

THE RELEVANCE OF ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIALS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH RELIGIOUS MODERATION VALUES: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACTS

This research aimed to evaluate the relevance of the English teaching materials in the textbook “My Next Words (For Elementary School 5)” concerning the values of religious moderation as adopted in primary schools. The textbook has received endorsement from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, highlighting the importance of evaluating its alignment with the government's religious moderation standards. The research methodology employed content analysis of the textbook to identify content related to religious moderation values. Surveys and interviews with elementary school teachers using this textbook provided insights into its utilization and its reflection of religious moderation values in teaching practices. The results indicated that the textbook primarily focuses on language skills, with limited integration of religious moderation values. It lacks sensitive language usage and activities promoting interfaith understanding. However, it does feature diverse character names associated with specific religious groups and incorporates some aspects of cultural diversity. Educators expressed the importance of integrating religious moderation values into English language teaching materials, but they found the current materials lacking in this regard. In conclusion, the textbook “My Next Words: For Elementary School” for Grade V requires improvements to better integrate religious moderation values. These enhancements can contribute to a more inclusive and relevant English language learning experience for elementary school students, fostering tolerance and interfaith harmony.

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INTRODUCTION

English language instruction holds importance in schools worldwide serving as a foundational tool, for developing effective communication abilities among young learners. With globalization shaping our interconnected world the ability to communicate in English has become increasingly essential for professional and personal success (Council, 1993). As a result, primary schools strive to offer high-quality English language education that equips

students, with language skills and cultural awareness. However, it is crucial to consider the values and principles upheld by institutions that emphasize religious moderation when selecting appropriate teaching materials (Ebersole et al., 2015; Suri & Chandra, 2021).

Religious moderation values promote a balanced and inclusive approach to religious beliefs, fostering an environment of tolerance, respect, and understanding (Alam, 2020; Ni et al., 2023; Qosim, 2023; Suryana & Hilmi, 2023). In primary schools, where students are in the formative stages of their cognitive and social development, it is crucial to incorporate materials that reflect these values. Such materials not only facilitate language learning but also play a role in shaping students' attitudes toward diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. However, there is limited research examining the specific alignment of English teaching materials with religious moderation values in primary school contexts, creating a gap in our understanding of how such materials can effectively promote inclusive education.

In primary schools that prioritize religious moderation values, it is imperative to ensure that the English teaching materials used align with the school's overall educational philosophy. These materials should embody cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity, and the promotion of harmonious coexistence (Ardiansyah & Erihadiana, 2022). By selecting materials that reflect religious moderation values, educators can foster an inclusive learning environment where students develop language skills while also cultivating empathy, understanding, and appreciation for different faiths and cultures (Ali, 2018; Na'imah & Nurdin, 2021). Therefore, exploring the relevance and appropriateness of existing English teaching materials in relation to religious moderation becomes a significant aspect of enhancing the quality of primary school education.

Previous studies have examined the integration of religious moderation values into the teaching and learning process. Yusti & Ika (2022) conducted a study titled "Internalizing Religious Moderation Values through Project-Based Learning in English Language Teaching: A Literature Review". This literature review discusses how religious moderation values can be internalized into English language teaching through project-based learning. Mulyana (2023) also studied "Religious moderation in Islamic religious education textbook and implementation in Indonesia". This study investigates the concept of religious moderation in Islamic religious education textbooks at the junior high level and its implementation in Indonesia. Idris et al., (2021) investigated "The Implementation of Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Education and Character Subject at State Senior High School 9 Manado". This study found that religious moderation values can be implemented through exemplary examples by teachers in schools and the community and that teachers of Islamic education and character should apply moderation values in the learning process. Further, Sholeh et al., (2022) studied "The Integration of Religious Moderation Values in English Language Teaching in Madrasah". This study explores how Islamic moderation values can be integrated into English language teaching in Madrasah. The study's findings revealed that Islamic moderation values could be integrated into lesson plans, learning materials, teaching and learning activities, and instructional design.

The study aims to address the gap in the literature regarding the integration of religious moderation values into English teaching materials for primary schools. The study builds upon previous research, including Yusti & Ika (2022), Mulyana (2023), Idris et al., (2021), and Sholeh et al., (2022), to evaluate the practical applicability of religious moderation values in English teaching materials used in primary schools. The analysis aims to inform educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers on ways to enhance the promotion of these values within the primary education system, creating a more inclusive and values-driven learning environment.

