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RESEARCH ARTICLE

RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN INDONESIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS OF KURIKULUM 2013 AND KURIKULUM MERDEKA

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Abstract: As the concept of Religious Moderation, or religious moderation, was introduced in education as an effort to promote a balanced, tolerant, and respectful attitude between religious communities, this study aims to analyze its representation in English textbooks for high school students in Indonesia, which are compiled based on the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. Using corpus analysis approach, this study identifies the frequency and collocations that reflect eight indicators of religious moderation as determined by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Corpus data were obtained by collecting texts from all textbooks published by Ministry of Education and Culture in both curricula. The results showed the lexical frequency analysis indicates the presence of moderation-related vocabulary in both curricula but it constitutes less than 1% of the total word count. The Merdeka Curriculum demonstrates a notable shift from explicitly religious terminology toward more universal, civic-oriented language. The contrastive analysis of collocation of related words to religious moderation in English textbooks of Indonesia's 2013 and Merdeka curricula reveals a significant pedagogical shift from passive, abstract value presentation to active, contextualized implementation.

Keywords: religious moderation; curriculum; discourse analysis; corpus analysis; English textbooks

MODERASI BERAGAMA DALAM BUKU AJAR BAHASA INGGRIS SMA DI INDONESIA KURIKULUM 2013 DAN KURIKULUM MERDEKA

Abstrak: Sebagai konsep Moderasi Beragama (religious moderation) yang diperkenalkan dalam dunia pendidikan sebagai upaya mempromosikan sikap seimbang, toleran, dan saling menghargai antarumat beragama, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis keterwakilannya dalam buku ajar Bahasa Inggris untuk siswa SMA di Indonesia yang disusun berdasarkan Kurikulum 2013 dan Kurikulum Merdeka. Dengan pendekatan analisis korpus, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi frekuensi dan kolokasi yang mencerminkan delapan indikator moderasi beragama menurut Kementerian Agama RI. Data korpus diperoleh dengan mengumpulkan teks dari seluruh buku ajar terbitan Kemendikbud pada kedua kurikulum. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa analisis frekuensi leksikal mengindikasikan adanya kosakata terkait moderasi dalam kedua kurikulum, namun jumlahnya kurang dari 1% dari total kata. Kurikulum Merdeka menunjukkan pergeseran signifikan dari terminologi keagamaan eksplisit menuju bahasa yang lebih universal dan berorientasi pada nilai-nilai kewargaan. Analisis kontrasif kolokasi kata terkait moderasi beragama dalam buku ajar Bahasa Inggris Kurikulum 2013 dan Merdeka mengungkapkan perubahan pedagogis signifikan, dari penyajian nilai-nilai abstrak secara pasif menuju implementasi aktif dan terkontekstualisasi.

Kata kunci: Moderasi beragama; kurikulum; analisis wacana; analisis korpus; buku ajar Bahasa Inggris

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with high religious diversity, and one of the roles of education is to instill values of tolerance and respect for this diversity. The concept of Religious Moderation was introduced in education as an effort to promote a balanced, tolerant, and respectful attitude between religious communities (Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). Since English language is a mandatory course for foreign language in secondary level in Indonesian education based on Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Sisdiknas), English textbooks play an important role in teaching language skills as well as social and cultural values. In this regard, instilling religious moderation and English language teaching in Indonesian schools meets a common ground.

Kaymakcan and Leirvik (2008) suggest that teaching tolerance within Muslim-majority societies is essential for fostering mutual respect and understanding across diverse communities. This perspective supports the current study's focus on religious moderation within Indonesian English textbooks, as it emphasizes the need to integrate values of tolerance and social cohesion into educational content. By examining linguistic representations of religious moderation, this study aims to show how English language instruction in Indonesia can play a role in promoting intercultural respect and unity in a pluralistic society.

In the midst of the transition from Curriculum 2013 to Curriculum Merdeka, there is a need to understand how English textbooks represent the values of religious moderation. This study aims to analyse the lexis related to religious moderation in high school textbooks in both curricula to assess the extent to which the values of moderation and inclusivity are integrated into English learning materials. Merry and Driessen (2005) explore the role of Islamic schools in promoting values that align with societal expectations, emphasizing the importance of incorporating religious and cultural values into educational frameworks. This perspective supports the aim of this study to analyse Indonesian English textbooks for senior high school, particularly in how they incorporate religious moderation values. By identifying linguistic markers of tolerance and unity within the textbooks, this research highlights the potential of English language education to reinforce national goals of harmonious religious coexistence and mutual respect in a diverse society.

In the current study's examination of religious moderation within Indonesian English textbooks, values such as respect, social harmony, and empathy are encouraged through language. By analysing how moral principles are linguistically embedded, this study illustrates how textbooks contribute to students' moral education and align with broader educational goals of tolerance and inclusivity. Halstead and McLaughlin (2005) argue that moral education should go beyond simple rule-following, focusing instead on fostering values that promote ethical understanding and personal growth.

This viewpoint is relevant to the current study, which examines how religious moderation is represented in Indonesian English textbooks. Parker and Raihani (2011) highlight that democratizing education in Indonesia, particularly in Islamic schools, involves engaging communities to cultivate shared values like tolerance and participation. By analysing language patterns promoting inclusivity and respect, this study aligns with educational efforts to foster democratic values, suggesting that English instruction can also serve as a medium for reinforcing community-oriented, moral values in diverse classroom settings.

