

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION VALUES IN SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

Iin Inawati

iin.inawati@mpbi.uad.ac.id

Magister of English Education, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Wiwiek Afifah

wiwiek.afifah@enlitera.uad.ac.id

English Literature Department, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the character education values in English textbooks written by an elementary school teachers. Martin and White's (2005) language appraisal theory (social construction) and Smetana's (2006) social domain theory (social constructivism) were employed to analyse the verbal representations of character education values in the text books series. The findings show that helping others, religiosity, and hard work were the most frequently appear in the textbook.

Keywords: *Character education values, Textbooks, Elementary school teachers, Critical Discourse Analysis.*

Sari

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki nilai-nilai pendidikan karakter dalam buku teks Bahasa Inggris yang ditulis oleh para guru sekolah dasar Muhammadiyah. Teori language appraisal dari Martin dan White (2005) (konstruksi sosial) serta social domain theory dari Smetana (2006) (konstruktivisme sosial) digunakan untuk menganalisis representasi verbal nilai-nilai pendidikan karakter dalam buku teks seri kelas 1–6. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai tolong-menolong, religiusitas, dan kerja keras merupakan nilai yang paling sering muncul dalam buku teks tersebut.

kata kunci: *Nilai pendidikan karakter, Buku teks, Guru sekolah dasar, Analisis Wacana Kritis*

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Introduction

For an extended period, ELT has been considered clean and safe exports with few moral and value issues as a means for communication (Baladi, 2007). Contrastingly, “EFL programmers embody a much more multifaceted moral landscape than other subjects” (Akbari & Tajik, 2012). Widodo (2018) has advocated the need for the integration of moral education into language teaching and language textbooks in order to socialize children positively and inculcate moral values in them.

To the best of our knowledge, only limited studies have explored the presence of moral teaching in primary school English textbooks except (Feng, 2019 and Sulistiyo et al., 2020). Through a social semiotic lens, Feng (2019) examined the representation of social values and ontogenetic development in Hong Kong’s EFL textbooks. Through textual analysis of 19 EFL textbooks (Primary 1 to Secondary 4–6), he found that the social values that were promoted grew from the personal domain (e.g. good hygiene and healthy lifestyle) through the interpersonal domain (e.g. politeness and respect) to an altruistic concern for all mankind. He also observed that the textbooks placed more emphasis on didactic education promoting good citizenship than on cultivating children’s critical thinking. Sulistiyo, et al. (2020), informed by Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, focused on how moral content was discursively infused into English for young learners (EYL) textbooks. Investigating three primary EYL textbooks (Grades 4, 5, and 6), they found that textbook writers emphasized such values as helpfulness, politeness, and kindness, suggesting that EYL textbooks could serve as mediums for teaching moral values (e.g. being polite and helpful) at an early age. This empirical evidence suggests the importance of including morally-sensitive pedagogy in language education.

Concept of Character

The word character comes from a Greek term that means "to engrave." Character traits refer to the markings engraved upon us that lead us to behave in specific ways (Gebregeorgis, 2016b). It is described as a way of expressing inner and outward being imbedded in individuals. For this reason, individuals go out of their ways to express compassion, caring, integrity, respect, and all other values in line with virtue (Gebregeorgis, 2016b). According to Lickona (Lickona, 2013), the character is a reliable inner disposition to respond to situations morally. This means that it is identical with goodness. It is also a good attitude or personality-driven from a conscious understanding of kindness, followed by a commitment to goodwill (Lickona, 2013). Through the Ministry of National Education, the government developed critical 18 character values to be integrated into the learning process, which come from the values of religion, Pancasila, culture, and education objectives (Nasional, 2011). These including: (1) religiosity; (2) honesty; (3) tolerance; (4) discipline; (5) work hard; (6) creative; (7) independent; (8) democratic (9); curiosity; (10) the spirit of nationality; (11) love the country; (12) rewarding achievement, (13) friendly/communicative; (14) love of peace; (15) joy of reading; (16) environmental care; (17) social care; and (18) responsibility. As the basic

principles, a character refers to three domains: knowing, feeling, and behavior (Lickona, 1996). It is a set of cognitive knowledge, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors, and skills. People are perceived to have character when they know and feel and implement it in their lives.

