

The Application of Multimodal Approach in the English for Nusantara Coursebook for 8th Graders

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Abstract

The use of multimodal resources is increasingly essential in the developing field of education, particularly in foreign language learning. Textual materials alone can hardly meet the varied needs of learners; the principle of multimodality gives a richer experience through text, pictures, color, symbol, and layout. It is out of this requirement that the Indonesian government issued the *English for Nusantara* coursebook for 8th graders under the Merdeka Curriculum. This study discovered how multimodality is applied in the coursebook, focusing on Chapter 2, *Kindness Begins with Me*. Using descriptive qualitative methods and documentation techniques, the analysis applies (Gunther, 2010) framework of visual grammar, consisting of representational, interactive, and compositional aspects. Results indicate that the coursebook has systematically put in multimodal elements towards guiding and engaging, students. Human and non-human visuals convey moral values, while interactive elements foster emotional engagement. Strategic layout enhances message clarity. Together, these modes collaboratively support both language development and character education.. The study recommends that similar multimodal approaches be adopted in other educational materials for creating learning experiences that are more inclusive and meaningful for junior high school students.

Keywords: Compositional, English coursebook, interactive, multimodal approach, representation.

INTRODUCTION

The multimodal approach is increasingly recognized as an effective learning strategy for creating a dynamic and interactive educational environment, especially in English language instruction at Indonesia's junior high school level. Multimodality can be defined as the use of multiple semiotic modes in designing a communicative product or event and the specific ways these modes are combined (Gunther, 2010). In the educational context, Jewitt also emphasizes that multimodality is an approach that highlights the importance of various forms of representation, such as text, images, sound, color, and gesture, to construct meaning in a richer and deeper way (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018). Thus, a multimodal approach implies mixing different media of communication within learning materials to enable students to grasp and create meaning from diverse sources (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018; Gunther, 2010).

The importance of multimodality in education arises from students' diverse learning styles. By incorporating various learning materials, teachers can reach all types of learners, making the learning process more inclusive and effective (Purba et al., 2023; Sirazitdinova, 2023). Multimodal composing practices with teens help them understand and take advantage of the various semiotic resources available to them. When offered different modes of communication within one material, they tend to understand better and also become better communicators (Kang, 2022).

Placing multimodality within the curricular framework is one of the most important aspects in steering the course of developing students' critical analytical abilities. The typical curriculum to date has not provided sufficient guidance or support for students in understanding how different modes of communication work and interact in complex multimodal texts (Brossek & Downes, 2024). Mult multimodal learning resources help to ensure deep learning because knowledge is constructed by

learners building new understandings from interaction with multiple and varied modes that accompany the entire learning process (Nikula et al., 2024). Multimodality opens up even more ways in which learners make meaning from materials and processes of learning (Brossek & Downes, 2024).

Monotonous teaching materials can lead to boredom and low student comprehension, especially in English as a foreign language learning (Wardani & Kurniasih, 2023). Monotonous material makes the classroom boring, and the students come out with very low comprehension; this is particularly seen in English as a foreign language learning (Wardani & Kurniasih, 2023). A multimodal approach whereby different modes- visual, audio, and text- are integrated will improve students' understanding and retention of information (Man & Li, 2022; Purba et al., 2023).

It has been indicated in earlier studies that utilizing multimodal texts within teaching has the potential to enhance students' levels of comprehension as well as motivation significantly in narrative contexts. Students are able to combine information from multiple sources, such as images, graphics, and audio, alongside written text, to form a more complete and meaningful understanding (Saputra et al., 2024; Wardani & Kurniasih, 2023). This approach is especially valuable because it addresses the diverse learning styles students may have.

With the increased digitalization of education, the demand for diverse learning materials becomes paramount. Multimodality helps in developing students' communication skills according to their individual needs (Sirazitdinova, 2023). However, most modern English coursebooks are not sufficiently multimodal and therefore quite inadequate (Purba et al., 2023). This study tries to bridge that gap by assessing the book "English for Nusantara" and thus help create more engaging and effective materials for eighth-grade learners.

A multimodal approach fits the trend of modern education perfect, where digital literacy and the ability to read different types of media become the core (Brossek & Downes, 2024). The “English for Nusantara” coursebook is an appropriate subject of analysis as it contains varied tasks that assist in building students’ skills mainly in interpersonal communication (Damayanti & Mukarto, 2024). This book mixes written text, pictures, audio, and interactive tasks all meant to develop different facets of competence by tapping into student potential. In this way it serves both as a means for learning and as a vehicle through which students can be helped to develop their interpersonal communication as well as critical thinking abilities.

