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## **HOW DO INTERNATIONAL EFL TEXTBOOKS TEACH MORAL VALUES TO INDONESIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS?**

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**Abstract:** Studies of the representation of moral values in English textbooks in Indonesia have developed in recent years. However, there is still little research that reveals the use of speech acts to represent moral values through sayings presented in elementary school students' textbooks. This research aims to investigate the representation of moral values depicted through sayings in international English textbooks for elementary schools in classes 2 and 6 in Indonesia. By adopting Searle's (1969) speech act theory, this qualitative research explains the representation of moral values is only found in oral texts. Data were analyzed by applying several steps from Krippendoff (2004). The findings of this research indicate that responsibility and kindness are the dominant moral values depicted in two English language textbooks for

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elementary schools in Indonesia. This research implies that teachers and textbook writers should provide students with more examples of moral values, especially those related to daily life communication both at school and in the family.

**Keywords:** *EFL textbooks, moral values, primary schools, speech acts*

## INTRODUCTION

Moral values are fundamentally embedded in society's daily activities. These are culturally appropriate behaviors in a range of social contexts, including interacting with people from many ethnic origins, participating in community events, and having conversations with parents or others from a variety of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. As a result, society plays a crucial role in establishing and maintaining moral principles in individuals from a young age. Therefore, it is necessary to socialize children by teaching them the values, customs, and traditions of their particular culture (Birhan et al., 2021) because early childhood is a crucial time when children acquire moral values such as honesty, compassion, loyalty, respect, trust, and responsibility from their teachers and parents (Meiju et al., 2014). In formal education, schools—the primary institution for preparing students for life—play a crucial role in supporting parents in instilling several moral values in their children (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2011).

In addition to teachers' roles in transmitting particular values to pupils, textbooks' role as a learning tool is also crucial to the process of moral values implementation. These textbooks significantly influence the construction of character and morals in children, especially during the vital primary school phase. Widodo (2018) states that textbooks could act as moral value transmitters, assisting in developing children's moral identities aside from supplying knowledge of the subject. Furthermore, experts in critical applied linguistics emphasize

that many language textbooks contain instructional materials that ideologically promote particular moral ideals or ideologies, either explicitly or implicitly (Imelwaty et al., 2022; Novita et al., 2020; Yang, 2021). It suggests that language education should provide a space that facilitates meaningful engagement and fosters critical awareness of moral issues in addition to emphasizing the spread of factual knowledge about the world, casual conversations, and enjoyable activities (Feng, 2019; Pessoa and Freitas, 2012; Meindl et al., 2018).

A textbook is more than just a result of a curriculum that offers frameworks for teaching and learning activities; it also conveys a set of ideas and values specific to a society (Widodo, 2018; Dewi et al., 2023). Moral or character education has been incorporated into English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms in elementary, middle, and high schools as part of the 2013 curriculum revision. The regulation of the implementation of moral education in each level of schools has been written in the Indonesian Law Number 20/2003 (Undang-Undang No. 20 Tahun 2003) about the National Goal of the Educational System of Indonesia and the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 20/2018 (Permendikbud No. 20 Tahun 2018) about Enhancing Character Education in Formal Education Institutions. Nevertheless, several International schools in Indonesia utilize textbooks written by foreign authors, such as those published by Cambridge Assessment International Education, a globally known provider of international certification. They introduced the Cambridge International Curriculum, which covers knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and strategies (Stobie, 2013; Simanjuntak, 2020). Indonesian moral values education, as authorized by the Indonesian government, should also be incorporated into teaching activities at Indonesia's international schools, particularly those that use international books, despite they have different principles regarding the values (Khoirunisa et al., 2021; Widodo, 2018).

Moral values can be understood as the concept of good or bad behaviors. It relates to Johnston's (2003) statement that moral value is a

collection of accepted norms and characteristics that help an individual evaluate and distinguish what is good and right from what is bad and wrong. Similarly, Gutek (2004) argues that moral values might be described as basic norms governing what forms a good society and the desirable moral character of citizens. In the education field, moral principles must be instilled in students to develop their moral sense. Several values such as empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and fairness (Borba, 2001) can be infused for children.