Character Education in English language Teaching

However, some studies show that character education can be implemented in English Language Teaching using two-mode: explicit and implicit modes (Qoyyimah, 2016), (Sugirin, 2018), dan (Manalu & Marpaung, 2018). In the implicit mode in EFL learning, character education can be implemented by transmitting the moral value explicitly as part of an instructional discourse or using direct statements (Qoyyimah, 2016; Sugirin, 2018; Manalu & Marpaung, 2018). This means that the teacher names such value and teaches them deliberately to the students. They need to plan the character values to be inserted in teaching and learning activity (Sugirin, 2018). Furthermore, the teacher also selects the part of the theme that suits the inclusion of character values and appropriate timing to discuss value with the students. A brief explanation about certain character education values can be conducted since raising students' awareness of the character in the topic chosen is the primary purpose of this activity.

Written or recorded material under the theme of value can also be used to implement character education explicitly. Integrating the character value inside the learning material, such as reading text or audiovisual learning, is an appropriate alternative. Good literature with character development themes can develop and shape students' character (Almerico, 2014). The implicit mode is also a critical mode for implementing character education. In case the values are incorporated as behaviors and dispositions modeled in class activities, the implicit mode is applied (Qoyyimah, 2016). They may use various means to insert character education in the instruction, including serving it as a hidden syllabus or participating in activities in the teaching and learning process for students to acquire character values (Sugirin, 2018) unconsciously.

Character Education Value Content in English Textbook

Some studies had evaluated textbook for example Feng (2019), Setyono & Widodo, (2019), Widodo (2018), Puspitasari et al. (2021), and Gebregeorgis (2016a). Three studies have explored the presence of character or moral teaching in primary school English textbooks (Feng, 2019), (Sulistiyo et al., 2020) and (Puspitasari et al., 2021). Feng (Kress, Gunter and van Leeuwen, 2006) investigated the representation of social values and ontogenetic development in Hong Kong's EFL textbooks. Nineteen EFL textbooks (Primary 1 to Secondary 4–6) were analysed and he found that the social values that were promoted grew from the personal domain (e.g. good hygiene and healthy lifestyle) through the interpersonal domain (e.g. politeness and respect) to an altruistic concern for all mankind. He found that the textbooks positioned more emphasis on didactic education promoting good citizenship than on cultivating children's critical thinking. Sulistiyo, et al. (2020), informed by Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, focused on how moral content was discursively infused into English for young learners (EYL) textbooks. They investigated three primary EYL textbooks (Grades 4, 5, and 6), and found that textbook writers emphasized such values as helpfulness, politeness, and kindness. Puspitasari et al. (Puspitasari et al., 2021) examine the inclusion of moral values in primary school language textbooks used in a multicultural country, specifically Indonesia.

They conducted a critical discourse analysis adopting Martin and White’s (J.R Martin & White, 2005) language appraisal theory, Kress and van Leeuwen’s (Kress, Gunter and van Leeuwen, 2006) visual grammar theory, and Smetana’s (Malti & Ongley, 2013) (2006) social domain theory (social constructivism) to clarify the verbal and visual representations of moral values in Indonesian primary school English language (EL) textbooks.

Language Appraisal Theory

Language Appraisal Theory developed by Martin and White (2005). It is a framework within Systemic Functional Linguistics that examines how language expresses attitudes, emotions, and judgments. It focuses on three main areas: Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation. Attitude explores how feelings, behaviors, and evaluations are conveyed through language, including affect (emotions), judgment (ethics and behavior), and appreciation (aesthetic values). Engagement deals with how speakers position their viewpoints and interact with others' perspectives, incorporating notions like modality, polarity, and attribution. Graduation addresses the intensity or degree of expressions, including force (intensification or quantification) and focus (sharpening or softening the boundaries of categories). This theory provides a detailed analysis of how evaluative language functions in texts, helping to reveal the underlying values and ideologies.

Table 1. Types of Attitudes

Component	Description	Example
Affect	Express emotional responses (feelings, moods, emotions)	“I feel enthusiastic.”
Judgement	Evaluates people’s behaviour in terms of morality, legality, and social norms.	“They are very independent.”
Appreciation	Evaluates object, events, or states of affairs based on their aesthetic value.	“This school is comfortable.”

