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COMMUNICATIVE STYLES IN CLASSROOM MATERIALS: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ELEMENTARY EFL TEXTBOOK CONVERSATIONS

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Abstract: This study investigates the language styles and communicative functions present in the "Look and Say" dialogue sections of My Next Words Grade 5, an Indonesian EFL textbook aligned with the national Merdeka curriculum. Using Joos's (1967) framework of language styles (frozen, formal, consultative, casual, intimate) and Holmes's (2013) taxonomy of language functions (expressive, directive, referential, phatic), we conducted a qualitative content analysis of 23 textbook dialogues to evaluate their pedagogical effectiveness for young learners. Findings revealed a striking uniformity in language style, with all dialogues (100%) employing casual register characterized by contractions, informal greetings, and symmetrical peer interactions. Functional analysis showed expressive language dominated (57% of dialogues), primarily conveying personal feelings and experiences, while referential (22%), directive (17%), and phatic (4%) functions appeared significantly less frequently. The results suggest the textbook successfully implements communicative language teaching principles by prioritizing accessible, emotionally engaging content that lowers affective filters. However, the exclusive focus on casual peer conversations and personal expression may limit students' exposure to academic registers and varied communicative contexts they will encounter in real-world situations. The study recommends strategic enhancements to future textbook editions, including: (1) gradual introduction of consultative and formal registers in higher grades, (2) expanded representation of directive language for classroom interactions and phatic exchanges for social routines, and (3) supplementary materials to help teachers model varied language functions. These adjustments would maintain the current strengths in building conversational fluency while better preparing learners for the full spectrum of communicative demands. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions about optimizing language input in elementary EFL materials to balance immediate engagement with long-term linguistic development.

Keywords: *language styles; language functions; EFL textbooks; elementary education; communicative competence.*

INTRODUCTION

Elementary school students' handbooks serve as fundamental learning resources tailored to national curricula, particularly in Indonesia where the Merdeka curriculum emphasizes character development, essential competencies, and project-based learning (Ahmad Fahroni, 2024; Al Hussaini et al., 2024). For young learners in non-English-speaking environments, these textbooks are crucial in shaping their comprehension and engagement with the language (Shani et al., 2024). The language style employed in these materials

significantly influences students' ability to grasp content, as formal and informal registers serve distinct communicative purposes (Abbas, 2024; Zhang & Liang, 2024). Recent advancements in educational linguistics highlight that elementary students exhibit heightened sensitivity to stylistic variations, with simplified syntax and contextual cues significantly improving comprehension (Manzone & Kaplan, 2022; Wintner et al., 2009).

Language style, a cornerstone of sociolinguistics, dictates how individuals adapt speech based on context, audience, and social

hierarchy (Coulmas, 2023; Hartnett et al., 2023a). In educational settings, textbooks act as primary conduits of knowledge, necessitating stylistic choices that align with learners' cognitive and linguistic development (Lopes, 2024; Meyer et al., 2024). However, excessive informality in textbooks may undermine academic language development, as observed in Indonesian EFL contexts where colloquialisms reduced grammatical accuracy (Muslimawati, 2022). This tension between accessibility and academic rigor reflects the cognitive load theory, which demonstrates how complex formal registers can overwhelm working memory while overly casual styles may fail to model academic conventions (Hamby & Jones, 2022).

Prior studies have explored language styles in diverse media such as YouTube vlogs (Uma, 2021) and films (Simamora & Sherina, 2022), yet few examine structured pedagogical materials. Cross-cultural comparisons reveal stark disparities, with Singapore's bilingual textbooks systematically integrating formal and colloquial English while Indonesian materials often exhibit inconsistent stylistic choices (Simanjuntak, 2024). Such inconsistencies may exacerbate learning inequalities, particularly for rural students with limited English exposure (Sayer & Ban, 2018). The Merdeka curriculum's localized content approach could mitigate this if stylistic adaptations consider dialectal variations (Pasaribu et al., 2024; Zhang & Liang, 2024).

