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Research Trends in Analyzing Indonesian Books for the Curriculum Merdeka (2020-2025) in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia requires an evaluation of teaching materials, including textbooks, to ensure alignment with the principles of the curriculum, but systematic research on textbook analysis is still limited. This research aims to identify research trends in the analysis of elementary school student books under the Merdeka Curriculum during the period 2020-2025. Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, the researchers analyzed 5 journal articles and proceedings indexed in Google Scholar published between 2020-2025, focusing on studies of the analysis of Indonesian language textbooks for elementary school students. The research findings indicate: (1) an increasing trend in research on the analysis of Merdeka Curriculum textbooks, (2) the dominance of Universitas Negeri Semarang as the most active institution in this field, and (3) a diversity of analytical instruments used according to the individual objectives of each study. The study's conclusion underscores the importance of raising awareness among educators and researchers in evaluating the feasibility of textbooks, as well as the need for the development of more consistent analysis standards.

1. Introduction

Since 2021, the Merdeka Curriculum has been a popular learning concept for education in Indonesia (Thana & Hanipah, 2023). Education does not only focus on academic knowledge, but also on creativity, critical, analytical thinking, cooperation, communication, and digital and media literacy skills (Susilo & Harsono, 2021). The Merdeka Curriculum includes the use of technology in the learning process (Marisa, 2021). In addition to academic competence, students are taught ethical values, social responsibility, empathy, and the spirit of contributing positively to society (Cholilah et al., 2023).

The curriculum is the 'soul' of education that must be innovatively, dynamically evaluated, and periodically evaluated by the development of times, science and

technology, and the competencies required by society and users of graduates (Suryaman, 2020). In each curriculum, according to Lemov (2020), there are efforts to ensure that changes in the educational curriculum include current linguistic aspects relevant to students' needs in understanding the Indonesian language. Language contains grammatical aspects, namely the existence of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences that can form language discourse in syntax (Enggarwati & Utomo, 2021).

Some research about the Merdeka Curriculum, like research by Prahastiwi (2023) discussing the trend of using Arabic as an elective subject in the Merdeka Curriculum, research by Ramadhani et al (2024) discussing the changes in the high school mathematics curriculum from 2006 to 2024, researched by Asy'arie et al (2025) discussing trends in learning models within the Merdeka Learning Curriculum (KMB), research by Nada & Listiana (2024) providing a comprehensive analysis between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum, highlighting the differences in focus and its impact on students' environmental awareness, and research by Fatoni (2024) providing valuable contributions to the understanding of the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum through innovative learning models.

Textbooks published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) are assessed and compiled based on the standards set by the Center for Curriculum and Books (Puskurbuk) and the National Education Standards Agency (BSNP). Textbook evaluation is important to ensure its effectiveness in meeting students' learning needs (Wijayanti, 2020). Research shows that textbook development must consider users' needs, both students and teachers, and must meet applicable educational standards (Anri & Soebagyo, 2021; Yanthi et al., 2022; Daulay et al., 2020).

Afriansyah et al. (2022) identified that some textbook content does not align with curriculum messages, some textbooks only present material in summary form, and do not match students' mindsets. Government Regulation No. 32 of 2013, Article 1, Paragraph 23, states that textbooks are the primary learning resource for achieving basic competencies and core competencies. Textbooks, also referred to as teaching books (Direktur Jenderal Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan, 2019), are knowledge books for specific fields of science or subjects, specifically intended for students studying at a certain grade level, presented in an easily understandable manner (Pebriana, 2021).

Textbooks are materials specifically designed to guide and facilitate the learning process at various levels of education (Farhana et al., 2021). Generally, textbooks present information, concepts, theories, and practical applications regarding a particular subject or topic (Susanto et al., 2023). The textbook's primary purpose is to help students understand, master, and apply the subject matter according to the applicable curriculum (Anggraini et al., 2022). A good textbook should have high readability, discourse that meets the readability aspect, and the information presented should be easy to understand (Pebriana, 2021).