Social Domain Theory

Smetana's (2006) Social Domain Theory, rooted in social constructivism, posits that children's understanding of morality is developed through their social interactions and experiences, categorizing social knowledge into distinct domains: moral, social-conventional, and personal. In the context of analyzing moral values in Indonesian primary school English textbooks, this theory helps clarify how moral values are verbally represented and taught. By distinguishing between moral imperatives (universal principles of right and wrong) and social conventions (context-specific norms), educators can better understand how textbooks communicate these values. For instance, moral values like honesty, respect, and empathy may be explicitly addressed in stories and activities, reflecting broader societal and cultural principles. Social Domain Theory aids in examining whether these textbooks adequately balance moral teachings with the culturally specific social norms, ensuring that students develop a nuanced understanding of morality that is both universally principled and contextually relevant.

Table 2. Focus and Judgment Criteria

Domain	Focus	Criteria for Judgement	Example of Behaviour
Moral Domain	Issues of rights, justice, and welfare. Involves understanding harm, fairness, and others' well-being.	Universally applicable rules that are considered intrinsically right or wrong. Focus on fairness, harm, and justice.	Hitting someone is wrong because it causes harm.
Conventional Domain	Socially agreed-upon rules and norms that maintain social order and cooperation.	Rules that are context-dependent and vary across cultures or settings, often related to social expectations.	Using polite language or waiting in line.
Personal Domain	Individual preferences and personal choices that do not affect others' rights or welfare.	Based on personal autonomy and individual choices; typically not subject to moral or conventional evaluation.	Choosing what to wear or how to spend one's free time.

Two research problems are (1) what character education value represented in English textbook written by Muhammadiyah primary school English teachers in Yogyakarta city and (2) how character education values are delivered in English textbook written by Muhammadiyah primary school English teachers?

Methods

Contexts of the study

This study was focused on the analysis of six English textbooks series (books 1,2,3,4,5, and 6) for Muhammadiyah primary school in Yogyakarta city. These books written by English teachers of the schools and published Badan Kerjasama Sekolah (BKS) SD Muhammadiyah Kota Yogyakarta year 2019. These books were selected because (1) these textbooks are widely used in Muhammadiyah Primary school in Yogyakarta city, (2) they were written by Indonesian writers who might understand the local primary school English classroom context (3) they have rich verbal and visual content representing cultural and moral values considered important in Indonesian society. Thus, these textbooks could be a rich source of information on how children are being taught character education values.

Research design

This study employed content analysis technique in which enables researcher to study written contents, such as textbooks (Fraenkel et al., 2012). In this study, the school textbooks for Muhammadiyah primary school in Yogyakarta city will be analyzed in terms of character educational values.

Research procedures

This employed critical discourse analysis (CDA) to inspect verbal texts in six selected English textbooks to clarify the representation of character education values. In this sense, the CDA allowed us to see character education values as an affective discourse represented in textbooks. To operationalize this analysis, we adopted Martin and White’s (Martin & White, 2005) language appraisal framework and Smetana’s (Malti & Ongley, 2013) social domain theory to investigate how children learn character education values through a variety of social interactions with parents, adolescents, peers, and the broader society. Thus, Smetana’s social domain theory guided us to further explain how character education values are represented in English textbooks.

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion of this study are presented based on two main themes. The first theme focuses on the character education values represented in English textbooks written by Muhammadiyah primary school English teachers in Yogyakarta. The second theme examines how these character education values are delivered within the textbooks. By analyzing the verbal representations using Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory and Smetana’s (2006) social domain theory, this section highlights both the frequency and the patterns of the character values embedded in the textbooks, providing insights into the ways in which moral and social values are integrated into primary English language learning materials.

1. Character Education Values exist in the textbooks

An in-depth analysis verbal texts from the six primary school textbooks began with corpus coding (see Table 1) and by analyzing the representation of moral values as well as relating these values to the broader social context. There are 27 character education values evaluated in the textbooks, 18 comes from the ministry of national education of Indonesian government and 9 character education values appears when analyzing the textbooks. Through the Ministry of National Education, the government developed critical 18 character values to be integrated into the learning process, which come from the values of religion, Pancasila, culture, and education objectives [12]. These including: (1) religiosity; (2) honesty; (3) tolerance; (4) discipline; (5) work hard; (6) creative; (7) independent; (8) democratic (9); curiosity; (10) the spirit of nationality; (11) love the country; (12) rewarding achievement, (13) friendly/communicative; (14) love of peace; (15) joy of reading; (16) environmental care; (17) social care; and (18) responsibility. While the nine other characters education values are: (1) taking care of family; (2) Leisure; (3) Gender equality (4) confidence; (5) love animals; (6) togetherness; (7) healthy life style; (8) respect others; (9) Appreciate local culture.