The use of corpus analysis in analysing textbook has been written by (Ryan, 2018). His paper discusses the vocabulary in English textbooks used in Swedish schools. It presents the types of words in the textbooks and how they compare to the words used by native English speakers. There are differences in the number of types of words and tokens in the different textbooks. Some words appear in almost all books, while others appear in only one or two books. The use of discourse analysis in this paper is not apparent, the focus is in displaying statistical data for more extensive perspective.

Another research concerns the analysis of textbook using corpus is from Foll, Elen Le. (2023). The research explores the use of language in textbooks where English is a foreign language (EFL) in secondary schools in France, Germany and Spain using corpus analysis. Using this

approach, the research assesses whether the language in the textbooks is appropriate to the learning needs and real-world uses of students. The research focuses on cultural and value representations, vocabulary variation and comparisons between texts. The results show a gap between textbook material and the communication contexts relevant to students. The combination of corpus and discourse analysis in this research, dissertation, is apparent.

The aforementioned previous studies concerning English textbooks using corpus-based analysis leads this study to a particular issue in Indonesia, namely, how religious moderation are represented in English textbooks for senior high school students. Although earlier corpus-based analysis studies of English textbooks have concentrated on lexical and cultural representation in many European contexts, they have mostly ignored the ways in which values are instilled in textbooks. This disparity is especially pertinent in Indonesia, where the curriculum must emphasize religious moderation. Through corpus analysis of Indonesian English textbooks, this study adds a new cultural and pedagogical component to the literature by investigating how ideals such as social justice, inclusion, and tolerance correlate with government-endorsed indices of religious moderation.

More precisely, this study endeavours to examine the linguistic representation of religious moderation within English textbooks employed in both Curriculum 2013 and Curriculum Merdeka. The primary focus is on the lexical choices that convey the values of religious moderation elaborated in its indicators, namely, 1) rahmatan lil alamin vision, 2) commitment to nation, 3) tolerance, 4) fair to others, 5) brotherhood, 6) Accommodation of local culture, 7) Polite and Wise, and 8) Innovative, Creative and Independent (Direktorat KSKK Madrasah, 2021). By conducting a comparative analysis of these two curricula, this study aims to identify any significant disparities in the selection of words that contribute to the promotion or hindrance of religious moderation within the English language learning context.

As textbooks is integral parts in curriculum, more than just linguistic goals are involved in developing curriculum for language instruction; cultural and ethical values that fit the social environment must also be incorporated. Richards (2001) emphasizes that curriculum development in language teaching involves more than linguistic objectives; it also includes integrating cultural and ethical values that align with the social context. This perspective supports the focus of the current study, which explores how religious moderation is embedded within Indonesian English textbooks for senior high school. By analysing lexical choices that promote tolerance, inclusivity, and respect, this study demonstrates how language curricula in Indonesia not only serve educational goals but also reflect broader moral and societal values.

By using a corpus-based analysis to evaluate English textbooks as materials, this study assesses whether key values like tolerance and respect are linguistically embedded, thus supporting the dual role of English textbooks in language development and moral education within Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape. Tomlinson (2011) suggests that effective language teaching materials should be contextually relevant and foster meaningful engagement with both language and cultural values. This approach underpins the current study, which examines how Indonesian English textbooks incorporate religious moderation principles.

Littlejohn and Windeatt (1989) argue that language learning materials should transcend basic language acquisition to foster broader educational objectives and personal growth. This perspective is crucial for the current study, which investigates Indonesian English textbooks for their alignment with religious moderation principles. By using corpus analysis to identify values like tolerance and inclusivity in textbook language, the study illustrates how language materials can serve dual purposes, advancing linguistic skills and nurturing ethical values that support harmonious, pluralistic societies.

Examining linguistic markers of tolerance and inclusivity, it is necessary to highlight how textbooks can serve as tools for instilling values that promote mutual respect and understanding in a pluralistic educational environment. Raihani (2014) emphasizes the importance of fostering a culture

of religious tolerance in Indonesian schools as a means to support social harmony within a diverse society. This aligns with the goals of the current study; which analyses how religious moderation principles are represented in Indonesian English textbooks.

Corpus linguistics and discourse analysis can be respectively as a tool and as a theoretical framework (Baker, 2006). As a tool, Corpus linguistics provides a large amount of text data that can be analysed quantitatively. By using corpus, researchers can identify patterns of language use, word frequency, collocation, and context of word use more objectively. As a theoretical framework Discourse Analysis provides a theoretical framework for understanding the meaning hidden behind the text. Discourse analysis allows researchers to investigate how language is used to construct meaning, identity, and social relations in a particular context. Synergy of both enables identifying relevant linguistic patterns, Corpus helps identify linguistic patterns that may be difficult to see manually. Their combination makes possible testing hypotheses empirically; researchers can test hypotheses proposed in discourse analysis by using quantitative data from the corpus. Furthermore, by combining them, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how language is used to create meaning in social contexts.

