A Critical Discourse Analysis of Religious Tolerance in ELT Textbook for Senior High School

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Abstract: This study was conducted to investigate how religious tolerance portrayed in ELT textbook for senior high school students for grade 10. The present study applied critical discourse analysis (CDA), framed in fairclough’s 3D model approaches in analyzing visual and textual artifact materials that represents the religious tolerance in the textbook. The findings showed that religious tolerance has very rare found in the textbook, which is represented 6 times through different images and oral text. The visual and textual data of religious tolerance contained in each textbook unit have been identified using the categories of fairness (F), respect (R1), and reasonableness (R2). The findings showed that there is still a lack of visual and verbal representation of religious tolerance in the textbook.

Keywords: religious tolerance, critical discourse analysis, English textbook

Introduction

As a curriculum document, English textbooks serve as the main learning materials for students in English teaching-learning process. English teachers commonly use textbooks to help them teach and achieve the curriculum goals (Mukundan, Hajimohammadi, & Nimechisalem, 2011). As a language learning resource, textbooks contain a wide range of texts selected purposefully to reach particular curriculum goals. In selecting texts and developing tasks, textbook authors are impressed by the curriculum ideology to some extent. For this reason, textbooks are seen as an agent of ideologies embedded in the official/prescribed curriculum (van Dijk 2001, Widodo 2016); a curriculum artifact transmitting ideas and ideologies to shape learners’ identities (Awayed-Bishara 2015; Widodo 2018); and a medium of instilling universal and community-specific values in learners (Widodo 2018). Widodo (2018) maintains that language textbooks do not only teach language but also conduct different hidden messages.

Researching the issue of religious tolerance in English textbooks is crucial for several reasons. First, Indonesia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religion country, requiring the Indonesian people to be tolerable citizens. Second, as a country adopting democratic ideology, every citizen has his/her own rights to adhere a
particular religion and has been protected by the law. Third, ideologically, school textbooks in Indonesia are required to avoid pornographic content, extreme ideology, radicalism, violence, ethnic-religious-racial sentiments, and gender bias (Direktorat Jenderal Peraturan Perundangan-undangan 2016). Therefore, textbooks have a mission to promote character education, such as avoiding pornographic content, extreme ideology, radicalism, violence, ethnic-religious-racial sentiments, and gender bias through textual, audio, visual, and audio-visual materials in the textbooks.

In the last decade, the issue of religious tolerance has been examined by previous textbook analysts in different context by applying various methods of analysis (see Hayes, 2013; Parker, 2014; Raihani, 2014; Wijaya, 2018). Raihani (2014) showed that religious tolerance in English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks are taught indirectly. Hayes (2013) discovered that religious tolerance dominate the contents of EFL textbooks for ten grade of senior high school. On the other hands, Parker (2014) found less materials that are dominantly represented while in the international textbooks, spiritual content are absent. Wijaya (2018) who examined ELT textbooks using spiritual content analysis found that that religion is not overtly depicted nor is it explicitly taught.

Based on the previous studies, it can be synthesized that a research uncovering religious tolerance depicted in English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks used in Indonesia by using critical discourse analysis (CDA) is rarely investigated in Indonesia. In other word the issue of religious tolerance has not been sufficiently touched by many researchers. Since Indonesian is known for its spiritualism, materials containing religious tolerance are essentially put into ELT textbooks. In order to fill the mentioned gap, this study aims to analyze the selected textbook of the latest edition in 2017 from the 2013 English curriculum. The present study will set out to carefully analyze the religious tolerance in the Indonesian ELT textbook. The focus of the present study is to analyze visuals (such as pictures, photographs, and diagram) and verbal texts which carry religious tolerance messages in the selected ELT textbook.

In recent years, religious tolerance in the textbook has been researched by some researchers in various contexts. From the articles which I have reviewed from 2011 to 2021, religious tolerance was examined in the textbook by the previous researchers by using different tools of analysis and methods.

First, by using mixed content analysis and mixed-method analysis, Bouzid (2016) analyzed three Moroccan second-year baccalaureate ELT textbooks to discover the representation of religion from a cultural perspective in these textbooks by focusing on the textual and visual representation in the textbook. Bouzid discovered that students are not sensitized about respect for diversity, tolerance,
and peaceful coexistence among various religions by the examined textbooks. In the end, some ways in which religious antagonism could be minimized are suggested.