Another strength of the coursebook is its integration of diverse task categories, particularly those with an interpersonal focus, which are highly relevant in a multimodal context. Effective communication requires understanding how different modes can be used together to convey messages more clearly and meaningfully (Damayanti & Mukarto, 2024). By highlighting tasks like these, the coursebook prepares students to communicate in real-life situations and helps them understand and utilize the rich array of modalities available to them.

The focus on multimodal text literacy in this book is very relevant because it can greatly increase the engagement and understanding of learners (Saputra et al., 2024; Wardani & Kurniasih, 2023). By exposing learners to different kinds of texts-visual, audio, and digital-this book helps students develop the ability to critically analyze the torrential flow of information available today. Further, character education is integrated into the book according to the Pancasila Student Profile thus working towards students’ holistic development

In addition, the book shows a visual grammar layout that is looked at using Kress & van Leeuwen’s structure, which

has representational, interactive, and compositional ways. The representational way looks at how pictures and words show reality; the interactive way looks into the bonds formed by visual material; and the compositional way considers how visual parts are organized to make clear meaning (Gunther, 2010). This study is key to ensuring that the many modes in the coursebook help with learning goals.

Beyond academic aspects, the book also integrates character education aligned with the Pancasila Student Profile. This character education goes beyond cognitive learning, focusing on values and attitudes vital for everyday life (Sari & Marifatulloh, 2024). This approach aligns well with the multimodal framework, where learning is about mastering content and how students internalize values and attitudes through various learning modes.

Multimodal literacy is very crucial in the current educational setting because it allows students to engage effectively in an increasingly connected and complex society (Wardani & Kurniasih, 2023). Thus, this coursebook will provide material for English learning and develop broader skills that students need to take on a changing world.

Multimodal and multimodality are concepts that, as discussed above, hold considerable potential for application in the educational field, particularly within English language learning at the junior high school level. In this regard, the coursebook English for Nusantara is regarded as a highly suitable resource for examining how this approach is put into practice, as it integrates multiple modes of communication, such as textual, visual, and interactive elements, alongside diverse task types that align with the learning needs, preferences, and contexts of contemporary students. These modes work complementarily to reinforce language comprehension, promote meaningful interaction, and stimulate students’ cognitive engagement.

The integration of such elements also reflects the shift in modern pedagogy toward learning materials that go beyond a reliance on text, instead providing rich and varied input that can cater to different learning styles. By incorporating these varied modes and activities, the book not only facilitates the development of linguistic competence but also encourages deeper engagement, critical thinking, and contextual understanding. Therefore, this research aims to offer new perspectives on how the multimodal approach can be optimized to create English learning experiences that are more engaging, relevant, and effective for grade 8 students in Indonesia, while also contributing to the broader discourse on innovative practices in language education..

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive qualitative research since it is considered the best fit for describing and analyzing multimodal phenomena in coursebooks. Through this approach, the researcher will understand deeply how multimodal elements are integrated into teaching materials and how they support English language learning at the junior high school level. Therefore, the main data source of this research was Chapter 2: Kindness Begins with Me from the Grade 8 Coursebook “English for Nusantara” published by Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. This chapter has been selected due to its representative and relevant examples regarding the implementation of multimodality aligned with the objectives of this study.

Table 1. Method of Collecting and Analyzing Data

Research Question	Data Collection	Data Analysis
How is the multimodal approach implemented in the English for Nusantara coursebook?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representational Mode • Interactive Mode • Compositional Mode 	Content Identifying
		Initial Code
		Multimodal Analysis
		Synthesis and Interpretation
		Data Verification
		Drawing a Conclusion

The data was collected through documentation analysis techniques by categorizing, and listing all the multimodal components located in the coursebook. These include text, images, layout, color, symbols, and the relationships between visual and verbal elements. Every page of the selected chapter was carefully examined to identify the modes of communication used in presenting the material. Documentation analysis was chosen as the technique because it is effective for collecting data in the form of written and visual documents, which are the main focus of this study (Sugiyono, 2017).

The data were analyzed using the visual grammar theory developed by (Gunther, 2010). The analysis focused on three main aspects: representational, interactive, and compositional. The representational aspect explores how images and texts represent certain realities or events within the learning material. The interactive aspect examines the relationship between images, texts, and readers, such as the use of angle, gaze, distance, and perspective that help build interaction between the material and students. The compositional aspect investigates how visual elements are arranged on a page to form cohesive and meaningful content, including placement, salience, and framing (Gunther, 2010).