According to McEnery and Hardie (2012), corpus linguistics provides a structured, empirical approach to examining language patterns within authentic texts, enabling researchers to uncover implicit themes and value systems in educational materials. In the context of this study, this methodology allows for a systematic analysis of Indonesian English textbooks, examining how language is used to convey values aligned with *moderasi beragama* (religious moderation). This approach not only highlights specific lexical patterns related to tolerance and social cohesion but also allows for objective comparison between curriculum variations, enhancing our understanding of how religious values are integrated into educational discourse.

Corpus linguistics allows for an in-depth investigation of language structures, offering a clear view of linguistic patterns that might be overlooked in more traditional analyses (Biber, Conrad, and Reppen, 1998). This perspective is invaluable for this study, as examining Indonesian English textbooks with a corpus-based approach reveals how linguistic choices are used to communicate values of religious moderation. By focusing on patterns related to tolerance, inclusivity, and ethical behaviour, this analysis clarifies the implicit messages embedded within educational materials that promote social harmony and cultural sensitivity.

By focusing on the distribution and frequency of keywords related to inclusivity, justice, and tolerance, this study highlights the implicit messaging aligned with national values and religious moderation in the educational curriculum. Scott and Tribble (2006) point out that corpus analysis can uncover "key words" and "textual patterns" that reveal underlying themes within educational materials, which might otherwise go unnoticed. Applying this approach to Indonesian English textbooks enables a deeper understanding of how religious moderation is linguistically represented through recurring vocabulary and phrase structures.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a corpus-based approach to analyse the lexis or choice of words related to religious moderation. The data were taken from high school English textbooks published by Indonesian Ministry of Education compiled based on the 2013 Curriculum and Independence Curriculum. With the help of corpus analysis software (Antconc), this study explored the frequency of words, collocations, and contexts of keyword usage related to religious moderation. This analysis provided insight into how each curriculum represents the values of tolerance and inclusivity in the context of English language teaching.

This study used purposive sampling to get appropriate data in line with the variables explored in this study. The data were collected from six English textbooks were published by ministry of education and widely used by most senior high schools in Indonesia. They were managed in Antconc (software of corpus analysis) in order to see descriptive statistical information necessary for this

study. This software also presents linguistic data by showing collocation of particular word in search, so that the patterns and the context of the words are apparent.

This study utilizes statistical and linguistic data processed through AntConc and analyzes the findings using corpus and discourse analysis approaches. A more in-depth interpretation, especially within the discourse analysis, is grounded in relevant theoretical perspectives, particularly the concept of religious moderation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency of Keywords related to Religious Moderation

This part presents the results of the textual analysis of English electronic textbooks for senior high schools issued by the Indonesian government under the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. The analysis is grounded in the framework of religious moderation based on the eight indicators: 1) *Rahmatan lil alamin* vision, 2) Commitment to nation, 3) Tolerance, 4) Fair to others, 5) Brotherhood, 6) Accommodation of local culture, 7) Polite and Wise, and 8) Innovative, Creative and Independent. Each indicator is represented through a cluster of related lexical items whose frequencies were manually counted in both sets of textbooks.

The aggregated frequency data reveals striking patterns across both curricula. With a total of 8,578 entries and 97,836 words in the 2013 Curriculum textbooks and 8,445 entries with 101,016 words in the Merdeka Curriculum, the overall exposure to religious moderation-related vocabulary is present but relatively low in proportion. Figure 1 illustrates the comparative appearance of religious moderation-related terms across the indicators, offering insight into which values are emphasized more prominently in each curriculum.

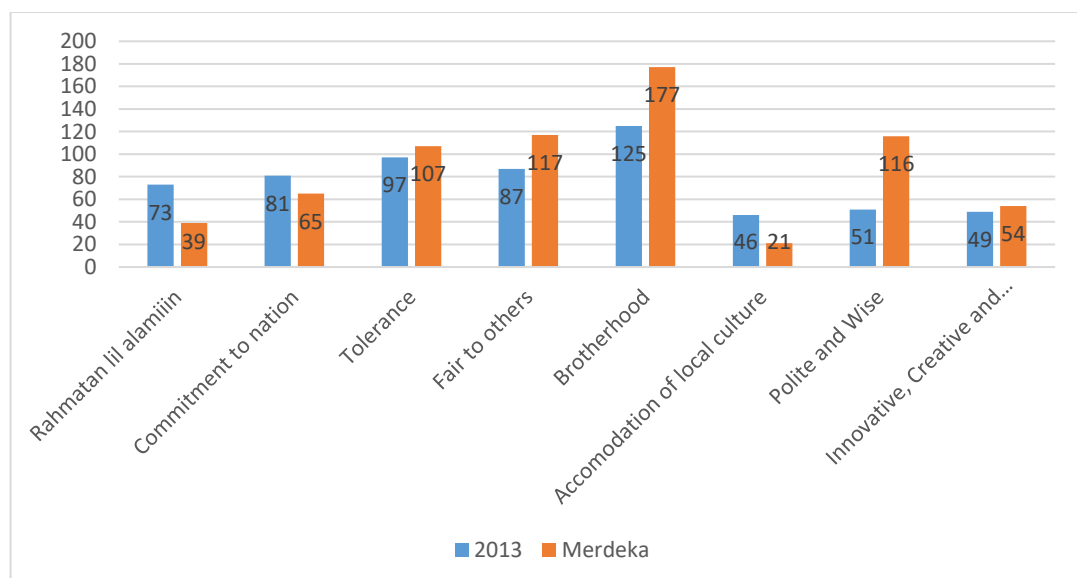


Figure 1
Trends of religious moderation terms used in curriculum 2013 and Merdeka English Textbooks