Numerous previous studies have shown that English textbooks portray moral values. In the Indonesian context, there are several studies examining the representation of moral values in English textbooks (Arwanto et al, 2024; Puspitasari et al., 2021, Sitio et al., 2023). Most of them investigated the moral values represented in English textbooks for elementary schools. On the other hand, the same topic has been examined by several scholars around the world (Feng, 2019; Tan et al., 2018) who focused on the representation of moral or character values in national English textbooks. Both local and international studies on the representation of moral values in textbooks emphasize both verbal and visual aspects that portray certain values. Moreover, the present study investigates the moral values based on the concept proposed by Kemendiknas (2011) represented in International English textbooks that are used in Indonesian primary schools found in dialogue or conversation by applying a pragmatic approach (Yule, 1996) and speech acts theory (Searle, 1969). The pragmatic approach appropriates for examining the meaning and understanding of what a speaker or writer means in a certain situation (Yule, 1996) while the use of speech acts theory is to fill the gap from the previous studies that focus on the visual aid rather than the utterances to portray moral values.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study use the critical discourse analysis (CDA) method since it analyses moral lessons encoded in textbooks' verbal (dialogue/conversation) discourses. CDA is an interdisciplinary method used to examine how language – spoken, written, or visual – constructs ideology, power, and knowledge (Fairclough, 2003). By considering discourse as a type of social action, Fairclough's (2003) approach to CDA highlights the fundamental relationship between language and social practice. He also noted that CDA tries to understand how texts work within socio-cultural settings. Thus, CDA can provide more detailed explanations about how moral values are embedded in EFL textbooks.

### **Data Sources and Data Collection**

The current study examines moral values in International English textbooks from Cambridge University Press for primary grades 2 and 6 because the two books provide many examples of utterances that can be used to learn English and other social values. Meanwhile, classes 2 and 6 were chosen because these two levels can represent the abilities of elementary school students in learning English language in low and high classes. Although an EFL textbook is a curriculum product, it serves as a medium for students to learn about the ideology the curriculum promotes.

The data for this study comes from utterances found in the textbooks' conversation/dialogue from all chapters. The researcher used document analysis as the data collection process by reading all the textbook contents, especially in the form of dialogue or conversation to find certain utterances that indicated speech acts. Then, samples of utterances that represent speech acts are chosen to identify moral values following the national grand's guidelines for character education.

## Data Analysis

The collected data are analyzed by following Krippendorff's (2004) data analysis components, including unitizing, sampling, recording/coding, reducing, inductively inferring, and narrating. The samples of data are qualitatively analyzed with social domain theory (Smetana, 2006) to elaborate on the representation of moral values in language textbooks.

## FINDINGS

The results of moral values representation in the international EFL textbooks for primary school students in grades 2 and 6 are shown in Table 1 below. The results are displayed in the form of frequencies and percentages from each textbook.

**Table 1.**

*The weightage of moral values in the EFL textbooks*

No	Moral Values	Speech Act	Grade 2		Grade 6	
			F	%	F	%
1	Conscience (4,17%)	Commissive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Expressive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Assertive	0	0.00	1	4.17
2	Self-control (6,94%)	Directive	3	6.25	2	8.33
		Assertive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Assertive	5	10.42	0	0.00
3	Kindness (12,5%)	Commissive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Directive	1	2.08	2	8.33
		Assertive	1	2.08	0	0.00
4	Fairness (4,17%)	Assertive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Directive	2	4.17	0	0.00
		Assertive	4	8.33	0	0.00
5	Honesty (9,72%)	Directive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Expressive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Assertive	1	2.08	0	0.00
6	Hard-working (2,78%)	Assertive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Commissive	0	0.00	1	4.17
7	Creativity (2,78%)	Assertive	2	4.17	0	0.00
8	Independence (6,94%)	Assertive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Directive	1	2.08	2	8.33

