p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

ENGLISH REVIEW
Journal of English Education
Published by
English Language Study Program, Faculty of Teachers Training & Education, Universitas Kuningan, Indonesia in collaboration with AISEE (The Association of Indonesian Scholars of English Education)
AISEE

MULTICULTURAL AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY IN PRACTICE: A VISUAL ANALYSIS OF INDONESIAN EFL TEXTBOOKS

Nuskhan Abid[1], Azizah Maulina Erzad[2], Muhammad Noor Sulaiman Syah[3]
[1]*Aqidah and Filsafat Islam Department, Ushuluddin Faculty, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kudus; English*
[2]*Education Department, Tarbiyah Faculty, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kudus*
[3]*Central Queensland University, Australia*

Corresponding author: nuskhan@uinsuku.ac.id

APA Citation: Abid, N., Erzad, A. M., & Syah, M. N. S. (2025). Multicultural and culturally responsive pedagogy in practice: A visual analysis of Indonesian EFL textbooks. *English Review: Journal of English Education, 13*(3), 931-942. https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v13i3.59

Received: 26-06-2025 Accepted: 21-08-2025 Published: 30-10-2025

Abstract: This study explores how multicultural values are visually represented in Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook. The findings reveal that textbook illustrations depict diverse students interacting harmoniously across ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Key images illustrate inclusive educational environments, interfaith friendships, and culturally respectful behaviour. These depictions support students' language development and shape civic values and intercultural competence. Drawing from James A. Banks' (2021) multicultural education framework and Gloria Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally responsive pedagogy, the study argues that textbooks function as ideological tools that internalize social ethics aligned with Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. This research highlights the importance of visual literacy in language learning and advocates for a more comprehensive integration of intercultural values through multimodal and digital representations.
Keywords: *culturally responsive pedagogy; EFL textbooks; Indonesia; multicultural education; multicultural values.*

INTRODUCTION

Religion and ethnic conflict remain urgent issues in contemporary discussions, as differences in faith, ethnicity, and race often become triggers for social unrest. Various studies show that religious and ethnic plurality can lead to both acceptance and tension, depending on how communities and governments manage diversity (Mazya et al., 2024). In Indonesia, ethnic and religious conflicts have taken place in regions such as Ambon and Poso, leaving long-lasting effects on the nation's social and political life (Firdaus, 2023). Once such conflicts occur, they disrupt domestic stability and invite external interference, creating a serious threat to national and global peace (Tuki, 2025). These conflicts also highlight how ethnic and religious issues influence domestic political dynamics, as seen in the lead-up to the 2024 general election in Medan, where inter-group relations shaped political mobilization (Fauzan et al., 2023). To prevent recurring conflicts, Indonesia has promoted religious moderation as an essential framework for conflict management and peacebuilding (Salim & Rosada, 2023; Setinawati et al., 2025). Therefore, sustaining long-term harmony among diverse communities in plural societies like Indonesia is not only a moral imperative but also a political necessity to ensure peace and security at both national and global levels.

Research on the issue of tolerance for ethnic culture and religion has been conducted worldwide. Several multiethnic countries around the world face complex challenges related to religious and ethnic issues. For example, the protracted conflict in Myanmar has spread to the education sector because of an ethno-religious civil war (Rinehart et al., 2024; Tyrosvoutis et al., 2025). The cause of ethnic conflict is not solely group dominance, but rather the interaction of

ethnic hatred, intolerance, and identity clashes (Cahyadi & Fahadayna, 2025). On the other hand, religious organizations and religious communities are not only sources of conflict but also important actors in conflict resolution and peacebuilding through mediation, advocacy, and reconciliation (Driessen, 2025). Learners must be aware of the issues surrounding ethnic and religious diversity. They are not only equipped with knowledge and English competence but also with sensitivity to the world around them.

The incorporation of cultural values in education yields significant positive impacts on student development, particularly in fostering local traditions, attitudes, and character formation. In Indonesia, the national curriculum is deliberately designed to integrate religious, artistic, moral, social, and cultural values as part of holistic character education (Raihani et al., 2025). The cultural contexts of each country naturally shape its curriculum content, and in Indonesia, this dynamic is influenced by cultural transmission and community-based practices (Adha et al., 2023). The inclusion of cultural values helps students understand their cultural contexts while reinforcing local wisdom as part of the learning process (Sakti et al., 2024). More broadly, the integration of cultural values into the curriculum is an important strategy for promoting tolerance and peace (Litaay et al., 2025). Ultimately, cultural values in the curriculum originate from local knowledge, attitudes, and character, which underpin tolerance, peace, and sustainable education.

As a partner to teachers, textbooks not only facilitate language learning but also serve as important conveyors of ideology, cultural values, and beliefs. Textbooks instill these values through images, texts, and layouts that visually and verbally represent culture (Sibanda & Herman, 2024; Suwandani & Hidayati, 2025; Tafrijiyah & Andriani, 2025). Visual design encourages interactive meaning and implicitly conveys cultural orientation (Jamilah et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Indonesian traditions and practices constitute the elements most extensively represented in textbooks (Bahri & Agustina, 2023; Irham et al., 2024). In Indonesia, textbooks remain a primary companion for teachers and students, because they not only support classroom instruction but also shape students' critical and reflective understandings of culture, self, and others through their multimodal composition (Linder & Falk-Ross, 2024). Therefore, teachers and students must critically acknowledge the presence of values embedded in textbooks, which are evident in the text, images, and visual design.