N o	Character values	Education	Appraisal (Attitude)	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
1	Religiosity (0.05%)	5	Affect + Appreciation + Judgement +	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	Honesty (0%)		-						
3	Tolerance (0%)		-						
4	Discipline (0.6%)	5	Affect + Appreciation + Judgement +	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	Work hard (0.1%)	9	Affect +						7

		Appreciation + Judgement +					
6	Creative (0,006%)	Affect +					
7	Independent (0%) 2	-					2
8	Democratic (0%)	-					
9	Curiosity (0%) 1	-		1			
10	The spirit of nationality (0%) 5	-					4
11	Love the country (0.05%) 2	Affect + Appreciation + Judgement +					2
12	Rewarding achievement (0.006%)	Affect +					
13	Friendly/communicative (0.19%) 23	Affect + Appreciation + Judgement +	1	5		1 2	3
14	Love of peace (0%)	-					
15	Joy of reading (0.01%) 2	Affect+					
16	Environmental care (0.025%) 3	Affect + Appreciation + Judgement +	2				
17	Social care (0.025%) 9	Appreciation + Judgement +					
18	Responsibility (0%)	-					
19	Taking care of family (0.11%) 17	Affect + Appreciation + Judgement +	1	2		1	1
20	Leisure (0.075%) 24	Affect + Appreciation + Judgement +		1			1 3
21	Gender equality (0.4%) 2	Affect + Appreciation + Judgement +		2			
22	Love animals (0.025%) 5	Affect + Appreciation +		1		3	
23	Healthy lifestyle (0.11%) 3	Affect + Appreciation + Judgement +		1		1	
24	Respect others (0.025%) 17	Affect + Judgement +				4	1 2
25	Appreciate local culture (0.01%)	Judgement +					3
			4	1 6		2 1	6 1

Textbooks that have the fewest items containing character education values are grade 1 textbook, which contain 6 items (0.38%) out of 160 items. While the textbooks that have the most items containing character education values are grade 6 books, which contain 61 items (38%) out of 160 items. Hard work is the value that appears the most in textbooks, it appears 14 times (0.08%). While rewarding achievement only appears once. However, there seven character education values recommended by the government can not be found in the textbooks, namely: honesty, tolerance, independence, democratic, curiosity and the spirit of nationality.

2. How the character education values delivered in the text books.

A total of 25 character education values were analyzed in this study. However, only 21 of these values were found across the six textbooks. For the purpose of this discussion, only ten character education values are highlighted. These ten values are discussed in

detail because they appeared more frequently in the textbooks—ranging from 5 to 17 instances—compared to the other values, some of which appeared only once or were not represented at all. Focusing on the more prominent values allows for a clearer understanding of how character education is emphasized and conveyed in the English teaching materials for primary school students.

Religiosity

Religiosity is one character education value delivered in the textbooks analyzed in this study. This text found in grade four textbook. The text tells about the regular practice of a moslem.

Naira's Daily Activities

Naira is a student in Muhammadiyah Boarding School. She always wakes up at 3 o'clock to prepare praying tahajud (+app) and at 4 o'clock she prays Subuh. She usually reads Al-Qur'an (+App) every morning. (#G4)

The analysis of the text reveals the presence of positive attitudinal meanings primarily through judgement, appreciation, and implicit affect (Martin & White, 2005). Phrases such as “*She always wakes up at 3 o'clock*” and “*she prays Subuh*” reflect perseverance and moral propriety, positioning Naira as a disciplined and spiritually committed individual. These attitudes correspond to the moral domain in social domain Theory (Smetana et al.), as they reflect adherence to religious obligations and ethical principles rather than mere social conventions. In addition, expressions like “*praying tahajud*” and “*reads Al-Qur'an*” are positively valued actions within the appreciation system, indicating spiritual worth and cultural importance. Though affect is not explicitly stated, the consistency of religious routines implies emotional engagement such as inner peace and fulfilment, reinforcing moral dedication.