		Commissive	1	2.08	0	0.00
9	Curiosity (5,56%)	Directive	1	2.08	2	8.33
		Assertive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Directive	1	2.08	0	0.00
10	Respect for others (8,33%)	Assertive	2	4.17	0	0.00
		Expressive	2	4.17	0	0.00
		Declarative	1	2.08	0	0.00
11	Friendliness (2,78%)	Directive	2	4.17	0	0.00
12	Religiosity (1,39%)	Assertive	0	0.00	1	4.17
13	Peace-loving (2,78%)	Commissive	1	2.08	0	0.00
		Directive	0	0.00	1	4.17
14	Love to read (2,78%)	Assertive	0	0.00	1	4.17
		Directive	0	0.00	1	4.17
15	Environmental sensitivity (8,33%)	Assertive	3	6.25	3	12.50
		Assertive	0	0.00	1	4.17
16	Social awareness (2,78%)	Directive	0	0.00	1	4.17
		Directive	5	10.42	3	12.50
17	Responsibility (15,28%)	Assertive	1	2.08	2	8.33
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings presented in Table 1 show that the moral values both proposed by the Indonesian government and from Borba's theory have been represented quite well through International English textbooks for elementary school students in Indonesia. There are 17 different moral values depicted through written content in class 2 and 6 books. In addition, the value of moral responsibility (15.28%) is the value that appears most often in the content of these two books followed by kindness (12,5%). Apart from that, other values are also represented with different frequencies such as respect for others (8,33%), environmental sensitivity (8,33%), self-control (8,33%), honesty (8,33%), independence (6,94%), curiosity (5,56%), conscience (4,17%), fairness (4,17%), hard-working (2,78%), creativity (2,78%), friendliness (2,78%), peace-loving (2,78%), love to read (2,78%), social awareness (2,78%), and religiosity (1,39%).

Moreover, to analyze the samples that demonstrate moral values through speech acts, the present study used narrative analysis alongside quantitative data in the form of frequency and percentage analysis. Three moral values -responsibility, kindness, and honesty- appeared as the most dominant values represented in the textbooks. As a result, those values were chosen to be deeply analyzed.

### **The value of being responsible**

Teaching the value of responsibility is an important way to form good character from the early age of children. Responsibility, according to Kemendikbud (2011), is explained as the ability to be able to carry out duties and obligations, which should be done towards oneself, society, the environment (natural, social, and cultural), the state, and God. Instilling responsibility from an early age cultivates essential life skills, including independence, self-discipline, and accountability (Lerner et al., 2014). Beyond personal development, teaching responsibility equips children with the skills and mindset necessary to contribute meaningfully to society, shaping them into capable and conscientious citizens (Shiner & Caspi, 2012). In the textbook for grade 2, the value of responsibility is represented in the utterance.

Datum 1

*Miss Gracia: Now it's your turn, Omar. Come and show us your things.*

The utterance in datum 1 is an excerpt from a work that describes classroom activities. It depicts a teacher calling on one of the students to go to the front of the class and participate in an activity in front of the other students. In the utterance from data 1, the teacher tries to instill the value of being responsible to the student by performing directive speech acts in the form of instruction. Seen from Smetana's theory of social domain, children's understanding of societal norms and responsibilities develops through their interactions within various social contexts, such as family, school, and community. The phrase "Come and show us your things" encapsulates a moment where a child



is called upon to share and demonstrate their possessions or achievements. This interaction inherently carries an expectation of responsibility, as the child is being asked to take ownership of their belongings and present them to others (Fairclough, 2003). The value of responsibility intertwines with Smetana's theory as it underscores the importance of children learning to fulfill their obligations within social settings, whether it's through sharing their belongings or engaging in other socially expected behaviors. Through such experiences, children not only come to understand their role within their social environment but also learn to navigate the complexities of interpersonal relationships and societal expectations.

The other example of the representation of responsibility value is found in the textbook for grade 6. The utterance below encapsulates a moment where a parent is reminding their child of a mutual agreement or promise made, emphasizing the importance of accountability and responsibility. By specifically referencing a "contract," the statement conveys a sense of formality and seriousness, implying that the agreement holds significance and should be honored. Seen from Fairclough's CDA, this interaction highlights the value of responsibility within the parent-child relationship, as the mother seeks to instill a sense of integrity and reliability in her child. Through such reminders, children learn the importance of honoring their word, fulfilling obligations, and respecting agreements, laying the foundation for responsible behavior in both personal and societal contexts.

Datum 2

*Mother: Remember the contract! Do not forget the contract!*

The directive "Remember the contract! Do not forget the contract!" epitomizes a scenario where a child is reminded of an agreement or promise made, highlighting the importance of honoring commitments and being responsible for one's actions. This interaction underscores the value of responsibility in Smetana's framework, as it underscores the necessity for individuals, even at a young age, to uphold their agreements and fulfill their duties within social

relationships. By adhering to such expectations, children not only internalize the importance of reliability and accountability but also develop a deeper understanding of the social fabric and their role within it. Through these experiences, they learn to navigate social interactions with integrity and consideration for others, ultimately contributing to their development as responsible members of society.