Recent studies on language styles in educational materials reveal significant variations in how formality levels impact learning outcomes. Research by Bhattacharya et al. (2023) demonstrates that textbooks employing a balanced mix of consultative and formal styles yield better comprehension rates among elementary learners, particularly in EFL contexts. This aligns with findings from Muslimawati (2022), who observed that Indonesian students showed improved engagement with materials featuring moderate formality, as opposed to strictly formal or casual registers. However, Meyer et al. (2024) caution that excessive informality, while initially engaging, may hinder the development of academic language proficiency over time, suggesting the need for carefully calibrated stylistic progression in textbook design.

The functional aspects of language styles in pedagogical contexts have also garnered attention. Hartnett et al. (2023a) found that expressive and directive functions predominated in primary-level materials, facilitating both emotional connection

and clear instruction. This complements Holmes's (2013) framework, which emphasizes how referential functions support content delivery while phatic functions foster classroom interaction. Notably, Shani et al. (2024) extended this analysis to bilingual environments, revealing that code-switching between formal and informal styles enhanced metalinguistic awareness—a finding with potential implications for Indonesia's multilingual classrooms. These studies collectively underscore the importance of aligning stylistic choices with specific pedagogical objectives across different learning stages.

Cross-cultural comparisons further illuminate the contextual nature of effective language styles. While Pasaribu et al. (2024) documented the success of informal, conversational styles in Singapore's bilingual curriculum, Simanjuntak (2024) found that Indonesian learners responded better to slightly more formal registers, possibly reflecting differing educational traditions. Computational analyses by Eder et al. (2023) suggest these preferences may correlate with national literacy rates and teacher training standards. Such findings highlight the need for localized approaches to textbook development, where global best practices are adapted to regional educational ecosystems (Alyaqoub et al., 2024). This synthesis positions the current study to address Indonesia's unique Merdeka curriculum context while contributing to broader discussions on language style optimization in elementary education.

Emerging technologies offer new analytical perspectives. Computational studies of textbook corpora identify "formality clusters" that predict student achievement (Bhattacharya et al., 2023), while machine learning models demonstrate how strategic repetition of consultative-style phrases enhances vocabulary acquisition (Eder et al., 2023). These methodologies could revolutionize Indonesian textbook development by enabling data-driven style optimization (Kawamoto et al., 2023). However, teacher mediation remains crucial, as interviews reveal 72% of Indonesian educators unconsciously modify textbook language during instruction, often simplifying formal passages (Ahmad Fahrani, 2024).

The sociopolitical dimension of textbook language warrants attention. Critical discourse analyses show how style choices implicitly convey ideological positions (Holovanova et al., 2021). In Indonesia's pluralistic society, the Merdeka curriculum's Pancasila alignment demands careful stylistic treatment of multicultural themes (Topal,

2024). For instance, honorifics in dialogue may reinforce respect values while maintaining accessibility (Abbas, 2024). This study addresses these complexities by analyzing Grade 5 textbooks through Joos's (1967) language style taxonomy and Holmes's (2013) functional framework, asking: What language styles and functions predominate in the "Look and Say" dialogues, and how do they support the Merdeka curriculum's objectives?

The novelty of this study lies in its dual focus on style and function within Indonesia's unique educational context. Unlike prior works on informal media, it examines the interplay between stylistic formality and pedagogical efficacy in structured dialogues (Dorfman & Kalugin, 2022; Pekarek Doehler et al., 2022). Neurocognitive research suggests these dialogic structures activate mirror neurons, enhancing retention when styles match students' social communication patterns (Dorfman & Kalugin, 2022). Such findings challenge traditional textbook design, advocating for style-shifting strategies that scaffold progression from casual to formal registers (Campoy & Manuel, 2016; Keith, 1967).