Two recent studies further support this phenomenon. Nurjanah et al. (2023) found that Indonesian primary textbooks frequently embed religious routines to construct “ideal students” aligned with national character goals. Similarly, Suwandi & Widiati (2024) report that religious practices are often framed through positive evaluative language to promote discipline and obedience among young learners. These findings align with Puspitasari et al. (2021), showing that religiosity, discipline, and obedience are commonly conveyed as core values in primary-level narratives. Overall, the portrayal of Naira demonstrates how textbooks integrate religiosity not only through content but also through evaluative linguistic choices that construct a morally exemplary identity.

Discipline

For the context of children, discipline is something related to their daily lives. For students, stationery is something that cannot be separated from their lives. So the example taken in sending moral values is to describe a student's discipline in organizing his stationery. This kind of discipline is very beneficial for a child.

Shafa's Stationery

Shafa is a student in Muhammadiyah Boarding School. She has a lot of stationeries. For example, she has 5 pencils, 6 pens, some basic books of grade 4, a sharpener, a note book, a ruler, and 2 erasers. Then, she always keeps them

in a big pencil case. She also has a computer beside her desk in the bedroom. So, she arranges her stationeries well. She always cares with her stationeries. (#G4)

Discipline, in this context, refers to a child's ability to manage and take care of their belongings consistently and responsibly. The story describes how Shafa, a primary student, carefully manages her numerous stationery items and arranges them systematically, showing an internalized sense of order. Using the appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005), several judgement values are linguistically realized. Words such as "*always*" and "*well*" serve as markers of positive social esteem, particularly within the tenacity and propriety subcategories. For instance, the clause "*She always keeps them in a big pencil case*" positively judges Shafa's consistency and sense of care. Additionally, appreciation is found in the evaluative use of "*arranges her stationeries well*", which reflects a valuing of orderly behavior and neatness. These lexical items construct Shafa as a morally disciplined and responsible child.

Shafa's behavior is best situated within the moral domain (Smetana, 2006), as her actions though not mandated by explicit rules are guided by internalized standards of care, responsibility, and respect for property. Unlike the conventional domain, which deals with rule-based behavior (e.g., school policies), this depiction highlights voluntary discipline rooted in moral reasoning. This analysis aligns with findings from Sulistiyo et al. (2020), who argue that primary-level texts in Indonesia often promote moral values such as helping others, politeness and caring. "*Shafa's Stationery*" diverges from this pattern by foregrounding discipline as a form of self-regulation rather than social behavior. This divergence is ideologically meaningful. Whereas many textbooks construct morality through socially oriented virtues, the story highlights autonomy, self-management, and internal responsibility. Such representation repositions the child not only as a cooperative member of a community but also as an agent capable of regulating her environment and making responsible decisions independently.

Work hard

The value of hard work, understood as consistent effort and perseverance in accomplishing one's duties, is one of the core moral lessons emphasized in textbooks analyzed. It is conveyed through simple narratives that portray diligence and responsibility in everyday life, as reflected in the following text.

My uncle is a fishmonger. Everyday he goes to the market sell some fish. He leaves home early morning. Before going to the market, he goes to buy some fish from a fisherman in the beach market. After that, he goes to the market to sell those fresh fish. (#G6)

The text presents a clear illustration of the value of working hard, embedded through both linguistic choices and narrative structure. The text reveals positive judgement, particularly in the subcategory of persistence (Martin and White, 2005). The character of the uncle is evaluated as hardworking through actions such as "*leaves home early morning*", "*goes to buy some fish*", and "*goes to the market to sell those fresh fish*." These repeated material processes signal a sustained and consistent effort, which is positively judged as persistence and industriousness. The use of temporal sequencing (e.g., "*everyday*," "*before going to the market*," "*after that*") also contributes to an evaluative tone of responsibility and routine, which in turn enhances the image of the uncle as a dependable and disciplined figure. Though explicit affect is not present, the positive

portrayal implies admiration and emotional alignment with the uncle's hard-working nature.

Within Smetana's framework, (2006), the uncle's behavior falls into the moral domain, as it reflects internalized ethical values such as responsibility, diligence, and fulfilling one's duty to support the family. The story promotes not only a work ethic but also respect for labor especially in contexts where physical effort and consistency are needed to earn a living.

