



A Content Analysis Of English For Nusantara Grade Ix Textbook Based On Elt Principles

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the alignment of the pedagogical aspects of the English for Nusantara textbook with the principles of the Independent Curriculum. The evaluation was conducted to identify the extent to which the textbook supports student-centered learning, the development of communicative competence, the integration of language skills, the strengthening of critical thinking, and the implementation of the Graduate Profile values. This study employed a qualitative content analysis method, using the English for Nusantara textbook as the primary data source. Data were analyzed through a process of identification, classification, interpretation, and evaluation of the learning objectives, learning activities, language skills integration, assessment, and character development contained in the textbook. The results indicate that English for Nusantara has generally implemented the pedagogical principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka well. This textbook has clear learning objectives, implements a student-centered learning approach, integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in a balanced manner, and encourages the development of critical thinking skills through communicative, collaborative, and contextual activities. This research also identified several weaknesses, including limited differentiated learning activities to accommodate differences in student abilities, the reliance of some activities on teacher guidance, and the need for technological support for audio- and visual-based activities. The development of the textbook in the next edition needs to strengthen differentiated learning strategies, expand the variety of assessment forms, and provide activities that are more adaptive to the diversity of student abilities and learning conditions to ensure optimal implementation of the Independent Curriculum.





Keywords: English For Nusantara, Independent Curriculum, Qualitative Content Analysis, Pedagogical Evaluation, Student-Centered Learning.

INTRODUCTION

English has become a global lingua franca that plays a crucial role in education, communication, and knowledge access. In EFL contexts, textbooks remain one of the most widely used instructional resources, particularly in formal education systems where they serve as the primary teaching reference (Richards, 2001; Tomlinson, 2023). In addition to offering structured educational content, textbooks have an impact on classroom dynamics, instructional strategies, and evaluation procedures. Well-designed teaching resources are supposed to enable communicative language use in real-world situations, foster meaningful learning experiences, and boost learner engagement (Tomlinson, 2023).

As a result, textbook evaluation becomes a crucial procedure to guarantee that educational resources are both pedagogically acceptable and in line with the demands of students. According to latest studies, textbook evaluation in EFL contexts should take into account a variety of factors, including task design, authenticity, instructional focus, and language skills coverage. For instance, research on English language textbooks in Indonesia have evaluated textbook quality using a variety of frameworks, including task-based analysis, CEFR alignment, and critical thinking evaluation (Damayanti et al., 2024; Rijali & Nor, 2025). These studies show that although curriculum goals are often supported by textbooks, problems including language skill imbalance and a lack of higher-order thinking tasks are nonetheless commonly observed.

The Kurikulum Merdeka's introduction in Indonesia signifies a change to a curriculum that is more adaptable, student-centered, and competency-based. Through relevant and contextual learning experiences, the curriculum places a strong emphasis on helping students develop their communicative skills, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, and character (Ministry of Education, 2022). This change calls for educational resources that can facilitate student autonomy and active learning in the classroom. The Ministry of Education created the English for Nusantara textbook series for junior secondary school pupils in order to promote this curriculum. The Grade IX textbook uses a genre-based approach that incorporates spoken and written language development and is based on Phase D learning outcomes.

Thematic themes including Animals and Us, Taking Trips, Environment, Healthy Life, and Digital World are presented in the textbook with the goal of tying English language instruction to students' everyday experiences. The English for Nusantara textbook has been assessed from many aspects in a variety of current research studies. Analyzed the textbook with Tomlinson's





approach and discovered that while it still lacks variety of tasks, it often supports learner-centered learning (Melisa et al., 2024). Found an uneven distribution of tasks among units after analyzing the textbook's task kinds (Damayanti et al., 2024). Although its use differs by chapter, emphasized the textbook's importance in encouraging critical thinking (Nasution et al., 2025).

