

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING MATERIALS AND RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN INDONESIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A NARRATIVE CASE STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

*The research addressed the gap in understanding how English Language Teaching (ELT) materials in Indonesian primary schools promoted religious moderation and fostered values such as tolerance and respect for diversity. Utilizing a narrative case study approach, it examined the role of ELT materials in advancing religious moderation. Through an analysis of ELT textbooks and supplementary resources, the research evaluated the representation of religious moderation themes and explored teachers' perceptions and use of these materials in their classrooms. The research contributed to the broader discourse on education's role in fostering peace and tolerance, providing insights for policymakers, educators, and curriculum developers. Employing a qualitative narrative case study design, this research captured the experiences of English language teachers from three primary schools in diverse settings in Pekalongan, Central Java, Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations, with validation techniques such as triangulation and member checking ensuring credibility. Thematic analysis was used to systematically analyze the data. Findings reveal both the potential and limitations of ELT materials in promoting religious moderation. While textbooks feature characters from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, they often lack explicit integration of religious moderation values, focusing more on language skills. Teachers address these gaps with supplementary strategies, including additional stories, activities, and discussions that emphasize religious diversity and interfaith tolerance. The research highlights the need for curriculum developers to prioritize religious moderation in educational materials and for policymakers to support professional development initiatives for teachers. Implementing these recommendations can better equip students with values essential for fostering a harmonious and inclusive society.*

**Keywords:** ELT materials, religious moderation, Indonesian primary school, teachers' perception

## INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation is fundamental to fostering a peaceful and inclusive society, particularly in multicultural and multi-religious countries like Indonesia. The Indonesian government has recognized the importance of instilling values of tolerance, mutual respect, and religious moderation from an early age (Ali

et al., 2021; Mukhibat et al., 2024; Nafisa, Iskandar, & Nugraha, 2024; Suciati, Sa'adah, & Mukarromah, 2023). The educational sector, especially primary education, plays a critical role in this endeavor. English language teaching (ELT) materials, often enriched with diverse cultural and ethical content, can be instrumental in promoting these values among young learners (Puspitasari et al., 2021).

English, as a global language, not only facilitates international communication but also serves as a medium through which various cultural and religious narratives can be shared (Aleksandrova et al., 2024; Fauzan & Nadia, 2024; Khomyshak, 2024; Raja et al., 2022). In the context of Indonesian primary schools, incorporating themes of religious moderation into ELT materials can provide students with a broader worldview and foster an environment of mutual understanding and respect. Previous studies have highlighted the potential of educational content in shaping students' attitudes and beliefs (Ikhrom et al., 2023; Lee, 2022; Siegel & Daumiller, 2021), making it imperative to explore how ELT materials can be effectively utilized to cultivate religious moderation.

Recent studies highlight the importance of integrating religious moderation values into English language teaching materials to promote tolerance and prevent radicalism. According to Ahmad (2023), English language teaching (ELT) materials can significantly contribute to promoting the values of religious moderation among young learners by incorporating diverse cultural and ethical content. Furthermore, studies highlight that integrating religious moderation into educational curricula not only enhances students' understanding of different beliefs but also cultivates a sense of community and respect for diversity (Aflahah, Nisa, & Aldeia, 2023). However, challenges remain in effectively implementing these educational strategies across various regions, which may affect the consistency of outcomes (Allo, Gusmino, & Sumiaty, 2023). Overall, the alignment of educational practices with the principles of religious moderation is essential for nurturing a harmonious society in Indonesia (Cholil, 2022). Researchers have developed English course books and modules that incorporate themes such as tolerance, multiculturalism, and respect for diversity (Andriani & Puspitasari, 2024; Budiasih & Dewi, 2023). These materials aim to strengthen students' religious moderation while improving their language skills. Various approaches to embedding religious moderation values in English instruction have been proposed, including communication activities and practical classroom applications (Farida & Sukraini, 2021). The integration of these values can be achieved through lesson plans, learning materials, teaching activities, and evaluation methods (Sholeh et al., 2022). By incorporating religious moderation indicators into English language teaching, educators can foster an active learning environment that promotes national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and appreciation of local cultures (Andriani & Puspitasari, 2024). This approach is particularly relevant in Islamic educational institutions to prevent intolerance and radicalism (Budiasih & Dewi, 2023; Sholeh et al., 2022). Further, the Indonesian education system has undergone significant reforms aimed at integrating character education into the curriculum (Kurniasih, Utari, & Akhmadi, 2017; Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2020). These reforms emphasize the development of students' moral and ethical values

alongside academic achievements. However, despite the recognized potential of English language teaching (ELT) materials to promote religious moderation, the specific role of these materials in fostering values such as tolerance, non-violence, and respect for diversity within the Indonesian education context remains under-researched.

