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# CHARACTER EDUCATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: AN ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER VALUES IN THE ENGLISH FOR NUSANTARA TEXTBOOK FOR GRADES III–VI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**Abstract:** Character education has been positioned as a foundational objective of Indonesian elementary education, particularly under the Kurikulum Merdeka framework, which emphasizes the development of the Pancasila Student Profile. While prior scholarship acknowledges the strategic role of textbooks in mediating value formation, empirical analyses examining how character dimensions are systematically represented in elementary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) materials remain limited. This study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) What character values are represented in the English for Nusantara textbooks for Grades III–VI? (2) How are the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile distributed across the textbooks? and (3) Which character dimensions are most and least dominant? This study investigates the extent to which character values are embedded in four English for Nusantara textbooks for Grades III–VI. Adopting a qualitative content analysis with a directed coding procedure, the study analyzed textual and visual components using the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile as analytical categories. To complement the qualitative analysis, frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the distribution of character values. The findings indicate that character education is substantively integrated across grade levels; however, its representation is disproportionate. Critical Reasoning dominates the materials, followed by Independence and Mutual Cooperation, whereas Global Diversity is minimally represented. These patterns suggest a stronger orientation toward cognitive and behavioral competencies than toward intercultural development. The study underscores the need for a more balanced incorporation of character dimensions to ensure holistic value formation within elementary EFL instruction.
**Keywords:** *character education; EFL textbook analysis; Pancasila Student Profile; intercultural dimension; elementary education*

## INTRODUCTION

Character education has become a central concern in Indonesian education, particularly at the elementary school level, where students are expected to develop not only intellectually but also morally and socially. Under the Kurikulum Merdeka framework, character education is systematically integrated through the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes the development of holistic competencies, including moral integrity, independence, collaboration, and critical thinking. Previous studies indicate that character education has become a national priority, especially in primary education, which is considered a crucial stage for children's moral and social development (Usmawati et al., 2025; Witasari et al., 2025) Additionally, research shows that character values are frequently incorporated into instructional activities to enhance students' attitudes, behaviors, and social responsibility (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Umar et al., 2024).

Language learning provides an important space for integrating character education because students engage with texts, dialogues, and classroom interactions that implicitly model

values and social behaviors. Through these activities, students are exposed not only to linguistic knowledge but also to moral messages embedded in instructional materials. However, studies also highlight challenges in implementing character education, such as limited instructional time and variations in teaching practices (Triarisanti et al., 2022; Usmawati et al., 2025). Therefore, instructional materials, particularly textbooks, play a crucial role in ensuring consistent exposure to character values in classroom settings.

Previous research on character education and textbook analysis can be categorized into three main themes. First, studies on character education in Indonesia emphasize its importance in shaping students' moral and social development, highlighting topics such as character development, local wisdom, and value-based learning (Aprilia et al., 2023; Huda et al., 2024; Witasari et al., 2025). However, these studies mainly focus on general educational practices rather than instructional materials.

Second, research on the integration of character values in learning activities demonstrates that values can be embedded through teaching strategies, classroom interactions, and instructional materials (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Umar et al., 2024). While these studies confirm the importance of integrating character education into teaching practices, they often do not provide detailed analysis of how values are represented in textbooks.

Third, textbook analysis studies reveal that instructional materials function as carriers of cultural and moral values and can influence students' exposure to value-based learning (Ardnyananisari & Ratri, 2024; Triarisanti et al., 2022). However, most existing studies focus on cultural representation or language skills rather than systematically examining the distribution of character values across grade levels. These limitations indicate that further research is needed to provide a more structured analysis of character value representation in elementary EFL textbooks.

Despite the growing number of studies on character education and textbook analysis, limited research has specifically examined how the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile are systematically represented in English for Nusantara textbooks across different grade levels. In particular, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the distribution and dominance of character values within official English learning materials used in Indonesian primary education.

To address this gap, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What character values are represented in the English for Nusantara textbooks for Grades III–VI? (2) How are the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile distributed across the textbooks? (3) Which character dimensions are most and least dominant in the textbooks?