The chart clearly shows that the *tolerance*, *fair to others*, and *brotherhood* indicators are the most frequently represented in both curricula, with a noticeable increase in the Merdeka Curriculum. For example, terms related to *tolerance* increased from 125 occurrences in Kurikulum 2013 to 173 in Merdeka. Similarly, *fair to others* rose from 108 to 131, and *brotherhood* from 120 to 138.

On the other hand, *Rahmatan lil alamin* experienced a sharp decline, dropping from 97 in Kurikulum 2013 to only 43 in Kurikulum Merdeka. This decline, viewed alongside the shift toward increased use of civic and intercultural values, may indicate a transition from explicitly religious-universalistic vocabulary (e.g., kindness, peace, mercy) toward broader ethical and humanistic ideals better aligned with the globalized and inclusive orientation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

In Kurikulum 2013, *Rahmatan lil alamin* indicator was well-represented with frequent use of terms such as "kindness" (21), "social justice" (13), and "moral responsibility" (7). However, in the Merdeka Curriculum, the emphasis shifted. While "moral excellence" (12) and "global well-being" (5) emerged, foundational values like "kindness" dropped to only 3 appearances. This change suggests a reframing of religious values through more universal, civic-oriented terminology.

For *commitment to nation*, although traditional nationalist terms such as "nationalism" (44 in 2013; 11 in Merdeka) and "public service" (13 in 2013; 6 in Merdeka) declined, newer expressions such as "collective identity" (23) and increased mentions of "leadership" and "responsibility" reflect a modernized interpretation of civic duty. This signals an ideological shift from rigid patriotism toward participatory and ethical citizenship in the Merdeka Curriculum.

A substantial lexical enrichment is evident in this indicator *tolerance*. Increased use of terms like "understanding" (43), "respect" (14), and "freedom" (17) in the Merdeka textbooks highlights a deliberate embedding of inclusive, democratic values. These linguistic choices signify a pedagogical commitment to interpersonal empathy and mutual respect.

For indicator *fair to others*, the Merdeka Curriculum incorporates a more diverse range of justice-related terms such as "fairness", "ethical behavior", and "consideration". The prominence of "objectivity" and "balance" in both curricula further strengthens the presence of impartiality as a core ethical value. This lexical shift indicates a broader conceptualization of fairness that transcends institutional justice.

For indicator *brotherhood*, Merdeka's increase in "support" and "community" language, combined with greater use of "trust" and "cooperation", suggests an intentional cultivation of collaborative, socially cohesive discourse. This demonstrates a realignment of brotherhood values through the lens of social and emotional learning.

For indicator *accommodation of local culture*, despite a quantitative drop, the emergence of terms such as "intercultural respect" and "cultural sustainability" in Merdeka points to a conceptual shift. These terms reflect an inclusive and forward-looking treatment of local wisdom that resonates with global awareness and cultural responsiveness.

For indicator *polite and wise*, the shift in emphasis from traditional etiquette (e.g., "manners") in Kurikulum 2013 to more reflective values like "judgment", "consideration", and "civility" in Merdeka represents a more internally-driven moral compass. This highlights a developmental focus on ethical awareness and emotional intelligence.

Finally, for indicator *innovative, creative and independent*, the substantial growth in terms like "creativity", "originality", and "critical thinking" underlines Merdeka's strategic emphasis on student agency. The embedding of these terms supports an ideological orientation toward innovation, independence, and problem-solving—aligned with the values of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*.

The Merdeka Curriculum reflects a deliberate shift from traditional moral and religious lexicons toward language that promotes tolerance, social responsibility, intercultural understanding, and student-centred learning. While religious values are not absent, they are embedded within a broader secular framework more compatible with global educational goals. This supports the Ministry of Religious Affairs' call for moderation, inclusion, and peace in education.

Although the lexical frequency analysis indicates the presence of moderation-related vocabulary in both curricula (e.g., 173 terms for *tolerance* in Merdeka), this constitutes less than 1% of the total word count. Following Fairclough's (1995) view that ideologies are embedded through discourse and not merely vocabulary, and supported by CEFR (2001) and Weninger & Kiss (2013), it can be concluded that frequency alone does not suffice. Effective ideological embedding requires

contextualized use, reflective learning tasks, and coherent integration into the discursive fabric of the textbooks.