This narrative case study addresses a significant gap in existing research by exploring the design and implementation of English language teaching (ELT) materials in Indonesian primary schools to promote religious moderation. Through a comprehensive analysis of ELT textbooks and supplementary materials, the research seeks to evaluate the representation of themes related to religious moderation and to examine teachers' perceptions and utilization of these materials in classroom settings. The findings will enrich the broader discourse on the role of education in cultivating a culture of peace and tolerance, offering valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and curriculum developers. By focusing on the intersection of language instruction and promoting religious moderation, this research highlights a crucial aspect of educational content in Indonesian primary schools. The implications of the results extend to the development of ELT materials that not only enhance language proficiency but also support the holistic development of students as tolerant and respectful individuals. The specific objectives of this research are: (1) to analyze the representation of religious moderation values within the ELT materials utilized in Indonesian primary schools, with particular emphasis on the textbook *My Next Words: For Elementary School*, and (2) to evaluate how English teachers perceive and implement these religious moderation values in their classrooms, including their supplementary strategies for fostering religious tolerance through ELT materials.

## METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach, with a narrative case study research design, to explore how English language teaching (ELT) materials contribute to promoting religious moderation in Indonesian primary schools. The narrative approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of teachers' lived experiences and perspectives. This method is particularly suited for capturing the nuances and contextual factors that influence the integration of religious moderation themes into ELT materials.

The participants in this research include English language teachers from three primary schools in different regions of Pekalongan, Central Java, Indonesia. The selection of schools is based on purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of urban, suburban, and rural settings. In total, six teachers (two from each school) are interviewed. The teachers have at least three years of experience in teaching English, ensuring they have substantial familiarity with the ELT materials used in their

classrooms.

Data collection involves multiple techniques to ensure a rich and comprehensive dataset. (1) Interview: An in-depth interview is conducted with the teachers to gather in-depth insights into how they perceive and utilize ELT materials to promote religious moderation. The interviews explore their teaching practices, benefits and challenges, and the effectiveness of the materials. (2) Document analysis: The primary ELT textbooks and supplementary materials used in the selected schools are analyzed. This analysis identifies the presence and representation of religious moderation themes within the content, exercises, and illustrations. (3) Classroom observations: Observations of English language classes are conducted to see how teachers implement the materials and engage students in discussions related to religious moderation. Detailed field notes are taken to capture the interactions and instructional strategies used.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data, this research employs several validation techniques. Triangulation is a key method involving the use of multiple data sources, interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations to cross-verify findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Additionally, member checking is conducted by sharing the preliminary findings with the participants (teachers) to verify the accuracy of the interpretations and to provide them with an opportunity to offer feedback or additional insights (Lincoln, 1985). These combined strategies enhance the validity and reliability of the research's findings, providing a well-rounded and credible exploration of the role of ELT materials in promoting religious moderation in Indonesian primary schools.

Data analysis for this research utilizes Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, which followed a six-phase process to identify and report patterns within the data. The first step involves familiarization with the data through repeated readings of interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents to identify initial ideas. Next, initial codes are generated by systematically highlighting significant portions of the data and labeling them using manual coding and qualitative data analysis software. After coding, the codes are organized into potential themes that reflect broader patterns related to the promotion of religious moderation in ELT materials. These themes are reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represent the data. Each theme is then defined and named, capturing its essence and relevance to the research question. Finally, a narrative report is produced, integrating findings from interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations to provide a comprehensive understanding of how ELT materials foster religious moderation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first finding of this research is about the representation of religious moderation in ELT materials for Indonesian primary schools. To reveal the representation of religious moderation in ELT materials, a textbook analysis is conducted. The English textbook analyzed in this research is published by the Book Center of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. The specific textbook under review is titled *My Next Words: For Elementary School*, published in 2021. This analysis focuses on the edition designed for grade 5 students. *My Next Words: For Elementary School* serves as a reference book in three schools, from which the participants of this research are selected.