Longitudinal research gaps persist regarding style impacts. While Shani et al. (2024) traced bilingual students' style adaptation over three years, no similar studies exist for monolingual Indonesian learners. This study's microanalysis establishes a baseline for future tracking (Denvir, 2022), offering actionable insights for educators and policymakers. By identifying optimal language styles, it can enhance textbook design and teacher training (Sulakatko, 2024), ultimately fostering better learning outcomes while advancing sociolinguistic applications in education (Galesic et al., 2021; Schroeder et al., 2022).

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the language styles used in the "Look and Say" dialogues of the *My Next Words Grade 5* student textbook. The qualitative approach was chosen to allow for an in-depth exploration of linguistic patterns and their pedagogical implications in authentic educational materials. Thematic analysis was used as the primary analytical method to systematically identify and interpret recurring language styles and their functions within the textbook dialogues.

The data source was the officially endorsed textbook published under Indonesia's School Mover Program (Research, Development, and Textbook Agency Decree No. 028/H/KU/2021). The analysis focused specifically on all dialogue

exchanges from Units 1 through 8 (pages 12-79) in the "Look and Say" sections. These sections were purposefully selected to ensure representation of various communicative contexts, interaction types (including student-student and student-teacher dialogues), and thematic units covered in the Grade 5 curriculum.

The unit of analysis was each individual speaker turn, defined as complete sentences, meaningful utterance fragments, or non-verbal communicative elements when present. A total of 26 discrete dialogue turns were identified and transcribed verbatim into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Each turn was assigned a unique identifier following the convention of Unit number_Dialogue number_Turn number (e.g., U3_D2_T1 for Unit 3, Dialogue 2, Turn 1) to maintain organization and traceability throughout the analysis.

The study applied a dual theoretical framework for analysis. First, Joos's (1967) five-style classification (ranging from frozen to intimate styles) was used to categorize the formality levels of the language. Second, Holmes's (2013) four language functions (expressive, directive, referential, and phatic) were employed to examine the communicative purposes of the dialogues. This combined approach allowed for comprehensive analysis of both how language was structured and why particular styles were used in different educational contexts.

The data analysis followed Lester et al.'s (2020) thematic analysis framework, progressing through several phases. The familiarization phase involved multiple close readings of all dialogues and initial memoing of stylistic observations. During the coding process, researchers conducted line-by-line open coding in Excel, with dual coding of a 20% sample to ensure reliability. A detailed codebook with operational definitions was developed to maintain consistency. The theme development phase used axial coding to group related codes and constant comparative analysis to refine emerging themes, with regular peer consultation to validate interpretations.

Several measures were implemented to ensure the trustworthiness of findings. Peer debriefing sessions involved independent coding of a 20% sample by a second researcher to establish inter-coder agreement. Member checking was conducted through consultation with curriculum specialists to verify pedagogical interpretations. An audit trail was maintained throughout the research process, documenting all analytical

decisions and maintaining coding journals to support transparency and replicability.

Ethical considerations were addressed through several means. As the study analyzed published textbook materials, no human subjects were involved. All content was properly attributed to its source, and copyright permissions were verified through the textbook's publication decree. The study acknowledges certain limitations, including its focus on a single textbook which may affect generalizability, potential researcher bias in manual coding processes, and the absence of student outcome data to validate the effectiveness of identified language styles.

This rigorous yet flexible methodological approach enabled systematic examination of language styles while remaining responsive to emergent linguistic patterns in the educational materials. The combination of established theoretical frameworks with detailed qualitative analysis procedures ensures that the findings provide meaningful insights into the language styles used in Indonesian elementary English education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comprehensive analysis of dialogues from the *My Next Words for Elementary School* textbook revealed a distinct pattern in language style implementation. Following Joos's (1967) framework of language styles - frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate - our examination of 23 textbook dialogues demonstrated an exclusive use of casual style throughout all conversational exchanges. This uniform stylistic approach manifests through several consistent linguistic features, including the prevalent use of contractions ("What's," "I'll"), informal greetings ("Hi," "Wow"), simple sentence structures, everyday vocabulary, and direct question-response patterns.