Collocation Analysis: Relationship between Keywords and Context

To deepen the interpretation of religious moderation values beyond surface-level frequency, this section presents a collocation analysis of the most frequently used words across the eight indicators of religious moderation. Collocation analysis helps reveal how key terms are embedded within specific discourse patterns in the textbooks, shedding light on their pragmatic roles and ideological orientations. For each indicator, one or more of the most frequently occurring lexical items, such as *kindness* for *Rahmatan lil alamin*, *nationalism* for *commitment to nation*, *understanding* for *tolerance*, and *togetherness* for *brotherhood*, were selected as focal points. Using concordance lines extracted via AntConc, the surrounding left and right co-texts (L1 and R1) of these terms are analysed to identify recurring themes, verb associations, and evaluative framing. This approach allows for a nuanced comparison between the 2013 and Merdeka Curricula, revealing not only what values are emphasized, but how they are linguistically constructed and contextualized. Such insights contribute to understanding the implicit messaging strategies within the English textbooks and their alignment with the broader goals of religious moderation.

In the indicator of *Rahmatan lil alamin*, "kindness"-related vocabulary in Indonesia's Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum textbooks reveals distinct approaches to value transmission. In the 2013 Curriculum, the adjective "kind" appears primarily in grammatical constructions (e.g., "What kind of...") and polite formulae ("It's very kind of you"), serving communicative functions rather than conveying moral values (Kemdikbud, 2013). Notably absent is the nominal form "kindness," which Fairclough (1995) would argue limits ideological embedding since sustained conceptual discourse requires substantive noun forms to carry ideological weight effectively.

The Merdeka Curriculum demonstrates more deliberate value integration through its use of "kindness" in moral narratives. In the *Bawang Putih* folktale, "selfless kindness" is framed as both a personal virtue and social good, while reflective questions prompt students to connect kindness to lived experience (Kemdikbud, 2021). This approach aligns with Weninger and Kiss's (2013) model of value-based language learning, where lexical items gain ideological meaning through contextualized repetition in morally charged narratives rather than through isolated vocabulary presentation.

Collocational patterns highlight these curricular differences. Corpus analysis reveals the 2013 Curriculum's "kind" primarily collocates with grammatical particles (of/to), whereas Merdeka's "kindness" pairs with moral descriptors (selfless) and action verbs (learn/return). This supports van Dijk's (2006) sociocognitive theory that ideological reinforcement occurs through patterned word associations in meaningful contexts. The Merdeka Curriculum's narrative framing creates stronger conceptual networks around kindness as a moderating value compared to the 2013 Curriculum's decontextualized usages.

These findings suggest that successful value transmission requires strategic discourse design beyond lexical inclusion. While both curricula reference kindness, only Merdeka's approach - embedding the concept in culturally-grounded narratives with reflective tasks - meets contemporary needs for religious moderation education. This confirms Fairclough's (1995) assertion that ideologies manifest through coherent discourse patterns rather than vocabulary lists alone.

In the indicator of *Commitment to nation*, "nationalism"-related vocabulary in Indonesia's Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum textbooks reveals distinct approaches to instilling commitment to nation. In the 2013 Curriculum, the term "national" appears primarily in geographical and institutional contexts, such as *Tanjung Puting National Park* and *National Examination*, with minimal ideological framing. While these references highlight Indonesia's natural

and educational institutions, they lack explicit discourse connecting them to national identity or civic values. This aligns with Fairclough's (1995) critique of decontextualized vocabulary, where terms appear without ideological reinforcement through sustained discourse.

In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum employs "national" in more value-laden contexts, such as national heroes (pahlawan nasional), national anthem (lagu kebangsaan), and national achievements. For example, students are instructed to "stand for the National Anthem" and reflect on "good deeds for society", explicitly tying nationalism to personal responsibility and civic behaviour. This approach resonates with van Dijk's (2006) sociocognitive theory, where ideological reinforcement occurs through repetition in meaningful, action-oriented contexts. The Merdeka Curriculum thus goes beyond descriptive usage (e.g., "national park") to prescriptive discourse (e.g., "respect national symbols").

A collocation analysis further highlights these differences. In the 2013 Curriculum, "national" primarily pairs with neutral nouns (e.g., *park, exam, accreditation*), whereas in the Merdeka Curriculum, it collocates with moral imperatives (e.g., *anthem, heroes, achievement*). For instance: In 2013: "*Tanjung Puting National Park*" (descriptive) and in Merdeka: "*Stand for the National Anthem*" (normative). This shift reflects Weninger & Kiss's (2013) argument that textbooks transmit values more effectively when vocabulary is embedded in behavioral and reflective tasks rather than passive descriptions.

While both curricula include the term "national," the Merdeka Curriculum more effectively fosters *commitment to nation* by: a) Contextualizing nationalism in civic rituals (anthem, heroes), b) Linking it to personal actions (respect, achievement), and c) Encouraging reflection (discussions on national identity). This aligns with CEFR's (2001) emphasis on intercultural citizenship, proving that lexical frequency alone is insufficient for ideological transmission—discourse design matters.

In the indicator of Tolerance, the word "understanding" in Indonesia's Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum English textbooks reveals distinct approaches to fostering tolerance as part of religious moderation. In the 2013 Curriculum, "understanding" appears primarily in cognitive and academic contexts, such as comprehending texts (e.g., "understanding descriptions of ecotourism") or mastering skills (e.g., "understanding poetry"). While these usages promote intellectual engagement, they lack explicit connections to interfaith dialogue or social harmony, missing opportunities to frame "understanding" as a tool for tolerance (Fairclough, 1995). For instance, tasks like "discuss the similarities and differences between texts" remain neutral, avoiding deeper reflection on cultural or religious diversity.