The analysis process began with identifying all multimodal elements in Chapter 2 of the “English for Nusantara” coursebook. Each element was then categorized according to the three aspects of visual grammar, followed by description and analysis based on the selected theory. The results of this analysis were used to draw conclusions about the patterns and functions of multimodal use in supporting English learning in grade 8. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher conducted triangulation by comparing the analysis results with multimodality theories and findings from previous studies, and by holding discussions with the academic

advisor and peers (Flick, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 2015).

The descriptive qualitative method with document analysis was selected because it can provide a concrete and detailed picture of how the multimodal approach is implemented in the coursebook. It is also relevant for examining how effectively the coursebook supports the goals of communicative and contextual English language learning (Ary et al., 2010; Moelong, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The application of multimodality in the grade 8 coursebook “English for Nusantara,” especially in Chapter 2, was analyzed through three main modes developed by Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: representational, interactive, and compositional. These three modes complement each other and play an important role in constructing complex meaning, enriching the learning experience, and effectively supporting students’ understanding in a meaningful way.

Representational Mode: Visualization of Participants and Activities to Convey Meaning and Values

Table 2. Representational Mode-Findings

Participant		Frequency (N)	%	
Human	Child	Male	9	6,53
		Female	12	8,69
	Adult	Male	2	1,45
		Female	2	1,45
Non Human	Object	44	31,88	
	Animal	69	50	
Total			100%	

The representational mode focuses on how images in the book depict human and non-human participants as well as their activities, relationships, and experiences. The analysis findings show that non-human participants dominate the visual appearance of this book with a proportion of around 82 percent of the total images analyzed consisting of 44 object participants and 69 animal participants.

This dominance of non-human participants indicates that the book uses a

wider range of visual elements than just human images thus providing more creative and contextual interpretation space for students.

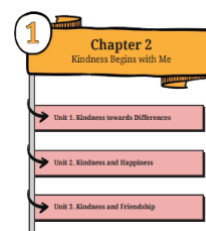


Figure 1. Object Participant (Signage)



Figure 2. Object Participant (Words Box)

For example, objects such as signage, words box, headphones, books, arrows, microphones, etc are visualized naturally and serve as important markers in the learning process. Word box and arrows for instance act as visual aids marking dialogues and instructions so that students can follow the material flow more easily.

The use of animals as visual participants is also very strategic. Animals such as duck, ducklings, fox, monkey, rabbit, crocodile, and others not only attract students’ attention but also contain strong moral values.



Figure 3. Animal Participant (Duck and Ugly Duckling)

For example, in the story “The Ugly Duckling,” the visualization of a mother duck who continues loving her physically different child teaches students the importance of tolerance and appreciation of diversity. Animals as metaphors of social

values correspond with (Gunther, 2010) who state that animal representations in multimodal texts can effectively convey social and emotional messages.

Human participants in the book are fewer in number only 25 images. However, their presence remains significant in building an inclusive and diverse classroom atmosphere. Human characters such as Galang and Monita also play important roles in the representational mode.



Figure 4 Human Participant (Student Galang and Monita)

Galang is portrayed with unique characteristics that enrich the visual dynamics and reflect physical diversity in the school environment while Monita appears neat and enthusiastic instilling values of discipline and eagerness to learn. These visualizations provide concrete examples for students to build empathy and respect for diversity in line with (Sirazitdinova, 2023) who confirms that multimodality in language education helps develop students' interpersonal communication competence and social awareness.

Moreover, the representational mode displays relevant social and learning activities such as discussing reading writing and group work. The visualization of these activities invites students to understand learning as a social and collaborative process not just an individual one. Symbols such as word boxes arrows and word box function as markers for instructions and moral messages helping students understand the storyline and important material as explained by (Nikula et al., 2024) who emphasize the importance of multimodality in enriching learning experiences and building meaning.

Another concrete example is an illustration showing interaction between human and animal characters such as the affection of a mother duck toward her child or student teamwork in discussions. These visualizations not only strengthen moral messages but also activate students' emotional involvement which is important for effective learning (Wardani & Kurniasih, 2023). Therefore, the representational mode in this book functions as a bridge between abstract concepts and students' real experiences making it easier for them to internalize character values through rich and meaningful visual depictions.