In addition, in Fairclough's (2003) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the sentence "Mother: Remember the contract! Do not forget the contract!" is a rich site for analyzing how language enforces social norms and power structures. This imperative utterance by "Mother" uses repetition for emphasis, highlighting the importance and urgency of the "contract," which can be interpreted both literally and metaphorically. From a CDA perspective, the "contract" may symbolize a set of obligations, social norms, or moral expectations that the listener is bound to uphold. The mother's authoritative tone reflects a power dynamic where the mother enforces compliance, possibly reinforcing traditional roles or societal expectations. The repetition acts as a rhetorical device to reinforce control and to ensure that the contractual agreement remains salient in the listener's mind. This interaction can reveal how discourse perpetuates and legitimizes power relations, embedding certain values and behaviors within the social fabric. The analysis within CDA would examine how such language acts sustain or challenge power structures and contribute to the reproduction of social order.

### **The value of being kind**

Being kind is a universal value taught throughout the world. This value is also a basic thing that must be taught to children from an early age because it has a tremendous effect on the surrounding community. In the grade 2 textbook, the representation of the value of being kind is shown in the utterance in Datum 3.

Datum 3

*Father: I'm going to make something special for your mother*

The statement in Datum 3 embodies both an expression of kindness and the use of commissive speech acts within the familial context. The use of "I'm going to" signals a commissive speech act, where the father commits himself to a future action of making something special for the child's mother. This declaration not only conveys the father's intention to undertake a thoughtful gesture but also reflects his commitment to fulfilling it (Fairclough, 2003). The phrase "something special" conveys a sense of care and consideration, suggesting that the father's actions are motivated by a desire to demonstrate love and appreciation for his partner. Through this interaction, the father not only exemplifies the value of kindness but also reinforces the importance of keeping promises and following through on commitments. By witnessing such behavior, children learn the significance of empathy, generosity, and integrity in nurturing loving relationships and fostering a supportive family environment.

Additionally, the representation of the value of kindness is portrayed in the grade 6 textbook as well. The phrase "You up for" serves as a directive, suggesting an invitation or proposal for the listener to consider. This type of speech act implies a desire for the listener to engage in a specific action, in this case, joining the speaker for a refreshing beverage (Namaziandost, 2019). The term "cool drink" conveys a sense of refreshment and relaxation, indicating the speaker's intention to offer something enjoyable and refreshing. Additionally, the use of "then" adds a casual tone and implies a sense of camaraderie or companionship, inviting the listener to share in a casual and friendly moment. Overall, this interaction exemplifies the value of kindness through the speaker's gesture of offering hospitality and companionship, while also demonstrating the use of directive speech acts to initiate social interaction and foster connection.

Datum 4

*You up for a cool drink, then?*

In Smetana's theory of social domain, kindness plays a crucial role in shaping children's understanding of interpersonal relationships and societal norms within various social contexts. The sentence "You up for a cool drink, then?" embodies an expression of kindness and hospitality, reflecting a moment of social interaction where one individual extends a friendly invitation to another. Within Smetana's framework, such gestures of kindness contribute to children's development of prosocial behavior and empathy. By witnessing and participating in acts of kindness, children learn the importance of consideration, compassion, and reciprocity in their interactions with others. The use of directive speech acts in the sentence also aligns with Smetana's emphasis on children's acquisition of communication skills and understanding of social conventions. Through experiences like this, children learn not only to express kindness and generosity but also to navigate social dynamics and build positive relationships within their social environment. Thus, the value of kindness, as demonstrated in this simple invitation, intertwines with Smetana's theory to foster children's social development and understanding of their role within society.

In the context of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, the sentence "You up for a cool drink, then?" provides a window into informal social interactions and their underlying power dynamics. CDA explores how language both reflects and shapes social relations, power, and ideologies. This sentence, framed as a casual question, serves to invite the listener into a shared social activity—having a drink. The informality of the language, including the use of colloquial expressions like "up for" and the tag "then," suggests a relaxed, friendly tone, which can indicate an attempt to establish or reinforce a sense of camaraderie and equality between the speaker and listener. However, this apparent informality can also mask subtle power dynamics, as the speaker is still initiating the interaction and potentially guiding the listener's behavior or choices. The phrasing assumes a certain level of mutual understanding and social rapport, implying an in-group relationship. Analyzing such discourse within CDA would involve

examining how these subtle cues in language function to create, negotiate, or reproduce social bonds and power relations, reflecting broader social practices and ideologies of inclusion, sociability, and influence.