The Merdeka Curriculum, however, employs "understanding" in ways that align more closely with tolerance-building. Phrases like "understanding modern technology to protect digital devices" and "understanding mortgage products to prevent predatory lending" tie comprehension to ethical responsibility. More significantly, the curriculum includes reflective tasks (e.g., "rate your understanding of legends/fairy tales") that implicitly encourage students to consider multiple perspectives, a cornerstone of tolerance (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). The recurring "My Initial Understanding" sections also prompt self-awareness, fostering a mindset open to diverse viewpoints.

A collocation analysis underscores these differences. In the 2013 Curriculum, "understanding" pairs with academic nouns (e.g., *concepts, descriptions, poetry*), whereas the Merdeka Curriculum links it to active verbs (e.g., *protect, prevent, rate*) and social concepts (e.g., *modern technology, climate change*), for example, in 2013: "*Understanding descriptions of ecotourism*" (passive, content-focused); and in Merdeka: "*Understanding mortgage products to avoid exploitation*" (active, ethics-focused). This shift reflects van Dijk's (2006) argument that ideology is embedded in verb choices, with action-oriented language more likely to drive behavioural change.

Both curricula use "understanding," but the Merdeka Curriculum more effectively links it to tolerance by: a) Contextualizing comprehension in ethical dilemmas (e.g., fair lending practices), b) Promoting metacognition (e.g., self-rating understanding of cultural stories), and c) Aligning with

real-world issues (e.g., internet safety, climate change). The 2013 Curriculum's decontextualized usage limits its impact, whereas Merdeka's approach mirrors CEFR's (2001) emphasis on intercultural communicative competence, proving that "understanding" must be actively tied to social values to foster tolerance.

In the indicator of Fair to others, "social justice"-related vocabulary in Indonesia's Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum textbooks reveals fundamentally different approaches to teaching fairness to others. In the 2013 Curriculum, the term "social" appears almost exclusively in linguistic and functional contexts, such as "social function" of texts or "social features" of language. These usages are technical, focusing on communicative purposes (e.g., congratulating others, describing places) rather than ethical values. While the curriculum includes texts about historical figures like Cut Nyak Dhien, the framing remains neutral, avoiding explicit discussions of justice or equity (Fairclough, 1995). This reflects a missed opportunity to link language learning to broader societal values.

The Merdeka Curriculum, by contrast, explicitly ties "justice" to civic engagement and digital responsibility. Phrases like "voice perspectives for justice without harming others" appear in lessons about digital media, framing fairness as both a moral imperative and a practical skill. This aligns with van Dijk's (2006) theory that ideologies are most powerful when embedded in action-oriented discourse. The Merdeka Curriculum also emphasizes participation (e.g., "participate in justice"), positioning students as active agents of social change rather than passive learners of language functions. This shift mirrors global education trends that connect language proficiency to intercultural citizenship (CEFR, 2001).

A collocation analysis highlights these divergences. In the 2013 Curriculum, "social" pairs with academic terms (e.g., *function, structure, features*), reducing it to a descriptive category. The Merdeka Curriculum, however, collocates "justice" with verbs of action (e.g., *voice, participate, harm*) and ethical concepts (e.g., *perspectives, digital media*), for example, in 2013: "*Social function of congratulatory texts*" (mechanical); and in Merdeka: "*Voice opinions for justice*" (transformational). This contrast underscores Wenginger and Kiss's (2013) finding that values are transmitted through verb choices, not just nouns.

The Merdeka Curriculum again more effectively promotes adil terhadap sesama by: a) linking justice to real-world behaviors (e.g., ethical digital communication), b) encouraging active participation in fairness (vs. passive analysis of text functions), and c) Integrating moral reasoning into language tasks (e.g., balancing free speech with harm prevention). While the 2013 Curriculum describes social language, Merdeka prescribes social responsibility, proving that justice must be practiced, not just named, in textbooks.

In the indicator of Brotherhood, word "togetherness" in Indonesia's Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum reveals fundamentally different pedagogical approaches to fostering social harmony. In the 2013 Curriculum, the term "together" appears primarily in procedural classroom contexts - students pray together (16 instances), sing together (4 instances), and work together on assignments (9 instances). While these usages create a sense of communal activity, they remain superficially cooperative rather than deeply relational. The most frequent collocations - "pray together" (religious), "work together" (academic), and "sing together" (performative) - suggest togetherness as a mechanical process rather than an ethical value (Fairclough, 1995). Even interpersonal examples ("having lunch together") lack reflection on why unity matters.

The Merdeka Curriculum transforms togetherness into an explicit moral principle. The nominal form "togetherness" appears strategically (e.g., "Togetherness can break through limitations"), elevating it from an action to an ideological concept. Key collocations include "working together to build" (3 instances), "do it together" (community problem-solving), and "stronger than alone" - all framing unity as a transformative social force. The narrative about villagers

constructing a dam ("began working together to build") particularly embodies the Islamic value of gotong royong (mutual cooperation) as religious moderation in action (Azra, 2019). This aligns with van Dijk's (2006) theory that repetition in achievement contexts naturalizes ideologies.

