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Discourse Analysis of Conflict and Resolution in History Textbooks: Representations of the Referendum in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how Indonesian history textbooks represent conflict and its resolution with a focus on the theme of East Timor. The research applies the methodology of Historical Discourse Analysis, examining various elements of representation, including nomination, predication, argumentation, perspective, and intensification. The primary objects of study are two Indonesian history textbooks that are currently used in schools. The results show that textbook I adopts a pragmatic and binary approach, framing the Indonesian government as the protagonist that seeks to include East Timor as part of its national territory. In this narrative, the East Timorese people are portrayed as the antagonists who resist the

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integration process with Indonesia. This approach reflects a polarized view of the conflict, emphasizing the roles of both parties in opposition. On the other hand, Textbook II takes a more constructive and reconciliation-oriented approach. It presents a vision for future cooperation and understanding between Indonesia and East Timor, highlighting possibilities for peaceful resolution and long-term collaboration between the two countries. Despite these different approaches, this study identifies an ongoing challenge in the writing of Indonesian history textbooks, which can be termed as “schizo-history.” This concept refers to the paradox faced by historians in balancing efforts to reconstruct historical events with the anxiety surrounding the potential impact of those narratives on national unity. The study argues that Indonesian historians must continue to seek alternative methodologies that can address these tensions while providing more nuanced and balanced representations of historical events. This research contributes to broader discussions on the role of history textbooks in shaping national identity and calls for further investigation into the challenges and opportunities in writing history textbooks in post-conflict contexts.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis; Representation of Conflict Resolution; Indonesian History Textbooks

1. Introduction

Today, portraying conflict in historical literature has become an important topic, especially in the context of conflict resolution. This is closely related to the potential use of different historical writing methods in textbooks to change views on conflict, strengthen trust among communities, and reduce structural and cultural violence^[1]. Conflicts can be triggered by the complex interplay between simple common understandings by society and more efficient understandings of internal resource utilisation^[2]. This topic often triggers debates involving various groups in society and the political sphere, including governments, historians, and various institutions from the social, cultural, or religious sectors. According to Bernardoni^[3], controversial historical issues still strongly influence various collective movements today, including encouraging debate and reflection and emphasising the construction of critical thinking citizenship. According to Saefudin et al.^[4], this related discussion usually centres on the role of history textbooks, whether as a tool to influence students’ interpretations through the structure of arguments and meanings they contain or simply as an instrument to justify political regimes for their violent actions.

Attempts to influence students’ interpretations have led governments around the world to develop educational policies that impact the content of history textbooks. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the conditions of conflict and separation have prompted the government there to adjust the content of history textbooks to fit the dynamics and recommendations^[5]. Such textbooks reflect the official

view of history, making them one of the most influential tools in shaping the shared understanding of young people and society as a whole. Moreover, Yan et al.^[6] highlighted the importance of history textbooks in shaping national memory and identity in China, especially in the national campaign to fully instil socialist core values into youngsters and ensure their familiarity and identification with socialism with Chinese characteristics. On the other hand, the conflict between Israel and Arab countries is reflected in history textbooks, Arar & Ibrahim^[7] and Al-Haj^[8] showed that in such conflict situations, textbooks often form a biased worldview and create negative stereotypes against the opposing side, which prolongs the duration of the conflict, hence the dilemma in national identity formation stemming from the conflict between two national narratives. This analysis reveals that each country develops its way of presenting its historical conflict representations, tailored to its own needs and socio-political context.

In Indonesia, discussions on conflict representation in historical literature are more complex due to the country’s rich history and cultural diversity. Indonesia’s history is characterised by the existence of various groups of people formed through social construction^[9]. The Indonesian nation has come together as a national entity through a process influenced by various factors. National consciousness is formed from a consistent ideology and dynamic agreements among its citizens^[10, 11]. Internal conflict, often fuelled by political rivalries and ideological differences, has been one of the main challenges to Indonesia’s national integrity. Since independence in 1945 until today, Indonesia has gone through

numerous political and ideological conflicts, many of which are related to political elite rivalries and economic differences between the central and local governments^[12]. In regions such as Aceh, conflicts have also arisen due to regionalism and separatism^[13], and the history of East Timor has seen the conflict end in a referendum^[14, 15]. Therefore, these issues make the representation of conflict resolution in Indonesian historical literature very important.

