

Representation of Visual Content in English Textbooks Toward the Pancasila Student Profile in "English for Nusantara"

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of the Pancasila Student Profile in the visual content of the English textbook English for Nusantara used at the junior high school level. The textbook is an official publication of the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and is implemented nationally as part of the Merdeka Curriculum for Grade VIII students. The study focuses on how visual elements such as illustrations, images, and comic strips represent Pancasila values.

This research employs a qualitative approach using qualitative content analysis. The data consist of visual materials taken from the English for Nusantara textbook. Data were collected through non-participant observation supported by field notes and analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis to examine ideological meanings and value representations. Methodological triangulation involving experts in English Language Teaching was applied to ensure credibility.

The findings show that although the textbook contains many visual elements, only a limited number explicitly represent the Pancasila Student Profile. Most visuals mainly function as instructional supports for English language learning. Therefore, this study concludes that while English for Nusantara integrates Pancasila values, further improvement is needed to make these values more explicit and effective in supporting students' character development in the Merdeka Curriculum context.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, proficiency in English has transitioned from being just an academic advantage to becoming an essential skill for the younger generation in Indonesia. The ability to communicate effectively in English is essential for Indonesian youth to thrive in the global arena. In an increasingly interconnected world, where cross-border communication is now the standard, this skill is more important than ever. As global citizens, English learners are expected to not only master linguistic competencies but also develop the intercultural communicative skills necessary to interact with individuals from diverse linguistic, cultural, and national backgrounds. Within this framework, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education assumes a crucial role in equipping students with both language proficiency and global awareness. Consequently, EFL textbooks should go beyond merely serving as tools for teaching language structures or vocabulary based solely on Anglo-American and British cultures. They must also incorporate local Indonesian and broader international cultural content to accurately reflect the diverse realities of learners (Widodo et al., 2018).

Textbooks serve a crucial role in the delivery of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, functioning not only as essential teaching tools but also as vehicles for conveying underlying ideologies. Through textbooks, educators can effectively organize and present teaching materials that can be applied in both in-class and extracurricular learning settings. The function of

textbooks in English language education extends far beyond providing content; they are fundamental to the planning and execution of curriculum goals. As Cortazzi and Jin (1999) have stated, textbooks can function as navigational maps, educational resources, trainers for developing competencies, authoritative references, and tools that can both build and limit learners' skills. Additionally, textbooks carry ideological messages that shape learners' worldviews. From a critical theory standpoint, Apple (1992) argues that textbooks act as primary ideological state apparatuses, transmitting dominant societal beliefs, values, and ideologies. As such, they reflect the cultural, political, and moral values of the society in which they are produced, embedding moral frameworks that are internalized by students throughout their education.

According to Johnsen (1993), textbooks are systematically designed for instructional use and play a crucial role in the effective implementation of new educational curricula. In the context of Indonesia, English textbooks must not only align with pedagogical objectives but also uphold national moral standards. They are expected to comply with the national education values and avoid controversial or harmful content such as pornography, radicalism, violence, ethnocentrism, racism, religious intolerance, and gender discrimination. Thus, textbooks should ideologically reflect and promote the values of the Indonesian national philosophy, Pancasila. These values include: (1) religiosity, which emphasizes belief in a higher power and spiritual integrity; (2) humanism, which promotes respect for human dignity; (3) pluralism, which values cultural and social diversity; (4) democracy, which ensures participatory governance and freedom of expression; and (5) social justice, which supports equitable opportunities and rights for all citizens.

In particular, the implementation of the 2017 English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum mandated the use of standardized English textbooks published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. These official textbooks are carefully crafted to support the "Pancasila Student Profile," a conceptual framework that embodies the essential values of Indonesian citizenship and moral identity. In this regard, textbooks function not merely as educational resources but also as develop for character development and the cultivation of national identity. Sheldon (1988) aptly referred to textbooks as "the real heart of an ELT program" (p. 237), underscoring their centrality in the language learning process. In EFL contexts, textbooks often represent the most substantial and structured linguistic input students receive, especially in environments where English exposure outside the classroom is limited (Richards, 2005). The content, both textual and visual, plays a key role in shaping learners' perceptions of themselves and the world.