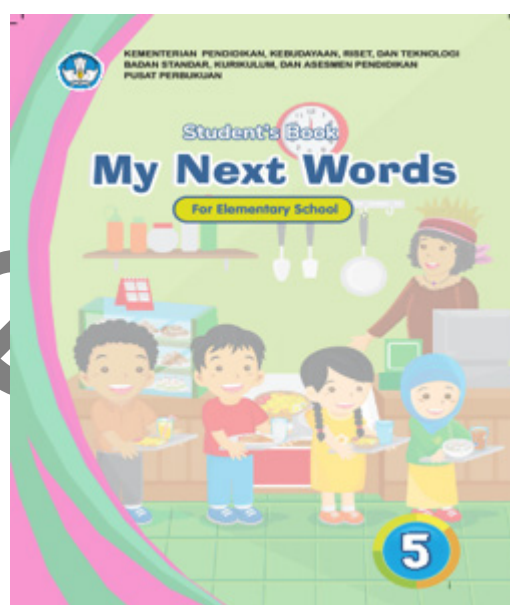


Figure 1 Outside Cover Page of *My Next Words*



Figure 2 Inside Cover Page of *My Next Words*



Figures 1 and 2 show that the book includes a diverse array of characters, such as Made, Joshua, Cici, and Aisyah, each representing different cultural and religious backgrounds. Through these character names, the book subtly communicates the value of diversity in friendships. Made is a name commonly associated with individuals from Bali, reflecting Hindu cultural heritage, Joshua is typically linked to the Christian faith, Cici is indicative of Chinese descent, while Aisyah is a name often associated with those practicing Islam. This thoughtful selection of names highlights the book's emphasis on fostering inclusive and multicultural relationships among students, illustrating the rich tapestry of Indonesia's diverse society.

However, an analysis of the available English instructional materials (Figures 3 and 4 in Appendix) reveals that most content predominantly emphasizes grammar mastery, vocabulary acquisition, and the development of speaking and writing skills. Despite these educational priorities, the inclusion of values related to religious moderation within the instructional content is notably sparse. The materials rarely highlight the importance of religious values or interreligious tolerance, both of which are essential components of religious moderation. This limited integration suggests a gap in the curriculum, where critical aspects of fostering mutual respect and understanding among different religious groups are insufficiently addressed.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the textbook *My Next Words: For Elementary School* does not fully incorporate religious moderation values within the context of English language learning. The textbook primarily emphasizes grammar mastery, vocabulary, and speaking and writing skills, with minimal attention to religious moderation. Although characters from diverse backgrounds and religions are included, there is a lack of passage that encourages the appreciation of differences. The activities and exercises do not explicitly promote understanding different religious perspectives or interfaith cooperation. While the book reflects cultural diversity by featuring characters from various religions, the teaching material needs to include more stories or examples that clearly depict religious diversity and respect for various religious traditions. Additionally, the integration of religious moderation values into the elementary school curriculum has not been consistently implemented.

Further, based on the interview results with the participants, the teachers do the following to address the limited ELT materials that integrate religious moderation values in English language teaching in primary schools. Firstly, they supplement the textbook *My Next Words* with additional stories, activities, and discussions that explicitly address religious diversity and interfaith tolerance. They create or curate reading materials and exercises that highlight the importance of respecting different religious beliefs and practices.

*"I noticed that 'My Next Words' doesn't fully*

*cover religious moderation, so I started incorporating additional stories and activities into my lessons. For instance, I bring short stories that focus on characters from different religious backgrounds working together and showing mutual respect. I also create discussion questions that prompt students to think about how they can apply these values in their own lives. This helps fill the gap and ensures that my students are learning about religious tolerance and diversity."* (Teacher A)

Secondly, the teachers foster an inclusive classroom environment by encouraging open dialogues about cultural and religious differences, helping students develop empathy and understanding. Role-playing activities and group projects focused on cooperation among students from diverse backgrounds can also be effective.

*"Absolutely. One of the things I do is encourage open dialogues about cultural and religious differences. For example, during a lesson on cultural traditions, I ask my students to share their own experiences, and we discuss their similarities and differences. I also use role-playing activities where students act out scenarios that involve cooperation and understanding among people from different religious backgrounds. This not only makes the lessons more engaging but also helps students develop empathy and a deeper understanding of diversity."* (Teacher B)

Additionally, the teachers also seek professional development opportunities to enhance their skills in addressing sensitive topics related to religious and cultural diversity. By integrating these strategies, teachers can significantly contribute to fostering a culture of religious moderation and tolerance among their students, preparing them to be respectful and open-minded individuals in a multicultural society.

*"I believe continuous learning is key, so I actively seek professional development opportunities. I attend workshops and seminars on teaching diversity and religious tolerance, which provide me with new strategies and insights. For example, I recently attended a workshop that focused on integrating cultural diversity into the curriculum, and I learned some fantastic new activities that I've already started using in my classroom. By staying informed and updated, I feel more confident and equipped to address these important topics with my students."* (Teacher C)

The findings of this research highlight both the potential and limitations of the English textbook *My Next Words: For Elementary School* in promoting religious moderation among Indonesian primary

school students. The textbook, published by the Book Center of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia in 2021, is designed for grade 5 students and serves as a reference in three schools. This section discusses the implications of the research's results, situating them within the broader context of existing literature.