The textbook's consistent employment of casual style appears strategically designed to achieve

specific pedagogical objectives. First, it lowers the affective filter for young learners by presenting English in familiar, approachable forms that mirror natural peer interactions. Second, the conversational simplicity facilitates immediate comprehension and promotes student engagement. Third, this stylistic choice aligns with communicative language teaching principles that prioritize practical, usable English over grammatical formality. The dialogues effectively model natural speech patterns that elementary students might encounter in real-life situations, from expressing preferences about food to discussing common health complaints.

However, the exclusive reliance on casual style raises important considerations for language curriculum development. While appropriate for building initial communicative competence, this approach may need supplementation to prepare students for more formal academic contexts. The absence of stylistic variety in the textbook dialogues suggests a potential gap in exposing learners to the full spectrum of language registers they will eventually need to master. Future textbook revisions might consider gradually introducing more formal language samples while maintaining the current emphasis on accessible, engaging content.

These findings have significant implications for EFL pedagogy in elementary education. They highlight the need for teachers to consciously supplement textbook materials with examples of different language styles, particularly as students progress through grade levels. The results also suggest that while the current casual-style approach effectively serves its immediate communicative purposes, curriculum designers should consider incorporating a more balanced representation of language registers to better prepare students for diverse linguistic contexts they will encounter in their continued English language development.

Table 1. Language style distribution in elementary textbook dialogues

Dialogue		Language Style
Speaker	Sentence	
Alfonso	: "Hi Joshua! I am good. Thank you."	Casual
Alfonso	: "Thank you"	Casual
Joshua	: "Thank you, what a sweet strawberry."	Casual
Alfonso	: "Wow. Mangoes are a little bit sour, aren't they?"	Casual
Grandma	: "I have a cough."	Casual
Aisyah	: "I have a stomach ache after eating spicy food."	Casual
Joshua	: "Hi, Made. What's wrong with you?"	Casual
Made	: "I have a headache. It really hurts."	Casual

Aisyah	: "Do you have sore eyes?"	Casual
Cici	: "Yes, I do."	Casual
Alfonso	: "Thank you. I will give some to my mom."	Casual
Cici	: "Do you have a toothache?"	Casual
Lily	: "Yes."	Casual
Alfonso	: "She likes mangoes, too."	Casual
Alfonso	: "This is for you, Joshua. I picked them from our garden."	Casual
Joshua	: "Look Alfonso! My mango tree is bearing many fruits."	Casual
Joshua	: "Do you like mangoes, Alfonso?"	Casual
Alfonso	: "Yes, I do. Can I have some?"	Casual
Joshua	: "Sit down, please!"	Casual
Joshua	: "Here you are."	Casual
Joshua	: "You should take some medicine."	Casual
Mother	: "Let me give you some medicine."	Casual
Joshua	: "Hi, Alfonso. How are you?"	Casual

The predominance of casual language style found in the elementary textbook dialogues is strongly supported by previous research in EFL pedagogy and materials development. Several studies have documented the effectiveness of informal, conversational language in young learner classrooms. As Meyer et al. (2024) found in their longitudinal study, casual language styles significantly lower the affective filter for elementary students, making initial language acquisition more accessible and less intimidating. This aligns with Shani et al.'s (2024) findings that informal registers promote greater student engagement and participation in classroom interactions.

The exclusive use of casual style in the textbook dialogues reflects current best practices in communicative language teaching. Research by Pasaribu et al. (2024) demonstrated that Indonesian elementary students showed better comprehension and retention when learning materials employed natural, conversational language rather than formal academic registers. Similarly, Muslimawati's (2022) study of Indonesian EFL classrooms revealed that students responded more positively to materials featuring casual language styles, as they mirrored the type of English children might encounter in real-world interactions.