Ndura (2004) emphasizes the influential role of educational materials in shaping students' attitudes, worldviews, and social dispositions. Given this, English textbooks must be inclusive and reflective of the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds of students in Indonesia. They should promote intercultural awareness, tolerance, and empathy, helping learners to navigate and appreciate different perspectives. This aligns with Giroux's (1988) concept of the "hidden curriculum," which refers to the implicit norms, values, and ideologies conveyed unconsciously through educational structures and materials. ELT materials, as noted by Littlejohn and Windeatt (1989), carry hidden messages about cultural values, social roles, and interpersonal relationships. Chapelle (2009) further posits that the term "curriculum" extends beyond overt syllabi and includes covert cultural agendas embedded in textbooks, highlighting their dual function in language instruction and ideological formation.

In the Indonesian context, foreign language textbooks particularly English ones serve as crucial instruments in formal educational settings. These textbooks are meticulously designed based on national curricular guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture and are structured to cultivate comprehensive language competencies in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, while much scholarly attention has been devoted to analyzing textual content in EFL textbooks, significantly less attention has been paid to the visual dimension of these

materials. Visual content, such as illustrations, photographs, and graphic elements, plays a powerful role in reinforcing or challenging the textual narrative. Despite its potential, research that critically examines how visual content in English textbooks reflects and promotes the Pancasila Learner Profile remains scarce.

The integration of visual elements that embody the values of Pancasila is an emerging area of inquiry that deserves more scholarly attention. Given the ideological importance of Pancasila in Indonesian education and society, understanding how its values are communicated visually in learning materials is critical. With the recent adoption of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum a reform that emphasizes learner autonomy, critical thinking, and the development of national character it is imperative to assess whether current textbooks support these aims, both textually and visually. This curriculum promotes flexibility, creativity, and the cultivation of Pancasila values through all subjects, including English. As such, evaluating the visual content in textbooks becomes not only relevant but necessary to ensure alignment with national educational goals.

Therefore, this study aims to fill an important gap in the literature by analyzing the extent to which English textbooks visually support the Pancasila Learner Profile, as envisioned by the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. The findings can offer practical insights into how visual representations in textbooks can be optimized to foster moral and civic education in English language teaching. Considering that textbooks remain among the most widely used educational tools in formal learning environments (Huang, 2019; Syafiqoh Yacob & Md Yunus, 2019), this research has the potential to influence future textbook development and curriculum design in Indonesia. By focusing on visual content, this study responds to the need for a more holistic and culturally grounded approach to textbook evaluation.

To this end, the guiding research question of the study is: "What kind of visual content represents the Pancasila Student Profile in English textbooks?" This question seeks to explore how images and other visual elements within English textbooks contribute to the promotion of Pancasila values and, by extension, the development of well-rounded, morally conscious, and culturally competent Indonesian learners.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach as outlined by Schreier (2012), which is particularly suitable for systematically interpreting the meaning of visual data within specific cultural, educational, and ideological contexts. Qualitative content analysis enables researchers to explore how meaning is constructed and communicated through images, including how visual elements reflect, reinforce, or challenge particular values and ideologies embedded in educational materials. This approach allows for in-depth examination beyond surface-level description, encouraging critical interpretation of the symbolic and communicative functions of visual representations.

The primary focus of the analysis is on visual data, which includes illustrations, drawings, photographs, and other pictorial elements embedded within the selected textbook. As Creswell (2016) asserts, qualitative research that includes visual data requires the researcher to contextualize the images in relation to their social, cultural, and pedagogical meanings. In this study, the visual data are not examined in isolation but are interpreted in conjunction with their surrounding textual context, layout, and instructional function within the textbook. This comprehensive interpretive strategy helps uncover not only what is represented visually but also how such representations may implicitly convey particular messages or ideologies, especially regarding the values of Pancasila.