Until now, research on how conflict resolution is represented in Indonesian history textbooks is still relatively rare; even research on the conflict in East Timor from the perspective of Indonesian history textbook researchers has never been conducted. Researchers interested in the field of educational historiography in Indonesia usually concentrate on political aspects of education and the way history textbook materials portray political discussions. Most previous research tends to focus on the politics of education, including the formation of national identity and the legitimisation of power^[4, 16, 17]. However, recent studies that are more critical of Indonesian history textbooks, such as Djono et al.'s^[18], have begun to provide deeper insights into how conflict representations are presented by analysing the way historical narratives are structured in Indonesian history textbooks and finding the use of a binary opposition logic approach in describing historical events.

The study conducted by Djono et al.^[18] revealed an imbalance in the representation of unity and diversity in history textbooks, which could potentially lead to the marginalisation of certain groups. They criticised history books in Indonesia that tend to follow the logic of binary opposition, emphasising nationalism while ignoring diversity and other aspects of human life, including conflict and its resolution. The researchers point out that Indonesian society today is still dealing with conflicts from the past, especially from the old order (1945–1965) and new order (1966–1998) eras. However, no Indonesian researcher has taken up the theme of conflict resolution in East Timor, especially from the perspective of Indonesian history textbooks. The issue, especially when it comes to excessive nationalism, is how the conflict can be represented in a way that supports its future resolution. Thus, this paper aims to examine how Indonesian history textbooks in the current curriculum present representations of the conflict and its resolution in East Timor.

2. Literature Review

2.1. History Learning in the Indonesian Curriculum

The curriculum in Indonesia since 2021 has changed from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum. In this transition period, two textbooks are still used according to the character of each curriculum. The character of the 2013 Curriculum integrates skills, themes, concepts and topics from various disciplines, both individually and interdisciplinarily, and is designed to suit the needs of all students. The main goal is to hone students' abilities to make observations, ask questions, think critically, and communicate effectively^[19]. Meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum was implemented to improve by introducing flexibility in teaching, allowing schools and teachers to adjust subject matter according to students' needs and contexts while still following nationally set competency standards^[20].

History education's role and purpose positively impact nation-building^[21]. Today, history education focuses on knowledge of past events and emphasises the values and lessons that can be drawn from past historical events, especially in conflict and its resolution. Through history lessons, students are taught about historical conflicts, including their backgrounds and ways of resolution^[22]. This helps students understand the complexity of conflict and the importance of peaceful resolution. In learning history, students get the opportunity to understand their community's history^[23, 24]. According to Evans^[25] history education in schools aims to help students understand the historical context in relation to the present and foster their interest in historical events. It also plays a role in strengthening their national identity and providing an understanding of cultural origins and heritage. History education contributes to students' knowledge of national history and global culture in a contemporary context, develops critical thinking skills through studying history, introduces specialised methods in studying history, supports other curricula, and prepares students for adult life.

The analysis of conflict resolution in the context of Indonesian history, as presented in history textbooks, facilitates students' recognition and internalisation of past events while enabling them to understand abstract concepts through comprehensive and easy-to-understand narratives. In this way, the Indonesian education curriculum seeks to equip students

with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to conflict resolution constructively in society^[23, 26]. This approach also plays a role in linking field information with concepts contained in the curriculum implemented in Indonesia. In other words, conflict resolution values will enrich students' learning experiences and better prepare them to face future challenges.

2.2. From East Timor to Timor Leste

The integration of East Timor into Indonesia went through a complicated process^[27]. It began with a military operation by President Soeharto's government, which was said to have the support of the United States^[28]. Previously, East Timor was under the colonial rule of Portugal. In the 1970s, there were three main groups in East Timor: The Uniao Democratica Timorese (UDT) party, which supported Portugal's colonial status; Frente Revolucionaria de Timor-Leste Independente (Fretilin), which fought for independence and the creation of an independent state; and Associacao Popular Democratica de Timor (Apodeti), which pushed for integration with Indonesia^[29, 30]. Apodeti was the least influential of these three groups compared to UDT and Fretilin. There was strong competition between UDT, which sought to maintain the status quo, and Fretilin, which wanted independence. UDT accused Fretilin of turning East Timor into a communist state. The dispute between these groups culminated in armed conflict and caused many East Timorese to flee to the border areas close to Indonesia^[31–33].