Examined at the textbook's alignment with CEFR levels and discovered that although it generally satisfies curricular requirements, several parts of skill integration still need to be improved (Rijali et al., 2025). English for Nusantara aligns with *Kurikulum Merdeka* principles, its higher-order thinking components and work distribution are still inconsistent between units (Idris et al., 2026). Despite these advances, the majority of earlier research has tended to concentrate on discrete elements of textbook evaluation, such as assignment kinds, CEFR alignment, or critical thinking. However, existing studies tend to examine specific aspects of textbook analysis such as task design, CEFR alignment, or critical thinking separately. An integrated analysis that combines pedagogical aspects and language skills distribution of the English for Nusantara Grade IX textbook within the framework of *Kurikulum Merdeka* remains limited. By presenting a thorough assessment of government-issued EFL textbooks and insights for teachers, curriculum planners, and material designers in enhancing instructional materials, this study is anticipated to contribute to the field of English language teaching research.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a content analysis method. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study aimed to identify, describe, and interpret the alignment of the content of the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade IX with the principles of English Language Teaching (ELT). Content analysis allows researchers to systematically examine documents to discover meanings, patterns, characteristics, and trends within the learning materials (Damai et al., 2025). Textbook analysis is a crucial step in evaluating the quality of teaching materials because textbooks remain the primary source of English language learning in various countries (Vitta, 2021).

The object of this study was the English for Nusantara textbook: SMP/MTs Grade IX (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). This textbook was chosen because it is the official textbook used in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the SMP/MTs level. All units, materials, learning activities, exercises, illustrations, and supporting components in the textbook served as sources of research data.

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher (human instrument) assisted by an analysis sheet based on the principles of English language teaching materials development





(Tomlinson, 2023). These principles include the material's ability to impact students, build self-confidence, provide authentic language exposure, provide opportunities for language use for communicative purposes, address students' learning needs, encourage emotional and intellectual engagement, and facilitate effective language acquisition. This framework was chosen because it is one of the ELT textbook evaluation models widely used in research on the development and evaluation of teaching materials.

Data collection was conducted through a documentation study of the entire textbook content. The researcher thoroughly read each learning unit and then identified sections that align with the indicators of ELT principles. Data were classified based on predetermined analysis categories so that each material, activity, text, image, and exercise could be systematically analyzed. The documentation approach is an appropriate technique in content analysis research because all data comes from written documents that are the object of the study (Melisa et al., 2024).

Data analysis was conducted through several stages, referring to qualitative content analysis procedures: data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected sections of the book relevant to the research indicators. The next stage was to group the data based on ELT principles, which were used as analysis categories. Each finding was interpreted by comparing the book's content to theories on English language teaching materials development regarding English textbook evaluation (Damai et al., 2025; Melisa et al., 2024). The final stage involved drawing conclusions regarding the textbook's level of conformity to ELT principles and its implications for English language learning at the junior high school/Islamic junior high school level.

To enhance the credibility of the research, the researcher applied theoretical triangulation by comparing the analysis results with various references on English textbook evaluation, teaching materials development, and recent research on English for Nusantara. The resulting interpretations were not based solely on a single theoretical perspective but were also reinforced by various relevant empirical studies, thereby enhancing the validity of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade IX has been designed based on a modern pedagogical paradigm that aligns with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. This textbook no longer positions students as passive recipients of information, but rather as individuals actively constructing knowledge through interaction,





experience, reflection, and communication. These findings demonstrate that the textbook's material design integrates various pedagogical theories, including behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and student-centered learning approaches. Teaching materials not only serve to convey linguistic knowledge but also create meaningful learning experiences, motivate students, provide opportunities for authentic language use, and encourage the development of thinking and communication skills (Tomlinson, 2023).

Analysis of each learning unit shows that behaviorist principles are still used as the basis for developing students' initial competencies. Learning occurs through the relationship between stimulus and response, reinforced by practice, repetition, and positive reinforcement. This principle is evident in various initial activities that encourage students to recognize vocabulary, practice pronunciation, match pictures to words, and complete simple exercises before moving on to communicative activities. In Chapter 1, students are asked to identify the names of endemic Indonesian animals through illustrations and audio recordings before describing their characteristics. These activities provide opportunities for students to develop the habit of using correct language forms through structured practice. This approach demonstrates that mastery of basic language aspects remains the foundation before students are directed to more complex language use (Tomlinson, 2023).

Research shows that this book does not stop at mechanical exercises, as is characteristic of traditional behaviorist learning. Once students have mastered basic vocabulary and structures, learning activities progress to more communicative and contextual tasks. Structured practice remains necessary in language learning because it helps students achieve accuracy before achieving fluency. The application of behaviorism in English for Nusantara serves as an initial foundation to support the development of communicative competence, not as the ultimate goal of learning (Tomlinson, 2023).

The analysis results demonstrate a strong application of cognitive theory. Learning is viewed as a mental process involving conceptual understanding, information organization, and problem-solving skills. This perspective is reflected in various reading, listening, and discussion activities that encourage students to comprehend text content, connect new information with previous experiences, and draw conclusions based on the data obtained. In almost every chapter, students are not only asked to find the correct answer but also to explain reasons, identify cause-and-effect relationships, and express opinions about a phenomenon. These activities demonstrate that textbooks emphasize the thinking process rather than simply memorizing material (Piaget, 1952; Bruner, 1966).