Several recent studies have analyzed textbooks within the context of EFL and multicultural education through a critical approach. Alawlaqi & Basya (2023) International EFL franchise textbooks continue to be heavily dominated by Western and European perspectives, resulting in an imbalanced representation of Indonesian cultural diversity. Furthermore, multicultural values such as race/ethnicity, social class, gender, and disability can be represented through both text and images in junior high school EFL textbooks (Ningtiyas et al., 2025). However, even though these four aspects are present, their visual and textual representations are not balanced, with a tendency toward local cultural dominance. In pedagogy, teachers must implement culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) so that English language materials teach not only linguistic forms but also respect students' cultural backgrounds (Matiso, 2024). Additionally, the selection of readings, task themes, and text levels should reflect student diversity to make the learning process more inclusive and culturally relevant (Jabar, 2025). Textbook analysis should go beyond linguistic content; it must read how cultural ideologies are embedded in visual, verbal, and didactic activity structures. An ideal textbook serves as a crucial means for teachers and students to develop a critical understanding of cultural values within the language learning process.

The input of this study is that results in such situations can trigger linguistic textbook authors to design and create linguistic products adapted to ethnic variations (Ruiz-Cecilia, 2012). Another result of this study is to provide a more precise knowledge of the depiction of cultural diversities and harmony in a widely accepted EFL textbook in a nation where distinct languages and cultures coexist. Thus, this study examines a portrait of multicultural and culturally responsive pedagogy in the Indonesian EFL textbook and analyzes how this book influences learners to respect other cultures and diversity, thereby creating harmony. Meanwhile, other studies suggest that visual presentation is important for reinforcing students' memory (Nugroho & Widiatmojo, 2024). Another study notes that visuals in textbooks should respect students' backgrounds (Nganga & Kambutu, 2024) and avoid cultural stereotypes (Taqdir, 2025). In addition to avoiding stereotypes, textbooks should be able to portray local and international identities proportionally (Anggraini & Rohmah, 2024; Hasnah et al., 2024), in harmony with the curriculum (Raihani et al., 2025), and include

p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

values of tolerance and ethnic diversity (Maulidiah et al., 2023). Another study by Silviana and Triastuti (2025) found that Indonesian textbook content predominantly displays local culture rather than the target culture. Meanwhile, cultural representation in textbooks was also examined by Handayani and Yunita (2025), Habib et al. (2025), and Dalimunte et al. (2025). A different study conducted by Sabillawati and Putra (2023) provides recommendations to textbook authors on balancing multicultural values to foster students' cultural creativity and critical awareness. These efforts are expected to make EFL learners more responsive to multicultural values in educational practice.

Several studies on integrating multicultural values in English textbooks in Indonesia focus more on textual content, discourse analysis, and semiotic approaches (Parlindungan et al., 2018; Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Widodo, 2018). In contrast, previous studies have only investigation foregrounds the linguistic and visual construction of cultural content within textbooks. Visual elements influence learners' perceptions and attitudes toward diversity and harmony in multicultural contexts. Prior research has not sufficiently examined cultural practices, such as empathy and mutual concern, across religious and ethnic groups. To fill this gap, the study examines the visual representation in English textbooks as a means of advancing multicultural and culturally responsive pedagogy. Consequently, the study aims to address the following research questions: (1) What aspects of cultural diversity are represented visually in Indonesian EFL textbooks? (2) How do these visual representations cultivate learners' respect, empathy, and concern across religious and ethnic boundaries?

METHOD

The portrayal of cultural diversity and harmony in Indonesian EFL textbooks through visual and textual discourse is examined with critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is a form of interdisciplinary study that emphasizes the use of language. Some experts, such as Fairclough (2001), state that CDA is a study of discourse that views language as a social practice. CDA centres on the context of how the language is used (Wodak, 2001). Cultural diversity and harmony in Indonesian EFL textbooks were the focus of the analysis, with visual and verbal texts serving as the units of analysis. The visual and verbal text may represent cultural diversity and harmony regarding the English language materials' presentation style and performance mode. The social practices in the textbooks can be represented as text or images. Text and images in textbooks may represent cultural diversity and harmony. The representation of cultural diversity and harmony will be used in the classroom as English language material. Since textbooks often contain hidden values, such as cultural diversity and harmony, teachers and students may be unaware of them. For in-depth analysis, this study selected the EFL textbooks published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MONEC) for junior and senior high schools.

CDA uncovers the ideological system that is constructed by text or images. Both the text and images portray social context or practice. The language is used to portray the ideology or values that might happen in a real-life situation. The textbook's author may have based the situation on Indonesia's fundamental cultural diversity and harmony. Additionally, the textbooks in this research guide students to practice social values in a multicultural context. Indonesian students need to know the social practices embedded in the English language textbooks since extremism, radicalism, and disintegration issues appear.

There are two levels of EFL textbooks published by MONEC. The first level is for junior high school students, focusing on Bahasa Inggris, titled "When English Rings a Bell." This book is used for grades VII to IX. The second textbook used for senior high school grades X to XII is Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA (English for Senior High School). Both books are reviewed by experts and scholars interested in Indonesia's English language teaching situation and context. The textbooks were reviewed by experts and scholars who are well-versed in the context of Indonesian language teaching. The textbook's authors have a long experience teaching and learning languages in Indonesia.