This study is unique in its focus on the integration of religious moderation values into primary school English language education, which has not been extensively explored in previous research. While previous studies have examined the integration of these values in

various educational contexts, this review specifically looks at primary school English teaching materials, providing a fresh perspective on how religious moderation can be instilled in young learners through language education. By venturing into this uncharted territory, the study aims to offer valuable insights into the development of pedagogical approaches and materials that not only enhance language proficiency but also contribute to the cultivation of religious moderation values from an early age, potentially leading to more tolerant and harmonious societies.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research was conducted through a systematic qualitative approach, involving both content analysis and thematic analysis. The content analysis focused on scrutinizing the textbook 'My Next Words (For Elementary School 5)' for instances and representations of religious moderation values. Specific themes and examples were extracted to evaluate their alignment with the principles of religious moderation as endorsed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia.

Subject

This research includes a content analysis of the “My Next Words (For Elementary School 5)” textbook to identify content related to religious moderation values. The researchers also conducted surveys and interviews with elementary school teachers using this book in their teaching. Thus, the researchers gained a deeper understanding of how this textbook is utilized in day-to-day teaching and to what extent religious moderation values are reflected in everyday teaching practices.

Instruments

In this research, thematic analysis of the surveys and interviews with teachers provided complementary insights, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how these materials are perceived and implemented in classroom settings. This dual-method analysis facilitated a robust examination of the textbook's effectiveness and relevance, ensuring a holistic assessment that incorporates both textual content and practical application in educational environments. The synthesis of these data sources led to the identification of key patterns and themes, which informed the overall conclusions regarding the textbook's support for religious moderation values in the primary school context.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the content analysis of the textbook and interviews with teachers were then qualitatively analyzed to identify key findings. The results of this analysis provide insights into the extent to which this textbook is relevant in supporting religious moderation values in primary schools. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable input for the development of English teaching materials that are more culturally and religiously appropriate for the Indonesian context, strengthening the approach of religious moderation in elementary education (Mulyana, 2023).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The book “My Next Words: For Elementary School” for Grade V (Five) is an English instructional material designed for elementary school students. In analyzing the relevance of this book to religious moderation values, several aspects serve as indicators for evaluation:

Content of Instructional Material

First and foremost, it is essential to consider the content of the instructional material contained within the book. Does this book encompass religious moderation values such as tolerance, mutual respect, justice, or inclusive attitudes? Does the instructional material provide a solid introduction to religious and cultural diversity?

Through an analysis of the English instructional material available, it was found that the majority of the instructional content still primarily focuses on grammar mastery, vocabulary acquisition, and speaking and writing skills. However, the integration of religious moderation values within the instructional content remains limited. Emphasis on the significance of religious values and interreligious tolerance, crucial aspects of religious moderation, is seldom found within the instructional material.

Framework (Semester 1)			Framework (Semester 2)		
Unit	Objectives	Language Focus	Unit	Objectives	Language Focus
1 What delicious bakso!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to identify taste of different foods and drinks. Students are able to mention taste of different foods and drinks. Students are able to make sentences to express taste of foods and drinks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sweet bitter salty sour 	6 Parts of our body that work together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to tell different body parts and their functions. Students are able to express functions of body parts in daily activities. Students are able to write a short text about the use of different body parts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> although/never/first/second/last they use their nose to smell the rose. hair, eye, nose, chin, cheek
2 I want an ice cream cone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to quantify foods and drinks using quantifying nouns. Students are able to make sentences using vocabulary of foods and drinks and their quantifying nouns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an ice cream cone a bottle of water a hand of bananas a bar of chocolate a loaf of bread 	7 How tall are you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to identify features of people, animals, and common everyday objects. Students are able to use adjectives to describe people, animals, and common everyday objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the giraffe is tall, but the deer is short. tall, short, old, young, big, small, fast, slow, new, old, expensive, cheap
3 How much is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to use words about food and drink related to prices. Students are able to tell prices of foods and drinks. Students are able to make sentences to tell prices of foods and drinks. Students are able to create a poster about a restaurant menu. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a kilo of sugar is 11,000 rupiahs. a plate of gado-gado is 4,000 rupiahs. a glass of orange juice is 2,000 rupiahs. a bowl of bakso is 5,000 rupiahs. it is two thousand rupiahs. it is seven hundred rupiahs. 	8 The giraffe is taller than the deer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to use comparative adjectives to talk about people, animals, and things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is the rabbit smaller than the goat? Yes, it is. which animal is bigger? the goat is bigger than the rabbit. bigger than, smaller than, slower than, faster than
4 I've got a stomachache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to identify different types of common health problems. Students are able to express different types of common health problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have a stomachache. sore eyes headache toothache sore throat cold 	9 The elephant is the biggest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to use superlative adjectives to talk about people, animals, and things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is the deer the shortest? No, it is not. how is the cat compared to the giraffe? The cat is smaller than the giraffe. which is the tallest? The giraffe is the tallest.
5 What a nice skirt!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to tell types of clothes that people wear. Students are able to tell what people wear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> what does she wear? Mouse Shoes hat socks a pair of trousers a long dress uniform short tie t-shirt 	10 I like playing "balap karung"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are able to mention dates and months. Students are able to respond to questions using the question word "when". Students are able to make sentences about dates and months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What month is this? It's October. January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc

Figure 1. Content Framework in the Book for Semester 1 and 2

Based on the content framework for Semesters 1 and 2, it is evident that the material taught in the book is still very general, such as favorite foods and drinks, body parts, and comparisons between objects and living beings. However, the book incorporates various characters, such as Made, Joshua, Cici, and Aisyah. From these character names, it can be implicitly inferred that the book also conveys material about diversity in friendships stemming from different backgrounds. The name "Made" is strongly associated with individuals from Bali and the Hindu religion. "Joshua" is synonymous with those of the Christian faith. "Cici" is indicative of someone of Chinese descent. Lastly, "Aisyah" is commonly associated with individuals who practice Islam.

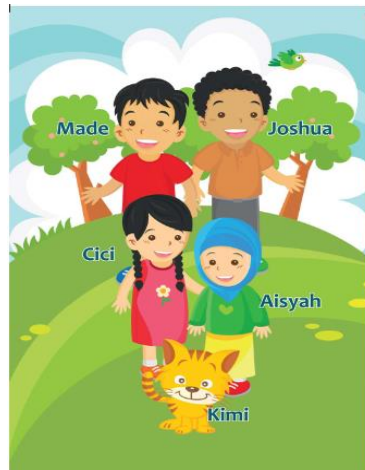


Figure 2. Diversity of characters in the book

Usage of Sensitive Language

Furthermore, it is imperative to assess the language employed within the book. Does the book employ language that is sensitive and respectful of various religious beliefs? Does the language utilized within the book foster open dialogue and appreciation for differences?

In relation to this second aspect, there is no evidence of sensitive language and respect for various religious beliefs in the book. The use of language in the book does not explicitly encourage open dialogue and appreciation for differences. However, there are diverse character names associated with specific ethnic and religious groups.



Figure 3. Diversity of characters engaging in dialogue within the book (page 2)

Activities and Exercises

The book should ideally present a variety of activities and exercises that are relevant to the values of religious moderation. Are there any activities that encourage students to understand different religious perspectives, engage in inclusive understanding, or promote interfaith cooperation?

Based on the analysis results, the book lacks activities that encourage students to comprehend differing religious perspectives, engage in inclusive understanding, or promote interfaith cooperation. However, it primarily highlights diverse character illustrations, such as a female character wearing a headscarf (associated with Islam) and characters representing other distinct religious affiliations.



Figure 4. Diversity of characters in activities and exercises (page 8)

Content and Cultural Representation

The relevance of this book can also be assessed by the extent to which its content and cultural representations within the instructional material reflect the religious diversity present in society. Does this book encompass stories or examples that reflect diverse cultures and respect various religious traditions?

Based on the analysis results, this book has included stories or examples that reflect diverse cultures and respect various religious traditions. There are several sections within the book where different cultures, characters, and the religions they represent interact with one another in everyday life. This implicitly demonstrates religious moderation behaviors.



Figure 5. Representation of diverse cultures in the book (pages 15 and 107)

Alignment with the Curriculum

Lastly, the relevance of this book is also related to its alignment with the prevailing elementary school curriculum. Does this book encompass content that is relevant to the English language curriculum standards at the elementary school level? Are the values of religious moderation consistently integrated into the curriculum?

Based on the analysis results, this book has included content that is relevant to the English language curriculum standards at the elementary school level. However, the values of religious moderation have not been consistently integrated into the curriculum.