Modern English textbooks must develop both linguistic competence and students'





thinking skills through authentic and meaningful activities (Vitta, 2021). Quality textbooks should provide opportunities for students to gradually build knowledge through active learning experiences (Damai et al., 2025). Based on the analysis results, English for Nusantara has fulfilled these characteristics through the presentation of activities that are arranged systematically from simple to complex levels, making it easier for students to develop conceptual understanding.

Constructivism theory is the dominant approach in this book. Knowledge is constructed through the interaction between experience, the social environment, and students' reflection. Learning provides opportunities for students to explore, discuss, collaborate, and discover knowledge independently (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978). Analysis shows that each learning unit begins with an activity that activates prior knowledge through the "Say What You Know" section. At this stage, students are asked to connect the learning topic to their personal experiences before learning new material. This activity is a form of activating prior knowledge that helps students build connections between previous experiences and the concepts to be learned.

Almost all chapters include collaborative activities in the form of group discussions, presentations, role-plays, interviews, and simple projects. These activities provide space for students to construct knowledge with their classmates through communication and collaboration. Language teaching materials should be able to engage students' affective, social, and cognitive aspects so that learning takes place more meaningfully (Tomlinson, 2023). Previous research also indicates that English for Nusantara strongly applies constructivist principles, as most activities direct students toward the exploration of ideas, discussions, and use of language in real-life contexts (Melisa et al., 2024).

This dominant constructivist approach is further reinforced through the implementation of Student-Centered Learning. Analysis shows that this textbook consistently places students at the center of learning. Teachers are no longer the sole source of information, but rather act as facilitators guiding the learning process. Each unit provides opportunities for students to ask questions, discuss, express opinions, and reflect on learning outcomes. This approach aligns with the characteristics of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes differentiated learning, independent learning, collaboration, and the development of the Pancasila Student Profile (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

The implementation of Student-Centered Learning is evident in activities such as "Your Turn," group discussions, presentations, and project-based assignments that give students the freedom to generate a variety of alternative answers. Unlike traditional teacher-centered learning, this approach provides students with the opportunity to determine learning strategies according to their individual needs. Effective learning materials should provide opportunities for





students to make decisions during the learning process, thereby fostering intrinsic motivation and a sense of responsibility for their learning (Tomlinson, 2023). Research also shows that teaching materials that implement student-centered learning tend to increase learning engagement, motivation, and communication skills compared to teacher-centered approaches (Damai et al., 2025).

Student-Centered Learning, the analysis shows that the English for Nusantara textbook consistently applies the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This approach positions language as a tool of communication, so learning is more oriented toward using language in real-life situations than simply learning grammar rules (Richards, 2006). All speaking activities in the textbook are designed to encourage students to communicate actively through dialogue, discussions, interviews, presentations, role-playing, and problem-solving. This pattern of activities demonstrates that the primary goal of learning is to develop communicative competence, not simply mastery of language structure.

In Chapter 2, students are asked to discuss travel plans with friends, while in Chapter 5, they are asked to discuss the positive and negative impacts of social media use before presenting the results to the class. These activities demonstrate that learning emphasizes negotiating meaning rather than simply the accuracy of language form. Language learning materials must provide ample opportunities for students to use language as a means to achieve communication goals, not simply as an object of study (Tomlinson, 2023). Idris et al. (2025) demonstrated that the task-based approach in English for Nusantara provides students with opportunities to use English in authentic contexts, thereby improving their communicative competence.

The analysis also revealed that some speaking activities were still semi-controlled. The teacher still provided detailed examples of dialogue, vocabulary, and sentence patterns before students communicated independently. This situation indicates that the textbook still strives to maintain a balance between linguistic accuracy and fluency. This balance is important because communication skills are determined not only by fluency but also by the appropriate use of language structures (Fakhrillah & Suharyadi, 2025). The combination of structured practice and communicative activities implemented in English for Nusantara can be viewed as a pedagogical strategy that supports gradual language acquisition.