The analysis was focused on the cultural diversity and harmony assembled in EFL textbooks published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture for several reasons: (1) the textbooks implement the national curriculum; (2) The textbooks portray the Indonesian EFL situation and condition; (3) The textbooks contain salient depiction of cultural diversity and harmony, as recognized by both teacher and students; The unit analysis was any textbook image (photograph, illustrator, cartoon and infographic) containing human figures or social interaction. Decorative or technical graphics without social content were excluded. We analyzed a total of five images based on these criteria. We code markers of diversity

based on physical appearance, regional clothing, religious symbols, and types of activities or interactions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This analysis focuses on the cultural diversity and harmony represented in EFL textbooks and how they equip learners with the knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity and harmony to enrich their understanding and awareness. Revealing these values is important to enact the values of cultural diversity and harmony represented in the textbooks, since the textbook is a value-curriculum document (Widodo, 2018). The author presents cultural diversity and harmony through a series of pictures in the textbooks. Both teachers and students must recognize artifacts that embody these values.

The visual representation portrayed in the textbook, which reflects cultural diversity and harmony, is listed in Table 1. Only the relevant visual presentations were selected for in-depth analysis. Figure 1 is a textbook character depicting female and male students with physical appearance and origin differences. In Figure 1, the most noticeable physical characteristics are the skin's color and the hair's shape. Some students have straight hair, and some have curly hair and dark skin. In addition to their visible physical appearance, the names of their place of origin also indicate that they come from different tribes. They originate from various islands in Indonesia, including Sumatra, Nusa Tenggara, Seram Island, Borneo, Java, and Sulawesi. Indonesia is an archipelago that stretches from Sabang on the island of Sumatra to Merauke in Papua. Indonesia boasts a rich variety of cultural and ethnic heritage, as reflected in its name, place of origin, and diverse population. In many ethnic groups in Indonesia, cultural and linguistic differences exist. There are 652 regional languages in Indonesia. Although there are regional and cultural differences, this does not cause the source of conflict and dissension among the people. These language and cultural differences can coexist harmoniously. A unifying language, Bahasa Indonesia, also unites the Indonesians. Every school in Indonesia has students from different regions. Although each has a different language, they can still communicate using Indonesian.

The plurality of Indonesian society is reflected in English learning materials through the display of student introductions, as shown in Figure 1. The picture shows Indonesia's diversity. This effort demonstrates that textbooks strive to maintain inclusivity by depicting diverse tribes, races, ethnicities, and religions. Textbooks are not exclusive; they only display one group. Thus, textbooks serve as a medium for students to understand that Indonesia is a pluralistic country with many tribes and cultures that have coexisted in harmony for a long time. Figure 1 depicts a group of female and male students with front-facing frames aligned with eye level. Their skin tones are diverse. The hair textures vary, including both straight and curly hair. Each student is presented in the same school uniform as worn by every student in real life. In Figure 1, it is also evident that all students are shown with the same posture. The smiling facial expressions convey a positive attitude, suggesting they appear neutral and approachable to anyone. Visually, Figure 1 illustrates equality within the multicultural context of Indonesia. The composition—the arrangement of figures, the spacing between students, and their equal heights—indicates the absence of gaps or hierarchies. In Figure 1, no single student from a particular ethnic group or region is portrayed as dominant.

The visual arrangement in Figure 1 aligns with Banks' (2016). Pedagogy of equality and knowledge construction. The diversity of cultural identities displayed represents real-world culture and life as presented in the textbook. This situation aligns with the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) , as it portrays equality and inclusivity. The presence of diversity in Figure 1 suggests that the aims of a multicultural curriculum have been effectively represented within the English language textbook.

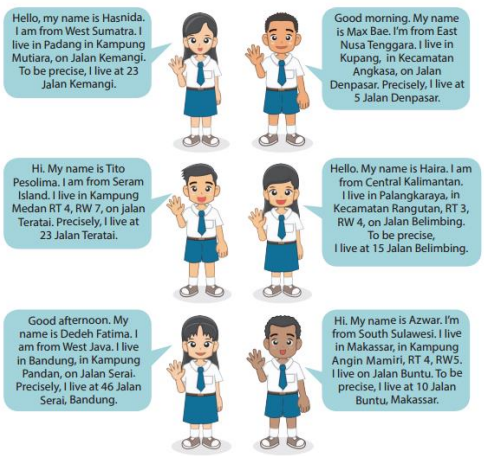


Figure 1. *Students introduction*

In Figure 2, students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds sit together in a park. Various physical characteristics, clothing, and expressions reflect Indonesia's cultural and social

p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

diversity. There are students with diverse hairstyles and skin colors, as well as a female student wearing a hijab. Figure 2 shows inclusivity in the representation of culture and religion. When examined in detail, the students depicted in Figure 2 display a relaxed, laid-back posture with bent knees and faces showing positive smiling expressions. The background of the image also conveys a calm and peaceful atmosphere in the park. This is evidenced by a sleeping cat, butterflies fluttering around the park, and two waste bins labelled "organic" and "inorganic." Figure 2 illustrates a community environment that is orderly and aligned with school culture.