President Soeharto was concerned about the possibility of East Timor becoming a communist state if it gained independence but did not want the territory to remain under Portuguese colonialism. In this situation, President Soeharto took steps to communicate with the then President of the United States, Gerald Rudolph Ford Jr. On 6 December 1975, President Ford and US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger met with President Soeharto in Jakarta. The day after the meeting, Indonesia began military operations in East Timor, known as "Operation Seroja", led by Ali Moertopo to integrate East Timor into the 27th province of the Republic of Indonesia^[34].

Some sources claim that Fretilin, which had a communist ideology and wanted independence, had the majority support of the East Timorese people^[35, 36]. This was one of the reasons the Indonesian government and the United States

launched Operation Seroja on December 7, 1975. Previously, on 28 November 1975, Fretilin lowered the Portuguese flag and declared the independence of East Timor as a Democratic Republic. However, Fretilin's military strength was no match for that of the Indonesian army, which allegedly had the support of the US^[34]. On the night of 7 December 1975, Dili was captured by the Indonesian military, followed by Baucau, East Timor's second-largest city, three days later. On 17 July 1976, East Timor officially became part of Indonesia as the 27th province^[37, 38]. This situation lasted throughout the New Order period in Indonesia. However, after the fall of Soeharto and the New Order in 1998, a referendum was held in East Timor on 30 August 1999, which resulted in the decision that the territory seceded from Indonesia and eventually stood as an independent country called Timor Leste from 2002 until today.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of conflict representation can be explained using representation theory. Representation is generally understood as a way of interpreting and disseminating knowledge that materialises through the use of language, text, images, illustrations, symbols and other objects^[26]. These representations act as intermediaries between two human interpretative processes: first, linking objects to knowledge and mental representations, and second, linking representational concepts to knowledge and mental representations. The process of linking an object's meaning, representation and objectification is part of the representation process, which is achieved through cognition, mental representation and objectification^[39]. It is important to understand that representations do not always directly reflect reality. Sheppard^[24] argues that representations are merely replications of reality, not realistic depictions of an event or object, and are shaped through discourses associated with power, knowledge, and subjectivity.

Following this view, Hall^[40] distinguishes three views of representation: reflective, intuitive, and constructionist. The reflective approach sees representations as a true reflection of reality. The intuitive approach assumes that representations carry the meaning the maker or speaker intended. In contrast, the constructionist approach argues that representations are formed through language and discourse. Referring to this theoretical framework, in studying the representation

of conflict resolution in history textbooks, the content of the book should be seen as historical discourse. This means that the way conflict resolution is represented in textbooks should be analysed by considering various aspects of discourse and discourse practices, including texts, descriptions, evaluations, narratives, images and illustrations^[41]. Among these various forms of representation, narration is often the most dominant way in history textbooks. Narratives in history textbooks are usually based on the work of historians and are recognised by the academic community as part of academic historiography^[42]. Derocher^[43] criticises these historical narratives as mere stories and argues that they cannot accurately reflect historical events. Therefore, similar to Deutsch's approach, conflict representation in history textbooks should be understood as a narrative of historical conflict resolution.

As a form of narrative, the representation of conflict resolution in history textbooks can be scrutinised through its narrative logic structure. Al-Ghazzi^[44] explains the logic of historical narrative as a collection of rules applied by historians in describing historical events. This narrative logic structure reveals how historians choose subjects, objects, names, and perspectives in describing a particular event. In narratives with a binary approach, these choices determine who or what is supported or criticised in the narrative. According to Hassanein^[45], the binary approach can be used in text or narrative analysis, where a text or narrative can be analysed in two opposite aspects, such as positive versus negative, good versus bad or others. Meanwhile, conflict resolution, according to Bentrovato^[46], emphasises the reconciliation approach, which is an attempt by text narratives to rebuild relationships and trust between the parties involved in the conflict. The reconciliation process can include initiatives to promote narratives of peace and reconciliation. By examining this narrative logic, we can understand how conflict resolution is represented in history textbooks. Therefore, in this study, the focus of the analysis of conflict resolution representations will centre on the narrative logic present in Indonesian history textbooks, to identify the rules and methods of representation used in depicting historical conflict resolution in Indonesia.

3. Materials and Methods

In this section, the methods used to obtain the results in the paper should be clearly elucidated. This allows read-

ers to be able to replicate the study in the future. Authors should ensure that any references made to other research or experiments should be clearly cited.