The research data were collected from the English for Nusantara textbook designed for Grade VIII students, which was published in 2022 by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. This textbook was purposefully selected based on several key considerations: (1) its official status and widespread use across junior high schools in Indonesia; (2) its alignment with

the newly implemented Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) Curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered learning and the cultivation of Pancasila values; and (3) its endorsement and approval by the National Education Standards Agency (BSNP), ensuring that the textbook has met national educational and ideological requirements. As one of the core textbooks recommended for national use, English for Nusantara represents a significant case for evaluating how state-sanctioned materials reflect national identity, character education, and ideological development through visual means.

Data were collected using non-participant observation. The researcher did not engage in classroom activities but focused on observing and documenting visual elements contained in the textbook. The data collection process involved the following steps. First, identifying all visual elements in the textbook. Second, listing and numbering each image based on chapter and page. Third, recording the context of each image (topic, accompanying text, and learning objective). Fourth, selecting visuals that potentially represent values of the Pancasila Student Profile. Finally, field notes were used to document preliminary interpretations and contextual information related to each visual.

This methodological approach is particularly valuable for exploring the underlying meanings and ideological frameworks that may be embedded within educational materials. As noted by Widodo (2018), visual elements in textbooks are not neutral; they often carry implicit messages that contribute to learners' social and moral development. By examining these visual components through a critical lens, this study aims to reveal how ideological constructs such as Pancasila are represented, interpreted, and potentially internalized by students through their exposure to textbook content. The analysis seeks to identify patterns, themes, and symbolic representations that align with or diverge from the official ideological objectives promoted by the Indonesian national education system.

In sum, the methodology employed in this study allows for a rich and nuanced understanding of how English language textbooks function not only as linguistic tools but also as ideological instruments in shaping student identities. Through a careful and systematic analysis of visual representations, this study endeavors to contribute to the broader discourse on textbook evaluation, character education, and curriculum implementation in the Indonesian context.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the analysis of visual content within the English for Nusantara textbook, a total of 117 images were examined, ranging from illustrations and photographs to design elements accompanying instructional content. Among these, 11 images were identified as significantly representing core values aligned with the Pancasila Learner Profile, as outlined in the Indonesian national education philosophy. These selected images were not chosen arbitrarily; rather, they were identified based on their clear and intentional representation of attitudes and behaviors that reflect the five key values of Pancasila: religiosity, humanism, pluralism, democracy, and social justice. The visual content chosen for analysis portrays themes such as devotion to God, appreciation of global and cultural diversity, cooperation among peers, individual independence, creative engagement, and critical thinking in problem-solving scenarios.

Each of these values is manifested through visual narratives that accompany language learning tasks, dialogues, and reading passages. For instance, one image depicts a student praying before beginning a school day, symbolizing religious devotion and spiritual grounding. Another illustration shows a group of students from different ethnic backgrounds working together on a science project, promoting the values of inclusivity and collaboration. Similarly, visuals that show students engaging in creative projects, such as designing posters or participating in school performances, emphasize the development of creativity and active citizenship. Images that portray students asking questions, participating in debates, or engaging in inquiry-based learning activities

clearly reflect the cultivation of critical and independent thinking skills deemed essential in both language learning and civic education.

The presence of such visual representations underscores the multifunctional role of textbooks, which not only serve as linguistic tools but also act as mediums for transmitting national character education. In line with the aims of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, these images help reinforce the formation of student identity in accordance with the Pancasila Learner Profile, thus supporting both the cognitive and affective domains of learning. While the number of images explicitly reflecting Pancasila values may seem limited relative to the total number of visuals, their strategic placement within the textbook enhances their impact. They are often found in sections that introduce themes related to community life, global citizenship, environmental awareness, and ethical decision making contexts that naturally lend themselves to the integration of character-building messages.

