

THE REPRESENTATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION VALUES IN PICTURES FOUND IN 10TH ENGLISH TEXTBOOK: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how character education values are visually represented in the 10th-grade English textbook Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress untuk SMA/SMK/MA Kelas X, published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in 2022. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach and Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, 79 images from the textbook were analyzed through the stages of description, interpretation, and explanation. The analysis identified 15 out of 18 character values outlined in the national education policy, including religiousness, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, curiosity, nationalism, patriotism, appreciation of achievement, communicativeness, love of peace, environmental care, and responsibility. These values are embedded in various visual contexts such as sports, cultural practices, everyday routines, folktales, and classroom interactions. Some illustrations present values directly, while others reflect them indirectly through depictions of negative behavior that encourage moral reflection. It can be concluded that the textbook's pictures serve not only as linguistic support but also as an effective medium for character education. The integration of moral and civic values through visual discourse highlights the role of English textbooks in shaping students' character in meaningful and culturally relevant ways.

Keywords: Character Education, Visual Representation, Critical Discourse Analysis, English Textbook

INTRODUCTION

Character education plays a crucial role in shaping students' personalities, behaviors, and moral values. It nurtures positive traits such as honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility, which are essential for students to become ethical and socially conscious individuals. As Hamidah et al. (2022, p. 3585) emphasize, character education is as important as academic achievement because it contributes to students' holistic development. Similarly, Ismail & Imawan (2023, p. 86) argue that character education helps students respond appropriately to social and moral challenges in everyday life by equipping them with strong values and attitudes. Accordingly, character education should be integrated into all educational practices and materials, including textbooks (F. Z. Sari & Ma'rifatullah, 2024, p. 244).

Textbooks serve not only as a medium for delivering knowledge but also as a tool that can foster moral development. According to Renette et al. (2021, p. 319), textbooks are primary learning resources that include curriculum-based content while promoting student engagement and character development aligned with national educational goals. Particularly in English textbooks used in Indonesian senior high schools, visual elements such as pictures often accompany texts to help students better understand language use in social and cultural contexts (Chandra & Yuliani, 2024, p. 580). These pictures carry the potential to implicitly convey ideologies and values. As Basya et al. (2025, p. 76) highlight, illustrations serve as concrete representations that can help readers better grasp the meaning of character education.

In the Indonesian education system, character education has been positioned as a national priority. The Merdeka Belajar policy, introduced by the Ministry of Education and Culture, aims to improve the quality of human resources by embedding character values into learning to enhance students' creativity and critical thinking (Rosadi & Mun'amah, 2023, p. 47). The importance of this initiative is also reflected in Article 3 of the National Education

System Law No. 20 of 2003, which states that national education aims to develop students' potential to become faithful, noble, knowledgeable, creative, and responsible citizens. Nevertheless, moral issues among youth such as drug abuse, theft, and violence still occur, indicating that the implementation of character education may not yet be fully effective (N. P. Sari et al., 2022, p. 151).

Given this context, the researcher recognizes the need for a deeper investigation into how character values are presented in learning media, especially textbooks. A literature review conducted for this study identified 29 journal articles published between 2015 and 2025 that analyzed English textbooks used at various educational levels in Indonesia. Of those, only four focused specifically on senior high school textbooks, all of which were based on the 2013 Curriculum. For example, Lestari et al. (2023, p. 11). examined a tenth-grade textbook published by Grafindo Media Pratama. However, since the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, newer textbooks have been introduced, yet academic studies addressing them remain scarce.

To fill this gap, the present study aims to analyze how character education values are represented in the tenth-grade English textbook entitled "Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress untuk SMA/SMK/MA Kelas X," published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (KEMENDIKBUDRISTEK) in 2022. The analysis is carried out using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to examine how visual components such as gestures, expressions, clothing, and settings communicate character values either explicitly or implicitly. This study is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of character education studies, visual discourse analysis, and the broader field of English language education in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Character Education Values

Character Education Values Character education is a systematic effort to instill moral values and virtues that shape students' behavior, reasoning, and decision-making (Ismail & Imawan, 2023, p. 86). It aims to develop students' personalities based on ethical integrity, social responsibility, and emotional maturity (Mawaddah et al., 2025, p. 203; T et al., 2022, p. 165). This approach not only emphasizes cognitive development but also the consistent habituation of positive traits throughout the learning process.