This research uses the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) as a method to evaluate how conflict resolution in East Timor is represented in history textbooks. In terms of methodology, DHA provides a tool to analyse the way conflict resolution is represented and its narrative logic by examining three relevant aspects: critique in the context of discourse, socio-diagnostic analysis, and prospective analysis^[47]. Strategies critical of discursive elements are used to investigate these aspects, including the examination of nomination, prediction, argumentation, point of view, and reinforcement^[48]. These discursive elements are intended to reveal the "laws of narrative logic" manifested through comparisons and narrative structures in history textbooks describing the resolution of the conflict on Timor Island until the independence of East Timor into Timor Leste.

Two compulsory history textbooks published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia for the learning process of history in SMA class XII were used as the object of research. These books were selected because they are still the main reading material for grade XII students and there is special material about the conflict in East Timor. Both books were written by historians and academics as follows:

1. Abdurakhman, Arif Pradono, Linda Sunarti and Susanto Zuhdi^[49]. Indonesian History for SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Class XII (Sejarah Indonesia untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas XII). Jakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture;
2. Martina Safitry, Indah Wahyu Puji Utami and Aan Ratmanto^[50]. History for SMA/MA Class XII (Sejarah untuk SMA/MA Kelas XII). Jakarta: Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia.

The contents of these textbooks cover the background of East Timor's integration in 1976, the referendum in 1999 and the official independence of Timor Leste in 2002. For further analysis, the author only selected grade XII history textbooks containing narrative representations of East Timor's conflict. The analysis focuses on the narrative of the conflict in East Timor between 1975–2002. The list of conflict resolution topics can be seen in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Representation of conflict resolution in history textbooks.

Number	Identification Number in Textbook		
	Topic in Textbook	Pages	Total Pages
Textbook 1			
1	East Timor’s Integration	136–139	3
2	Implementation of the East Timor Referendum	158–160	2
3	Legal Reform	160-161	1
4	Issues of Disintegration and Territorial Sovereignty	171–172	1
Textbook II			
1	Freedom of Expression and Political Aspirations	163–164	1
2	The Referendum and the Fate of East Timorese Ex-Refugees	164–165	1

This study investigated the representation of conflict resolution in narratives using the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) method. Discourse analysis was conducted to analyse the data, which includes research on how the narrative dominates, predicts, argues, and provides perspectives on conflict resolution^[51]. The purpose of nomination analysis is to explore how narratives discursively structure various social aspects such as events, actions, and processes. Nomination is concerned with the way actors or groups within an issue are presented, often implicitly. In analysing nominations, this research explores how people, objects, phenomena, events, processes and actions are identified and mentioned in language. Meanwhile, predication analysis focuses on the judgement of social actors and events. Furthermore, argumentation analysis examines the justification of the claims in the conflict resolution narrative. Perspective analysis examines the author’s position and views in the narrative. Through this approach, the researcher can reveal the various ways of representing conflict resolution in Indonesian history textbooks.

This study adopts the content analysis method in its research. Therefore, this approach requires a comprehensive evaluation of various media or information content, including written and printed materials^[52]. The main objective is to investigate and interpret various forms of material found in documentary sources such as textbooks. Using the content analysis method, this research aims to illustrate and understand the messages presented in various contexts.

4. Results

The findings of this research explore two different presentations in two history textbooks: The first textbook

presents the initial process of East Timor’s integration up to the referendum period. The second textbook deals with the freedom of aspiration for self-determination through the referendum and the fate of the refugees who chose to become Indonesian citizens. For more details, it will be presented in detail as follows:

4.1. Textbook I: East Timor’s Integration to the Referendum

In the history textbook written by Abdurakhman et al.^[49], the theme of East Timor is found in Chapter IV, under the title “Indonesia’s Political-Economic System and Structure during the New Order Period (1966–1988)”, precisely in the sub-chapter point C titled “East Timor Integration”. In this section, the textbook emphasises the initial conflict in East Timor. The initial conflict began with a narrative of the world’s political conditions during the Cold War, where there was a struggle for influence in the Southeast Asian region between two competing blocs, namely the Western Bloc led by the United States and the Eastern Bloc led by the Soviet Union. The situation was complicated by the defeat of the United States in Vietnam in 1975, which affected the political conditions in Southeast Asia. This sentence can be found in the sentence:

The establishment of the communist government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was considered a threat that could lead to the fall of neighbouring countries to communist rule (page 137).