Behaviorism is used as the basis for developing initial skills through practice and repetition, cognitivism encourages the development of thinking skills and conceptual understanding, while constructivism is the most dominant approach through collaborative and experiential learning. The Student-Centred Learning and Communicative Language Teaching approaches reinforce the textbook's orientation toward active, communicative, and meaningful





learning. English for Nusantara has largely met the principles of developing modern English language teaching materials. There is still room for increasing the variety of more spontaneous communicative activities, differentiated learning, and the integration of technology into the learning process (Melisa et al., 2024; Damai et al., 2025; Idris et al., 2025; Tomlinson, 2023).

English for Nusantara Grade IX systematically integrates four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—into each learning unit. Unlike conventional textbooks, which often separate each skill into separate chapters, this book presents all four skills as a complementary whole, providing students with a more authentic learning experience. The learning materials are designed to provide opportunities for students to use various language skills in an integrated manner, as real-life communication never occurs through a single skill in isolation. Modern textbooks need to represent language use as it occurs in everyday life through the integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities (Tomlinson, 2023; Vitta, 2021).

Based on the analysis of each chapter, listening skills serve as the initial activity to build students' understanding of the learning context. Listening activities are presented through dialogues, monologues, and recorded information related to each chapter's theme. In Chapter 1, students listen to descriptions of endemic Indonesian animals before identifying their characteristics. In Chapter 2, students listen to conversations about travel and are asked to complete an itinerary. Chapter 3 presents recordings on environmental issues, Chapter 4 contains conversations about healthy lifestyles, and Chapter 5 discusses the use of social media and digital literacy. These activity patterns demonstrate that listening skills are directed not only at recognizing language sounds but also at understanding key information, finding important details, and connecting information to the learning context. Listening assignments are still dominated by answering questions, completing tables, and identifying information, resulting in relatively limited variety of authentic listening strategies (Melisa et al., 2024).

Speaking skills are the most dominant aspect of this book. Nearly all chapters provide opportunities for students to use English through group discussions, role-plays, interviews, presentations, and problem-solving. In Chapter 1, students describe the characteristics of animals to classmates, while in Chapter 2, they discuss travel plans. Chapter 3 invites students to discuss solutions to environmental problems, Chapter 4 focuses on experiences of maintaining health, and Chapter 5 encourages students to debate the benefits and impacts of social media. These activities demonstrate that speaking learning is directed at using language as a communication tool, not simply memorizing dialogue. Language learning materials need to provide ample opportunities for students to negotiate meaning through authentic





communication, while task-based learning approaches can increase student engagement because speaking activities are linked to everyday life situations (Tomlinson, 2023; Idris et al., 2025). Most speaking activities remain semi-controlled, as teachers provide examples of dialogue, vocabulary, and sentence patterns before students engage in independent communication.

Reading skills occupy the largest portion of the material presentation. Each chapter contains various text types, such as descriptive, narrative, informative, and procedural, tailored to the learning theme. Before reading, students are encouraged to predict the content of the reading through images or prompting questions. After reading, they are asked to identify main ideas, find detailed information, summarize the reading, and connect the information to personal experiences. This strategy demonstrates that the reading activities incorporate pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages, supporting students' comprehensive comprehension. Most of the texts are adapted texts, so exposure to authentic reading remains limited. The use of authentic texts is important to prepare students for real-life communication outside the classroom, so adding a variety of authentic readings needs to be considered in the development of future books (Vitta, 2021).

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In the writing aspect, the book provides step-by-step writing exercises, from composing simple sentences and completing paragraphs to producing short texts in the form of descriptions, opinions, posters, and activity plans. This approach demonstrates a scaffolding process that helps students develop writing skills systematically. Writing activities are not solely oriented toward the end result but also provide opportunities for students to develop ideas gradually, although opportunities for producing longer, creative writing are still relatively limited





(Tomlinson, 2023).

In addition to developing language skills, research shows that English for Nusantara also prioritizes the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Learning activities require students not only to memorize information but also to analyze, evaluate, and create solutions to various problems. In Chapter 3, students are asked to identify the causes of environmental damage and propose solutions that can be implemented in their local environment. In Chapter 5, students evaluate digital information, distinguish between facts and hoaxes, and argue for the wise use of social media. These activities demonstrate that the book has developed higher-order thinking skills according to the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, although activities requiring creativity and innovation could still be expanded (Fakhrillah & Suharyadi, 2025).

The analysis also revealed several strengths of the book. First, the material is presented contextually, highlighting Indonesian culture, making it easier for students to connect learning to everyday life. Second, the learning activities integrate the four language skills in a balanced manner and are oriented toward real-life communication. Third, the material presentation employs a student-centered learning approach through discussions, collaboration, presentations, and simple projects. Fourth, the book develops 21st-century competencies through communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy. The representation of local culture in the book also contributes to strengthening students' cultural identity and intercultural competence (Sari & Ma'rifatulloh, 2024).