In Indonesia, character education has been formally integrated into the national curriculum through the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 20 of 2018. Teachers play a central role in this process not only as facilitators of knowledge, but also as role models for moral and ethical behavior (Zurqoni et al., 2018, p. 894; Suryantari, 2022, p. 229). The goal is to cultivate learners who are responsible, disciplined, and able to contribute positively to society by internalizing values such as honesty, hard work, and tolerance (Mawaddah et al., 2025, p. 199; Utami et al., 2021, p. 297).

Good character is not only essential for individual development but also closely tied to one's role in society. Learners with strong moral grounding are expected to be able to navigate social challenges, make ethical decisions, and build harmonious relationships. In addition to fostering personal growth, character education is considered a key factor in enhancing students' academic achievement (Biringan et al., 2024, p. 17). Therefore, it must be integrated into all aspects of schooling—not just the curriculum, but also classroom interactions, school culture, and instructional materials.

To support this, the Indonesian Ministry of Education has identified 18 core character values as the foundation for character-building efforts in formal education. These include: religiousness, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, patriotism, appreciation of achievement, friendliness, love of peace, love of reading, environmental care, social care, and responsibility (Luaylik et al., 2022, p. 4917). These values are expected to be internalized through both structured

learning and daily educational experiences.

2. Textbooks as a Medium for Character Education Enhancement

Textbooks are fundamental learning tools that serve as the primary source of instruction in formal education. They support curriculum implementation and guide both teaching and learning processes (Winarni et al., 2022, p. 40; Riadini & Cahyono, 2021, p. 286). According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, textbooks are books specifically designed to teach a particular subject, typically used in schools or universities. As systematically organized resources, they assist teachers in presenting material while also enabling students to study independently (Aki et al., 2024, p. 409; Okitasari & Palupi, 2019, p. 42). Their structured content facilitates cognitive development and helps students grasp key concepts effectively (Suciati et al., 2022, p. 21).

Beyond their instructional function, textbooks also act as vehicles for transmitting social and moral values. They are not merely academic tools but also represent ideologies and cultural narratives that reflect the values of a society (Nurwahyuningsih et al., 2023, p. 671; Hasna et al., 2024, p. 539). Through both verbal and visual content such as dialogues, stories, and pictures textbooks can convey character education values, either explicitly or implicitly (Afandi et al., 2025, p. 163; Basya et al., 2025, p. 76). Visual elements in particular, including illustrations and symbols, are a form of multimodal text that can express cultural practices and moral messages (Rehman et al., 2022, p. 10563; Sukma et al., 2021, p. 1045).

In this regard, textbooks serve as strategic media for shaping students' character and social behavior. They contribute significantly to building students' integrity, empathy, and civic responsibility (F. Z. Sari & Ma'rifatullah, 2024, p. 244). As noted by Maisyaroh et al. (2023, p. 151), character education delivered through textbooks helps develop individuals with strong personal values and the capacity to foster social harmony. This role is increasingly recognized in Indonesia's educational policy, especially with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which positions textbooks not only as tools for academic success but also as instruments for nurturing critical thinking, independence, and moral character (Rosadi & Mun'amah, 2023, p. 47; Huda et al., 2024, p. 983; Coştu, 2024, p. 259).

3. Representation and Visual Discourse

Representation is a meaning-making process that allows individuals to convey complex thoughts, messages, or values through language or visual forms (Fithratullah, 2021, p. 60; Hall et al., 1997, p. 28). It involves how meaning is constructed and communicated using signs whether in written text, spoken language, or visual imagery so that it can be understood by others within a particular cultural or social context.

In visual discourse, representation plays a central role in shaping how information is interpreted. Images are not merely decorative elements; they serve to construct meaning, express values, and influence perceptions (Deng, 2023, p. 167; Chernyavskaya & Kulikova, 2020, p. 21; Ramón-Verdú & Villalba-Gómez, 2022, p. 1). Elements such as facial expressions, gestures, clothing, symbols, and settings are used intentionally to support particular discourses or ideological messages within specific contexts.