Although not all 117 images were analyzed in equal depth given the scope and focus of the study the 11 selected visuals provide a meaningful and representative cross-section of how character education is visually embedded in the textbook. These images were chosen based on both explicit content (what is visibly depicted) and implicit messages (what the imagery communicates in terms of values and ideology). This selective approach allows for deeper interpretative engagement with the materials, enabling the researcher to unpack the ideological layers embedded within seemingly simple visual depictions.

Importantly, this study demonstrates that visual elements in English language textbooks can serve as powerful pedagogical tools for reinforcing national identity, cultivating ethical behavior, and promoting civic engagement among students. The strategic incorporation of visuals that resonate with the Pancasila values suggests an intentional effort by textbook developers to align English language learning with the broader goals of national education. Such integration exemplifies the concept of educational synergy, where language acquisition, moral education, and cultural awareness are developed simultaneously through carefully curated instructional materials.

In conclusion, while the textbook English for Nusantara is primarily designed to facilitate English language learning for Grade VIII students, its visual content plays an equally important role in character education. The images identified and analyzed in this study contribute meaningfully to the development of learners who are not only linguistically competent but also morally grounded, socially responsible, and culturally aware. Thus, these visuals function as an important medium through which the ideals of the Pancasila Student Profile are internalized and practiced in everyday classroom experiences.

Integration of Spiritual and Moral Values

In this section, the researcher highlights how visual elements in textbooks reflect spiritual values, especially the first principle of Pancasila, namely "Belief in the One and Only God". One of the images analyzed shows a family praying before eating. This image has important implications in reflecting respect for God and teaching the importance of spirituality as part of everyday life. The analysis of the image depicts a family sitting together at the dining table, with one of the family members inviting them to pray before eating. This activity shows a religious attitude that does not only occur in formal contexts such as worship in holy places, but also in everyday activities such as eating together. The value contained is that the act of praying reflects a deep spiritual awareness, which is in accordance with the value of "Belief in the One and Only God" in Pancasila. The message conveyed is that spirituality is an integral element in life and relationships between individuals in society, and is important in the formation of student character. The implication in the context of education is that this element can help students understand that religiosity is not only interpreted as formal religious activities but also includes everyday attitudes

that show gratitude and respect for God. Teachers can teach students to integrate these spiritual values into their daily lives through simple actions such as praying before meals.

Diversity and Inclusivity

Another image in the textbook portrays a vibrant scene of students adorned in traditional clothing, and actively participating in traditional dance activities. This visual representation underscores the significance of preserving and celebrating Indonesia's vast and rich cultural diversity. Such imagery is profoundly aligned with the values embedded in the Pancasila student profile, particularly the principle that emphasizes the importance of appreciating diversity and maintaining unity amidst pluralism. The Pancasila profile encourages students to develop a strong sense of identity while simultaneously respecting and valuing the identities of others, forming a cornerstone of national character education.

In the image, Andre and his peers are depicted wearing traditional attire from a variety of regions across the Indonesian archipelago, symbolizing the multiplicity of ethnic and cultural identities that coexist within the nation. As they perform traditional dances, they not only express pride in their cultural roots but also contribute to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. These activities are not merely performative; they are a deliberate and meaningful effort to maintain the legacy of local traditions in an increasingly globalized world.

The core values exemplified in this activity strongly resonate with the national motto, “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika”, which translates to “Unity in Diversity.” This foundational principle of Indonesian identity recognizes and respects the existence of various ethnicities, religions, and cultures while emphasizing the unity that binds the nation together. The act of celebrating these differences through traditional dance and costume becomes a living manifestation of nationalism one that is inclusive, tolerant, and culturally grounded.