As discussed previously, in addition to the book analysis (document), the researchers also gathered data for this study through surveys and interviews. Below are the survey results obtained:

The Importance of Integrating Religious Moderation Values into English Language Teaching Materials for Elementary Schools

Regarding this point, 83.3% of the respondents stated that the integration of religious moderation values into English language teaching materials is “Very Important.” Meanwhile, the remaining 16.7% of respondents indicated it is “Important.”

1. Seberapa penting menurut Anda untuk mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama dalam materi ajar Bahasa Inggris untuk SD/MI?

12 jawaban

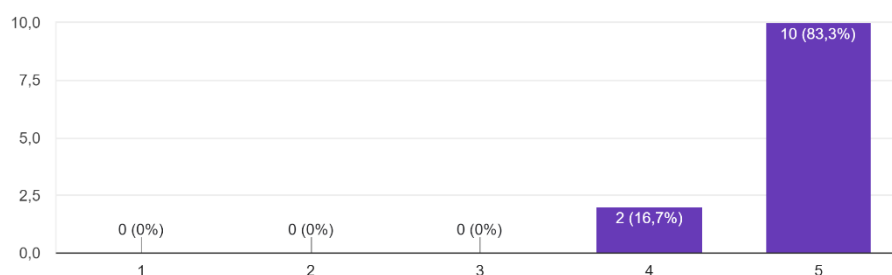


Figure 6. Item of a survey question about how important integrating religious moderation values into ELT materials for primary schools

Aspects of Religious Moderation that Should be Integrated into English Language Teaching Materials for Elementary Schools

Based on the survey results, the religious moderation topics that can be sequentially integrated into English language teaching materials are tolerance, interfaith harmony, brotherhood, appreciating differences, open-mindedness, and justice.

2. Menurut Anda, nilai-nilai moderasi beragama mana yang seharusnya diintegrasikan dalam materi ajar Bahasa Inggris untuk SD/MI? (Pilih semua yang berlaku)

12 jawaban

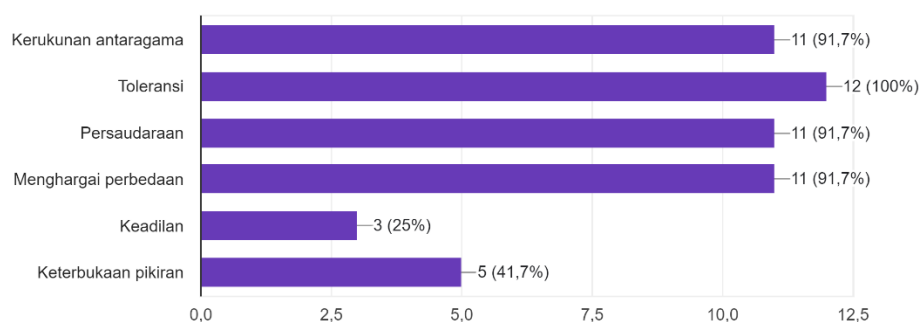


Figure 7. Item of a survey question about the kinds of religious moderation values that should be integrated into ELT materials

The Extent to Which Current English Language Teaching Materials for Elementary Schools Have Integrated Religious Moderation Values

Based on the survey results, it can be stated that 25% of respondents believe that the integration of religious moderation values into current English language teaching materials for

elementary schools is “Good,” 66.7% of respondents are “Uncertain,” and 8.3% of respondents consider it to be “Insufficient.”

6. Se jauh mana Anda merasa materi ajar Bahasa Inggris yang ada saat ini mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama?
12 jawaban

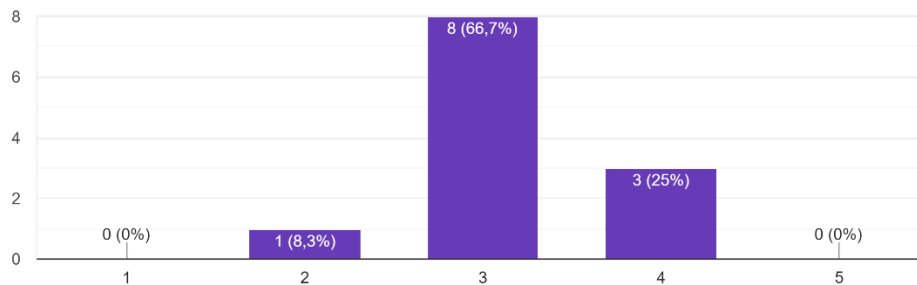


Figure 8. Item of a survey question about the extent to which ELT materials for primary schools have integrated religious moderation values