A collocation web analysis shows marked contrasts:

- 2013: together + [routine verbs] pray/sing/work → [classroom activities]
- Merdeka: togetherness + [transformational verbs] break/build/save → [community outcomes]

The Merdeka Curriculum also innovates by thematizing digital togetherness ("Together for a Better Internet"), addressing modern challenges to social unity - an approach absent in 2013's purely physical interactions.

Both textbooks acknowledge collective action but the Merdeka Curriculum more effectively cultivates *persaudaraan* by: a) lexicalizing the concept ("togetherness" vs. just "together"), 2) Contextualizing it in problem-solving narratives, and 3) Extending it to digital citizenship. This reflects Weninger & Kiss's (2013) finding that nominalizations and goal-oriented contexts are crucial for value internalization. The 2013 Curriculum's procedural togetherness lacks this ideological depth, demonstrating how form shapes ideological efficacy.

In the indicator of Accommodation to local culture, "cultural adaptation"-related vocabulary in Indonesia's Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum English textbooks reveals distinct approaches to accommodation to local culture as part of religious moderation. In the 2013 Curriculum, the term "culture" appears primarily in descriptive and static contexts, such as listing "cultural values" in folktales (e.g., Malin Kundang, Issun Boshi) or mentioning "cultural heritage sites". While these references acknowledge cultural elements, they treat them as fixed artifacts rather than dynamic processes of adaptation. For example, phrases like "appreciating cultural values" suggest passive observation rather than active engagement (Fairclough, 1995). This aligns with a touristic perspective on culture (e.g., "friendly island culture") that lacks deeper reflection on how local traditions interact with religious values.

The Merdeka Curriculum, by contrast, frames culture as an active, interdisciplinary process. Terms like "cross-cultural studies" and "cultural literacy" appear in academic contexts, emphasizing critical engagement with cultural systems. The explicit mention of "social, economic, political, and cultural structures" in discussions of change reflects a systemic understanding of cultural adaptation (van Dijk, 2006). This approach resonates with contemporary theories of religious moderation that view cultural accommodation as requiring structural awareness, not just content appreciation (Azra, 2019). The Merdeka Curriculum also uniquely addresses pedagogical dilemmas in teaching cultural awareness, positioning educators as mediators of adaptation, a perspective absent in the 2013 materials.

A collocation analysis highlights these conceptual differences. In the 2013 Curriculum, "culture" pairs with preservation-oriented nouns (e.g., *heritage*, *values*, *events*), while the Merdeka Curriculum links it to analytical verbs (e.g., *studies*, *change*, *literacy*) and modifying adjectives (e.g., *cross-cultural*, *political*), for instance, in 2013: "*Cultural heritage sites*" (static, museum-like) and in Merdeka: "*Cross-cultural studies*" (dynamic, academic). This contrast reflects Weninger & Kiss's (2013) argument that cultural learning becomes meaningful when paired with critical action.

The Merdeka Curriculum more effectively supports accommodation to local culture by: a) theorizing culture as interconnected systems (vs. isolated values), b) linking cultural adaptation to structural change (economic, political), and c) empowering teachers as cultural mediators. While the 2013 Curriculum celebrates cultural products, Merdeka interrogates cultural processes, proving that religious moderation requires active adaptation frameworks beyond folklore appreciation.

In the indicator of Polite and wise, the word "respect" in Indonesia's Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum English textbooks reveals contrasting approaches to teaching politeness and wisdom as aspects of religious moderation. In the 2013 Curriculum, the term appears only once in

a religious context ("considered to be holy and deserving respect"), presenting respect as a static virtue tied to sacredness. This limited usage reflects a passive, reverence-oriented understanding of respect, disconnected from daily interpersonal interactions. The absence of collocations with active verbs or social scenarios suggests a missed opportunity to frame respect as a practiced behaviour rather than an abstract concept (Fairclough, 1995). This aligns with critiques of older curricula that reduced moral values to dogmatic statements rather than actionable principles (Azra, 2019).

The Merdeka Curriculum, by contrast, embeds "respect" in active, social contexts that model polite and wise as lived ethics. Key collocations include: a) "Respect each other's answers/opinions" (4 instances), b) "Respect copyright" (digital citizenship), and c) "Mutual respect and collaboration" (teamwork). These usages frame respect as a participatory practice requiring conscious effort in diverse scenarios, from classroom discussions to online behaviour. The recurring phrase "listen carefully and respect" explicitly links respect to attentiveness, a core aspect of wisdom in intercultural communication (van Dijk, 2006). Notably, the curriculum extends respect to intellectual property ("copyright"), addressing modern ethical dilemmas absent in the 2013 materials. This reflects Weninger & Kiss's (2013) finding that value-based education thrives when connected to contemporary realities.

The Merdeka Curriculum's verb-driven collocations (listen + respect, discuss + respect) operationalize politeness as a social skill, while the 2013's adjective-noun pairing ("holy respect") relegates it to dogma. Also, the Merdeka Curriculum more effectively cultivates *santun dan bijak* by: a) Contextualizing respect in interpersonal exchanges (vs. abstract reverence), b) Modeling it as a reciprocal practice ("mutual respect"), and c) Extending it to digital domains. This aligns with global citizenship education frameworks that treat respect as a competency (UNESCO, 2018). The 2013 Curriculum's limited usage underscores how lexical scarcity in value education leads to conceptual fragility. Future textbooks could strengthen this further by incorporating local *adat* (customary) protocols of respect.