Damariswara & Jadmiko (2022) revealed that the textbooks needed to include concepts of a variety of texts that are easy to understand, by the applicable curriculum, and increase practice. However, the reality is that not all textbooks used as learning aids for elementary school students are suitable for use. This is similar to the results of the study by Mulyani & Dafit (2024) in the textbook of the Merdeka curriculum of grade IV elementary school, which shows errors in sentence structure and language use that are not fully met by the cognitive stage of students. For example, complex sentences are complicated for students aged 9-10 years to understand, which is not in line with the BSNP guidelines, which emphasize the suitability of language with the psychological development of students (Ginanjari et al., 2025).

Research by Xu & Liu (2025) states that in the student book, there is a neglect of phonological metaphors that are part of linguistics. As for the results of other research on the Merdeka curriculum student textbook has not included a more systematic guide on writing techniques to train students' fine motor skills (Pertiwi & Supartinah, 2025). Based on the problems presented, conducting an in-depth book analysis using linguistic theory and books in the Merdeka curriculum student books, including elementary school student books from grades I to VI, is necessary. Research by Nurchaliza et al. (2023) shows the existence of object phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, numeral phrases, and misuse of phrases in short story sentences. Research by Kusumawati & Fadilla (2024) show that errors found in learning support books made by teachers are one of the indicators that, in terms of Indonesian literacy skills in schools, teachers still ignore language rules.

Research on the analysis of Indonesian Elementary School students' books for the Merdeka Curriculum has not been done much. A review of the Merdeka Curriculum book needs to be done to make improvements immediately, if necessary (Hanifah et al., 2023). Similar to the research on the analysis of the books of students of the Merdeka Curriculum Indonesian Elementary School, which is still very rare, research on the review of the research on the analysis of Indonesian books for students of the Merdeka Curriculum Elementary School in 2020-2025 has also never been carried out. This research aims to discover the trends in Indonesian book analysis for Merdeka Curriculum Elementary School students in 2020-2025. The benefit of this research is that it provides readers with an overview of the Indonesian book analysis research trend for Merdeka curriculum elementary school students.

2. Methodology

This article was prepared using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, also known as systematic literature review (Martiani & Subali, 2024). According to Ibid, as quoted by Nurhaliza (2023), the literature review process is carried out by identifying, reviewing, interpreting, and evaluating research that focuses on research topics. The SLR method is used to evaluate, review, and interpret all available research on topics of interest, with specific research questions relevant (Faiza et al., 2022).

Identify in the article search using the Publish or Perish (PoP) software using the keyword "Analysis of Elementary School Students' Books of Linguistic Theory and Books". The article search process is limited to 500 articles in Indonesian and English published in the last five years, namely 2020-2025. Search results obtained 366 results, 31 books, so Google Scholar indexed 335 articles, proceedings, and repositories. Articles that were eliminated because they were less relevant to the keywords used were 298 articles. Then, after filtering based on titles and abstracts, a total of 37 articles were obtained. However, 17 articles were found that did not include the criteria because the articles were part of a/thesis and were considered less efficient to analyze. The articles considered worthy of analysis were 20 articles; then the data was verified again, and 14 articles were found whose research focus was not in elementary school. The results of the articles that will be analyzed are 5 articles and 1 proceeding that are part of the research on the analysis of the Indonesian Elementary School students' books of the Merdeka Curriculum based on Linguistics and Book Theory. The stages in searching for journal articles can be seen in Figure 1.