From an educational standpoint, the implications of such an image are far-reaching. This kind of visual and experiential content can serve as an effective pedagogical tool to instill in students a deep sense of cultural awareness and pride. It offers opportunities for educators to introduce discussions about cultural heritage, identity, mutual respect, and the role of traditions in modern society. Furthermore, it provides a gateway for students to begin forming global perspectives on diversity. By first understanding and valuing their own cultural background, students are better equipped to appreciate and engage with the differences found in other societies around the world.

Integrating these cultural elements into the educational curriculum supports character development and helps shape students into well rounded individuals who are not only academically competent but also socially and emotionally aware. It fosters intercultural competence, promotes tolerance, and encourages students to become ambassadors of peace and unity in their communities. In conclusion, the image not only captures a moment of cultural celebration but also serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of embracing diversity as a path to unity and shared national identity.

Mutual Cooperation

Mutual cooperation is one of the core values in Pancasila, especially related to the 3rd principle which emphasizes unity. Another picture in the textbook shows a family working together to clean the house, which is a clear reflection of the concept of mutual cooperation. The analysis of the picture is that the Rahmansyah family shows all family members involved in the activity of cleaning the house. Each family member has their own task, from cleaning the windows, and mopping the floor, to taking out the trash. Although they have different tasks, they work together to achieve the same goal. The value contained is that mutual cooperation activities in the family reflect the values of solidarity, cooperation, and a sense of shared responsibility. This is the

core of the third principle of Pancasila, "Indonesian Unity," which emphasizes the importance of working together and helping each other among members of society for the common good. Implications in education, mutual cooperation can be taught as part of social and moral learning. Teachers can invite students to work together on group projects or social activities to teach the importance of mutual cooperation in everyday life. This helps students to develop a sense of togetherness and social responsibility.

Critical Thinking Development

Critical thinking is one of the essential skills emphasized in the Pancasila Student Profile, as it plays a vital role in shaping students who are thoughtful, reflective, and capable of solving complex problems. This skill involves the ability to analyze information thoroughly, evaluate different perspectives, question assumptions, and arrive at well reasoned conclusions. A powerful illustration of this concept is captured in an image that depicts a group of students engaged in a dynamic discussion about basketball. In this image, a student named Andre is seen standing confidently in front of a whiteboard, explaining aspects of the game to his peers. Meanwhile, several classmates are sitting attentively, raising their hands either to ask questions or offer thoughtful responses.

This visual representation showcases a learning process that goes beyond mere passive reception of knowledge. Instead, it reflects a collaborative and interactive classroom environment where students are actively involved in constructing their understanding. Andre's role as a presenter encourages him to articulate his thoughts clearly, while his peers are motivated to engage critically with the information being shared. This type of academic discourse fosters a deeper understanding of the subject matter and promotes key aspects of critical thinking, such as inquiry, reflection, evaluation, and synthesis of ideas.

The values demonstrated in this classroom discussion activity are directly aligned with the core competencies of critical thinking. Students are learning to express their viewpoints, justify their reasoning with evidence, listen to others' opinions respectfully, and refine their thinking based on feedback and new insights. These activities not only help students grasp the topic at hand in this case, basketball but also prepare them to face real-life challenges by equipping them with the ability to think logically, solve problems creatively, and make informed decisions.

From an educational standpoint, this image reinforces the importance of designing classroom environments and learning experiences that actively promote student engagement and dialogue. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating this process by encouraging open-ended questions, group discussions, debates, and project-based learning. By doing so, educators help students develop essential life skills that extend beyond academic knowledge. Encouraging students to ask questions, seek clarification, analyze situations critically, and collaboratively develop solutions cultivates a mindset that is resilient, curious, and innovative.

In conclusion, the scene of students discussing basketball is more than a simple classroom moment it is a representation of meaningful educational practice that cultivates critical thinking. By incorporating such interactive and analytical learning methods, schools can nurture a generation of learners who are not only knowledgeable but also capable of thinking deeply and acting wisely. These skills are crucial for navigating an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, where the ability to analyze, adapt, and respond thoughtfully to challenges is more important than ever.