Interactive Mode: Building Engagement and Emotional Connection

Table 2. Interactive Mode Findings

No	Interactive Mode	Realizations		Fre quency of Pre sence	%
1	Modality	Color	Full Color	8	3,77
			Absence	4	1,89
			Maximum	7	3,30
		Contextualization	Minimum	5	2,36
			Blank	0	0
2	Perspective	Involvement	Front Angle	24	11.32
			Oblique Angle	25	11,79
		Viewer Power	High Angle	14	6,60
		Equality	Eye Level	18	8,49
		Represented Participant Power	Low Angle	1	0,47
3	Contact	Demand	Gaze at the Viewers	18	8,49
		Offer	Absence of Gaze	42	19,81
		Intimate	Close Shot	0	0
4	Social Distance	Personal Social	Medium Shot	44	20,75
		Impersonal	Long Shot	2	0,94
		Total:		212	100%

The interactive mode examines how the images in the book interact and establish relationships with the readers through several key dimensions: modality, perspective, contact, and social distance (Gunther, 2010).

Modality

Modality, referring to the level of image realism, is manifested in two main aspects: color and contextualization. The use of full and bright colors dominates, which not only beautifies the visuals but also enhances visual appeal and helps students differentiate characters, objects, and backgrounds.



Figure 5. Modality with Full Color



Figure 6. Modality with Absence of Color

High color saturation and variations strengthen visual attraction and assist students in better understanding the context, as Herman (2022) explains that color in multimodal texts plays an important role in improving student comprehension and memory.



Figure 7. Modality with Full Contextualization

Meanwhile, contextualization refers to how detailed the background and situations are depicted. The book shows maximal contextualization in many illustrations by depicting settings, character expressions, and atmospheres that support narrative comprehension. These enable students to picture the characters' situations and emotions, strengthening their understanding of the story's social, cultural, and emotional contexts (Brossek & Downes, 2024).



Figure 8. Modality with Minimum Contextualization

Some parts use minimal contextualization so that students can grasp the main message without being too much engaged outside visuals.

Perspective

The book uses varied perspectives to create a dynamic visual experience. Front angle are applied to human and animal characters to highlight facial expressions and moral traits.



Figure 8. Perspective Shot by Front Angle

For example, the monkey and fox characters show proud and unfriendly expressions, helping students grasp the traits of characters who reject friendship with the elephant due to physical differences, reinforcing messages about prejudice and acceptance, and increasing student engagement with the story.



Figure 9. Perspective Shot by Front Angle

In "The Ugly Duckling," front angle displays the yellow ducklings and mother duck to show emotions and conflict clearly,

building emotional connections and aiding understanding of love and acceptance of differences.



Figure 10. Perspective Shot by Oblique Angle

Besides the front angle, the oblique (detached) angle create a dynamic impression and enhance story action. These tilted images make illustrations appear lively and interesting, helping students visualize the situation clearly. Oblique angle also depict interactions between characters, such as dialogues or important events like egg hatching or the ugly duckling's transformation. Such illustrations encourage students to speak actively, listen, and discuss the story content.



Figure 11. Perspective Shot by High Angle

High angle (viewer power) appear in some images, which makes the character look small and vulnerable, allowing students to empathize with feelings of fear, loneliness, and helplessness. This viewpoint also gives the impression of the reader observing from a caring distance.



Figure 12. Perspective Shot by Eye-level Angle

Eye-level shots (equality) are used to create a sense of equality between reader and character. Images with this perspective make characters appear familiar, friendly, and easily accepted by students. This supports themes of inclusivity and togetherness by inviting readers to feel emotionally close to the characters. Some characters even gaze directly at the reader, suggesting communication or active engagement.

In short, the oblique angle adds depth and visual dynamics, making the story more alive and engaging. High angle emphasize vulnerability or alienation, such as with the gray duckling, fostering empathy (Salsabila et al., 2023). Eye-level shots support emotional closeness and inclusiveness (Damayanti & Mukarto, 2024).

Contact

Contact refers to the kind of eye contact that exists between images and the readers. The most common type found is called "offer" with the absence of gaze, where characters do not face or look at readers directly but rather invite them to observe and reflect indirectly. This therefore creates room for critical thinking and individual understanding.