This finding resonates with previous studies such as Musfiroh (2019) and Sulistiyo et al. (2020), who found that Indonesian primary textbooks often present moral values through daily life stories, making abstract values concrete and relatable. These studies highlight that integrating moral themes into language materials supports both linguistic and character development. The current text aligns with these conclusions by presenting a model of hard work that young readers can understand and potentially emulate. The story of the fishmonger uncle successfully conveys the moral value of working hard through evaluative language and culturally relevant storytelling.

The spirit of nationality

The spirit of nationality of Indonesian people usually is shown by doing traditional games and it is reflected in the following text in grade 6.

Today is our the seventeenth of August. It is the independence day in my country, Indonesia. I go to school to do flag salute in the morning. In the afternoon we celebrate it by playing some traditional games in the field in my village, such as *balap karung* or sack race, *makan kerupuk* or eating *kerupuk* competition, and cooking competition. #G6

The text describing the celebration of Indonesia's Independence Day by a sixth-grade student clearly illustrates the moral value of national spirit or the spirit of nationality. Through simple language and familiar cultural references, the text captures key behaviors and traditions associated with patriotic celebration, such as the flag salute and participation in traditional games like *balap karung*, *makan kerupuk*, and cooking competitions.

The text expresses positive judgement, particularly in the domain of propriety and social commitment (Martin & White, 2005). The phrase "*I go to school to do flag salute in the morning*" signals respect and adherence to national traditions, which is a socially valued behavior. The act of celebrating with others and joining collective games reflects a sense of belonging and solidarity, which enhances the construction of a responsible, patriotic identity. Additionally, the use of temporal markers like "*in the morning*" and "*in the afternoon*" provides a coherent sequence of activities that reflect dedication throughout the day, reinforcing the idea of consistent involvement in national celebrations.

These actions are situated within the moral domain, as they involve internalized values tied to national identity, respect for the country, and participation in civic culture (Smetana, 2006). The participation in Independence Day activities is framed as a personal and communal expression of love for the nation, emphasizing values such as unity, cooperation, and respect. This finding is in line with the study by Nurfaidah et al. (2020),

which found that primary English textbooks in Indonesia often integrate national values through cultural content, such as festivals, ceremonies, and traditional games. They argue that such inclusion helps learners build both language competence and civic awareness. The analyzed text shares this dual purpose: it promotes English learning while also strengthening students' national identity and pride. The text effectively reflects the value of national spirit through evaluative language and cultural representation. It reinforces moral meanings aligned with both linguistic and social frameworks, showing how English textbooks can serve as tools for moral and character education in addition to language instruction.

Friendly/communicative

In the textbooks analysed, there are some conversations conducted by two or more students. The moral values represented in the text are not explicitly described. However, by using appraisal theory and also social domain theory, the moral values can be uncovered. We can see in the following text.

Fifi : this is my friend, she is Paula
Sita : hi, Paula. Minta my name is Sita. Nice to meet you.
Paula : hi, Sita. Nice to meet you to. #G5

The dialogue among Fifi, Sita, and Paula in the Grade 5 textbook demonstrates the moral value of friendliness, particularly in the context of greeting and welcoming new acquaintances. This text expresses positive Judgement in the category of social capacity and propriety (Martin & White, 2005). Phrases like “*Nice to meet you*” and polite introductions show an appreciation of social norms, politeness, and interpersonal warmth. The repeated use of friendly expressions reflects a positive evaluative stance, encouraging students to engage in respectful and empathetic communication.

The act of introducing and welcoming someone fits within the moral domain, as it involves care for others' feelings, empathy, and inclusion (Smetana, 2006). This aligns with findings by Puspitasari et al. (2021), who noted that primary school textbooks in Indonesia use dialogues and everyday situations to promote interpersonal values such as kindness, cooperation, and respect. The simple yet meaningful exchange between the characters offers a realistic model of how friendliness can be enacted in daily life and reinforces its importance in developing students' social and emotional skills.

Social Care

The value of social care is an important aspect of character education that encourages students to show empathy and concern for others. This value is often portrayed through everyday conversations that model kindness, cooperation, and mutual support, as seen in the following dialogue.