In educational contexts, visual representations are often employed to subtly communicate values, norms, and worldviews (Chandra & Yuliani, 2024, p. 603; Nandi et al., 2024, p. 41). These visuals are not neutral; rather, they reflect cultural perspectives, gender ideologies, and social assumptions embedded within the images (Isnaini et al., 2019, p. 546). As Fairclough (2001, as cited in Durmaz & Yoğun, 2022, p. 27) explains, visual elements are part of a broader semiotic system in which images and texts interact to generate meaning and shape social consciousness.

Therefore, visual representations can construct dominant narratives or ideologies, sometimes reinforcing bias or stereotypes. A critical examination of how visuals convey meaning is essential to uncover hidden power relations or imbalances within discourse (Nikulina et al., 2024, p. 607; Ash et al., 2022, p. 1). This highlights the importance of visual literacy and critical discourse analysis, especially when visuals are used in educational media such as textbooks.

4. English Textbook Published by KEMENDIKBUDRISTEK in 2022

The Grade X English textbook titled "Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress untuk SMA/SMK/MA Kelas X," published by KEMENDIKBUDRISTEK in 2022, serves as a core learning resource developed to support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This initiative aligns with Law No. 3 of 2017 on the Book System, emphasizing the provision of accessible, high-quality, and equitable learning materials. The textbook's development involved various stakeholders under the coordination of KEMENDIKBUDRISTEK and adheres to the educational philosophy of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility, learner-centeredness, and character development.

The textbook comprises 182 pages divided into six chapters, covering the four foundational English language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing while incorporating real-life contexts and text types. Its design aims to promote critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and media literacy key competencies for 21st-century learning. Each activity is structured to stimulate learners' imagination and encourage contextualized language use.

In accordance with Merdeka Curriculum principles, English is a compulsory subject at the secondary level, and teachers are given autonomy to choose instructional materials aligned with learners' needs and local context (Basya et al., 2025, p. 74). This particular textbook was chosen for analysis due to several reasons: it meets the eligibility criteria set by the national Education Standards Agency, is the official core text under the Merdeka Curriculum, and is freely accessible through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. Additionally, the book integrates elements of Indonesian culture, character education, and moral values through both textual and visual content, making it a relevant subject for critical discourse analysis.

Given the ideological nature of educational content, it is essential to critically examine how values—particularly those related to character education are embedded in the book's visuals. As Utami et al. (2021, p. 294) note, some textbooks may include culturally biased or irrelevant content that can hinder the learning process. This study, therefore, focuses on evaluating the extent to which character values are represented visually in this official curriculum textbook.



Picture 1 Cover of English Textbook for Grade 10

5. Previous Studies

Several studies have analyzed character education values in English textbooks, with most focusing on reading texts. Suryantari (2022, p. 242) examined Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress for tenth grade using qualitative content analysis and found all six dimensions of Pelajar Pancasila present, though her analysis emphasized textual content. Similarly, N. P. Sari et al. (2022, p. 150) analyzed the 2017 eleventh-grade textbook and identified 14 character values represented both verbally and visually, though values such as tolerance and patriotism were missing. Lestari et al. (2023, p. 11) studied the English Skills for the Future textbook and found all 18 values included, with most delivered implicitly. However, the study noted a need to improve how values are visually and textually presented.

Utami et al. (2021, p. 294) analyzed the Pathway to English textbook for eleventh grade and found 16 of the 18 character values. Their study highlighted that most values were conveyed implicitly and emphasized the importance of teacher support in guiding value interpretation. Renette et al. (2021, p. 318) evaluated English textbooks for grades X–XII and found uneven distribution of values, with the tenth-grade book featuring 13 character values and notable omissions such as discipline, creativity, and love of peace.

While some studies touched on visual elements, they generally focused on verbal content and lacked critical analysis of the ideological messages behind the visuals. None applied a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework or investigated textbooks developed under the Merdeka Curriculum. Addressing this gap, the present study uniquely analyzes how character values are visually represented in the 2022 tenth-grade textbook published by KEMENDIKBUDRISTEK, using Norman Fairclough's CDA model. This approach enables a deeper understanding of how visuals such as gestures, clothing, and settings convey social and ideological meanings related to character education.