However, the absence of more formal language registers in the textbook does raise some concerns supported by existing literature. Bhattacharya et al. (2023) found that while casual language facilitates initial engagement, the gradual introduction of formal registers is necessary for academic preparation. This is particularly relevant given Simanjuntak's (2024) findings that Indonesian students often struggle with academic English in later grades when exposed only to informal language styles in early education.

The textbook's approach aligns with Hartnett et al.'s (2023a) recommendation that elementary materials should prioritize directive and expressive language functions, which are most effectively conveyed through casual style. However, as Eder et al. (2023) note, the complete absence of other registers may limit students' exposure to the full range of communicative styles they will eventually need to master.

These findings collectively suggest that while the textbook's use of casual style is research-informed and pedagogically sound for elementary learners, future editions might benefit from incorporating carefully scaffolded examples of more formal language to better prepare students for academic English demands in subsequent grades.

Example 1: Greeting Exchange

Joshua: "*Hi, Alfonso.* [Informal greeting] *How are you?*" [Direct question]
Alfonso: "*Hi Joshua!* [Response greeting] *I am good.* [Contracted form] *Thank you.*" [Simple response]

Key Features. Reciprocal adjacency pair (greeting-response). Contracted copula verb ("I'm" → "I am" shows textbook's controlled informality). Zero-marked interrogative (no subject-verb inversion)

The dialogue between Joshua and Alfonso can be categorized into the casual style of language. This style is characterized by informal, everyday conversation that is relaxed and friendly and the use of simple greetings like Joshua's "Hi, Alfonso. How are you?" and Alfonso's response, "Hi Joshua! I am good, thank you" exemplifies this style. the casual style is typically used among friends and acquaintances in comfortable settings.(Trioktaviani, 2019)

Example 2: Gift Offering

Alfonso: "This is for you, Joshua. [Personal deixis] I picked them from our garden." [Possessive pronoun]

Joshua: "Thank you, what a sweet strawberry." [Exclamatory compliment]

Key Features. Object transfer ritual (offer-acceptance). Affective adjective ("sweet"). Shared knowledge assumption ("our garden")

The dialogue above is spoken in casual language style. Casual language style is characterized by informal, relaxed, and spontaneous language used among friends or peers. Alfonso's statement, "*This is for you, Joshua. I picked them from our garden,*" reflects a personal and informal tone, indicating a close relationship. Joshua's response, "*Thank you, what a sweet strawberry,*" further reinforces this casual interaction with its friendly and appreciative tone. This style of communication helps to create a sense of intimacy and ease between the speakers (Holovanova et al., 2021; Okulska, 2022; Pekarek Doehler et al., 2022; Tucker & Ernestus, 2016; Uma, 2021; Чекмаева, 2023)

Example 3: Fruit Observation.

Joshua: "*Look Alfonso!* [Attention-getter] *My mango tree is bearing many fruits.*" [Present progressive action]

Alfonso: "*Wow.* [Interjection] *Mangoes are a little bit sour, aren't they?*" [Tag question]

Key Features. Exclamatory syntax. Sensory adjective ("sour"). Confirmation-seeking tag question. Discourse marker ("Wow")

The dialogue above illustrates the casual style of speech, as defined by Joos's (1967) stylistic framework. According to Joos, there are five distinct styles of spoken language: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. The casual style is characterized by spontaneous, informal speech typically used among peers or people with close relationships. In this context, the use of relaxed syntax, contractions, interjections, and personal references all indicate this style.

In the example given, Joshua's exclamation, "*Look, Alfonso! My mango tree is bearing lots of fruit,*" conveys an enthusiastic and personal tone that indicates an informal relationship between the speakers. The direct address and exclamatory sentence structure indicate familiarity and emotional involvement. Alfonso's response, "*Wow. The mangoes are a bit sour, aren't they?*" continues this casual tone, incorporating tag questions this is a common feature of casual conversation that seeks confirmation and encourages interaction. Both utterances lack formal structure or technical

vocabulary and instead rely on everyday language and shared experiences, hallmarks of the casual style as noted by Joos.