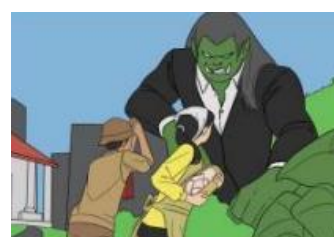


Figure 13. Contact with Absence of Gaze

Demand contact, with gaze at the viewers is seen less frequently because it establishes a more intense and direct relationship. (Saputra et al., 2024) assert that eye contact in multimodal texts contributes to establishing social interaction and building up emotional connection. Some images use demand contact, looking directly at the readers. This makes a more personal and intense connection, as if by

looking at them, inviting the readers to interact or respond. Such contact would increase student involvement and make them feel connected to the story.



Figure 14. Contact with Gaze at the Viewers

There are also personal connections where the gap between the text and its audience is very narrow, establishing a cozy and friendly environment. This connection typically occurs in moments depicting closeness, love, or strong emotional links, like between the mother duck and her ducklings.

Social Distance

Social distance in the book is dominated by personal social medium shots, positioning readers close enough to characters to foster intimacy and emotional engagement while still allowing space for reflection. This social distance helps students feel involved but also gives room to observe and contemplate the intended meaning. (Kang, 2022) emphasizes the importance of visual social distance in building empathetic relationships between readers and texts.



Figure 15. Social Distance shown by Medium Shot

There are also images with impersonal distance that shown by long shot, depicting characters from farther away. This distance is used to show general

scenes, story backgrounds, or group interactions. Impersonal distance enables students to see the bigger picture of situations such as classroom atmosphere, school environment, or groups of interacting animals. This helps students understand broader social and cultural contexts and develop critical and analytical thinking about the characters' situations.

The main function of this interactive mode is to build students' emotional, cognitive, and social engagement through attractive, detailed, and varied visualization. The proper use of color, detail, perspective, eye contact, and social distance assists students in understanding characters, situations, and values more deeply and meaningfully.

Compositional Mode: Visual Arrangement for a Complete and Cohesive Meaning

Table 3. Compositional Mode Result

No	Compositional Mode	Categories	Frequency	%
1	Information Status	Given	4	3,88
		New	5	4,85
		Ideal	11	10,68
		Real	12	11,65
2	Textimage Status	Informative	23	22,33
		Decorative	24	23,30
		Illustrative	24	23,30
Total			103	100%

The compositional mode discusses how visual elements are arranged and organized on a page to form a complete and cohesive meaning. In this book, the layout of images, texts, and symbols is strategically done to effectively convey moral messages and character values (Nikula et al., 2024).

The first compositional mode is about the information status. Which refers to how information is organized based on whether it is already known (Given) or new (New) to the reader, as well as whether the information is ideal (Ideal) or real (Real). This principle is consistently

applied in the book to guide students' attention and understanding.

Given vs New

Information that is Given is usually placed on the left side of the page or visual part, representing things already known or expected by the reader. Conversely, New information is placed on the right side, indicating things not yet known or information intended to be introduced. In the context of the "English for Nusantara" book, introductory texts, general definitions, or story contexts are usually positioned as Given, while illustrative images introducing new characters, new situations, or new concepts are positioned as New (Halliday, 1978; Kress & Luween, 2006).



Figure 16. Compositional Mode in Given Information

For example, a story about a mother duck's affection is introduced; the text explaining this affection is on the Given side because students have already studied this character in the previous unit. In this case, the function of "Given" is: (1) Strengthening Memory: Placing known information (Given) helps students connect new lessons with prior knowledge. (2) Building Visual Hierarchy: Given (left/top) functions as a "reference point" for New (right/bottom), making the page easy to scan. (3) Encouraging Interactivity: For instance, in the exercise section on page 87 (Duck), Given (verb cards) is used as a tool for New activities (sentence exercises).



Figure 17. Compositional Mode in New Information

Meanwhile, the images of the mother duck and ducklings newly shown act as New elements that attract students' attention. Also, the use of Word Boxes on several pages introduces new vocabulary related to the story. These Word Boxes are displayed in separate boxes with contrasting colors or borders, positioned on the right/center of the page close to the illustration or related text, and include Indonesian translations to ensure understanding. Basically, they help students focus on the key words needed for the activity.

So why is the New concept important? It serves as: (1) Visual Markers: Word boxes and new scenes use colors, icons, or different layouts to attract students' attention to important information. (2) Gradual Learning: "New" appears after "Given" (for example, Word Box on page 73 appears after the duck story on pages 70-71), so students are not overwhelmed with information all at once. (3) Contextualization: New vocabulary (Word Box) is directly related to the image/story being studied, facilitating understanding through visual association. In other words, the "New" compositional mode is designed to direct the reader's focus on key elements to be learned or remembered, while maintaining cohesion in the story and activities.