This study offers a novel contribution by providing a systematic and comparative analysis of character values based on the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile in English for Nusantara textbooks for Grades III–VI. Unlike previous studies that focus on general character education or cultural content, this research examines the proportional distribution of character dimensions across multiple grade levels, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how character education is embedded in elementary EFL materials.

This study contributes theoretically by enriching the literature on character education and textbook analysis in EFL contexts, particularly within the Indonesian educational framework. Practically, the findings provide insights for teachers and curriculum developers in improving the integration of character values in instructional materials. Pedagogically, the study highlights the importance of balancing different character dimensions, especially strengthening underrepresented aspects such as global diversity, to support holistic student development.

## METHOD

This research employed a qualitative content analysis to investigate the representation of character values in English language learning materials. Qualitative content analysis enables researchers to systematically interpret textual and visual data by identifying patterns, meanings, and value representations using predefined analytical categories (Kuckartz, 2019; Nørby et al., 2025; Sun, 2021) To complement qualitative interpretation, simple quantitative techniques in the form of frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the distribution of character values across grade levels.

The data of this study were obtained from the *English for Nusantara* textbooks for elementary school Grades III–VI, officially published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia under the Kurikulum Merdeka framework. Four

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textbooks were analyzed: Grade III (208 pages, six chapters), Grade IV (186 pages, six chapters), Grade V (208 pages, six chapters), and Grade VI (208 pages, six chapters). All chapters in each textbook were systematically reviewed to ensure comprehensive data coverage.

The *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* served as the analytical framework of this study, consisting of six key dimensions: faith and noble character, independence, mutual cooperation, global diversity, critical reasoning, and creativity. These dimensions functioned as predefined coding categories that guided the identification and classification of character values throughout the textbooks. A directed content analysis approach was employed, allowing the researcher to analyze data based on an established theoretical framework (Alexsandro & Simamora, 2024; Jawa, 2025).

The data collection process involved a thorough examination of all textual and visual elements in the textbooks, including dialogues, reading passages, instructions, learning tasks, and illustrations. Units of analysis were defined as segments containing potential character values.

The coding process was conducted in two stages. First, initial coding was performed by categorizing each identified segment into one of the six dimensions of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. Second, the coded data were reviewed to ensure consistency and accuracy. To enhance reliability, the coding process was conducted systematically using the same coding guidelines across all textbooks. Any ambiguous data were re-examined to ensure that coding decisions were aligned with the predefined indicators presented in Table 1.

This structured coding procedure has been widely applied in educational content analysis studies examining value representation in instructional materials (Ardnyananisari & Ratri, 2024; Ariyani et al., 2024; Huda et al., 2024; Nørby et al., 2025; Rachmadtullah et al., 2024). The data analysis procedure followed the qualitative data analysis framework proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

First, relevant data were selected and organized through data reduction. Second, categorized data were presented in the form of tables and percentages to illustrate the distribution of character values. Third, conclusions were drawn based on the patterns identified in the data.

The integration of qualitative interpretation with quantitative frequency analysis is commonly used in content analysis studies to enhance the clarity and depth of findings (Elhawwa, 2024; Kuckartz, 2019; Laari, 2025). To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied the criteria of credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was achieved through careful and repeated examination of the data to ensure accurate identification and classification of character values. Dependability was maintained by applying a consistent coding procedure across all textbooks using predefined analytical categories. Confirmability was ensured by grounding all interpretations in the data and by using a transparent analytical framework, allowing the findings to be traced back to the original sources.

Table 1. *Analytical framework of character values*

| No | Dimension | Description / Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Faith and Noble Character | Moral messages, honesty, respect, responsibility, and religious expressions reflected in texts, visuals, and activities |
| 2 | Independence | Responsibility, self-directed learning, confidence, and autonomy in completing learning tasks |
| 3 | Mutual Cooperation | Teamwork, collaboration, helping others, and group-based learning activities |
| 4 | Global Diversity | Tolerance, respect for differences, inclusivity, and representation of diverse cultures and perspectives |
| 5 | Critical Reasoning | Problem-solving tasks, reflective questions, decision-making, and analytical thinking activities |
| 6 | Creativity | Creative tasks, imagination-based activities, expressive language use, and original ideas |