The survey results are consistent with the interview findings. Below are some interview excerpts:

“I feel that the current English language teaching materials are not entirely relevant to religious moderation values. I rarely find content that explicitly includes religious and interfaith harmony aspects in English language teaching in elementary schools.” - Respondent 1

“When teaching English, I feel limited in integrating religious moderation values into the available teaching materials. I want learning resources consistent with religious teachings and capable of developing students' understanding of the importance of tolerance and harmony in religion.” - Respondent 2

“I see an urgent need to update English language teaching materials in elementary schools to better reflect religious moderation values. Currently, teaching materials are too focused on linguistic aspects and lack representation of how religious values can be applied in the context of English.” - Respondent 3

“So far, we've had to improvise and add content about religious moderation into existing English language teaching materials. However, I hope there will be well-integrated learning resources so that we can teach English more consistently and raise students' awareness of religious values.” - Respondent 4

“I acknowledge that existing English language teaching materials for elementary schools are not sufficient in covering religious moderation values. I often find it challenging to find content that can build students' understanding of the importance of respecting religions and upholding harmony in learning English.” - Respondent 5

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the book “My Next Words: For Elementary School” for Grade V is not fully relevant to religious moderation values in the context of English language learning in elementary schools. The analysis of teaching material content, language usage, activities and exercises, and cultural representation indicates that the integration of religious moderation values in this book is still limited.

The teaching material content in this book primarily focuses on grammar mastery, vocabulary, and speaking and writing skills, while the integration of religious moderation values is minimal. Although there are characters with different backgrounds and religions, there is no sensitive language usage or open dialogue that encourages appreciation of differences. Activities and exercises also do not explicitly include understanding different religious perspectives or interfaith cooperation.

While the book reflects cultural diversity by representing characters from various religions, the teaching material content needs to be expanded to include stories or examples that more clearly depict religious diversity and respect various religious traditions. Additionally, the integration of religious moderation values into the curriculum applicable to elementary schools has not been consistently implemented.

From the survey and interview results, it can be concluded that educators feel that the existing English language teaching materials are not fully relevant to religious moderation values. They desire learning resources that are more consistent with religious teachings and capable of developing students' understanding of the importance of tolerance and harmony in religion.

In summary, the book “My Next Words: For Elementary School” for Grade V needs to be updated and developed to better reflect religious moderation values. The integration of these values into teaching material content, sensitive language usage, activities and exercises, and cultural representation should be enhanced to make the book more relevant and help students understand the importance of respecting religions and upholding harmony in learning English in elementary schools.

Discussion

Content of Instructional Material

The primary content of the textbook is heavily focused on traditional language skills, such as grammar, vocabulary acquisition, and the development of speaking and writing abilities. However, the integration of religious moderation values, such as tolerance, mutual respect, justice, and inclusivity, is notably limited. For instance, while the book features diverse character names that implicitly suggest religious and cultural diversity, it does not explicitly address or promote the importance of interreligious understanding and respect (Figure 1).

Usage of Sensitive Language

The language used in the textbook does not actively encourage sensitivity towards different religious beliefs or foster an appreciation for religious diversity. While the presence of diverse character names like Made, Joshua, Cici, and Aisyah suggests an effort to reflect Indonesia's multicultural society, the textbook lacks explicit language or dialogues that promote religious tolerance and interfaith harmony (Figure 3).

Activities and Exercises

The analysis of the activities and exercises in the textbook reveals a significant gap in promoting religious moderation. There are no activities designed to help students understand different religious perspectives, engage in inclusive dialogues, or cooperate across faiths. The exercises primarily focus on language skills without integrating themes of religious or cultural understanding (Figure 4).

Content and Cultural Representation

Although the textbook includes stories and examples that reflect cultural diversity, these are not sufficiently leveraged to teach religious moderation explicitly. The inclusion of characters from various religious backgrounds is a positive step, but the narratives and dialogues do not explicitly address how these diverse backgrounds can coexist harmoniously (Figure 5).

Alignment with the Curriculum

The textbook aligns well with the English language curriculum standards at the elementary school level, covering essential linguistic skills. However, the integration of religious moderation values into the curriculum is inconsistent. This misalignment suggests a need for curriculum developers to more explicitly incorporate these values into educational standards and resources.