Ideal vs Real

The Ideal and Real principle governs the presentation of information from general, abstract, or ideal to more specific, concrete, or real. This book applies this principle by first presenting narratives or general concepts (Ideal), then

followed by images or illustrations showing concrete details of those concepts (Real). For example, a narrative about the importance of kindness and acceptance is presented generally, followed by real illustrations depicting characters helping each other and accepting differences. This approach helps students understand abstract concepts through concrete and relatable visual representations (Kress & Luween, 2006).

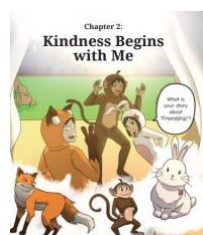


Figure 18. Compositional Mode in Ideal Information

In multimodal analysis, the “Ideal” category refers to visual or textual representations that show aspirational values, hopes, or abstract concepts emphasized by the learning material. These “Ideal” elements are usually placed at the top of the page using bright colors, dynamic illustrations, or striking layouts to attract attention and convey motivational messages or learning goals. For instance, on the cover of Chapter 2 and certain unit covers, there are main images such as students interacting or symbolic animals designed with bright colors and large titles. This design serves to communicate the aspirational theme of the chapter or unit, such as “Kindness Begins with Me,” while creating a positive impression before students begin learning.

Another example of “Ideal” elements can be found in illustrations of characters showing ideal student participation in creative activities, such as a character named Leni with a happy expression and active pose while in the theater. Such illustrations motivate readers to actively engage in learning activities. Also, comic strips featuring dynamic

dialogues with smiling or positively expressive characters depict ideal interactions, such as harmonious and collaborative class discussions or group work, modeling the expected communication in the learning environment.

In tasks like “Say What You Know” and readings, designs that use open questions or inspirational texts with supporting illustrations encourage students to think critically and imagine. This represents the desired learning outcomes, where students can relate the story to their personal experiences. Visualization of “Ideal” elements is designed to inspire students by showing expected results or attitudes, such as cooperation, creativity, and empathy. Images of smiling students, united animals, or successful theater scenes emphasize positive values like friendliness, courage, and inclusion.

Emotional stimulation is also an important part of the “Ideal” category. The use of bright colors, positive facial expressions, and energetic layouts creates a pleasant learning atmosphere and motivates students to stay actively involved. Thus, the “Ideal” category in compositional mode aims to build positive perceptions of learning material while encouraging proactive attitudes in the learning process.

- a. Work in a group of five. Listen to Audio 2.3. Read the script as you listen. Decide which part you want to take in the story.

Table 2.1. The script of The Ugly Duckling

Narrator 1 (Student 1):	The Ugly Duckling followed his brothers and sisters slowly, but they only stared at him.
Narrator 2 (Student 2):	Suddenly, one of them yelled.
Duckling 1 (Student 3):	You are not like us. You are very ugly and weak!
Ducklings (All students):	Go away!
Mother Duck (Student 4):	How can you say such a thing? Be nice!

Figure 19. Compositional Mode in Real Information

Meanwhile, “Real” elements focus on depicting everyday practical situations, authentic challenges, and factual content (Kress & Luween, 2006). The “Talking About Appearance” section invites students

to describe physical features using real examples like clothing and hairstyles. This activity trains students to use language for daily interaction (Kalmatova, 2024).

Worksheets asking students to fill in verbs or arrange sequences imitate classroom tasks emphasizing practical grammar application (Purba et al., 2023). The illustration of “A Mother Duck” depicts realistic animal behavior, linking the story to observable natural actions (Ledin & Machin, 2017). Verb cards (“shook,” “swam”) paired with illustrations show real actions, connecting vocabulary to physical activities (Man & Li, 2022).

The “Retelling the Appearance” activity trains students to retell stories, simulating real communication tasks like summarizing or public speaking (Brosseau & Downes, 2024). The “Animals” section shows animals in natural poses (grazing, resting) and teaches facts about their habitats and sizes through realistic visuals (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018).

The story “The Sad Ugly Duckling” also depicts emotional struggles (rejection, loneliness), reflecting real social challenges to foster empathy (Sirazitdinova, 2023). An old map of Jakarta is used to teach geography and history, grounding lessons in a factual cultural context (Salsabila et al., 2023). The “Fisherman” illustration shows a fisherman working, highlighting real jobs and daily struggles, connecting lessons to socio-economic realities (Damayanti & Mukarto, 2024).