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The *English for Nusantara* textbooks for Grades III–VI are designed to support students in developing their English language skills through integrated language activities, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each lesson begins with clearly stated learning objectives and is supported by language input components such as vocabulary lists and pronunciation guidance. The textbooks also present dialogues, reading passages, and various practice activities aimed at

encouraging students' active participation in language learning. In addition, reflection sections are provided to help students review their understanding and connect the learning material with their own experiences. Previous studies have highlighted that well-structured English language textbooks commonly integrate communicative activities, language input, and reflective learning components to facilitate both language development and value-oriented learning in classroom contexts (Ciptaningrum et al., 2024; Huda et al., 2024; Ilyas, 2022; Winarni et al., 2022) These features indicate that the *English for Nusantara* textbooks are structured not only to support language acquisition but also to encourage student engagement and reflective learning processes.

In addition to supporting language learning, textbooks also contain textual and visual elements that may convey character-related messages. These elements can be found in dialogues, task instructions, collaborative learning activities, and visual illustrations that represent everyday social interactions. Through these components, students may encounter values such as cooperation, responsibility, creativity, and decision-making during the learning process. Previous studies have shown that language learning materials often embed moral and social values within classroom activities and instructional texts, allowing character education to be integrated into language instruction (Ciptaningrum et al., 2024; Huda et al., 2024; Sitio et al., 2023; Winarni et al., 2022) Therefore, both textual and visual features in the *English for Nusantara* textbooks may serve as important mediums for representing character values alongside language learning objectives.

The current study examined how character values associated with the six dimensions of the *Pancasila Student Profile* are embedded within these learning materials. Character representations were identified and categorized based on their occurrence in both textual and visual components of the textbooks, including dialogues, instructions, learning activities, and illustrations. This approach allowed the researcher to systematically map how character-related values are integrated into English language learning resources. Similar analytical procedures have been applied in previous studies investigating the integration of character education within English learning materials and instructional textbooks (Ciptaningrum et al., 2024; Huda et al., 2024; Sitio et al., 2023; Winarni et al., 2022). Tables 1–4 present the distribution of the six character dimensions in each textbook across Grades III–VI, while Table 5 summarizes the overall distribution of character values across all grade levels.

This section presents the findings in relation to the research questions of the study. Specifically, it addresses how the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile are represented in the English for Nusantara textbooks for Grades III–VI, the frequency distribution of each dimension across grade levels, and the identification of the most and least dominant character values.

*Distribution of character values in grade III textbook*

Table 2. *Distribution of character values in grade III textbook*

| Dimension | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Faith and Noble Character | 45 | 12.13% |
| Independence | 92 | 24.80% |
| Mutual Cooperation | 75 | 20.21% |
| Global Diversity | 12 | 3.23% |
| Critical Reasoning | 107 | 28.84% |
| Creativity | 40 | 10.79% |
| Total | 371 | 100% |

In the Grade III textbook, a total of 371 instances of character values were identified. As shown in Table 2, Critical Reasoning accounted for the largest proportion (28.84%). This was followed by Independence (24.80%) and Mutual Cooperation (20.21%). Meanwhile, Creativity (10.79%) and Faith and Noble Character (12.13%) were moderately represented. In contrast, Global Diversity was the least represented dimension, comprising only 3.23% of the analyzed content.

*Distribution of character values in grade IV textbook*

Table 3. *Distribution of character values in grade IV textbook*

| Dimension | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Faith and Noble Character | 26 | 11.91% |
| Independence | 34 | 15.60% |
| Mutual Cooperation | 53 | 24.31% |
| Global Diversity | 5 | 2.29% |
| Critical Reasoning | 76 | 34.86% |
| Creativity | 24 | 11.01% |
| Total | 218 | 100% |

In the Grade IV textbook, 218 instances of character values were identified. As presented in Table 3, Critical Reasoning again emerged as the most dominant dimension (34.86%). Mutual Cooperation (24.31%) ranked second, followed by Independence (15.60%). The proportions of

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Creativity (11.01%) and Faith and Noble Character (11.91%) were relatively similar. Consistent with the previous grade, Global Diversity remained the least represented dimension at 2.29%