## DISCUSSION

The research's findings about the portrayal of moral values differ from those of several other research, particularly those that looked at textbooks that are often used in Indonesian elementary schools (Arwanto et al., 2024; Sitio et al., 2023; Puspitasari et al., 2021). In contrast to earlier research (Arwanto et al., 2024; Sitio et al., 2023; Puspitasari et al., 2021), this study emphasizes responsibility as the most significant value. However, even though honesty and friendliness are not the primary qualities found in textbooks, they are nonetheless mentioned in earlier studies (Sulistiyo et al., 2020; Puspitasari et al., 2021; Pratiwi et al., 2023). The results of the study about moral values are not entirely in line with other findings, such as those found in textbooks written by different publishers and writers that present a variety of moral ideals and are present in distinct ideological contexts. The differences in the percentage of moral principles found in these textbooks suggest that the writers and textbook designers placed a focus on teaching pupils a specific set of values based on their age (Khusniyah & Khomsiyah, 2019; Sitio et al., 2023). Certain values were discovered to be absent from the textbooks investigated in this study but present in the textbooks analyzed in earlier investigations, and vice versa.

Incorporating lessons on responsibility and kindness into elementary school textbooks holds immense importance for shaping the moral development of young learners. Eccles and Gootman (2002) and Maisyaroh et al., (2022) have highlighted the critical role of early childhood education in fostering social-emotional skills and promoting positive character traits. By integrating narratives, activities, and examples that emphasize responsibility (Birhan et al., 2021) and kindness (Datu et al., 2023; Jin et al., 2021), textbooks can provide

children with tangible models of ethical behavior and encourage them to apply these principles in their daily lives. Additionally, Berkowitz (2011) and Lukman et al., (2021) underscore the effectiveness of character education programs in promoting prosocial attitudes and behaviors among elementary school students. Textbooks serve as a primary medium through which these programs can deliver targeted lessons on responsibility, empathy, and compassion, offering children the opportunity to engage with ethical dilemmas and practice moral reasoning in a supportive learning environment (Shih, 2022; Utami et al., 2021; Widodo, 2018). Furthermore, Lickona (2004) advocated for the inclusion of explicit instruction on values and virtues in elementary education, emphasizing the need to cultivate a strong foundation of ethical principles from an early age. By incorporating stories, discussions, and reflection exercises that highlight the importance of responsibility and kindness, textbooks can play a crucial role in shaping children's moral development and preparing them to become conscientious and compassionate members of society (Ariawan, 2020; Mandarani et al., 2021).

Integrating moral values into primary school textbooks is crucial for fostering well-rounded development in young learners. Moral values play a pivotal role in shaping a child's social behavior and ethical understanding, contributing to their ability to navigate social relationships effectively (Bandura, 1997). Moreover, Nucci and Narvaez (2008) emphasize that textbooks infused with moral lessons help children internalize societal norms and values, promoting prosocial behavior and reducing instances of bullying and misconduct. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) highlights the importance of social and moral learning in cognitive development, suggesting that children learn through social interactions and cultural tools, which textbooks provide in a structured manner. By embedding moral values in educational content, educators can support the holistic development of students, preparing them to become responsible, ethical, and engaged members of society.

## CONCLUSION

This research aims to determine the representation of moral values represented in international EFL books used in elementary schools in Indonesia through the use of speech acts. The findings of this research indicate that not all moral values are reflected in both grade 2 and grade 6 elementary school books. There are only a few values that are emphasized through the use of speech acts in textbooks. These results indicate that textbook authors may want to instill certain values in students through simple speech to be taught through conversation in the context of family life and the school environment because that is what underlies interactions with other people in children's daily lives.

The findings of this research can be a reference for teachers to guide their students in building their moral character by providing examples of other speech related to social culture in society that is not conveyed through the content in textbooks. then future research might be able to compare how moral values are depicted in textbooks published by various authors or publishers, both local and global, to get a broader picture of teaching moral values from different perspectives.

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