The inclusion of characters from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds in *My Next Words* suggests an effort to reflect Indonesia's multicultural society. Characters such as Made, Joshua, Cici, and Aisyah represent Hindu, Christian, Chinese, and Muslim backgrounds, respectively. This diversity in character representation aligns with the principles of fostering inclusivity and multicultural relationships among students. As highlighted by both interviews and classroom observations, this aspect of the textbook facilitates initial conversations about cultural and religious differences, providing a foundation for promoting religious moderation.

Despite the positive representation of diverse characters, the textbook falls short in explicitly integrating religious moderation values within its instructional content. The analysis reveals that the focus remains predominantly on grammar mastery, vocabulary acquisition, and the development of speaking and writing skills. There is a notable scarcity of passages and activities that directly address religious values or interreligious tolerance. This finding echoes concerns raised in previous studies about the inadequate representation of intercultural and interfaith themes in educational materials (Mappaenre et al., 2023).

The gap identified in the textbook's content points to a missed opportunity for embedding religious moderation more deeply into the curriculum. As previous research suggests, textbooks play a critical role in shaping students' attitudes and beliefs (Arfani et al., 2022). Therefore, the lack of emphasis on religious moderation in *My Next Words* may limit its effectiveness in fostering a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of religious diversity among students.

In response to the limited coverage of religious moderation values in the textbook, teachers have adopted various supplementary strategies. Interviews with teachers reveal that they incorporate additional stories, activities, and discussions to explicitly address religious diversity and interfaith tolerance. For instance, Teacher A supplements the textbook with short stories that focus on characters from different religious backgrounds working together, thereby filling the gap left by the textbook. Similarly, Teacher B encourages open dialogues about cultural and religious differences and uses role-playing activities to foster empathy and understanding among students. These strategies align with the recommendations of scholars who advocate for a more dynamic and interactive approach to teaching religious moderation (Ghufron, 2022; Umar et al., 2024).

Furthermore, teachers seek professional development opportunities to enhance their skills

in addressing sensitive topics related to religious and cultural diversity. Teacher C's commitment to continuous learning through workshops and seminars demonstrates the importance of equipping educators with the necessary tools and strategies to effectively promote religious moderation in their classrooms. This aligns with findings from previous studies that emphasize the role of teacher training in successfully implementing values-based education (Latifah, Ishlahiyah, & Furaida, 2020).

The second finding of this research is about the teachers' perceptions of the importance of ELT materials in promoting religious moderation in Indonesian primary schools. Based on the interview results, the findings reveal that teachers hold a positive perception regarding the importance of ELT materials in promoting religious moderation among primary school students in Indonesia. Through in-depth interviews, three key themes emerged, i.e., the role of ELT materials in fostering tolerance, the practical application of religious moderation values in the classroom, and the broader impact on students' attitudes and behaviors.

Teacher A emphasizes the dual role of ELT materials in language learning and value education. The teacher highlights that ELT materials that are integrated with religious moderation values through stories and activities can promote an appreciation of religious diversity. This approach is seen as essential in a culturally and religiously diverse society like Indonesia. By introducing students to various beliefs and practices, ELT materials contribute to building a harmonious school environment and encourage students to become open-minded individuals. This perspective underscores the importance of early exposure to values of tolerance and respect, which are critical for fostering social cohesion.

*"Incorporating religious moderation in ELT materials is crucial for our students. These materials not only teach the English language but also serve as a medium to instill values of tolerance and understanding. In our diverse society, it's important for students to learn about different beliefs and cultures from a young age. We can integrate ELT materials with religious moderation values through presenting stories and activities that encourage students to appreciate and respect religious diversity. This helps in building a more harmonious school environment and prepares them to be more open-minded individuals in the future."*  
(Teacher A)

Additionally, Teacher B points out the practical benefits of integrating religious moderation into ELT lessons. The teacher observes that discussions sparked by the ELT materials help students internalize the concepts of respect and empathy towards different religious practices. This practical engagement with the material allows students to see religious moderation as

a tangible and relevant aspect of their daily lives. The teacher's experience indicates that such discussions can effectively reduce prejudice and create a more inclusive classroom atmosphere. This suggests that ELT materials serve not only as educational tools but also as catalysts for meaningful dialogue among students.