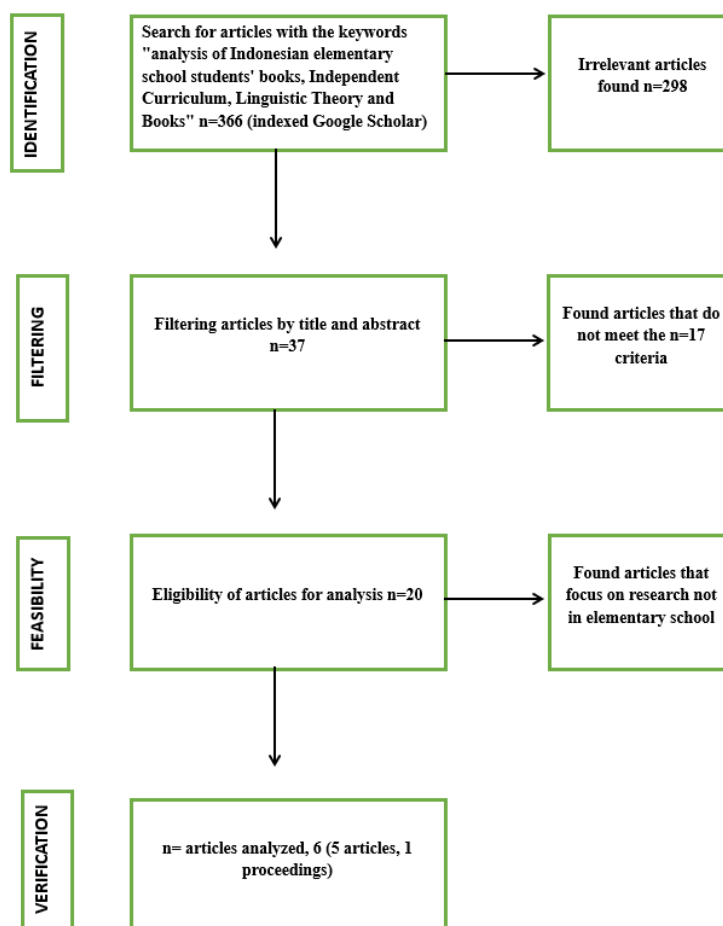


Figure 1. Article Search Illustration

Based on the data of the article, it can be seen that the research publication on the Analysis of Student Books for Indonesian Elementary Schools Merdeka

Curriculum based on Linguistic and Book Theory in 2020-2025 is shown in Figure 2.

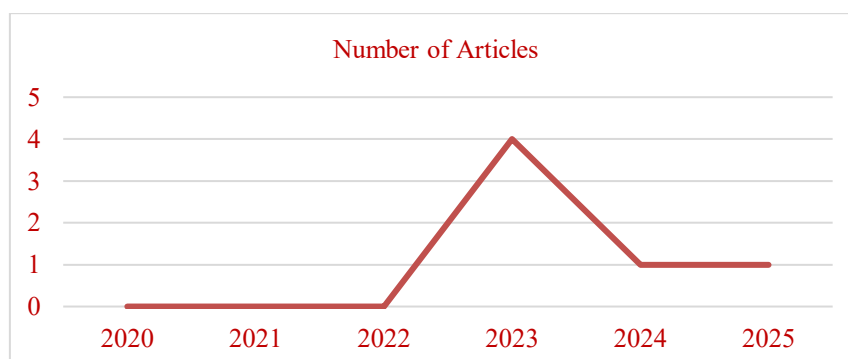


Figure 2. Graph Publication of Research Analysis of Indonesian Elementary School Students' Books

Based on the articles and proceedings obtained, several universities/schools in Indonesia contribute to researching the Analysis of Student Books for the Indonesian Elementary School Merdeka Curriculum based on Linguistics and Book Theory. The data can be seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3. University Graph Articles and Proceedings of Research Analysis of Indonesian Elementary School Students

The information from each university or school from which the articles and proceedings are taken is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Graphic Description of University/School of Origin Article

University	Code
Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an	A
Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta	B
Universitas Islam Riau	C
Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta	D
Universitas Negeri Semarang	E

Based on 5 articles and 1 research proceeding on the Analysis of Student Books for Elementary Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum based on Linguistics and Book Theory, the article citation data can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Graph of Citation of Articles and Proceedings