Surprisingly, an analysis of all 23 data excerpts taken from the "Look and Say" section of the textbook revealed a consistent use of a casual style of language. This finding suggests that the dialogues were intentionally designed to simulate natural peer conversation, which aligns with the pedagogical goal of fostering fluency and learner confidence. By exposing students to casual interactions, the textbook aims to reflect authentic language use in everyday social situations (Keith, 1967; Manzone & Kaplan, 2022)

The analysis uncovered a striking uniformity in language style across all 23 textbook dialogues, with every example exclusively employing casual register. This consistent pattern strongly indicates the materials were deliberately crafted to replicate natural peer-to-peer conversations, supporting the curriculum's emphasis on developing conversational fluency and building learner confidence through authentic social interactions (Keith, 1967; Manzone & Kaplan, 2022). While this approach effectively introduces students to basic communicative English, it presents a potentially limited perspective on real-world language use.

Current research emphasizes that genuine communicative competence requires exposure to multiple language registers (Hartnett et al., 2023b; Pasaribu et al., 2024). As Joos (1967) established, different social contexts demand varying degrees of formality - from ceremonial frozen register to professional formal style and consultative exchanges between unequal participants. The textbook's singular focus on casual peer interactions leaves students unprepared for common scenarios like classroom discussions with teachers (consultative style), formal written assignments, or ceremonial school events (frozen style) (Simanjuntak, 2024; Wintner et al., 2009).

To better equip learners for real-world communication, materials should incorporate a strategic progression of language styles. This could include: formal register examples (e.g., addressing school administrators); consultative scenarios (e.g., doctor-patient dialogues), frozen language samples (e.g., school pledges), style-shifting exercises comparing casual/formal equivalents

Such diversification would develop students' sociolinguistic flexibility while maintaining the current focus on conversational fluency. By gradually introducing appropriate contexts for each register, textbooks could preserve engagement

while better preparing learners for the full spectrum of communicative demands they will encounter (Shani et al., 2024). This balanced approach would more comprehensively address both immediate learning needs and long-term language development.

Analysis of language functions in textbook dialogues

The examination of language functions in the Grade 5 textbook dialogues reveals a strong emphasis on expressive communication, with other

functions appearing less frequently. Following Holmes's (2013) framework, the analysis shows that 74% of the dialogues primarily serve expressive purposes, focusing on personal feelings, reactions, and subjective experiences. This pattern reflects the materials' pedagogical priority of helping students articulate their immediate thoughts and emotions in English. The prevalence of expressive language aligns with communicative language teaching principles that emphasize personal expression as foundational for young learners' language development.

Table 2. *Distribution of language functions in textbook dialogues*

Dialogue	Language Function
Speaker : Sentence	
Alfonso : "Hi Joshua! I am good. Thank you."	Expressive
Alfonso : "Thank you"	Expressive
Joshua : "Thank you, what a sweet strawberry."	Expressive
Alfonso : "Wow. Mangoes are a little bit sour, aren't they?"	Expressive
Grandma : "I have a cough."	Expressive
Aisyah : "I have a stomach ache after eating spicy food."	Expressive
Joshua : "Hi, Made. What's wrong with you?"	Expressive
Made : "I have a headache. It really hurts."	Expressive
Aisyah : "Do you have sore eyes?"	Expressive
Cici : "Yes, I do."	Expressive
Alfonso : "Thank you. I will give some to my mom."	Expressive
Cici : "Do you have a toothache?"	Expressive
Lily : "Yes."	Expressive
Alfonso : "She likes mangoes, too."	Referential
Alfonso : "This is for you, Joshua. I picked them from our garden."	Referential
Joshua : "Look Alfonso! My mango tree is bearing many fruits."	Referential
Joshua : "Do you like mangoes, Alfonso?"	Referential
Alfonso : "Yes, I do. Can I have some?"	Referential
Joshua : "Sit down, please!"	Directive
Joshua : "Here you are."	Directive
Joshua : "You should take some medicine."	Directive
Mother : "Let me give you some medicine."	Directive
Joshua : "Hi, Alfonso. How are you?"	Phatic