Educator Perspectives

The survey and interview data underscore the educators' perception that current English teaching materials are insufficiently integrated with religious moderation values. A significant majority of respondents (83.3%) emphasized the critical importance of incorporating these values into teaching materials, reflecting a strong demand for resources that promote tolerance and religious harmony (Figures 6-8). Interviews further highlighted the challenges teachers face in integrating religious moderation into their lessons, often requiring improvisation and additional effort to fill the gaps left by the textbook.

This research focuses on analyzing the integration of religious moderation values in the book “My Next Words: For Elementary School” for Grade V. Religious moderation values involve respect for religious differences, interfaith cooperation, tolerance, and harmony. This theory is supported by an inclusive approach in education, where these values are considered essential for creating social harmony and a deep understanding of cultural and religious diversity (Subchi et al., 2022; Yanti & Witro, 2020).

To analyze the relevance of the book “My Next Words: For Elementary School” for Grade V in the context of English language learning in elementary schools, one can refer to the teaching guidelines and curriculum in place. At the elementary level, English language teaching should encompass aspects of grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. However, it is also important to integrate social and cultural values, including religious moderation values, so that students can develop a holistic understanding and interact effectively in a diverse religious society (Faucette et al., 2010; Wang, 2011).

To assess the development of teaching materials in the book, one can refer to the principles of inclusive teaching material development. Inclusive teaching materials should include religious and cultural diversity and encourage appreciation of differences (Bennett, 1993). In this context, it is important to provide examples of stories, dialogues, and activities that depict religious diversity and respect different religious traditions (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; ERIC Clearinghouse, 2002).

The survey and interview results with educators provide a deeper understanding of their perspectives on the relevance of current teaching materials. In this regard, educators' opinions can be seen as their participation in curriculum development and their assessment of the success of current teaching. Previous studies involving surveys and interviews with educators in the context of inclusive education and foreign language teaching can provide a strong theoretical foundation (Alsubaie, 2016).

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that the book “My Next Words: For Elementary School” for Grade V be updated and developed. The development of more inclusive and relevant teaching materials can include the enrichment of religious moderation values in the content of teaching materials, the use of sensitive language, activities and exercises that consider understanding different religious perspectives, and broader and more accurate cultural representations (Cardona, 2021; Cardona et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

In summary, the analysis of the book “My Next Words: For Elementary School” for Grade V reveals several key findings and areas of concern. The book does not fully align with religious moderation values, which include tolerance, mutual respect, justice, and inclusive

attitudes. Content of Instructional Material of the book primarily focuses on language skills such as grammar, vocabulary, speaking, and writing, with limited integration of religious moderation values. It lacks emphasis on the significance of religious values and interreligious tolerance. Usage of Sensitive Language in the book does not employ sensitive language that respects various religious beliefs or fosters open dialogue and appreciation for differences. However, it features diverse character names associated with specific ethnic and religious groups. Activities and Exercises of the book lack activities that encourage students to understand different religious perspectives, engage in inclusive understanding, or promote interfaith cooperation. It primarily highlights diverse character illustrations. Content and Cultural Representation of the book represents cultural diversity by featuring characters from various religions, but it needs to expand its content to include stories or examples that more explicitly depict religious diversity and respect various religious traditions. Alignment with the Curriculum of the book includes content relevant to the English language curriculum at the elementary school level, but the integration of religious moderation values into the curriculum is inconsistent. Additionally, surveys and interviews with educators reveal that they consider the integration of religious moderation values into English language teaching materials for elementary schools to be highly important. However, they find the current teaching materials lacking in this regard and express a need for more inclusive and relevant resources.

Several recommendations can be made based on the findings of the analysis of the book “My Next Words: For Elementary School” for Grade V. Firstly, the book should be updated and developed to better integrate religious moderation values into its content. This includes incorporating relevant themes, sensitive language, and activities that promote interfaith understanding and tolerance. Secondly, the book should expand its cultural representation to more explicitly depict religious diversity and respect for various religious traditions. Thirdly, efforts should be made to consistently integrate religious moderation values into the elementary school curriculum. Lastly, educators should receive training and resources to effectively teach religious moderation values in English language classes.

In conclusion, the book “My Next Words: For Elementary School” for Grade V requires improvements to align more closely with religious moderation values. These enhancements will contribute to a more inclusive and relevant English language learning experience for elementary school students, fostering tolerance and interfaith harmony.

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