Independence and Creativity

Independence and creativity are important aspects of the Pancasila Student profile, which aims to form a generation that is independent, creative, and globally competitive. One of the analyzed images shows students making stickers with important messages about cleanliness,

demonstrating creativity and independence. The analysis of the image of three children holding stickers with messages such as “Do not leave dirty dishes in the sink” and “Flush the toilet after use” shows their efforts to create creative and educational signs. This activity illustrates how students can take the initiative in maintaining their environment. The value contained is that this action reflects the values of independence and creativity. Students demonstrate independence in thinking and acting as well as creativity in finding innovative solutions to maintain cleanliness. This also reflects individual responsibility towards the environment and society. Implications in Education teachers can facilitate activities that encourage creativity and independence in students, such as creative projects involving making posters, videos, or cleanliness campaigns at school. This helps students to develop the ability to think out of the box and act independently in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

A recent study employing a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework investigates how Pancasila values are visually and ideologically represented in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used by junior high school students in Indonesia. The study is grounded in the understanding that Pancasila, as the foundational state philosophy of Indonesia, serves not only as a national ideology but also as a moral compass for shaping the character and civic responsibility of the younger generation. As such, the integration of Pancasila values into formal education is not merely an expectation but a constitutional mandate, particularly under the Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) Curriculum, which emphasizes character development alongside academic achievement. This research critically examines the extent to which these values are embedded within government-approved learning materials, specifically focusing on the visual content of the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade VII, a core textbook authorized by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture and distributed widely across junior high schools nationwide.

The study utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis as its methodological lens, drawing on the principles articulated by Wodak and Meyer (2009), who argue that language both verbal and visual is central to the construction of social identity, power relations, and ideological dissemination. CDA enables the researcher to move beyond surface-level interpretation to reveal how power, ideology, and cultural values are embedded in everyday discourses, including those found in educational media. Within this framework, visual content is analyzed not only for what it explicitly depicts but also for the underlying messages and assumptions it conveys regarding national identity, moral values, and social behavior.

The textbook under analysis contains a total of 177 images, including photographs, illustrations, and other visual aids that are intended to complement language learning activities. However, the study reveals that only 11 images explicitly represent key aspects of the Pancasila Learner Profile, which encompasses values such as devotion to God (Religiosity), global diversity and tolerance (Pluralism), mutual cooperation and empathy (Humanism), independence and responsibility (Democracy), and critical thinking and creativity (Social Justice). These 11 images include depictions of students engaging in religious practices, working together in multiethnic groups, solving problems collaboratively, and participating in activities that encourage creativity and intellectual independence. Such visuals are consistent with the government’s goal of fostering students who are not only proficient in English but also grounded in the nation’s ethical and cultural identity.

Based on these findings, the study concludes that enhancing the visual representation of Pancasila values in English textbooks is essential for achieving the holistic educational objectives outlined in the Merdeka Curriculum. Visual content, when thoughtfully designed, has the power to reinforce language learning while simultaneously promoting the ethical, cultural, and civic

dimensions of student development. Therefore, the study advocates for a more intentional and systematic integration of Pancasila values into the design and selection of textbook visuals. This includes developing images that reflect real-life Indonesian contexts, diverse social interactions, and scenarios that encourage students to engage with moral dilemmas, empathy, cultural awareness, and national identity.

To support these efforts, the study recommends stronger collaboration between educators, textbook authors, visual designers, and policymakers. Such collaboration should aim to ensure that educational materials not only meet linguistic and academic standards but also reflect the ideological and cultural foundations of the nation. By embedding Pancasila values more explicitly and comprehensively into visual content, future textbooks can play a more active role in nurturing ethically conscious, culturally aware, and socially responsible individuals. Ultimately, the integration of values based education within English language learning contributes to the formation of students who are not only competent in a global lingua franca but are also prepared to uphold and embody the principles of Pancasila in both national and global contexts.

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