*Distribution of character values in grade V textbook*

Table 4. *Distribution of character values in grade V textbook*

| Dimension | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Faith and Noble Character | 3 | 1.26% |
| Independence | 51 | 21.34% |
| Mutual Cooperation | 43 | 17.99% |
| Global Diversity | 3 | 1.26% |
| Critical Reasoning | 108 | 45.19% |
| Creativity | 31 | 12.97% |
| Total | 239 | 100% |

The Grade V textbook contained 239 instances of character values. As illustrated in Table 4, Critical Reasoning dominated the distribution, accounting for 45.19% of all occurrences. Independence (21.34%) and Mutual Cooperation (17.99%) followed as the next most prominent dimensions. Creativity accounted for 12.97% of the instances, whereas Faith and Noble Character and Global Diversity were minimally represented, each contributing only 1.26%.

*Distribution of character values in grade VI textbook*

Table 5. *Distribution of character values in grade VI textbook*

| Dimension | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Faith and Noble Character | 3 | 1.15% |
| Independence | 82 | 31.54% |
| Mutual Cooperation | 55 | 21.15% |
| Global Diversity | 2 | 0.77% |
| Critical Reasoning | 109 | 41.92% |
| Creativity | 9 | 3.46% |
| Total | 260 | 100% |

The Grade VI textbook included 260 instances of character values. As shown in Table 5, Critical Reasoning remained the most dominant dimension (41.92%). Independence (31.54%) and Mutual Cooperation (21.15%) followed. Meanwhile, Creativity (3.46%), Faith and Noble Character (1.15%), and Global Diversity (0.77%) were represented at relatively low levels.

*Overall distribution of character values across grade III–VI textbooks*

Table 6. *Overall distribution of character values in English for Nusantara textbooks*

| Dimension | Total Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Faith and Noble Character | 77 | 7.08% |
| Independence | 259 | 23.81% |
| Mutual Cooperation | 226 | 20.77% |
| Global Diversity | 22 | 2.02% |
| Critical Reasoning | 400 | 36.77% |
| Creativity | 104 | 9.55% |
| Total | 1088 | 100% |

A cross-grade comparison was conducted to identify overall trends in the representation of character values. As presented in Table 6, Critical Reasoning was the most dominant dimension, accounting for 36.77% of all occurrences. This was followed by Independence (23.81%) and Mutual Cooperation (20.77%), indicating a strong emphasis on problem-solving skills, learner autonomy, and collaborative learning activities.

In contrast, Creativity (9.55%) and Faith and Noble Character (7.08%) were moderately represented across the textbooks. Notably, Global Diversity was the least represented dimension, comprising only 2.02% of the total data.

Overall, while all six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile are present in the English for Nusantara textbooks, their distribution is uneven, with certain dimensions receiving significantly greater emphasis than others.

Overall, these findings directly answer the research questions by demonstrating how each of the six character dimensions is distributed across grade levels, revealing clear patterns in their representation. The results indicate that Critical Reasoning is consistently the most dominant dimension, while Global Diversity remains the least represented. These patterns provide a foundation for further discussion in relation to existing studies and the theoretical framework of character education and intercultural competence.

The findings of this study address the research questions by identifying the representation, distribution, and dominance of character values in the English for Nusantara textbooks for Grades III–VI. The results show that all six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile are present across all examined grade levels, indicating that character education is integrated into English language learning materials. However, the distribution of these values is uneven, with certain dimensions being more dominant than others.

The analysis shows that various instructional elements, such as conversations, learning activities, activity instructions, and visual representations, integrate character values within the learning materials. This finding indicates that character education is embedded in

communicative learning activities rather than presented as separate moral lessons. The integration of character values in learning activities supports the concept that character education can be effectively developed through classroom interactions and meaningful learning experiences (Novianti et al., 2023). In addition, (Sukarno & Riyadini, 2024) explain that character development in English language learning can be promoted through teaching materials and classroom activities that encourage students to actively participate in the learning process.