The picture portrays harmony and peace, despite the individuals being different in ethnicity and religion. Indonesian school regulations permit students to use religious symbols, especially in government-owned or private schools. So, Muslim female students are allowed to use the hijab as their dress code in public rooms. The hijab is required as an institutional dress code in schools and Islamic higher education, and it is legally protected (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). Indonesia is a multicultural society that allows worship according to individual religions and beliefs, including the display of religious symbols in public settings such as offices, schools, banks, and tourist destinations. Figure 2 is a factual representation of daily life in Indonesia. Interaction between different religious adherents shows harmony without conflict. The existence of diversity in textbooks, as shown in Figure 2, reflects the social reality in Indonesia, where people coexist with ethnic and religious diversity. Figure 2 also teaches students the importance of respecting each other and living in diversity.



Figure 2. *Group of students doing activities in public spaces*

Regarding the representation of cultural diversity in textbooks, Figure 2 illustrates the harmonious interactions that occur between students with diverse backgrounds. The textbook represents Indonesian society by displaying multicultural elements that reflect the principle of diversity. Figure 2 also shows the absence of domination of a particular religion or group in educational practices in Indonesia. Every individual adhering to a particular ethnicity, tribe, or religion has the same educational rights and obligations. This approach is consistent with Sleeter and Grant's (2008) multicultural education model, which offers a curriculum that accommodates diverse perspectives and challenges structural inequalities. The absence of a dominant religious or ethnic hegemony in Figure 2 suggests that the textbook supports an anti-bias curriculum and promotes interfaith and intercultural dialogue, as well as mutual respect. Figure 2 is designed to encourage internalization of the values of mutual respect for differences in a multicultural society.

In addition, Figure 2 also illustrates that every Indonesian citizen has the right to access public places, such as parks or public facilities, regardless of their ethnic background, tribe, religion, or group affiliation. Meanwhile, the textbook also teaches how to respect others. In Figure 2, a positive interaction is observed between students. Each student is involved in reading and discussing together. There is no exclusive or discriminatory attitude shown in the picture. This situation teaches students that mutual respect and cooperation are essential to living in a pluralistic society. The textbook's representation of students with physical and cultural differences also teaches that diversity is not an obstacle but a great potential that must be appreciated and celebrated to achieve common goals.

The cultural representation shown in Figure 2 provides evidence of multicultural pedagogy, specifically in the form of modelling inclusive, equitable, and respectful social interactions. These three elements are crucial not only for language learning but also for teaching students about differences and mutual respect in the context of a diverse global society. Banks (2016) emphasizing the inclusion of diverse cultural perspectives in educational content will provide equity, respect, and democratic values in diverse societies. Figure 2 portrays Indonesian students interacting harmoniously without the dominance of any major groups or religion, indicating an attempt by textbooks to reflect Indonesia's pluralistic social structure.



Figure 3. *Helping & errands dialogues (VIII–Unit 2–pp 27–28)*

Figure 3 presents students with diverse backgrounds. One female student wears a hijab, and another student has braids. The conversation taking place in the canteen is a form of personal communication, given that the distance between them is very close. The presence of word blocks indicates a request to buy a drink in the canteen. The request is articulated very politely. The response from the student wearing the hijab is also very polite and affirmative, using phrases such as "Sure" or "of course I will." Based on eye-level perspective and personal distance, Figure 3 appears to depict an egalitarian relationship. No one is portrayed as prominent or dominant. The two characters in Figure 3 are shown in a state of balance. This visual presentation aligns with equity pedagogy and knowledge construction (Banks, 2016) as well as culturally responsive pedagogy (1995) by normalizing cross-identity assistance without discrimination.

Figure 4 depicts five students in uniform, including one female student wearing a hijab. All five are working together to tidy the classroom. The setting with the whiteboard suggests that the activity occurs inside the classroom. Each student appears to be responsible and performing their respective tasks. Some are sweeping, organizing books, disposing of trash, cleaning the whiteboard, and mopping. There is no dominance or exclusion; everyone is carrying out their assigned tasks. From their gazes, they appear equal, indicating that the work is a collective effort. The distance between them suggests there is no gap between them. Figure 4 illustrates a process of cooperation and collaboration aimed at achieving a common goal: a clean classroom. The distribution of roles appears balanced, with no dominance by students of any religion or cultural background. This representation supports Sleeter and Grant's (2008) multicultural curriculum and culturally responsive pedagogy by demonstrating collective responsibility and equal engagement across identities. Figure 4 also aligns with the value of *gotong royong* in Indonesian culture (Bowen, 1986).



Figure 4. *Classroom clean-up (VIII–Unit 2–p.26)*

Figures 3 and 4 show students from different cultural backgrounds. This can be observed in the differences in their physical appearance, the way they dress, and their interactions. Picture 3 illustrates how students communicate with each other and ask for help politely and respectfully, such as when carrying books, delivering messages, and ordering tea. Figure 4 shows each class member involved in cleaning the classroom together. This picture reflects cooperation and collective responsibility. Despite their different skin colors and styles of dress, students demonstrate inclusivity in their representation of culture and religion in Indonesia. Pictures 3 and 4 depict real-life Indonesian people who are willing to help anyone in need, regardless of their ethnic or religious background. The absence of conflict or marginalization in these depictions aligns with Banks' (2016) principle of equity pedagogy, where all learners are treated as equal participants in the educational process. By presenting collaborative and respectful student interactions across cultural boundaries, the textbook contributes to the development of intercultural competence, which encompasses empathy, adaptability, and the ability to communicate effectively across diverse contexts. In addition, Figures 3 and 4 are in line with the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy proposed by Ladson-Billings (1995), which emphasizes the importance of recognizing students' identities while encouraging their academic and moral development. These visuals not only serve as a complement to learning but also as ideological texts that convey crucial civic and ethical values in a diverse democratic society.