At the same time, there was a political crisis in East

Timor, a Portuguese colony directly adjacent to Indonesia. This crisis resulted from the liberalisation and decolonisation policies implemented by the new Portuguese government under the leadership of General Antonio de Spínola. These policy changes included efforts to restore civil rights and encourage democratisation in society, which also affected the political dynamics in East Timor. Moreover, there was a struggle for influence between the three major parties in East Timor, as presented in the sentence:

In East Timor, three major political parties emerged to capitalise on the freedom granted by the Portuguese government. The three political parties are (1) Uniao Democratica Timorese (UDT-Timor People's Democratic Union), which wanted gradual independence. For the initial stage UDT wanted East Timor to become a state of Portugal: (2) the radical-Communist Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste (Fretilin-Front Revolutionary Independence of East Timor) which wanted immediate independence; and (3) the Associaco Popular Democratic Timorese (Apodeti-Popular Democratic Association of the Timorese People) which wanted to join Indonesia (page 137).

The history textbook also emphasises the conflicts that occurred between the three parties, even resulting in a civil war. In addition, it also features one of the statements made by Apodeti chairman Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo on 31 August 1974, with various reasons for wanting his party to join the Republic of Indonesia as the 27th province. This culminated in the "Balibo Proclamation" on 30 November 1975, in which the Apodeti party and its coalition announced their desire to join the government of the Republic of Indonesia. The textbook also emphasises the formal legal legitimacy of the sentence:

Then, on 31 May 1976, the East Timorese House of Representatives (DPR) submitted a petition urging the government of the Republic of Indonesia to immediately accept and ratify the unification of the people and territory of East Timor into the Unitary State of the Repub-

lic of Indonesia (page 138).

These textbook reasons were the basis on which Indonesia launched "Operation Seroja" in December 1975. The textbook emphasises that this operation was supported by various countries, most notably the United States. The textbooks also emphasise this as a "Security Operation" that required taking official and legal steps to integrate East Timor into Indonesia's 27th province. This policy was also supported by a formal legal step with the issuance of Law No. 7 of 1976, which approved the incorporation of East Timor into the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and its establishment as the East Timor Province. This step was later strengthened by a decision of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) through MPR Decree No. IV/MPR/1978. In the textbook, Indonesia's stance in launching this military operation was supported by fears of East Timor falling into the hands of communism. However, at the end of the discussion in the textbook with the phrase:

However, Indonesia's control of the territory turned out to cause many ongoing problems, especially after the end of the "Cold War" and the collapse of the Soviet Union (page 139).

The textbook continues the narrative on East Timor in Chapter V under the title "Indonesia's Political-Economic System and Structure during the Reformation Period (1998-present)" by placing point e) under the title "The Implementation of the East Timor Referendum." In this section, the textbook problematises this military operation as not backed by international recognition. However, it still provides "justification" with the sentence:

Despite the fact that Indonesia has never claimed and has no ambition to control the territory of East Timor. Many sacrifices have been made by the Indonesian people, both life and property, to create peace and development in East Timor, which historically has often been turbulent between those who are pro-integration and those who are against it (page 158).

At various points, the textbook also presents interna-

tional pressure as “cornered” by 8 UN General Assembly resolutions and 7 UN Security Council resolutions. Thus, this international pressure finally required President B.J Habibie’s government to conduct a referendum to ensure that the people of East Timor continued to choose integration or independence. The textbook explains the results of the referendum clearly:

The people of East Timor conducted a referendum on 30 August 1999 in accordance with the New York Agreement. The results of the referendum, announced by the UN on 4 September 1999, were 78.5% against (becoming Indonesian territory) and 21.5% for (becoming Indonesian territory). After this poll, there were various forms of violence, so for the sake of humanity, Indonesia agreed to accelerate the dispatch of multinational forces in East Timor (Page 159).

It can be seen that the textbook ends with the narrative of East Timor’s independence to become the state of Timor Leste in accordance with the principles contained in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution which states that independence is the right of all nations, the Indonesian Government recognises the decision of the East Timorese people through a decree separating East Timor from Indonesia in a good, honourable and peaceful manner. This was in accordance with the provisions of the New York Agreement and aimed to show the world that Indonesia was part of an international community that was responsible, democratic and respected human rights (Page 161).

In Textbook I, the initial conflict is categorised as a conflict of political interests, although there is some reasoning for ideological conflicts. The importance of describing this conflict is emphasised in the textbook as an effort to raise national awareness. In this book, the author found a uniform narrative pattern in the presentation of the conflict. The textbook first describes the conditions of the Cold War world, which resulted from ideological competition and differences in global interests. This then became the reason for Indonesia to conduct military operations in East Timor. With this reasoning, the government instead chose military action as the final solution to integrate East Timor into the 27th province. The textbook portrays the military operation

as a critical moment that had to be done in the national interest. The referendum process itself is portrayed as a step of pressure by the international community; although Indonesia offered various solutions, they were rejected. It finally forced a referendum and ended with the official birth of the state of Timor Leste in 2002.