Nabila : “*Hi, Friends. Are you okay?*”
Aziz : “*Ehmm... You look pale.*”
Shafa : “*Maybe, I have a fever.*”
Aziz : “*I think you should take the medicine.*”
Nabila : “*I agree with you, Aziz.*”

Aziz : “Okay. We will accompany you to take a rest in the School Health Unit.”
Shafa : “Thank you Aziz and Nabila.”
Nabila : “You are welcome.” #G4

The dialogue between Nabila, Aziz, and Shafa exemplifies the moral value of social care, which is conveyed through language choices reflecting empathy, concern, and support. The characters express both affect and judgement (Martin & White, 2005). For example, Aziz’s line “*You look pale*” carries a negative affect linguistically, but the intention is caring and considerate, signaling concern for Shafa’s condition. His suggestion “*I think you should take the medicine*” and Nabila’s supportive reply “*I agree with you*” reflect positive judgement, particularly in the domain of social propriety—showing helpfulness and moral responsibility.

The students’ responses fall within the moral domain, as their actions are guided by internalized values of empathy and collective responsibility, rather than by external rules (Smetana, 2006). This supports the findings of Astuti et al. (2020), who identified social and emotional learning—such as showing care and compassion—as common moral themes in Indonesian primary English textbooks. The simple yet thoughtful interaction not only models moral reasoning in daily school life but also encourages students to act with kindness and awareness toward others’ well-being.

Taking care of family

The value of taking care of family teaches children to be responsible and helpful in their daily lives. This value is often introduced through simple personal narratives that show love, care, and cooperation within the household, as illustrated in the following text.

Assalamualaikum. I am Ahmad. I have some farm animals. They are two goats, three roosters and two hens. I feed them every day. I also help my mother. I sweep the yard. I also mop the floor in the living room. I am happy doing my activity #G2

The short narrative from Ahmad reflects the moral value of taking care of family, which is conveyed through his actions and emotional stance toward daily responsibilities. Ahmad’s statement “*I feed them every day*” and “*I help my mother*” show positive judgement, particularly in the category of tenacity and propriety, as they highlight his sense of responsibility and helpfulness (Martin & White, 2005). Additionally, his expression “*I am happy doing my activity*” indicates a positive Affect, reflecting emotional engagement and satisfaction in contributing to the household.

Ahmad’s behaviors fall under the moral domain, as they are based on empathy, care, and responsibility toward both animals and family members (Smetana, 2006). His initiative to help his mother and maintain the home environment reflects internalized moral reasoning. This aligns with the findings of Astuti et al. (2020), who noted that Indonesian primary English textbooks often embed moral lessons such as helpfulness, discipline, and care for family within simple texts. Ahmad’s narrative not only serves as linguistic input but also as a moral model that promotes character development among young learners.

Leisure

The value of leisure highlights the importance of balancing study and play in children's daily lives. It is commonly presented through joyful activities that promote friendship, happiness, and physical well-being, as shown in the following text.

In the playground

Ihsan and his friends are playing in the playground. Ihsan is playing monkey bars. Ahmad is playing spring horse. Aisyah is playing swing. Hasna and syifa are playing see-saw. Muslim is playing slide. They are very happy. #G2

The short text illustrates the value of leisure, especially in the context of early childhood development. The sentence *"They are very happy"* reflects a clear use of positive affect, indicating emotional engagement and enjoyment (Martin & White, 2005). The various activities mentioned—monkey bars, swing, slide, see-saw—function as indicators of freedom and joy, which are essential in supporting children's emotional and social development. Each child's individual play is described neutrally, but the closing sentence provides an evaluative stance that positions leisure as a shared positive experience.

This situation belongs to the personal domain, where children engage in self-directed, non-obligatory activities that build autonomy and social relationships (Smetana, 2006). Leisure activities like those depicted foster cooperative interaction, turn-taking, and self-regulation—skills closely linked to social-emotional competence. This finding aligns with Hasana et al. (2024), who argue that even in non-didactic texts, children's English textbooks embed moral and social values through everyday contexts. The depiction of joyful leisure time in the playground reinforces that moral learning is not only about rules and obligations but also about nurturing wellbeing through shared enjoyment.

Love animals

The value of loving animals reflects children's care, gentleness, and sense of responsibility toward living creatures. This value is commonly shown through descriptive texts that express affection and empathy for pets, as illustrated in the following passage.