The textbook promotes respect for others, regardless of cultural and religious differences. Its

p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

attitude of mutual assistance and cooperation fosters critical awareness in students that it is important to maintain the spirit of mutual assistance. Working together and helping each other is called *gotong royong*. This tradition is working together to do a job or something (Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018). *Gotong royong* (cooperation) is a tradition that has been passed down in Indonesian rural communities. It has become the foundation for political discourse on the essence of government, the features of rural communities, and the validity of the state's labour demand (Bowen, 1986). This term is derived from the culture of rural communities, which help each other when building and moving houses. Today's practice of *gotong royong* is often observed through activities such as cleaning up the environment, building public self-help facilities, or constructing houses of worship, including mosques and churches. However, apart from the spirit of *gotong royong*, textbooks teach the sense of helping each other without regard to cultural or religious background.

Textbooks also teach the importance of respecting others when communicating with them. Pictures 3 and 4 illustrate the importance of being helpful and cooperative. In terms of communication, Figures 3 and 4 teach how to communicate politely, gently, and respectfully. It would be great to communicate with others politely and with respect, even when they are culturally and religiously different. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate that respecting others requires effective verbal communication and actions, such as helping and cooperating. These actions show a sense of caring and respect for others. Textbooks not only function as learning media but can also be a means to represent character values, multiculturalism, tolerance, and togetherness.



Siti: Hi Dayu, how are you? Mr. Ahmad said you were not in class today because you have diarrhea. Have you taken any medicine yet?
Dayu: Yes, I have. But it only helps a little.
Siti: Maybe you just **have to** take some rest **in order to** get well soon. Just **stay** in bed **to let** the medicine work to ease your diarrhea.

Figure 5. *Visiting a classmate who is ill in bed*

Figure 5 portrays a situation in which a student wearing a hijab visits a classmate who is ill. She is lying on a bed. The two students exchange broad smiles. They are depicted at eye level and in close personal proximity. Their postures appear relaxed, and their expressions are positive. Dialogues between the two students include, "Maybe you need to rest for a while… stay in bed so the medicine can take effect." This exchange demonstrates care, empathy, and solidarity. The coherence between text and image demonstrates intercultural competence, encompassing empathy, attention, and solidarity, which aligns with culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and multicultural education (Banks, 2016). The presence of care and cross-cultural connections among peers from different cultural and religious backgrounds reflects the goals of multicultural education. Figure 5 shows a reality in which religious difference, indicated by the hijab symbol, is a normal part of school life and does not render any group as dominant or superior.

Although different in terms of culture and religion, they are still considerate of others in harmful conditions. This is a picture of harmony in Indonesia. Visits to hospitals when our neighbours or friends are being treated are a common habit among the people of Indonesia. Indonesians are very concerned about everyone, especially people with unhealthy conditions. No matter whether the person is from a different ethnicity or religion, Indonesians will continue to visit and give support to the people who are in unhealthy conditions so that the person can recover quickly from their illness. The support given by friends and neighbours is not just in the form of prayer, but also in the form of financial support. Not infrequently, many also bring gifts to people who are in unhealthy conditions. There is a principle that everyone in Indonesia holds in high regard. When someone takes care of those who need help or attention, their hand will come to us when we need it.

Figure 5 illustrates that social interactions in Indonesia reflect cultural diversity and values of harmony. Helping one another and visiting those who are sick is a form of social concern among the Indonesian people. This action is the identity of the Indonesian people. This representation is in line with the research of Setyono and Widodo (2019), which found that English textbooks in Indonesia strive for multiculturalism and social ethics values in learning materials. Students will learn language and linguistic skills, as well as the values of empathy and social concern, within the context of

community life. The interaction between the two students in Figure 5 exemplifies the application of empathy and solidarity values in everyday life. This attitude is a character value that reflects intercultural competence, one of the primary goals of multicultural education (Banks, 2015). The textbook teaches that caring for others is not limited by cultural, religious, or ethnic background. Through the narrative in Figure 5, students are invited to imagine how to interact ethically and empathetically with their friends from various backgrounds. This aligns with Ladson-Billings' (1995) vision, which emphasizes that teaching materials must reflect the social values necessary in a democratic and pluralistic society.

The visual narratives in the MONEC textbooks demonstrate a strong representation of cultural diversity and social harmony in Indonesia. The visual representations include depictions of students from various ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Representations of harmony are depicted in the form of attitudes that include helping one another, learning from each other, and caring for sick friends, which are pedagogical efforts included in the textbooks. Inclusive and respectful interactions in the textbooks indicate that the textbooks serve not only as linguistic references but also to promote multiculturalism, citizenship, and social values that align with Indonesia's philosophical principles. Within the framework of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), inclusive and egalitarian by Ogodo (2024), visual-verbal representations in textbooks, such as parallel compositions, symmetrical spacing between actors, uniform attire, and positive expressions, constitute practices that validate students' identities and enhance engagement in learning. These findings are consistent with contemporary CRP research literature. On the other hand, strengthening cross-cultural communication competence (CCC/ICC) should proceed in parallel, so that the diversity showcased in visuals does not merely serve as decorative adornment, but encourages dialogic and empathetic intercultural practices in the EFL classroom (Zhou et al., 2024).