The representations portrayed endeavour to connect objects with knowledge as well as mental representations of the Indonesian people, although these representations are not always a direct reflection of reality^[39]. Representation in this textbook replicates reality and is shaped through discourse with the author’s power, knowledge, and subjectivity^[24]. On the other hand, the approach used in this textbook I is a binary approach, as this textbook approach refers to a way of thinking to engage understanding or analysis in two opposite or mutually exclusive aspects or options^[53]. This approach often involves categorising or understanding phenomena in two opposing or contrasting groups. Where the conflict in East Timor can be understood by identifying two opposing parties or groups between the Indonesian Government as the “good side” that wants to include East Timor as part of its territory and the East Timorese people as the “bad side” for rejecting integration with Indonesia.

The binary pattern of understanding in the interpretation of the historical conflict in East Timor began to appear from the beginning of each subchapter explaining the material. However, the textbook authors still attempt to extract the values of nationalism that can be learnt from the events of the conflict in East Timor. Here, the author seems to be trying to provide a deep understanding of how human history can produce wisdom even if it has to go through conflict first. The value is that students are invited to understand historical experiences and relate them to the context of today^[54]. The textbook emphasises that past conflicts can provide valuable insights to address present challenges, while past mistakes become important lessons for current situations^[46]. The lessons learnt from these events are considered valuable provisions to address potential conflicts that exist in the future.

From this analysis, Textbook I appears to follow a structured storyline in describing the historical conflict in East Timor. The narrative is described sequentially, starting from the beginning of the conflict, the government’s action to intervene militarily until the referendum process was conducted.

The plot involves the concept of dualism with the placement and explanation of protagonists and antagonists. However, in other sections, there is little discussion of conflict resolution, especially at the point of “Legal Reform,” which briefly discusses the reasons for granting a referendum for East Timor. Although insignificant, the author endeavours to provide an intuitive view of representation, as it provides meaning for his primary audience.

4.2. Textbook II: Political Freedom and Expression

This textbook II, written by Safitry et al.^[50], only briefly discusses the theme of East Timor. This theme is located in Chapter 4 entitled, “Indonesia during the Reformation Period”. The theme of East Timor is in point D, entitled “Freedom of Politics and Expression”. Book II is more reflective of the actual conflict resolution, as it does not discuss the initial conflict of East Timor’s integration and military operations. The textbook attempts to make an important point about the freedom to express political opinions and aspirations. This stance is emphasised with the phrase formal legal legitimacy:

This is the result of the Reformasi of 1998, which is based on the principles of open democracy and respect for freedom. President B.J. Habibie reinforced this value by issuing Law Number 9 of 1998 on Freedom of Expression in Public. One of the significant steps President B.J. Habibie took at the start of Reformasi was to demonstrate to the people of East Timor that freedom of expression was a principle upheld (Page 163).

The conflict resolution emphasises the view of the referendum as an example of exercising freedom of speech and a principle upheld by the Reformation period. In addition, the textbook offers a resolution by presenting options in the referendum process: first, special autonomy status under the Republic of Indonesia, and second, independence from Indonesia. The sentence in the textbook relating to this is:

The referendum was held on 30 August 1999 in a peaceful and calm atmosphere, in contrast

to the time when East Timor was separated from Portuguese control, which was plagued by internal conflicts that required Indonesian military intervention (Page 163).

The textbook emphasises the peaceful and democratic atmosphere of the 1999 referendum process and allows for political freedom and expression for the people of East Timor. Although the result was unsatisfactory for the Indonesian side, the Indonesian government still granted the right of independence, officially recognised as an independent state by the international community on 20 May 2002 under the name Timor Leste. During the transition period from 1999-2002 there was a massive wave of refugees, this is stated in the sentence:

The transition period from 1999 to 2002 was one of challenge and conflict. During this period, there was a large influx of refugees from supporters of integration with Indonesia, especially to the East Nusa Tenggara region (Page 163).