Text-Image Status: The Function of Images in Supporting Learning

The Text-Image Status principle classifies how images function in relation to text as Informative, Decorative, or Illustrative (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Informative

Informative images provide new information not found in the text, such as visual details about characters, settings, or objects that help students understand the story context. Decorative images beautify

the page and create a pleasant atmosphere, such as bright backgrounds or patterns. Illustrative images directly illustrate scenes, dialogues, or concepts explained in the text, helping students connect words with concrete visuals (Nikula et al., 2024; Machin, 2007).

For example, signage displaying labels like “Chapter 2” and “Learning Objectives” helps introduce chapter structures and learning goals. Word boxes containing keywords with translations, ease students’ understanding of new terms in story context. Illustrations of ducks and ducklings accompanied by brief descriptions teach animal behavior factually. Tables organizing information like story elements and characters make it easy for students to scan and understand material. Dialogues between teachers and students, as well as between students, model ideal classroom interactions and encourage critical analysis. Short notes or grammar tips provide practical guidance for tasks (Wahyuni & Dewi, 2024). Animal illustrations with descriptive labels teach biological facts visually, while emojis help students recognize characters’ emotions in the story.




NOW I CAN			
connect and sequence events in an imaginative story			
explain characters' actions, feelings, and behavior in an imaginative story			
retell and rewrite an imaginative story			

Figure 20. Compositional Mode in Informative form

The “Informative” function is crucial in learning because it breaks complex information into digestible parts, offers step-by-step guidance in completing tasks, and visualizes data to improve memory. Also, linking vocabulary with illustrations facilitates understanding through visual association. Thus, “Informative” elements are designed to increase students’ cognitive engagement, ensuring they not only read but also

understand, analyze, and apply knowledge effectively (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018; Kress & Luween, 2006).

Decorative

Decorative images beautify pages and create a pleasant atmosphere without providing significant new information. This book selectively uses decorative images to maintain student interest without distracting from the main material. Examples include bright-colored backgrounds or page patterns that create an engaging and non-monotonous learning environment (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018).



Figure 21. Compositional Mode in Decorative Form

Examples of decorative elements in “English for Nusantara” include icons and symbols like exclamation marks emphasizing key points, arrows directing readers’ eyes, pointing hands indicating instructions or focus, gear icons symbolizing activities or mechanisms, and check or cross marks providing visual effects on exercises. These icons help create a livelier and structured learning atmosphere without adding information overload (Kress & Luween, 2006).

Theme illustrations also serve as important decorative elements, such as main images on cover pages with bright colors and symbolic characters like students and animals that attract attention. Cute duck and duckling images add a pleasant impression, while elegant swan images reinforce transformation themes in stories. These elements not only beautify pages but also visually strengthen thematic messages (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018).

Elements like paper and magnifying glass icons as metaphors for “research” or “exploration,” headphone icons for listening activities, speech or thought bubbles providing playful effects, and open

books symbolizing learning all add visual appeal and invite curiosity and creativity in students (Nikula et al., 2024).

Creative visual effects like mirrors symbolizing self-reflection and illustrations of strangers adding mystery or tension are also used to enrich emotional and imaginative learning experiences. These elements help students engage more deeply psychologically and cognitively (Sirazitdinova, 2023). Thus, the “Decorative” category in compositional mode plays a vital role in creating an engaging learning atmosphere that supports student motivation without burdening them with extra information, making the learning process more effective and enjoyable (Purba et al., 2023).

Illustrative

Illustrative images function to illustrate or reinforce information already present in the text. In this book, many images directly illustrate scenes, dialogues, or concepts described in the text, enabling students to connect words with concrete visuals. For instance, an illustration of a mother duck’s affection toward her ducklings strengthens the text’s narrative about acceptance and love (Nikula et al., 2024).

5 Facts about Ducks!

All ducks have highly waterproof feathers. They can swim all day but stay dry.



Figure 22. Compositional Mode in Illustrative Form

Cultural and Folklore Representation, where folk tale characters like Buto Ijo, Mbok Sрни, and Timun Mas are visualized to introduce the cultural heritage of Nusantara. The use of modern design on traditional characters, such as contemporary clothing on folklore figures, creates visual irony emphasizing the relevance of those stories today. Additionally, the old map of Jakarta links

English learning with Indonesian history context, strengthening local identity and making the material more meaningful.