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Kind of The Research

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design employing Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model. Qualitative research is suitable for exploring meanings within visual texts rather than measuring numerical data (Maher et al., 2018, p. 3). As emphasized by Creswell and Creswell (2018, p. 60), research design provides systematic guidance for answering research questions. In this context, the study seeks to describe how character education values are visually represented in English textbook images without manipulating any variables (Furidha, 2023, p. 2).

Fairclough's CDA model is particularly relevant because it enables the analysis of visual discourse across three levels: description of surface features, interpretation based on social context, and explanation of how visuals construct ideological meanings (Fairclough, 1995, p. 4; Durmaz & Yoğun, 2022, p. 27). This layered approach is used to critically examine how visual elements such as facial expressions, gestures, symbols, and settings reflect or promote character education values as stated in the Indonesian Ministry of Education Regulation No. 20 of 2018.

The application of this design is significant in the educational field, where textbooks serve not only as instructional materials but also as carriers of cultural values and ideologies (Alexopoulos et al., 2022, p. 257). By analyzing how character values are embedded in textbook illustrations, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the potential impact of visual discourse on students' character development within the framework of national educational goals.

2. Research Data and Source

The data in this study consists of visual elements specifically pictures found in the tenth-grade English textbook "Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress untuk SMA/SMK/MA

Kelas X”, published by KEMENDIKBUDRISTEK in 2022. These images serve as the primary focus, as they are assumed to represent character education values in alignment with the national education framework. The textbook was selected as the main data source because it is officially used in Indonesian secondary schools and contains rich visual materials relevant for discourse analysis. As Kothari (2004, p. 95) notes, primary data in qualitative research refers to original information collected directly from its source, making this textbook an appropriate subject for visual and ideological exploration.

3. Data Collection Technique

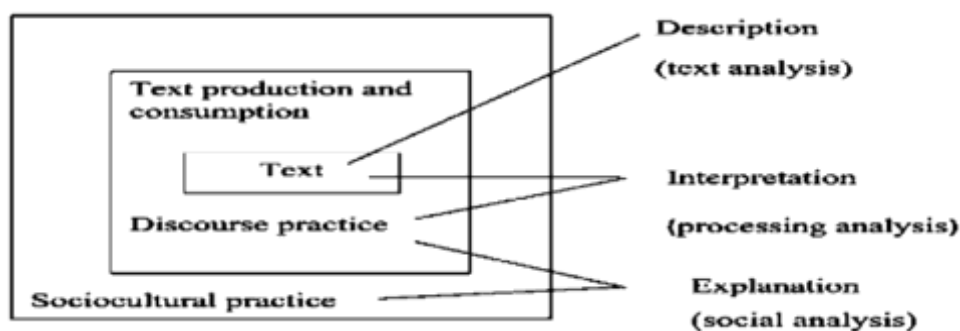
This study employed documentation as its primary data collection method, which is particularly effective for visual and textual data already available in published form (Sugiyono, 2013, p. 240). Since Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) does not require experimental or survey-based techniques (Afandi et al., 2025, p. 153), the researcher systematically reviewed and cataloged all pictures in the textbook. Each image was examined to identify visual cues such as facial expressions, gestures, settings, and symbols that may reflect character values as outlined in the Ministry of Education Regulation No. 20 of 2018.

The data collection process followed several steps: (1) the researcher selected the textbook as the primary source, (2) conducted a thorough review of each chapter with a focus on pictures, (3) analyzed each image to detect possible representations of character values based on CDA principles, and (4) classified relevant visuals into a structured data sheet. This systematic approach ensured that the visual data aligned closely with the research objectives and could be meaningfully interpreted through Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis framework.

4. Instrument and Data Analysis Technique

In this qualitative study, the researcher served as the primary instrument, managing the entire research process from data collection to interpretation, as emphasized by Sugiyono (2013, p. 223). To support this process, a data sheet was used as a secondary instrument to systematically organize and analyze visual data from the textbook. The data sheet included coding for each image based on its order, chapter, and page (e.g., “1/1/6”), following Utami et al. (2021, p. 304), and contained columns for description, interpretation, and explanation to guide the analytical process.