The textbook narrative also highlights the fate of refugees who chose to remain Indonesian citizens. A different approach from Textbook II can be seen from the approach used, namely the reconciliation approach. This reconciliation approach involves efforts to rebuild relations and trust between the Indonesian Government and the Government of Timor Leste who were once involved in the conflict. This history textbook seeks to promote peace rather than presenting a binary approach as in textbook I. The narrative pattern shown in Textbook II is that of reconciliation.

5. Discussion

In this study, two history textbooks on East Timor were analysed: Textbook I, which focuses on the initial integration process of East Timor up to the referendum period, and Textbook II, which emphasises freedom of expression and political aspirations through the referendum and the fate of refugees who chose to become Indonesian citizens. These two textbooks show different approaches in presenting these historical events. For simplicity, the different approaches are presented in **Figure 1**.

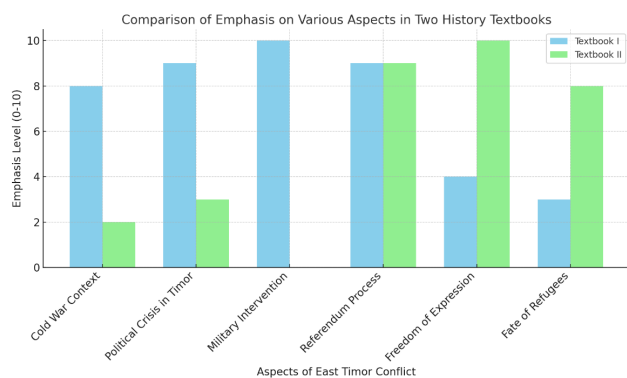


Figure 1. Comparison of emphasis on various aspects in the two textbooks.

Based on **Figure 1**, the narrative pattern presented in Textbook II shows a reconciliatory approach in describing the situation of East Timor, with an emphasis on the future relationship between the two countries. Although the Indonesian government is still portrayed as the good guy, it does not demonise the East Timorese people who voted for independence in the referendum. In addition, the textbook also pays attention to the fate of East Timorese who chose to remain Indonesian citizens. Thus, Textbook II not only describes the conflict, but also emphasises the importance of conflict resolution through reconciliation^[28]. The narrative in this book seeks to present a solution that is based on cooperation, without any party being considered a winner or loser, and encourages reaching an agreement through the referendum process. According to Bentrovato^[46], two important psychological processes in reconciliation are substitutability, which is the ability to fulfil the demands of the other party, and inducibility, which is the readiness to accept influence from the other party. The author’s narrative representation of conflict resolution in Textbook II reflects the logic of historical narrative guided by the rules applied by historians in describing historical events.

In this textbook II, the Indonesian government is still considered the key actor in easing the conflict in East Timor but recognises that major obstacles exist to international interests. Textbook II tends to provide the central government’s perspective, with less detail on local resistance and views. Compared to textbook I, there is a change in character in the narrative approach. Previously, textbook I adopted a pragmatic binary approach to explain the conflict in East Timor. Meanwhile, the explanation of the conflict in Textbook II takes a more constructive reconciliation narrative approach.

This approach focuses more on non-violent conflict resolution, highlighting the government’s efforts to resolve disputes through dialogue rather than military action. The aim is to achieve national integration through conflict resolution, aiming to include initiatives to promote narratives of peace and reconciliation^[46].

The results of this study show that the two history textbooks present the conflict in East Timor in different ways. In textbook I, it is presented in a chronological flow, starting from the Cold War’s international chaos, then escalating into conflict escalation, and ending with Indonesia’s intervention with military operations^[23, 42]. In this depiction, the textbook uses a binary structure that clearly distinguishes between “good” and “bad”. However, at the end of the textbook, it appears to emphasise Indonesia’s role in providing an opportunity for a referendum intended to promote post-conflict consensus and integration. This is also emphasised by Textbook II, which focuses more on the resolution aspect of the conflict, simplifying the course of the conflict to just the resolution stage. Textbook II attempts to present a more moderate representation of the conflict, in contrast to the historical narrative approach taken by other countries in the world. This is in contrast to China, which adopts a more absolutist narrative approach and avoids multiple perspectives in its history textbooks^[6]. The narrative model in Indonesian history textbooks indicates the tendency of the government and textbook writers to avoid authoritative and absolute narratives. However, this endeavour has not been entirely successful. Similar to the case in Israel and Arab countries, history textbooks in Indonesia also provide guidelines for history teachers to teach historical conflicts that suit specific political interests^[7, 8]. This emphasises that each country develops its way of presenting its representation of historical conflicts, tailored to its needs and socio-political context.