Visual representations in English language textbooks play a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes toward cultural diversity and social harmony. These images are not merely decorative elements but serve as pedagogical instruments that reflect Indonesia's multicultural reality. Their function extends beyond aesthetics, as semiotic tools that reinforce or challenge students' perceptions of social identities and intergroup relations. The concept offered by Risager (2022) suggest that language textbooks, whether in print or digital form, provide learners with insights into various aspects of the world through imagined communicative situations. They often depict elements of daily life, cultural traditions, social and political themes, as well as modern topics such as technology and migration. These materials typically include images, texts, and audiovisual content, offering learners a rich multimodal experience. Through this exposure, students not only improve their language proficiency but also gain an understanding of different cultures and perspectives. Thus, textbooks serve as linguistic tools and media for fostering intercultural awareness. In the Indonesian context, Widodo (2018) has demonstrated how textbook images can reflect and shape national identity discourses, particularly in their portrayal of gender roles, ethnic groups, and religious practices.

In the framework of multicultural education, according to James A. Banks, a balanced representation of cultural groups—including race, ethnicity, and local cultural identity—constitutes one of the approaches (Banks, 2016). In Indonesia, the curriculum likewise seeks to integrate multicultural values through materials that highlight social-cultural diversity (Raihani et al., 2025). The figures presented in the textbook serve as visual representations that support the principle that schools are inclusive spaces, not monolithic ones. The theory of culturally responsive pedagogy emphasizes that contextual visual representations and texts in instructional materials are a form of valuing students' backgrounds (Nganga & Kambutu, 2024). Visuals aid concept comprehension and strengthen students' memory, so inclusive visual representations can reinforce the cultural meaning being conveyed (Nugroho & Widiatmojo, 2024). Figure 1 shows that each student is "equal" visually (parallel alignment, smiling expressions, identical uniforms), potentially communicating values of equality and inclusivity. Since foreign language textbooks sometimes depict cultural stereotypes through images that represent Western cultural dominance over local culture (Taqdir, 2025).

Figures in the textbook represent education for tolerance that aligns with the principles of multicultural and culturally relevant pedagogy. This is also in line with Maulidiah, Nisa, and Rahayu (2023), who note that school materials in Indonesia carry values of tolerance and ethnic diversity as part of national integration. From the

p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

perspective of culturally relevant pedagogy, it is evident that the EFL textbook has presented experiences drawn from the students' environment. The depicted images represent local content appropriate to students' daily lives. In line with culturally relevant pedagogy, visual representations and local content serve as funds of knowledge that connect students' experiences to academic goals, thereby strengthening their identity, engagement, and critical understanding. Local representations depicted in textbook images can serve as authentic and life-relevant instructional material for students. Utilizing this textbook content, teachers can guide students to develop greater sensitivity to the issues surrounding them. Teachers should understand the objectives of English language learning while guiding students to acquire linguistic competence through their individualised learning styles and expectations (Siregar et al., 2024).

In summary, the pictures and accompanying text in EFL textbooks can convey powerful messages about diversity and social harmony as integrated cultural narratives. The implicit values embedded in these visuals often originate from the authors' sociocultural backgrounds, who selectively highlight ethnic, religious, and regional markers to imply inclusion. Both teachers and students may unknowingly absorb these subtle messages. Within Indonesian EFL textbooks, such depictions of harmony, tolerance, mutual aid, and respect among different ethnic groups and religions enrich the character-focused aspect of language education. Rather than merely reflecting the norms of Western or Anglophone cultures, these textbooks also elevate Indonesian values grounded in Pancasila and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that EFL textbooks in Indonesia serve not only as linguistic resources but also as vehicles for conveying multicultural values, civic identity, and social harmony. Through images of students from various ethnic and religious backgrounds engaging in everyday acts of kindness, cooperation, and empathy, these materials teach students to live respectfully in a pluralistic society. Additionally, these illustrations reflect real-life Indonesian social interactions, thereby strengthening character education and fostering intercultural understanding. These visuals foster students' moral imagination and cultural empathy, preparing them for democratic and inclusive citizenship. Therefore, EFL textbooks in Indonesia serve a dual purpose: as a language tool and a moral and ethical framework for fostering respectful, multicultural coexistence. To further enhance the impact of multicultural education, future EFL textbooks should incorporate interactive and multimodal digital content, including animations, videos, and augmented reality experiences, that depict diverse cultural contexts in more dynamic ways. This will provide students not only with richer linguistic input but also with more profound intercultural experiences. Finally, visual representations should be combined with reflective tasks and dialogic pedagogy to help students critically engage with issues of identity, power, and social justice in diverse contexts.