The analysis followed Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model, which consists of description, interpretation, and explanation stages (Fairclough, 1995, p. 4). The **description** stage focused on identifying visual features such as gestures, facial expressions, and settings; **interpretation** explored how these visuals reflect discursive practices and socio-cultural meanings; and **explanation** examined the broader ideological implications and how visuals contribute to shaping character education. This approach enabled a deep understanding of how values are visually constructed and embedded in educational discourse.



Picture 2 Fairclough (1992) 3D model (Islam et al., 2023, p. 966)

RESEARCH RESULT

This study analyzed 79 pictures from the 10th-grade English textbook Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress (KEMENDIKBUDRISTEK, 2022) using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model to investigate how character education values are represented visually. The analysis revealed that 15 out of the 18 character education values outlined by the Ministry of Education are present in the textbook. The values found include religious, honest, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creative, independent, curiosity, nationalism, patriotism, appreciate achievement, friendly/communicative, love peace, care for the environment, and responsibility. Meanwhile, three values democratic, love to read, and care for social were not identified in the visual data.

Religious values were predominantly represented through the visual appearance of women wearing hijabs and scenes of prayer, reflecting spiritual devotion and respect for parents. Honesty was represented reflectively, through illustrations of dishonesty (e.g., Malin Kundang denying his mother), encouraging critical reflection. Tolerance was visually conveyed through images of diverse regional cuisines, promoting cultural appreciation. Discipline and hard work were shown in contexts such as sports, health, and learning, with athletes and students embodying persistence, routine, and responsibility. Creativity was expressed through student projects and artistic works like graffiti and murals, while independence appeared in depictions of personal care, autonomous learning, and disabled athletes overcoming challenges.

Other values such as curiosity were captured in visuals of learners exploring ideas, using technology, and engaging in discussions. Nationalism and patriotism were expressed through depictions of athletes with national symbols and local folklore, especially the Malin Kundang tale and traditional foods. Appreciation for achievement was shown through recognition of both outcomes and processes in sports, arts, and learning activities. Friendly or communicative behavior appeared in collaborative scenes and group interactions, and love of peace was reflected through harmonious social settings and mural art promoting unity. Environmental awareness was communicated both through responsible artistic expression and as critique via acts of vandalism. Lastly, responsibility was depicted through sports, academic work, health routines, and storytelling, underscoring the importance of personal and social accountability. Overall, the textbook integrates character values visually in diverse and culturally contextualized ways that support students' moral development.

Based on the data analysis, the English textbook reflects a strong integration of character education values through visual representations that are contextual and didactic. These values are embedded not only through idealized depictions of positive behavior but also through reflective illustrations that portray negative conduct, thus offering opportunities for students to engage in moral reasoning. The use of pictures as a medium of moral instruction aligns with the national character education framework and enhances the pedagogical function of textbooks beyond language acquisition.

Religious values are portrayed in various forms, including depictions of women wearing hijabs, prayer scenes, and respectful gestures toward parents, such as a child kissing his mother's hand. These visuals convey the importance of spiritual devotion and filial piety, which are core elements in many religious teachings. As Utami et al. (2021, p. 298) emphasize, character values rooted in religious practice are fundamental in shaping moral behavior. Additionally, Setyono and Widodo (2019, p. 8) argue that visual cues, such as the hijab, serve as powerful representations of religiosity in educational contexts.

The value of honesty is conveyed through an indirect but powerful approach. The illustration of Malin Kundang denying his mother is not an example of virtuous behavior but rather a visual narrative that invites students to reflect on the consequences of dishonesty. This approach aligns with the view of Syamsurrijal et al. (2025, p. 247), who argue that depictions of immoral behavior in educational materials can serve as reflective tools to

promote ethical awareness. By engaging with such representations, students are encouraged to develop moral judgment and understand the social impact of dishonest actions.

Tolerance is another central value represented in the textbook. Through illustrations of Indonesia's diverse traditional cuisines and cultural practices, students are exposed to the rich multicultural fabric of the nation. This aligns with Utami et al. (2021, p. 298), who underline that tolerance involves respect for social, religious, and cultural differences, and must be cultivated within educational spaces. The depiction of diversity in the textbook thus supports inclusivity and cultural appreciation among learners.