*"I believe that promoting religious moderation through ELT materials is a necessary step in our education system. As an English teacher, I have observed that lessons from ELT often spark meaningful discussions among students about respect and empathy towards different religious practices. These conversations are important because they help students understand the concept of religious moderation not just as a theoretical idea but as a practical aspect of their daily lives. Moreover, the integration of these values in our lessons helps to reduce prejudice and fosters a more inclusive classroom atmosphere."* (Teacher B)

Further, Teacher C highlights the significant role of ELT materials in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors. According to the teacher, ELT materials integrate with religious moderation values successfully weave messages of religious tolerance into its content, helping students understand the importance of respecting different religious perspectives. The teacher notes that the impact of these materials extends beyond the classroom, influencing how students interact with their peers and the broader community. This broader impact is crucial for cultivating a culture of peace and mutual respect, suggesting that the integration of religious moderation in ELT materials can contribute to long-term societal benefits.

*"ELT materials that promote religious moderation play a significant role in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors. It does a commendable job of weaving messages of religious tolerance into its content. Through various exercises and narratives, students learn the importance of respecting different religious perspectives. This is particularly important in primary school, where foundational values are being formed. The impact of these materials extends beyond the classroom, influencing how students interact with their peers and their broader community. It's a vital tool in our efforts to cultivate a culture of peace and mutual respect."* (Teacher C)

The findings from this research highlight the significant role of English Language Teaching (ELT) materials in promoting religious moderation among primary school students in Indonesia. Through in-depth interviews with teachers, three key themes emerge the role of ELT materials in fostering tolerance, the practical application of religious moderation values

in the classroom, and the broader impact on students' attitudes and behaviors.

Teacher A emphasizes the dual role of ELT materials in both language learning and value education. This perspective aligns with Anggarini's (2022) findings, which suggest that integrating religious moderation values into EFL materials helps students appreciate religious diversity and fosters social cohesion in a culturally diverse society like Indonesia. The presence of characters from different religious backgrounds in ELT materials can subtly communicate the importance of diversity and inclusion (Anggarini, 2022).

Teacher B highlighted the practical benefits of integrating religious moderation into ELT lessons, noting that discussions sparked by ELT materials help students internalize respect and empathy towards different religious practices. Recent studies highlight the importance of integrating religious moderation into ELT to promote tolerance and diversity awareness. Embedding religious moderation values in ELT can be achieved through communication activities, practical learning models, and tailored teaching materials (Budiasih & Dewi, 2023; Farida & Sukraini, 2021; Salman, Thalib, & Haling, 2022). Research demonstrates that incorporating religious moderation into ELT curricula can effectively reduce prejudice and foster inclusivity among students (Farida & Sukraini, 2021). This integration can be implemented through lesson plans, learning materials, teaching activities, and evaluations (Sholeh et al., 2022). Developed materials should address topics such as tolerance, respecting others, and multiculturalism while also focusing on language competencies (Budiasih & Dewi, 2023). Studies have shown that these approaches are both practical and effective in improving students' awareness of diversity and preventing intolerance and radicalism (Budiasih & Dewi, 2023; Salman, Thalib, & Haling, 2022).

Teacher C points out the broader impact of ELT materials on students' attitudes and behaviors, noting that these materials can influence how students interact with their peers and the broader community. This broader impact is crucial for cultivating a culture of peace and mutual respect, suggesting that the integration of religious moderation in ELT materials can contribute to long-term societal benefits. Budiasih and Dewi (2023) develop ELT materials incorporating religious moderation themes for Islamic higher education to prevent intolerance and radicalism. Widodo et al. (2018) emphasize the potential of ELT materials to mediate moral and cultural values. Bouzid (2016) examines religious content in Moroccan ELT textbooks, finding they inadequately address religious diversity and tolerance. The research suggests ELT textbooks could play a crucial role in reducing religious illiteracy and fostering positive attitudes towards other religions. These studies collectively underscore the potential of ELT materials to promote religious moderation, cultural understanding, and tolerance, contributing to broader societal benefits.



The third finding of this research is about the classroom implementation of ELT materials integrated with religious moderation values in Indonesian primary schools. Through interviews with teachers and classroom observations, the research reveals significant insights into how ELT materials integrated with religious moderation values impact student engagement, critical thinking, collaborative learning, and the overall classroom environment. The interviews with teachers highlight the effectiveness of integrating religious moderation values into ELT materials.

Teacher A emphasizes that the stories and activities integrated with religious moderation in ELT effectively prompted discussions among students about various religious practices and beliefs. The teacher notes that reading a story about a child celebrating a different religious festival sparks curiosity and sharing among students. This not only enhances their language skills but also fosters a deeper understanding and respect for religious diversity. This observation aligns with the goal of promoting religious moderation by encouraging students to appreciate different cultural and religious backgrounds.