REFERENCES

Adha, I., Firman, F., & Harun, M. M. (2023). The dynamics of cultural transmission and curriculum development in Indonesia. *Widyagogik: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Sekolah Dasar*, *11*(1), 164–179. https://doi.org/10.21107/WIDYAGOGIK.V11I1.24236

Alawlaqi, S. A. S. M., & Basya, D. (2023). The representation of multicultural content provided by "world-class franchise" English course textbook used in Indonesia: A critical discourse analysis study. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, *5*(4), 192–206. https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v5i4.1488

Anggraini, D., & Rohmah, Z. (2024). A comparative analysis of source and target cultures in Indonesian 10^{th} grade English textbooks. *International Journal of Language Teaching and Education*, *8*(2), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.22437/ijolte.v8i2.38031

Bahri, K., & Agustina, N. (2023). Cultural content and intercultural communicative competence in Indonesian EFL textbooks. *TELL-US JOURNAL*, *9*(3), 746–759. https://doi.org/10.22202/TUS.2023.V9I3.7321

Banks, J. A. (2021). *An introduction to multicultural education* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Banks, J. A. (2016). *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. https://www.routledge.com/Cultural-Diversity-and-Education-Foundations-Curriculum-and-Teaching/Banks/p/book/9781138654150

Bowen, J. R. (1986). On the political construction of tradition: Gotong royong in Indonesia. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, *45*(3), 545–561. https://doi.org/10.2307/2056530

Cahyadi, D. D., & Fahadayna, A. C. (2025). Post-conflict democratization: A comparative case study of Cambodia and Nigeria's experiences. *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture*,

33(2), 421–452. https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v33i2.21287

Dalimunte, A. A., & Suryani, I. (2025). Multicultural values in ELT textbook for Indonesian elementary schools: A critical discourse analysis. *JOALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature)*, *10*(1), 71–93. https://doi.org/10.33369/joall.v10i1.37954

Driessen, M. D. (2025). Interreligious dialogue, conflict resolution and peacebuilding: A review. *Religions*, *16*(2), 150. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16020150

Fairclough, N. (2001). Critical discourse analysis as a method in social scientific research. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Introducing qualitative method method of critical discourse analysis*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Fauzan, I., Arifin, A., Dalimunthe, M. A., & Rahmadani, S. (2023). The configuration of ethnic and religious relations towards the 2024 general election: A case study in Medan, Indonesia. *Multidisciplinary Science Journal*, *6*(2), 2024006. https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2024006

Firdaus, F. (2023). Conflict on religion in Indonesia. *Berumpun: International Journal of Social, Politics, and Humanities*, *6*(2), 61–72. https://doi.org/10.33019/berumpun.v6i2.112

Habib, A. P., Husna, N., & Hidayat, D. N. (2025). Embracing inclusiveness: A discourse

analysis of cultural representation in Indonesian EFL textbook. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, *12*(2), 137. https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v12i2.28135

Handayani, R., & Yunita, D. (2025). Cultural representation analysis in English textbook in Indonesia EFL secondary school students. *Anaphora: Journal of Language, Literary, and Cultural Studies*, *8*(1), 11–19. https://doi.org/10.30996/anaphora.v8i1.12188

Hasnah, Y., Ginting, P., Saragih, M., Kharisma, A. J., & Sari, P. L. P. (2024). A probe into local cultural values in locally produced EFL textbooks in Indonesia. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies*. https://doi.org/10.69598/hasss.24.3.268564

Irham, N. R., Daulay, S. H., & Purnomo, M. D. (2024). "Interactive English" EFL textbook: A cultural content analysis. *TELL-US JOURNAL*, *9*(4). https://doi.org/10.22202/tus.2023.v9i4.7653

Jabar, Z. S. (2025). Exploring culturally responsive pedagogy in teaching English. *International Journal of Humanities and Education Research*, *7*(1). https://doi.org/10.33545/26649799.2025.v7.i1d.161

Jamilah, S., Ismail, N. M., & Faizah, C. (2024). Multimodal analysis of an English textbook used for EFL young learners. *New Language Dimensions*, *5*(1), 50–63. https://doi.org/10.26740/nld.v5n1.p50-63

Kusumaningputri, R., & Widodo, H. P. (2018). Promoting Indonesian university students' critical intercultural awareness in tertiary EAL classrooms: The use of digital photograph-mediated intercultural tasks. *System*, *72*, 49–61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.10.003

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice*, *34*(3), 159–165. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849509543675

Linder, R., & Falk-Ross, F. (2024). Multimodal resources and approaches for teaching young adolescents: A review of the literature. *Education Sciences*, *14*(9), 1010. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14091010

Litaay, S. C. H., Manuputty, F. M. L., Afdhal, A., & Makaruku, N. D. (2025). Local culture-based education in the hidden curriculum: A strategy for fostering tolerance and peace in Maluku secondary schools. *Society*, *13*(1), 192–207. https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v13i1.777

Matiso, N. H. (2024). Optimising culturally responsive pedagogies in multicultural English second language classrooms. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *23*(11), 384–401. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.11.20

Maulidiah, R. H., Nisa, K., Rahayu, S., Irma, C. N., & Fitrianti, E. (2023). Multicultural education values in the Indonesian textbooks: A critical discourse analysis. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *13*(3), 624–635. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1303.11

Mazya, T. M., Ridho, K., & Irfani, A. (2024). Religious and cultural diversity in Indonesia: Dynamics of acceptance and conflict in a multidimensional perspective. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, *07*(07). https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/V7-i7-32

Nganga, L., & Kambutu, J. (2024). Culturally responsive professional development programs for teacher educators using community-based collaborative learning: Lessons learned from a Native American community. *Education Sciences*, *14*(7), 787. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14070787