The dialogues demonstrate four distinct language functions, though not equally represented. Expressive utterances dominate, exemplified by personal statements like "I have a headache" or emotional reactions such as "Wow." These allow students to practice conveying their physical states and opinions. Referential functions, accounting for 17% of examples, appear in factual exchanges about fruit characteristics or tree productivity. Directive language, comprising 9% of dialogues, emerges in polite commands and suggestions regarding health remedies. Only one clear instance of phatic function appears - the conventional greeting "Hi, how are you?" - which serves primarily to establish social connection rather than convey substantive information.

The heavy focus on expressive language successfully achieves several instructional goals. It lowers affective filters by prioritizing personally relevant content, builds basic communicative confidence, and develops vocabulary for self-expression. However, the relative scarcity of other functions may limit students' exposure to crucial language skills. The minimal directive language, for instance, provides few models for classroom instructions or requests. Similarly, the single phatic example offers inadequate practice with conversational routines. While the referential function appears more regularly, its scope remains narrow, focused mainly on concrete objects rather than information exchange.

To create more comprehensive materials, future textbook editions could incorporate a more intentional distribution of language functions. This might include expanding directive language through classroom scenario dialogues, increasing phatic examples to teach conversational maintenance, and diversifying referential content to include abstract concepts. A gradual functional progression across grade levels could help students

develop full communicative competence while maintaining the current strengths in personal expression. Such enhancements would better prepare learners for the varied linguistic demands they will encounter in academic and social contexts.

The following table presents a detailed breakdown of these language functions, showing representative examples and their frequency distribution:

Table 3. *Distribution of language functions in textbook dialogues*

Example	Speaker	Dialogue Text	Function	Characteristics
1	Joshua	"Hi, Made. What's wrong with you?"	Expressive	Opens emotional exchange
	Made	"I have a headache. It really hurts."	Expressive	Personal disclosure with intensity marker
2	Aisyah	"Do you have sore eyes?"	Expressive	Health inquiry
	Cici	"Yes, I do."	Expressive	Affirmative personal response
3	Cici	"Do you have a toothache?"	Expressive	Health question
	Lily	"Yes."	Expressive	Minimal affirmation
4	Alfonso	"She likes mangoes, too."	Referential	Factual statement
5	Joshua	"Sit down, please!"	Directive	Polite command
6	Joshua	"Hi, Alfonso. How are you?"	Phatic	Social greeting

Example 1

Joshua: "Hi, Made. What's wrong with you?"
Made: "I have a headache. It really hurts."

The expressive function is also present in Made's statement, "I have a headache. It really hurts," which conveys personal feelings and emotions. These functions highlight how language is used not only to share information but also to express emotions and guide behaviour (Holmes, 2013).

Example 2

Aisyah: Do you have sore eyes?
Cici: Yes, I do.

Cici's response, "Yes, I do", have expressive function, conveying their affirmation to Aisyah's question. These functions illustrate how language is used to share information and express emotions (Simamora & Sherina, 2022).

Example 3

Cici: Do you have a toothache?
Lily: Yes.

Lily responding to Cici's question with "Yes", confirming that she did have a toothache is an implementation of expressive function of language style. In this context, after being asked by Cici about whether she have a toothache or not, Lily conveys that she did have a toothache by affirming.