In the indicator Innovative, Creative and Independent, "critical thinking" in Indonesia's Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum English textbooks reveals an evolution from procedural application to systemic cultivation of innovative, creative, and independent learning. In the 2013 Curriculum, the term appears primarily in teacher-centred contexts, such as "Developing Critical Learners" in academic writing programs or the "Visible Thinking" technique. While these references acknowledge critical thinking, they frame it as a specialized method (e.g., Think-Pair-Share) rather than a fundamental competency. The collocation "critical thinking questions" appears just once, isolated from deeper pedagogical integration. This reflects a technical approach to criticality that treats it as a classroom activity rather than a mindset (Fairclough, 1995), limiting its potential to foster genuine intellectual independence.

The Merdeka Curriculum demonstrates a paradigm shift by embedding critical thinking in interdisciplinary frameworks and student empowerment strategies. Key collocations include: a) "Critical thinking skills" (3 instances) - explicitly positioned as learnable competencies, b) "Critical literacy program" - linking criticality to media and cultural awareness, and c) "Critical thinking, literature and instructional activities" - integrating it across subjects. This approach aligns with van Dijk's (2006) concept of ideological naturalization, where repeated pairing with "skills" and "programs" makes critical thinking appear essential rather than optional. Notably, the curriculum connects critical thinking to local contexts ("Folklore for Critical Thinking") and teacher development, addressing both student and educator roles in fostering innovation.

A collocation web analysis shows conceptual expansion, for example: in 2013, "Visible thinking technique" (tool) and "Critical learners" (passive) and in Merdeka, "Critical thinking skills" (outcome) "Fostering critical thinking" (active). The Merdeka Curriculum's adjective-noun pairs

("fundamental critical thinking skills") emphasize measurable competencies, while 2013's verb-focused usage ("developing critical learners") retains an abstract quality.

The Merdeka Curriculum more effectively promotes *innovative, creative and independent* by: a) theorizing critical thinking as transferable skills beyond classroom techniques, b) embedding it in local research and teacher training, and c) linking it to creative domains (literature, folklore, digital writing). This reflects global education trends that treat criticality as cultural capital (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). The 2013 Curriculum's limited, activity-bound usage highlights how religious moderation requires cognitive empowerment frameworks, not just methodological tools. Future curricula could strengthen this further by incorporating design thinking models for hands-on innovation.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored how the concept of religious moderation was represented in high school English textbooks used in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia. Through corpus-based analysis, this study identified the frequency and the collocation of words related to eight indicators set by Direktorat KSKK Madrasah in 2021, namely, 1) *Rahmatan lil alamin* vision, 2) National commitment, 3) Tolerance, 4) Fair to others, 5) Brotherhood, 6) Accommodation of local culture, 7) Polite and Wise, and 8) Innovative, Creative and Independent.

In terms of frequency, although the lexical frequency analysis indicated the presence of moderation-related vocabulary in both curricula (e.g., 173 terms for Tolerance in Merdeka), this constitutes less than 1% of the total word count. The contrastive analysis reveals that while both curricula incorporate religious moderation values, the Merdeka Curriculum demonstrates a notable shift from explicitly religious terminology (e.g., "*Rahmatan lil alamin*" terms declining by 55%) toward more universal, civic-oriented language, particularly in indicators like Toleransi (+38%), Fairness towards others (+21%), and Brotherhood (+15%). This transition reflects a pedagogical realignment from traditional values toward modern interpretations of citizenship, emphasizing intercultural understanding, ethical behavior, and social-emotional learning, while maintaining core principles through terms like "fairness," "respect," and "critical thinking," which align with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila's focus on innovation and inclusive nationalism.

In terms of collocation, the contrastive analysis of religious moderation values in Indonesia's 2013 and Merdeka curricula reveals a significant pedagogical shift from passive, abstract value presentation to active, contextualized implementation. While both curricula address the eight indicators of religious moderation (*Rahmatan lil alamin*, National Commitment, Tolerance, Fairness to Others, Brotherhood, Accommodation of Local Culture, Polite and Wise, and Innovative-Creative-Independent), the Merdeka Curriculum demonstrates more sophisticated discourse strategies through: (1) replacing isolated vocabulary with conceptual networks (e.g., "kindness" becoming "selfless kindness" in moral narratives), (2) shifting from descriptive to prescriptive language (e.g., "national park" to "respect national symbols"), (3) employing action-oriented collocations (e.g., "understanding mortgage products to prevent exploitation"), and (4) expanding value contexts to digital citizenship and intercultural competence. Particularly notable is Merdeka's transformation of procedural terms ("work together") into ideological concepts ("togetherness breaks limitations"), its integration of local wisdom with critical thinking, and its framing of respect as a measurable competency. These changes reflect an intentional move toward internalized, applicable values aligned with *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile), though the decreased emphasis on explicitly religious terminology (e.g., *Rahmatan lil alamin* terms dropping 55%) suggests an ongoing tension between religious particularism and universal civic ethics in Indonesia's educational modernization.

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