Ningtiyas, A. A. K., Ghozali, I., & Nugraheni, D. A. (2025). Multicultural values in the Indonesian EFL textbook 'English for Nusantara': A critical discourse analysis. *Journal of English in Academic and Professional Communication*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/10.25047/jeapco.v11i2.5805

Nugroho, R. S., & Widiatmojo, R. (2024). Exploring the visual literacy parameters in English

elementary textbooks by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. *Proceedings of ICRES*

p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

2024 International Conference on Research in Education and Science, 1631–1641.

Ogodo, J. A. (2024). Culturally responsive pedagogical knowledge: An integrative teacher knowledge base for diversified STEM classrooms. *Education Sciences*, *14*(2), 124. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14020124

Parlindungan, F., Rifai, I., & Safriani, A. (2018). The representation of Indonesian cultural diversity in middle school English textbooks. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *8*(2), 289–302. https://doi.org/10.17509/IJAL.V8I2.13276

Raihani, R., Issabekova, G., Maulana, T., & Abdrakhman, G. (2025). Multicultural education in Indonesia's "Merdeka" curriculum. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, *16*(1), 413–432. https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2025.2.413.432

Rinehart, G., Pherali, T., Chase, E., Zaw, H. T., & Naing, T. (2024). Diversity and fragmentation of Myanmar education: Schooling shaped by protracted conflict and crisis. *ERICC Policy Brief*.

Risager, K. (2022). Culture and materials development. In *The Routledge handbook of materials development for language teaching*, 109–122. https://doi.org/10.4324/B22783-10/CULTURE-MATERIALS-DEVELOPMENT-KAREN-RISAGER

Ruiz-Cecilia, R. (2012). Narrowing cultural boundaries in the EFL classroom: Fairy tales from India. *RESLA (Revista Espanola de Linguistica Aplicada)*, *25*.

Sabillawati, R., & Putra, K. A. (2023). Multicultural representation in global language textbook used by Indonesian EFL learners. *Journal of Innovation in Educational and Cultural Research*, *4*(2), 354–362. https://doi.org/10.46843/jiecr.v4i2.650

Sakti, S. A., Endraswara, S., & Rohman, A. (2024). Revitalizing local wisdom within character education through ethnopedagogy approach: A case study on a preschool in Yogyakarta. *Heliyon*, *10*(10), e31370. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e31370

Salim, L., & Rosada, A. A. (2023). Conflict management in Indonesia through religious moderation. *KnE Social Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v8i16.14041

Setinawati, Jeniva, I., Tanyid, M., & Merilyn. (2025). The framework of religious moderation: A socio-theological study on the role of religion and culture from Indonesia's perspective. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *11*, 101271. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101271

Setyono, B., & Widodo, H. P. (2019). The representation of multicultural values in the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture-Endorsed EFL textbook: A critical discourse analysis. *Intercultural Education*, *30*(4), 383–397. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2019.1548102

Sibanda, L., & Herman, T. (2024). Do textbooks reflect learners' diversity? A case study of grade 4 English and life skills textbooks. *South African Journal of Education*, *44*(2), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v44n2a2328

Silviana, Z. J., & Triastuti, A. (2025). The representation of multicultural values in Indonesian ELT textbook "English for Nusantara." *Formosa Journal of Sustainable Research*, *4*(3), 477–494. https://doi.org/10.55927/fjsr.v4i3.104

Siregar, L., Mayuni, I., & Rahmawati, Y. (2024). Culturally responsive English teaching: Developing a model for primary school EFL teachers in Indonesia. *Issues in Educational Research*, *33*(4), 1582–1600.

Sleeter, C. E., & Grant, C. A. (2008). *Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class and gender* (6th ed.). Wiley.

Suwandani, F., & Hidayati, S. (2025). Conceptual representation of culture in EFL textbook images: A multimodal analysis. *Dinamika Ilmu*, *25*(1), 99–122. https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v25i1.10098

Tafrijiyah, K., & Andriani, M. (2025). Multimodal discourse analysis of an English language learning textbook in Indonesia. *Lire Journal (Journal of Linguistics and Literature)*, *9*(1), 61–79. https://doi.org/10.33019/lire.v9i1.391

Taqdir. (2025). Cultural stereotypes in foreign language textbooks: A systematic review of visual representation. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *15*(6), 1949–1958. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1506.23

Tuki, D. (2025). Violent conflict and hostility towards ethnoreligious outgroups in Nigeria. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *37*(2), 239–261. https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2023.2285939

Tyrosvoutis, G., Charoensukaran, W., & Chan, M. L. (2025). Conceptualising educational resilience during Myanmar's conflict. *Education and Conflict Review*, *5*, 107–115. https://doi.org/10.14324/000.ch.10207910

Widodo, H. P. (2018). A critical micro-semiotic analysis of values depicted in the Indonesian Ministry of National Education-endorsed secondary school English textbook. In *Situating moral and cultural values in ELT materials*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-63677-1

Wodak, R. (2001). What CDA is about: A summary of its history, important concepts and its developments. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Introducing qualitative method method of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 1–13). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Zhou, R., Samad, A., & Perinpasingam, T. (2024). A systematic review of cross-cultural communicative competence in EFL teaching: -024-04071-5

Insights from China. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, *11*(1), 1750. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599