The character trait of discipline is depicted through consistent involvement in physical activities, respect for authority figures, and rule-abiding behavior. These visuals emphasize both internal and external dimensions of discipline self-regulation as well as adherence to communal norms. Similarly, the value of hard work is shown through efforts in sports, academic tasks, and creative projects. Such representations reinforce persistence and determination as essential qualities for personal growth and academic achievement (Utami et al., 2021, p. 298).

Creativity emerges through scenes involving street art, group projects, and student performances. These visual narratives reflect the ability to think innovatively and express oneself through diverse mediums. This is critical in the 21st-century learning framework where creativity is seen not merely as artistic talent, but as a problem-solving and adaptive skill. Meanwhile, independence is represented through images of students working autonomously, including those with disabilities participating in competitions, illustrating agency, self-reliance, and confidence in one's abilities.

Curiosity, an essential trait for lifelong learning, is portrayed through illustrations of students exploring new topics, asking questions, and using technology to seek information. These representations are aligned with Utami et al. (2021, p. 299), who define curiosity as a continuous desire to learn and understand, which drives students to become active seekers of knowledge rather than passive recipients. In this regard, the textbook's visual elements promote inquiry-based learning.

Nationalism and patriotism are also prominent. Visuals featuring athletes representing Indonesia at international events, traditional folklore such as Malin Kundang, and images of pencak silat not only cultivate pride in national identity but also deepen students' appreciation of the country's cultural heritage. This reflects the educational imperative to foster civic responsibility and love for the homeland as key character traits in nation-building (Utami et al., 2021, p. 299).

The value of appreciating achievement is displayed through recognition of both the process and outcome of individual and group efforts. For instance, students are shown presenting projects, athletes receiving medals, and supporters cheering at sporting events. These visuals underscore the importance of acknowledging effort, dedication, and success as mutually reinforcing dimensions of personal and communal growth. Furthermore, being friendly and communicative is emphasized through depictions of teamwork, collaborative learning, and interpersonal dialogue, which are essential for building positive social interactions and emotional intelligence.

Love for peace is illustrated through harmonious interactions, such as communal gatherings and peaceful expressions in art, including murals of doves a universal symbol of peace. These images foster an understanding of peaceful coexistence and emotional balance, encouraging students to resolve conflict nonviolently. The folktale depictions that show forgiveness, such as the mother in Malin Kundang, further reinforce empathy and compassion as part of peace-building.

Environmental awareness is represented in both constructive and critical ways. On one hand, images of creative graffiti beautifying public spaces reflect environmental care through artistic responsibility. On the other hand, illustrations of vandalism serve as

cautionary examples, prompting reflection on the importance of preserving public facilities. As Syamsurrijal et al. (2025, p. 247) argue, negative depictions can function effectively when framed as material for ethical reflection and dialogue. In this way, the textbook integrates environmental values through contrast and moral reasoning.

Finally, the value of responsibility is conveyed through diverse domains academic tasks, physical well-being, community roles, and cultural obligations. Students are shown fulfilling their duties, participating actively in school activities, and maintaining cleanliness and order. Moreover, cultural stories such as Little Red Riding Hood and Malin Kundang serve as moral narratives that depict the consequences of neglecting responsibility, especially toward family and community. These depictions align with Utami et al. (2021, p. 299), who emphasize that responsibility is central to ethical living and must be consistently practiced across personal and social contexts.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the tenth-grade English textbook published by KEMENDIKBUDRISTEK, 2022 incorporates character education values through its visual content, as revealed by the application of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis. Of the 18 national character values mandated by the Ministry of Education, 15 were identified across 79 images. These include religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, curiosity, nationalism, patriotism, appreciation of achievement, friendliness, love of peace, environmental care, and responsibility.

These values are visually represented in various real-life contexts such as sports, cultural activities, health routines, artistic expression, and folklore. Some images also reflect negative behaviors to stimulate moral reflection and awareness. Therefore, the textbook functions not only as a language learning tool but also as a medium for character development that is educationally purposeful and socially relevant for Indonesian learners.

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