Visualization of Learning Activities, where illustrations of students speaking or retelling stories depict ideal classroom activities. For example, images of students discussing or storytelling motivate active participation in learning. Infographics like charts and calendars.

Implications of Applying the Three Multimodal Modes

The integrated application of representational, interactive, and compositional modes in this book significantly impacts students' understanding and engagement. The representational mode helps students recognize various characters, objects, and activities relevant to their lives while instilling moral and character values. The interactive mode builds emotional and cognitive connections between students and the material through the use of color, perspective, visual contact, and varying social distances. The compositional mode ensures that messages are conveyed clearly and cohesively through strategic and balanced layouts (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018; Brosseuk & Downes, 2024; Kress & Luween, 2006).

With this rich multimodality, students do not only learn English textually but also learn to understand the social, cultural, and emotional contexts embedded in the material. This is crucial in developing 21st-century skills such as visual literacy, critical thinking, and social empathy (Kalamatova, 2024; Sirazitdinova, 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to deeply explore how multimodal application is realized in the English for Nusantara Grade VIII coursebook, specifically in Chapter 2: Kindness Begins with Me. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and visual grammar theory analysis (Kress & Luween,

2006), the findings show that the book applies multimodality comprehensively, as an addition but as the main foundation in organizing the learning materials.

The multimodal application of the book embraces three primary modes: representational, interactive, and compositional. In the representational mode, the book sets forth a very wide array of visual participants-from human characters such as students and teachers to non-human participants such as animals and symbolic objects. These representations are not merely illustrative but rather are fraught with deep social and emotional meanings. For instance, the gray duckling character from The Ugly Duckling story becomes a metaphor for self-acceptance and diversity; it is one of the best principles in character education. Therefore, the visual representations in this book strengthen narrative content and broaden the scope of learning with life values that students can internalize.

In the interactive mode, color, perspective, visual contact, and social distance are appropriately used to establish affective relationships between students and the learning materials. Bright colors and expressive illustrations make the book aesthetically pleasing and alive; at the same time, use of high or eye-level perspectives help students empathize with and feel connected to the characters in the story. Types of visual contact like offer and demand are used to adjust the intensity of reader engagement, while variations in social distance encourage emotional and reflective involvement. The book not only invites students to read and understand the story but also actively builds visual experiences that encourage them to feel, think, and respond critically.

In the compositional mode of this book, principles of Information Value are applied consistently. The principles of Given-New and Ideal-Real have more than one application in this book: to organize information systematically and allow a reader to find his or her way through the

pages. Known information is placed on the left or top as Given or Ideal; new or concrete details are placed on the right or bottom as New or Real. Such principles enable students to perceive how logically they may flow with information and strengthen connections between visuals and text. Image functions classified as informative, illustrative, and decorative create strategic visual employment that supports student comprehension and retention. Word boxes, Visual symbols, tables, maps, infographics- many of these serve to prettify the book's appearance and act as concrete, contextual, interactive learning aids.

The main advantage of multimodal application in the English for Nusantara book is its ability to provide an immersive and holistic learning experience. Students are engaged not only cognitively but also emotionally and socially. They are encouraged to think critically, build empathy, recognize character values, and apply them in daily life contexts. Learning is no longer limited to written text but is expanded through visualization, spatial arrangement, symbolization, and cultural contexts embedded in each page.

Furthermore, the multimodal application in this book also supports the achievement of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile), especially in aspects of interpersonal communication, critical thinking, and character strengthening. The book is designed not only to teach language competencies but also to shape students' personalities as resilient, inclusive, and reflective individuals. This shows that multimodality in learning is not merely a presentation style but a pedagogical strategy that harmoniously integrates affective, cognitive, and social aspects.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the multimodal application in the English for Nusantara book has been carried out systematically, purposefully, and meaningfully. The three visual grammar modes analyzed demonstrate that

each element in the book is designed with full awareness of its function in building meaning. The book can be said to successfully address the challenges of English language learning in the Merdeka Curriculum era, which emphasizes contextual, differentiated, and student-centered learning.

This study also implies that the multimodal approach has great potential to be adopted in developing other teaching materials, not limited to English subjects. By designing multimodal learning materials, teachers and curriculum developers can create more inclusive, interactive, and meaningful learning experiences for all students, regardless of their learning styles. Ultimately, the application of multimodality not only meets the needs of the times but also paves the way toward more humanistic and transformative learning.

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