Title	Authors	Citation
Analisis Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka: Kajian Buku Teks Bahasa Indonesia Kelas 4 SD/MI	Hanifah et al., 2023	9
A content analysis of the language quality of thematic textbooks for elementary school students	Mardiyana et al., 2023	6
Analisis Bahasa Dalam Buku Teks Bahasa Indonesia Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Kelas IV	Mulyani & Dafit, 2024	0
Analisis Muatan Konten pada Buku Teks Bahasa Indonesia Kurikulum Merdeka Kelas 1 Sekolah Dasar	Pertiwi & Supartinah, 2025	0
Analisis Frasa Verba dan Adjektiva pada Teks Cerpen dalam Buku Bahasa Indonesia Kelas IV SD Kurikulum Merdeka	Nurchaliza et al., 2023	4
Exploring meaning: an analysis of denotative diction and connotative diction in Indonesian language textbook stories for second-grade elementary school	Ken Limaran & Sukardi Sukardi, 2024	0

3. Results and Discussion

Publication of Articles and Proceedings of Analysis of Student Books for the Elementary Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum based on Linguistic Theory and Books

Based on the search results for research articles on the Analysis of Student Books for Elementary Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum based on Linguistic and Book Theory from 2020-2025, 5 articles and 1 proceeding were found. The articles and proceedings were published in journals indexed by Google Scholar. In Figure 2, it can be seen that the research trend of Student Book Analysis of Elementary Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum based on Linguistics and Book Theory develops fluctuantly for each year. However, in 2020-2022, an article search through the Publish or Perish software did not find articles indexed by Google Scholar about the research on the Analysis of Student Books for Indonesian Elementary School Merdeka Curriculum based on Linguistic and Book Theory.

As a result of the analysis of article data, in Figure 3, it is known that Universitas Negeri Semarang is an institution that conducts research on the Analysis of Student Books for Indonesian Elementary School Merdeka Curriculum based on Linguistic Theory and Books, the most in this field, with as many as 2 articles. The spread of the analysis field of Indonesian elementary school students has not been comprehensive in Indonesia. The research was primarily conducted in two regions in Indonesia, namely Sumatra Island and Java. Therefore, this literature review can provide an overview for readers interested in the research so that it can be implemented in research on student book analysis.

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the research conducted by Hanifah et al. (2023) has the highest article citations. The article examines the feasibility of content, presentation, and language in the book for the Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum grade IV students.

Focus of Book Analysis

The results of the article search and proceedings regarding the Analysis of Student Books for SD Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum based on Linguistics and Book Theory found various focuses of article analysis and proceedings. The following is presented in Table 3, which shows some of the focus of the book analysis, grade level, and author.

Table 3. Focus on Analysis of Indonesian Elementary School Student Books

Focus of Analysis	Authors	Book Title
Book review covers content qualifications, presentation qualifications, and language qualifications	Hanifah et al., 2023	Indonesian Textbook for Grade IV Elementary / MI
All texts from the class V textbook are themed on heat and transfer	Mardiyana et al., 2023	Merdeka Curriculum Textbook for elementary school students by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Erlangga, and Yudhistira
Language qualifications	Mulyani & Dafit, 2024	Indonesian Textbook Curriculum Merdeka in Grade IV Elementary / MI
Content Content Analysis	Pertiwi & Supartinah, 2025	Buku Teks Bahasa Indonesia Kelas I SD/MI
Analysis of Verb Phrases and Adjectives in Short Story Texts	Nurchaliza et al., 2023	Indonesian Book Class IV Elementary School Merdeka Curriculum
Denotative and connotative diction analysis	Ken Limaran & Sukardi Sukardi, 2024	Indonesian Language Books for Grade II Elementary School Merdeka Curriculum

Based on Table 3, each author has a different focus on analysis. As for Hanifah et al. (2023), Mulyani & Dafit (2024), and Nurchaliza et al. (2023), researching the books of elementary school students in grade IV. While Mardiyana et al. (2023) researched Class V Books, Pertiwi & Supartinah (2025) researched Class I Books, and Limaran & Sukardi (2024) researched Class II Books. No book analysis research has been found for grades III and VI.