Second, Alabdulhadi (2019) investigated the extent to which secondary school Islamic education textbooks consider Islamic religious tolerance and how it is presented. By using content analysis, the finding of this research showed that tolerance is mentioned much more often than intolerance, but there is still room for improvement. Future research has to concentrate on investigating the methods that teachers use in the classroom to encourage students’ awareness concerning religious tolerance. Investigating the perspectives of learners and parents, concerning religious tolerance and its practical application in the program of studies is also an important future direction.

Third, research done by Mulya & Aditomo (2018) has discussed the use of discourse analysis in researching religious tolerance in education. Methodological benefits have been presented by using discourse analysis. The finding of this research shows up that learners drew up on their understanding of religious tolerance (i.e. discourse of nationalism, the discourse of tolerant theologies, and discourse of romantic love). A new contextuality contributed to the accumulation of knowledge in this scholarship from an under-presented global south country, Indonesia through these findings. The limits can be explored of tolerance by future research as discourse, such as the impossibility to draw on the discourse of tolerance to allow inter-religion marriage, same-sex marriage, or rather atheism in a context like Indonesia.

Fourth, Ghazi et al (2010) identified the content of promotes religious tolerance, intolerance, and the strength or weakness of the concept of religious tolerance in social studies and Pakistan studies textbooks. That study was delimited to the content analysis on religious tolerance and intolerance in the social studies textbook of the 8 class and Pakistan studies textbooks of 10 class published by the NWFP textbook Peshawar, Pakistan. The result showed that in both the textbooks of social studies and Pakistan studies, may be inferred that in social studies respective objectives on religious tolerance are translated only in one lesson while in Pakistan studies in three lessons or units. Research studies are also recommended for other subjects at every level in that the intolerance content may be eliminated from the textbooks for supporting peace in the world.

Even though the studies on the representation of religious tolerance in English textbooks have been conducted in a few countries in recent years, studies in a similar field are still rarely conducted especially in Indonesian textbooks with regard to textual and visual data. To fill the gap, the current study tries to examine the representation of religious tolerance in Indonesian English textbooks published by the Indonesian ministry of education and culture. I will do a critical discourse
analysis that concentrates on the textual and visual data in the textbook utilizing van Leeuwen’s theoretical framework (2008).

Research Method

The data of the present study are texts and pictures containing religious tolerance spread in the fifteen chapters of the English textbook. Religious tolerance means religious faith, religious activities, or people who maintain a religious faith and engage in religious activities (Newman, 1978). This involves respecting the rights of other individuals to keep their religious faith and practice their religion. In Islam, religious tolerance is manifested by the acceptance of religious diversity (Al-Sharbaji, 2002; Al-Rajhi, 2004). Islam refuses compelling anybody to accept or leave a religion; it specifically allows non-Muslims to convey, practice, and teach their religious beliefs. The peaceful followers are banned from the offensive against other religions. The documentation method will be used to collect data. Pictures and texts that contain religious tolerance will be collected and analyzed to discover meanings (Corbin and Strauss (2008). The texts and pictures shows acceptance of living together peacefully among people with different religious beliefs.

This study used CDA because it looked at how a recommended textbook in Indonesia depicted religious tolerance through both texts and pictures. There are some steps to analyze the texts and pictures that discuss religious tolerance in an ELT textbook (Fairclough, 1984). In the first step, texts and pictures that demonstrate respect for people of different religions will be identified. The second step is codifying the collected data, based on the following indicators: (1) texts and pictures showing religious activities, (2) texts and pictures showing respect for the rights of other people who practice their religion; (3) texts and pictures allowing non-Muslims to convey, practice, and teach their religious beliefs. The third step is describing the pictures and texts. The fourth step is to interpret the data, based on the contexts of situation. The final step is to discuss the texts and pictures in wider social practices.

Findings and Discussion

The visual and textual data of religious tolerance contained in each textbook unit have been identified using the categories of fairness (F), respect (R1), and reasonableness (R2). The following table shows the distribution of religious tolerance in each unit of the textbook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Location/Page</th>
<th>The distribution of religious tolerance through images and texts in the textbook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>p. 28, p. 33, p. 35, p. 36</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>p. 70</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4 images + 2 texts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
N/A: not available
F: fairness
R1: respect
R2: reasonableness

According to Table 4.1, there is no image shows the representation of fairness (F), four images and two texts shows the representation of respect (R1), and no evidence shows the representation of reasonableness (R2). The distribution of religious tolerance images and writings is uneven, which means that some chapters lack associated images and texts related to religious tolerance discourses.