This study also identified several weaknesses. The variety of listening activities is still limited to identifying information and answering questions, thus not fully practicing more complex listening strategies. Speaking activities are still dominated by semi-controlled communication, while opportunities for spontaneous communication are relatively limited. The use of authentic texts in reading activities is also still limited, preventing students from receiving sufficient exposure to the use of English in academic and professional contexts. Writing activities still consist more of guided assignments than free-form writing, which would allow students to develop their creativity optimally. Alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) also requires strengthening, particularly in the development of productive competencies and performative assessments (Rijali & Nor, 2025).

English for Nusantara aligns with the characteristics of the Independent Curriculum. This book emphasizes learner-centered learning, develops communicative competencies, strengthens character through the context of Indonesian culture, and encourages critical and collaborative thinking skills. Learning activities provide opportunities for students to explore knowledge, collaborate, reflect, and use English in meaningful contexts. These characteristics





align with the objectives of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasize learning flexibility, competency development, creativity, and the Pancasila Student Profile (Fallianda, 2025; Khoirussulfa & Saraswati, 2025).

English for Nusantara has fulfilled most of Tomlinson's principles of material development through communicative, contextual, and learner-centered activities. The book's task-based learning approach enhances authentic English use, while the integration of HOTS and local cultural representations are key strengths in supporting 21st-century competencies. Strengthening student creativity, differentiated learning, technology integration, and competency-based assessment are still needed to improve the book's quality in the future (Melisa et al., 2024; Idris et al., 2025; Fakhrihah & Suharyadi, 2025; Sari & Ma'rifatulloh, 2024; Tomlinson, 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the content of the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade IX based on the principles of English Language Teaching (ELT) and its alignment with pedagogical theory and the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that this textbook meets most of the characteristics of effective English language teaching materials. The material is structured systematically, contextually, communicatively, and oriented toward developing student competencies, thereby supporting a meaningful English language learning process.

From a pedagogical theory perspective, English for Nusantara comprehensively integrates various learning approaches. The behaviorist approach is evident in vocabulary introduction activities, pronunciation practice, and repetition of language structures, which help students build basic competencies. The cognitive approach is realized through activities that encourage students to understand concepts, process information, analyze reading content, and solve problems. Meanwhile, constructivism is the most dominant approach through discussions, presentations, projects, collaboration, and reflection, which enable students to construct knowledge based on experience and social interaction. The integration of these three theories demonstrates that this textbook is not only oriented toward mastering linguistic aspects but also supports the development of thinking, communication, and independent learning skills.

The research also shows that the textbook consistently implements a Student-Centered Learning approach. Students are placed at the center of the learning process through various exploratory activities, group discussions, presentations, problem-solving, and simple projects. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding students in actively constructing knowledge.





Furthermore, the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is reflected in the presentation of activities that encourage the use of English in real-life contexts through dialogue, role-play, interviews, discussions, and communication-based assignments. This approach supports the achievement of communicative competence, as the primary goal of English learning in the Independent Curriculum.

In terms of language skills, this textbook successfully integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing into each learning unit. These four skills are not taught separately but are interconnected through a systematic series of activities. Reading and speaking skills receive a dominant portion, while listening and writing activities serve as supporting activities in developing overall communicative competence. The presentation of material that connects various language skills provides a more authentic learning experience and aligns with everyday language use.

Analysis of each chapter shows that the selected themes, such as Indonesian animals, travel, the environment, health, and digital life, are closely related to students' lives. The use of local context, Indonesian culture, and current issues makes the material more relevant and increases learning motivation. Furthermore, this book develops higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) through activities that require students to analyze information, draw conclusions, evaluate various problems, and generate solutions based on the context being studied. The book focuses not only on language acquisition but also on developing critical, creative, collaborative, and communicative thinking skills.

This research also identified several aspects that still require improvement. The listening activities are still dominated by information identification and question-answering tasks, thus not fully developing more complex listening strategies. Speaking activities still utilize semi-controlled communication, while opportunities for spontaneous communication are still limited. Furthermore, the use of authentic texts in reading skills and creative writing activities can be further enhanced to provide students with a learning experience more closely resembling real-world English usage. Strengthening differentiated learning, integrating digital technology, and varying authentic assessments are also aspects that need to be developed in the next edition.

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