Book Analysis Instruments

Various kinds of book analysis instruments can be used to analyze the content of books according to the research objectives. Several researchers in Table 3 used multiple instruments to analyze the content of students' books. The instruments are presented in Table 4 as follows.

Table 4. Book Analysis Instruments

Instrument	Authors
Checklist with content analysis procedures according to Fraenkel and Wallen	Hanifah et al., 2023
Suitability to the student's level of development, Communicative language, Coherence, and cohesion	Mardiyana et al., 2023
Sentence Effectiveness, Word Accuracy, Vocabulary, Understanding of Messages or Information, Ability to Motivate Students, Encourage Critical Thinking, Conformity to Students' Level of Intellectual Development, Conformity to Students' Level of Emotional Development, Grammatical Accuracy and Spelling Accuracy Using Good and Correct Indonesian by Linguistic Rules, and Use of Terms and Symbols by Student Development	Mulyani & Dafit, 2024
Write Down the Content of the Beginning Reading Material and Write Down the Content of the Beginning Writing Material	Pertiwi & Supartinah, 2025
Data table of phrase grouping by type	Nurchaliza et al., 2023
Data table of connotative and denotative diction meanings	Ken Limaran & Sukardi Sukardi, 2024

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that the instruments used by the researchers are not the same. This is adjusted to the research objectives of each author.

Research Findings

Based on Table 3, each researcher has a different focus in analyzing students' books. This means that the results of the analysis are also different. However, there are similarities in the research by Hanifah et al. (2023) and Mulyani & Dafit (2024), who analyzed grade IV students' books and the feasibility of the language. The findings of the study are presented in Table 5 as follows.

Table 5. Research Findings

Findings	Author
The Indonesian textbook for Grade 4 of the Merdeka Curriculum is considered reasonable by the curriculum, easy to understand, and interesting, although it needs a minor adjustment.	Hanifah et al., 2023
The textbooks of the three publishers have excellent language quality in terms of language suitability for student growth, and the communicative language issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia and Erlangga is perfect, but Yudhistira needs much improvement.	Mardiyana et al., 2023
The language used in the textbook is in accordance with the students' rules, needs, and development. However, there are still some errors in the textbook sentences.	Mulyani & Dafit, 2024
The initial reading material is mostly by CP, TP, and ATP, Indonesian phase A. The shortcomings of this study are in several chapters, such as practicing pronouncing simple sentences and reading fluently. This book's advantages include using straightforward, interactive, and rules-compliant language, as well as motivating students. The drawbacks are the reliance on internet links for reading practice and the absence of an on-air writing guide.	Pertiwi & Supartinah, 2025

The results of this study show the existence of object phrases, adjective phrases, numeral phrases, and misuse of phrases in short story sentences. Nurchaliza et al., 2023

The study results show that using words with unambiguous denotative meanings makes it easier for students to understand the concepts being taught. Ken Limaran & Sukardi Sukardi, 2024

Based on the research findings in Table 5, we can observe that the Merdeka Curriculum student books have not fully reached feasibility, both from linguistic theory and from the books. This must be a common concern because textbooks are an information provider that educators and students need (Nuryasana & Desiningrum, 2020).

4. Conclusion

This research reveals a trend of increasing analysis of Indonesian language textbooks for elementary school students from the Merdeka Curriculum 2020-2025. The results indicate that Semarang State University is the most active institution in conducting research on the analysis of Indonesian student books. These findings show variations in the analysis tools used, highlighting the need for evaluation standardization. Although this curriculum offers innovations, challenges such as teacher readiness and the quality of teaching materials still need to be addressed. Therefore, further research is recommended to encompass all grade levels and to strengthen collaboration with stakeholders to support more effective curriculum implementation.

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