Visual Representation of Religious Tolerance in the Textbook
On page 33 in Unit 2 of "Congratulating and Complimenting Others." The physical appearances of the characters convey a sense of the differences between the two women. This image represents two women who are smiling at each other. The first female figure is dressed in a light blue hijab with a long-sleeved white T-shirt and a long light blue skirt, while the second female character is dressed in a long-sleeved pink T-shirt and maroon pants with long wavy blond hair.

This image conveys the meaning of respect (R1). The lady who wears the hijab is deemed Muslim in this context because the hijab is part of the Muslim women's
identity (Wagner et al., 2012). However a woman with long wavy blond hair (who does not wear a hijab) may be of another religion or faith. Furthermore, the smile on both women’s faces indicates that they are pleased with their contrasting ways of wearing. Because a smile conveys a positive mood at the time it occurs (Wierzbicka, 1995).

The image below is from Unit 2 of “Congratulating and Complementing Others” on page 35. This second image depicts two people, a guy and a lady, who are smiling at each other. A female figure wears a pink hijab with a long-sleeved white T-shirt and a pink skirt and appears to be a student, while a male character wears a long dark blue shirt and black leggings and appears to be a painter/artist.

Respect is conveyed connotatively in the image (R1). This value may be noticed in the diverse appearances of the characters, indicating that the people are of different religions because the name of one of the characters indicates a distinct faith. Furthermore, the characters’ smiles as their facial expressions reveal that they are all fine with their differences.

The third picture is also from the same unit. This graphic depicts some pupils playing football in a denotative manner (see appendix 4, image 3). The physical looks of each character reveal the differences. There are three boys and three girls in the class. The boys wear senior high school uniforms, as do the girl, however one of the girls wears a veil with a long shirt and a long skirt, while the rest wear shirt and shorts. They have fun playing football together.

This image, as a visual semiotic resource, connotes the value of respect (R1). This image depicts the value of respects (R1). The girls pupils who wear the veil are deemed Muslim because the veil is part of the Muslim women’s identity (Wagner et al., 2012), whilst the students who do not wear a veil are thought to be of another religion.

The last image containing religious tolerance can be seen on page 70 of "Let’s Visit Niagara Falls" unit 5. This image conveys to readers that there is a guy and a woman (see Appendix 4, image 4). A teacher is a man who wears a blue long shirt with a red tie and black trousers. And the girl with a white shirt and long blue skirt with a grey veil can be considered a student because she has a bag and several books, indicating that she is a student.

This image also conveys the importance of respect (R1). The various appearances of the characters demonstrate this value. Furthermore, those characters’ smiles as facial expressions show that they are okay with the differences.

**Textual Representation of Religious Tolerance in the Textbook**

In this research, religious tolerance is also being textually analyzed; the analyst discovered only two texts that bring the religious tolerance categories. On page 28, unit 2 of "Congratulating and Complementing Others" has the first text. This passage depicts a dialogue between Rani and Anisa.
This text, as a literary semiotic resource, brings one of the religious tolerance categories, respect (R1). The conversation is about complementing people, and Anisa complimented Rani on his pink head scarf. Rani is wearing a pink head scarf, which is typical of Muslim ladies.

The last text is also in the same unit, but on a different page. This image is on page 35. This text also suggests how to compliment the manner in which others dress. Wayan and Zainab compliment one other on their clothing in this text. This text brings the respect (R1) which can be seen to the sentence like beautiful new skirt and new pair of shoes.

Based on the discussion above, just one value of religious tolerance is visually and textually portrayed in the Ministry of Education and Culture's EFL textbook. According to the analysis, 3 out of 83 images and 2 out of 21 texts in the textbook indicated religious tolerance. The illustration of religious tolerance in the textbook allows students to learn to be respectful of religious diversity.

Conclusion

This study examined how a Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X (English for grade X of High School/ Islamic High School/ Vocational High School/ Islamic Vocational High School) EFL textbook depicts religious tolerance both visually and textually. Several procedures (i.e. identification, coding, analysis, interpretation, and discussion) based on all three stages of critical discourse analysis were used to examine the visual (pictures) and textual (texts).

The results showed that only 3 out of 83 images and 2 out of 21 texts in the textbook properly represented religious tolerance (i.e. fairness (F)), respect (R1), and reasonableness (R2). In particular, the two words only addressed respect (R1) while the four images only addressed two categories, namely fairness (F) and respect (R1). The findings showed that there is still a lack of visual and verbal representation of religious tolerance in the textbook.

References


Oxford university press.