*“In my classroom, integrating religious moderation values into ELT materials has been very effective. The stories and activities are designed to prompt students to discuss and reflect on different religious practices and beliefs. For example, when we read a story about a child celebrating a different religious festival, students were eager to share their own experiences and learn from each other. This not only enhanced their language skills but also fostered a deeper understanding and respect for diversity.” (Teacher A)*

Teacher B observes a notable shift in students' attitudes since using ELT materials integrated with religious moderation values. The exercises encourage students to critically reflect on their beliefs and those of others. This practical application helps students internalize values of empathy and respect, essential components of religious moderation. The teacher's insights underscore the role of ELT materials in developing students' critical thinking and emotional intelligence.

*“I've noticed a significant change in students' attitudes since we started using ELT materials with religious moderation values. The exercises encourage them to think critically about their own beliefs and those of others. In one lesson, we discussed a reading that highlighted the importance of empathy and kindness, regardless of religious background. Students participated enthusiastically and even came up with their own examples of how they could show empathy in their daily lives. This practical application helps them internalize these values.” (Teacher B)*

Teacher C highlights the holistic approach of integrating religious moderation into ELT lessons. The materials provide opportunities for students to learn important life values alongside language skills. An example is a dialogue exercise where characters from different religious backgrounds work together on a project. This leads to a group activity where students collaborate to present ideas on promoting peace and understanding in their community. Such activities make the lessons more engaging and meaningful, demonstrating the practical benefits of incorporating religious moderation into ELT materials.

*“The integration of religious moderation into ELT lessons has made my teaching more holistic. In addition to language skills, students are learning important life values. For instance, a dialogue exercise involved characters from different religious backgrounds working together on a project. This led to a group activity where students had to collaborate and present their ideas on how to promote peace and understanding in their community. Such activities make the lessons more engaging and meaningful.” (Teacher C)*

Further, classroom observations corroborate the positive perceptions shared by the teachers and provide additional insights into the practical implementation and impact of these materials. There are three key findings dealing with the implementation of ELT materials integrated with religious moderation based on classroom observations, i.e., enhancing student engagement, developing critical thinking skills, promoting collaborative learning, and creating a positive classroom atmosphere.

Students show active participation in discussions and activities related to religious moderation. During a reading session, students eagerly discuss different religious festivals mentioned in the text and shared personal experiences. This active engagement indicates that the materials are successful in capturing students' interest and encouraging them to explore religious diversity.

Activities that require students to reflect on and discuss religious values foster critical thinking. In one observed lesson, students compare and contrast religious practices and discuss common values. This exercise improves their analytical skills and promotes an appreciation for religious diversity. The ability to think critically about religious values is crucial for fostering a balanced and moderate perspective.

Group activities that involve tasks promoting religious moderation encourage students to work collaboratively. In a project-based learning session, students from diverse religious backgrounds work together to create a presentation on ways to foster religious harmony in their community. This collaborative effort develops teamwork skills and emphasizes the importance of unity, reflecting the core values of religious moderation.

The integration of religious moderation values contributes to a positive and inclusive classroom environment. Teachers report a noticeable reduction in conflicts and an increase in mutual respect among students. Observations confirm that students are more willing to listen to and respect their peers' opinions during discussions. This positive classroom atmosphere indicates the successful implementation of religious moderation values, fostering a respectful and harmonious learning environment.

The findings from this research reveal the positive perceptions held by teachers regarding the role of English Language Teaching (ELT) materials in promoting religious moderation among primary school students in Indonesia. Through interviews and classroom observations, it is evident that ELT materials integrated with religious moderation values significantly contribute to fostering tolerance, developing critical thinking skills, promoting collaborative learning, and creating a positive classroom atmosphere.

Teacher A highlights the effectiveness of integrating stories and activities with religious moderation values in prompting discussions about various religious practices and beliefs among students. This approach not only enhances language skills but also fosters a deeper understanding and respect for religious diversity. Recent studies highlight the importance of integrating religious moderation values into language teaching to promote tolerance and respect for diversity. Embedding these values in English and Arabic instruction has shown positive outcomes, enhancing students' engagement and understanding of religious diversity (Farida & Sukraini, 2021). Strategies for implementation include incorporating stories, activities, and cross-cultural understanding courses, which have proven effective in fostering inclusive attitudes and improving language skills (Nirwana & Darmadali, 2021). Research indicates that this approach not only enhances language proficiency but also cultivates a deeper appreciation for cultural and religious differences (Anggarini, 2022). By contextualizing language learning within a framework of religious moderation, educators can contribute to building a more tolerant and harmonious society. These studies demonstrate the potential of language education as a vehicle for promoting religious moderation and fostering inclusive attitudes among students (Anggarini, 2022; Farida & Sukraini, 2021; Nirwana & Darmadali, 2021).