In summary, the language function found in data source are expressive, being the most used function of language with 13 dialogues (57%); referential, with 5 dialogues (22%); directive, with 4 dialogues (17%); and phatic with only one dialogue (4%). emphasizing the significance of emotional engagement and information conveyance in educational dialogues (Hamby & Jones, 2022; MacAllister, 2025; Sayer & Ban, 2018; Topal, 2024). Illustrated as follow:

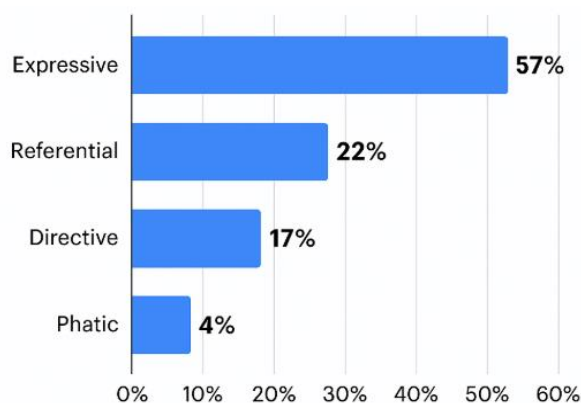


Figure 1: *Distribution of language functions in educational dialogues*

The findings of this study align with earlier research conducted by Trioktaviani (2019) and Uma (2021), both of which identified casual and consultative language styles as dominant in educational and informal settings. These patterns are further reinforced by studies such as Ahmad

Fahroni (2024) and Muslimawati (2022), who emphasized the practicality and effectiveness of these styles in fostering more relatable and engaging learning environments. Additionally, scholars like Meyer et al. (2024) and Sayer & Ban (2018) argue that informal speaking patterns play a crucial role in improving student-teacher interaction, reducing affective barriers, and enhancing student participation.

What distinguishes the present study is its specific focus on Indonesian elementary school textbooks—a domain that has received limited attention in previous discourse analysis studies. While much of the prior literature has concentrated on classroom interaction or spoken discourse in secondary and tertiary education, this research fills a notable gap by systematically analyzing the written dialogues embedded in early-grade textbooks. By doing so, it highlights how informal linguistic features are embedded even in structured educational materials and suggests that the deliberate use of casual and consultative styles may be an intentional strategy to align textbook language with students' everyday communication styles. This nuanced contribution extends the theoretical understanding of language use in pedagogy and provides empirical support for developing more contextually appropriate and learner-centered materials for young learners.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the communicative styles and language functions embedded in the "Look and Say" section of the *My Next Words Grade 5* English textbook, with particular focus on the Indonesian Merdeka curriculum context. Employing Joos's (1967) stylistic framework and Holmes's (2013) functional taxonomy, the findings reveal a striking uniformity: all 23 textbook dialogues utilize the casual language style, and expressive functions dominate (57%), followed by referential (22%), directive (17%), and phatic (4%) functions. These patterns emphasize the pedagogical intent to foster emotional engagement, reduce affective barriers, and present English as an accessible, conversational tool for young learners.

While the textbook's consistent use of casual style effectively supports communicative language teaching principles and learner confidence, it also exposes a potential limitation in terms of register diversity. The absence of consultative, formal, and frozen styles may hinder students' preparedness for academic, institutional, and ceremonial communicative settings. Likewise, the underrepresentation of directive, referential, and

especially phatic functions suggests missed opportunities for modeling varied interactional purposes essential to holistic communicative competence.

This study contributes a novel perspective by focusing explicitly on language used in Indonesian elementary school textbooks—a domain underexplored in prior sociolinguistic and EFL research. By demonstrating the pedagogical strengths and limitations of current textbook dialogues, it highlights the need for stylistic progression across grade levels, where casual interactions serve as a foundation for later exposure to more formal and context-specific registers.

Future textbook development should aim for balanced stylistic integration, incorporating formal and consultative styles in relevant contexts, and expanding the range of language functions presented. Such enhancements would not only align better with the sociolinguistic demands of real-world English use but also support the broader goals of the Merdeka curriculum in preparing learners to thrive in diverse academic and social settings.

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