I love my pet

Rabbit is a pet. I have 4 rabbits. They have long ears, beautiful eyes, a short nose and thin moustache. They have a fat body with the soft fur. They have short legs and the different colours. They are so cute and everyone likes them. Then, I feed them twice a day in the morning and evening with carrots. I often play with my pets in the garden. I put my rabbits in the cage in my garden.

The text reveals a strong emotional attachment between the child narrator and her rabbits, representing the value of love for animals. The writer's description—*"They are so cute and everyone likes them"*—clearly expresses positive affect, showing admiration and affection (Martin & White, 2005). Furthermore, evaluative phrases such as *"beautiful eyes," "soft fur,"* and *"fat body"* illustrate the speaker's appreciation not only for the physical features of the pets (appreciation) but also for the joy they bring. The act of feeding them regularly and playing with them reinforces positive judgment of the speaker's responsible and caring behavior.

The narrator's actions fall within the moral domain, especially in terms of caring for other living beings (Smetana, 2006). The narrative highlights not just affection but also commitment, such as maintaining a routine (feeding twice a day) and providing shelter (a cage in the garden). These behaviors align with Hasana et al. (2024), who emphasize that moral messages in English textbooks are often embedded through simple, relatable stories that reflect students' everyday lives. By showing care and affection toward pets, the text encourages young learners to develop empathy, responsibility, and respect for animals—key values in early moral education.

Respect others

The value of respecting others encourages students to communicate politely and show interest in others' experiences. This value is often reflected through simple dialogues that model friendly and considerate interactions, as seen in the following text.

Ferdi: How's life Rian?
Rian : Good.
Ferdi : How about your last holiday?
Rian : It was great.
Ferdi : What did you do?
Rian : I went to my grandma's house in the village. I saw beautiful scenery such as rice field, waterfall, mountain and so on.
Ferdi : Oh, that was wonderful

The short conversation between Ferdi and Rian reflects the value of respecting others, especially in interpersonal communication. Ferdi's use of open-ended and polite questions such as "*How's life, Rian?*" and "*How about your last holiday?*" signals positive affect and social judgement, indicating his interest and regard for his friend's experiences (Martin & White, 2005). Rian's responses remain concise yet positive, and the final response from Ferdi—"*Oh, that was wonderful*"—is an expression of positive appreciation, validating Rian's story and showing friendly support.

The respectful tone and turn-taking behavior illustrated in the dialogue support the cultivation of empathy and mutual respect. This interaction falls under the social-conventional domain (Smetana, 2006), where conversational norms such as showing interest, listening, and responding appropriately are essential. This finding is consistent with Puspitasari et al. (2021), who found that everyday dialogues in English textbooks promote moral values like courtesy, appreciation, and positive social interaction. Such short yet meaningful exchanges can help primary students internalize respectful communication habits through language learning.

Conclusion and Practical Recommendation

This study set out to explore the character education values represented in English textbooks written by Muhammadiyah primary school teachers in Yogyakarta and to understand how these values are delivered through language. By employing Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory—focusing on the attitude domain—and Smetana's (2006) Social Domain Theory, the research identified that values such as helping others, religiosity, and hard work appeared most frequently across the six textbook series. The analysis of selected texts showed that these values are embedded not through explicit

instruction, but through natural language use, affective expressions, and socially appropriate behaviors in everyday contexts. Additional values such as discipline, respect, care, love for animals, and nationalism were also communicated through evaluative language in narratives and dialogues. These findings suggest that teacher-authored English textbooks have strong potential to foster character development by integrating moral values within meaningful and age-appropriate language learning materials. The study reaffirms that textbook-based moral education can be both contextually relevant and pedagogically effective when informed by social constructivist perspectives.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest are reported.

About author


Iin Inawati is a lecturer at Magister English Education Department of Universitas Ahmad Dahlan. Her research focuses on English materials development for young learners, particularly through needs analysis to design task-based learning materials that incorporate character education values. She also explores picture book translation techniques, with an emphasis on how cultural meanings and child-friendly language are preserved in translation.


 0000-0002-0559-8334

 6853113

Scopus ID 57201580966

Wiwiek Afifah is a lecturer at the English Literature Department of Universitas Ahmad Dahlan. Her research interests include educational linguistics, particularly the interplay between language, learning, and cultural contexts. She also focuses on curriculum and materials development in English language education, with a specific emphasis on English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

 0000-0001-7378-8108

 6787137

Scopus ID 57213163401.