Teacher B observes a notable shift in students' attitudes, indicating that exercises encouraging critical reflection on their own beliefs and those of others help internalize values of empathy and respect. Research indicates that internalizing religious moderation values in education can foster tolerance, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence among students. This process involves three key stages: value transformation, transaction, and trans-internalization (Kamal, 2017; Mufi, Elhady, & Mursalim, 2023). Schools play a crucial role in promoting religious moderation through

formal and hidden curricula, emphasizing principles such as honesty, openness, compassion, flexibility, and respect (Suratin, Lestari, & Sabarudin, 2023; Suryana & Hilmi, 2023). Strategies for implementing religious moderation education include encouraging critical reflection on personal beliefs and those of others, as well as practical engagement with diverse perspectives (Suratin, Lestari, & Sabarudin, 2023). The internalization of moderate Islamic values in education can help prevent extreme and radical actions while promoting social harmony (Kamal, 2017; Mufi, Elhady, & Mursalim, 2023). This approach is particularly important in Indonesia's diverse society, where fostering religious moderation can contribute to a more harmonious and inclusive educational environment (Suratin, Lestari, & Sabarudin, 2023; Suryana & Hilmi, 2023).

Teacher C points out the holistic approach of integrating religious moderation into ELT lessons, where students learn important life values alongside language skills. Group activities involving tasks promoting religious moderation encourage students to work collaboratively, develop teamwork skills, and emphasize unity. Researchers have developed English course books incorporating religious moderation indicators, covering national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and cultural accommodation (Andriani & Puspitasari, 2024). Embedding these values through communication activities in ELT is seen as crucial for building peace and harmony (Farida & Sukraini, 2021). In higher education, some Indonesian Islamic institutions have integrated moderation values into ELT, particularly in speaking activities (Rizal, 2020). These approaches aim to create a holistic learning environment where students acquire language skills while simultaneously developing important life values. The integration of religious moderation in ELT is viewed as a preventive measure against intolerance and a means to foster unity in diversity.

Classroom observations corroborate the positive perceptions shared by the teachers and provide additional insights into the practical implementation and impact of these materials. Students show active participation in discussions and activities related to religious moderation, indicating that the materials effectively capture their interest and encourage exploration of religious diversity. Activities fostering critical thinking and collaborative learning contribute to a positive and inclusive classroom environment, reducing conflicts and increasing student mutual respect. This positive atmosphere indicates the successful implementation of religious moderation values, promoting a respectful and harmonious learning environment.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research highlight both the potential and limitations of the ELT materials integrated with religious moderation values in



promoting religious moderation among Indonesian primary school students. The inclusion of characters from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds in the textbook suggests an effort to reflect Indonesia's multicultural society. However, the textbook falls short of explicitly integrating religious moderation values within its instructional content. The focus remains predominantly on grammar mastery, vocabulary acquisition, and the development of speaking and writing skills. The lack of passages and activities that directly address religious values or interreligious tolerance points to a missed opportunity for embedding religious moderation more deeply into the curriculum.

In response to the limited coverage of religious moderation values in the textbook, teachers have adopted various supplementary strategies. These include incorporating additional stories, activities, and discussions to explicitly address religious diversity and interfaith tolerance, as well as fostering an inclusive classroom environment through open dialogues and collaborative projects. Furthermore, teachers seek professional development opportunities to enhance their skills in addressing sensitive topics related to religious and cultural diversity. These strategies align with the recommendations of scholars who advocate for a more dynamic and interactive approach to teaching religious moderation. By adopting these recommendations, the educational system can better equip students with the values of tolerance, respect, and understanding, which are essential for fostering a harmonious and inclusive society.

The implications of these findings are significant for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers. Curriculum developers should prioritize the inclusion of religious moderation values in educational materials to ensure that students are exposed to diverse religious perspectives and learn to appreciate and respect these differences. For educators, the findings emphasize the importance of adopting supplementary strategies to fill the gaps in the textbook, ensuring that religious moderation is actively promoted in the classroom. Policymakers should recognize the importance of integrating religious moderation into the curriculum and support initiatives that provide professional development opportunities for teachers in this area. By addressing these implications, the education system can better equip students with the values of tolerance, respect, and understanding, which are essential for fostering a harmonious and inclusive society.