Nevertheless, the distribution of character values in the textbooks is not evenly represented. Critical Reasoning appears to be the most dominant dimension among the six character values identified. This finding may be closely related to the orientation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which emphasizes the development of higher-order thinking skills as part of 21st-century competencies. Learning activities in English language instruction increasingly focus on problem-solving, reflection, and analytical thinking, which align with the goal of fostering independent and critical learners. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) materials tend to promote critical thinking and cognitive engagement as part of character-related competencies (Ciptaningrum et al., 2024; Sitio et al., 2023). It also extends previous research by demonstrating that this emphasis is consistently reflected across multiple grade levels in officially published textbooks.

In contrast, the Global Diversity dimension is minimally represented in the analyzed textbooks. Although the materials provide communicative contexts for language learning, opportunities for students to engage with intercultural perspectives remain limited. This finding highlights a gap between textbook content and the broader goals of intercultural communicative competence in language education. According to Byram (1997) and more recent studies, language learning should not only focus on linguistic competence but also foster intercultural awareness and global understanding as essential components of communicative competence. Recent research further emphasizes that intercultural competence can be systematically developed through instructional design that promotes cultural awareness, reflection, and critical engagement in EFL classrooms (Huang, 2023; Yunita, 2025)

Another notable finding is the relatively low representation of Faith and Noble Character compared to other dimensions. This may be due to the nature of English language learning materials, which tend to prioritize communicative competence and cognitive engagement rather than explicitly presenting moral or religious values. Unlike subjects such as religious or civic education, EFL textbooks often embed values implicitly rather than through direct moral instruction. This finding suggests that moral and ethical dimensions may not be sufficiently emphasized in language learning materials, which could limit students' exposure to value-based learning in this context.

Furthermore, the frequent representation of Independence and Mutual Cooperation in the textbooks indicates that the materials encourage both individual responsibility and collaborative interaction among students. Many learning tasks require students to complete activities independently while also participating in group discussions or cooperative exercises. This combination reflects the broader educational objective of fostering personal responsibility while maintaining active social engagement in the learning process. This finding is consistent with previous studies which highlight that language learning materials often integrate character values through individual and collaborative classroom activities (Ciptaningrum et al., 2024; Maryamah et al., 2024).

Overall, the findings indicate that character education is integrated into the English for Nusantara textbooks through structured learning activities and communicative tasks. However, the distribution of character values suggests that the materials tend to emphasize cognitive and behavioral aspects of character development, particularly critical reasoning and independence, while intercultural aspects such as global diversity appear less frequently. This imbalance confirms previous findings (Agustina & Kencana, 2023; Huda et al., 2024; Maryamah et al., 2024) and highlights the need for a more balanced integration of character dimensions, particularly by strengthening multicultural and global awareness values in English language learning materials to support holistic student development.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the integration of character education in the *English for Nusantara* textbooks for Grades III–VI by analyzing the representation of the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. The findings explicitly answer the research questions of this study. First, all six

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character dimensions are present in the textbooks, indicating that character education is integrated into English language learning materials through dialogues, communicative tasks, collaborative activities, and visual representations. Second, the distribution of these dimensions is uneven across grade levels, as shown by the frequency analysis. Third, Critical Reasoning emerges as the most dominant dimension, while Global Diversity is the least represented.

These findings suggest that the textbooks strongly emphasize cognitive and behavioral aspects of character development, particularly problem-solving and independent learning. However, the limited representation of Global Diversity indicates that intercultural awareness is not yet fully integrated into the instructional design. Therefore, a more balanced inclusion of character dimensions is necessary to support holistic character development in line with the Pancasila Student Profile and the Kurikulum Merdeka framework.

This study has several limitations. It focuses only on four textbooks and analyzes textual and visual content without examining how the materials are implemented in classroom practices. In addition, the study does not involve teacher or student perspectives, which may influence how character values are interpreted and applied in real learning contexts.

Practically, these findings provide important implications for textbook developers and teachers. Textbook developers are encouraged to incorporate more intercultural and global content to strengthen the Global Diversity dimension. Teachers are also expected to critically adapt and supplement textbook materials to ensure a more balanced integration of character values in classroom practices.

Future research is recommended to explore how teachers implement character education using these textbooks in classroom settings, to compare character value representation across different EFL textbooks, and to investigate students' responses to character-based learning materials in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of character education in English language learning.

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