Despite the valuable insights gained from this research, several limitations should be acknowledged. The research focuses exclusively on one specific textbook, which may not fully represent the broader landscape of ELT materials used in Indonesian primary schools. Additionally, the perspectives of students and parents are not included, limiting a comprehensive understanding of how religious moderation values are perceived and integrated within the home environment.

Future research could expand the scope by examining a more comprehensive range of ELT

materials across different publishers and educational contexts. It would also be beneficial to include qualitative data from students and parents to explore their perceptions of religious moderation and how these values are reinforced outside the classroom. Longitudinal studies could further assess the impact of integrated religious moderation values on students' attitudes toward diversity and interfaith relations over time. Such efforts would provide a more holistic understanding of how educational materials can effectively promote religious moderation and contribute to a more inclusive society.

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## APPENDIX

### Framework (Semester 1)

Unit	Objectives	Language Focus
<b>1</b> What delicious bakso!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are able to identify taste of different foods and drinks.</li> <li>Students are able to mention taste of different foods and drinks.</li> <li>Students are able to make sentences to express taste of foods and drinks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sweet</li> <li>bitter</li> <li>salty</li> <li>sour</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> I want an ice cream cone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are able to quantify foods and drinks using quantifying nouns.</li> <li>Students are able to make sentences using vocabulary of foods and drinks and their quantifying nouns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an ice cream cone</li> <li>a bottle of water</li> <li>a hand of bananas</li> <li>a bar of chocolate</li> <li>a loaf of bread</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> How much is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are able to use words about food and drink related to price.</li> <li>Students are able to tell prices of foods and drinks.</li> <li>Students are able to make sentences to tell prices of foods and drinks.</li> <li>Students are able to create a poster about a restaurant menu.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a kilo of sugar is 11,000 rupiahs.</li> <li>a plate of gado - gado is 6,000 rupiahs.</li> <li>a glass of orange juice is 2,000 rupiahs.</li> <li>a bowl of bakso is 5,000 rupiahs.</li> <li>it is two thousand rupiahs.</li> <li>it is seven hundred rupiahs.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> I've got a stomachache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are able to identify different types of common health problems.</li> <li>Students are able to express different types of common health problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i have a stomachache.</li> <li>sore eyes</li> <li>headache</li> <li>toothache</li> <li>sore throat</li> <li>cold</li> </ul>
<b>5</b> What a nice skirt!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are able to tell types of clothes that people wear.</li> <li>Students are able to tell what people wear.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what does she wear?</li> <li>blouse</li> <li>shoes</li> <li>hat</li> <li>socks</li> <li>a pair of trousers</li> <li>a long dress</li> <li>uniform</li> <li>short</li> <li>tie</li> <li>t-shirt</li> </ul>

Figure 3 Content Framework of *My Next Words* for the First Semester

## Framework (Semester 2)

Unit	Objectives	Language Focus
<b>6</b> <b>Parts of our body that work together</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are able to tell different body parts and their functions</li> <li>• Students are able to express functions of body parts in daily activities</li> <li>• Students are able to write a short text about the use of different body parts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aisyah uses her headset to listen to the music</li> <li>• they use their nose to smell the rose.</li> <li>• hair, eyes, nose, chin, cheek</li> </ul>
<b>7</b> <b>How tall are you?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are able to identify features of people, animals, and common everyday objects</li> <li>• Students are able to use adjectives to describe people, animals, and common everyday objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the giraffe is tall, but the deer is short</li> <li>• tall, short, old, young, big, small, fast, slow, new, old, expensive, cheap</li> </ul>
<b>8</b> <b>The giraffe is taller than the deer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are able to use comparative adjectives to talk about people, animals, and things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is the rabbit smaller than the goat? Yes, it is</li> <li>• which animal is bigger?</li> <li>• the goat is bigger than the rabbit</li> <li>• bigger than, smaller than, slower than, faster than</li> </ul>
<b>9</b> <b>The elephant is the biggest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are able to use superlative adjectives to talk about people, animals, and things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is the deer the shortest? No, it is not</li> <li>• how is the cat compared to the giraffe? The cat is smaller than the giraffe</li> <li>• which is the tallest? The giraffe is the tallest</li> </ul>
<b>10</b> <b>I like playing "balap karung"</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are able to mention dates and months.</li> <li>• Students are able to respond to questions using the question word "when".</li> <li>• Students are able to make sentences about dates and months.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What month is this? It's October</li> <li>• January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December</li> <li>• 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc</li> </ul>

Figure 4 Content Framework of *My Next Words* for the Second Semester