A major problem in the context of Indonesian history is the lack of harmony in depicting historical conflicts, especially those related to sensitive issues such as violence and genocide. In the school history curriculum, this condition can be explained through the concept of “schizo-history,” which describes the paradox between interest in history and anxiety about its impact on the narrative of national unity^[18]. This results in the neglect and stigmatisation of certain groups who have fought with great sacrifice. As a result, these groups

can be erased from the nation's collective memory. This insertion and erasure of memory not only erases the identity of the past but also potentially threatens the existence and identity of the group in the future^[27, 32]. This has led to the emergence of a constructive habit of representing conflict resolution in history textbooks. Constructive is that historians and governments continue to try to direct change in history textbooks, moving away from narratives related to past conflicts to resolution frameworks that are expected to be more critical thinking. However, an unfinished historical legacy is burdened with current socio-political issues. It appears that historians involved in school historiography still feel conflicted between choosing to promote the interests of nationalism at the expense of critical thinking, which is an integral part of the school history tradition, or trying to find a middle ground to resolve this conflict.

The analysis shows a paradox in how two Indonesian history textbooks represent the conflict in East Timor. This inconsistency reflects a process of refinement by the government and authors in portraying historical conflicts. Many textbook writers have endeavoured to unlearn the content of history books that often still retain the absolute narrative of the New Order era. Despite attempts at narrative revision, there remains difficulty in disengaging from the influence of this history^[4, 55]. In this situation, the author of Textbook II tries to represent conflict resolution to provide a productive understanding to society and cover the historical side of violence and disintegration that occurred in the past. Thus, textbooks are utilised to better support the transformation of conflict resolution in Indonesia. On the other hand, there is a challenge for historians in Indonesia to continue to seek alternative approaches in addressing the issue of conflict resolution representation in Indonesian history books for the benefit of education in Indonesia in the future.

6. Conclusions

This research examines the representation of the East Timor conflict and its resolution in two Indonesian history textbooks, each of which offers a different narrative approach. Textbook I presents the conflict as a clash of political interests, emphasising national consciousness and using a chronological narrative pattern. The conflict is framed through a binary lens, with the Indonesian government portrayed as the protagonist and the East Timorese as the antagonist. This

pragmatic approach seeks to align historical events with the knowledge and mental representations of Indonesian society. On the other hand, Textbook II adopts a constructive reconciliation approach, focusing on the future relationship between Indonesia and East Timor. The Indonesian government is still portrayed positively, but the text does not criticise the East Timorese people who voted for independence. Instead, it emphasises conflict resolution through cooperation and dialogue, incorporating psychological processes such as substitution and induction in the reconciliation process. Unlike Textbook I, which uses a binary narrative, Textbook II highlights non-violent conflict resolution and mutual understanding. The main finding of this analysis is that Indonesian history textbooks present different perspectives on the East Timor conflict, shaped by the socio-political context. Although Textbook II endeavours to avoid authoritarian narratives and promote reconciliation, challenges remain in how conflict resolution and historical events are portrayed.

While this research provides important insights, it also has some limitations. Firstly, this analysis is limited to two textbooks, and broader conclusions can be drawn by examining more educational materials. In addition, this study focuses on the narrative approach in the textbooks, without analysing how these representations are received or understood by students and educators. Finally, this study did not explore the long-term impact of these narratives on national identity formation or inter-community relations. Future research could build on this study by analysing a larger sample of textbooks across different regions and time periods to identify trends in how sensitive historical issues are presented. Additionally, research could focus on how these textbooks are used in the classroom, exploring both teacher and student perspectives. Investigating the impact of these narratives on students' understanding of national identity and international relations could also be valuable. Finally, comparative studies with textbooks from other countries, especially those with similar or contested histories, could provide a broader understanding of how conflict resolution is represented in educational materials.

Author Contributions

A.S. and S.S.U. were responsible for the conceptualisation of this research. The methodology was developed by M.T. and I.M.R.R. Data validation was conducted by S.S.U.,

M.Z.A., and S. Formal analyses were conducted by I.M.R.R., while L.J. and U.N. carried out further investigations. The necessary resources were provided by M.Z.A. and S.A. A.S. wrote the original draft, with S.S.U. and S.A. carrying out further review and editing. L.J. prepared the Visualisation of the results, while S.S.U. and S. guided research supervision. A.S. managed administration, with support from U.N. All authors have read and approved the version of the manuscript to be published.

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All data supporting the reported results are freely available online and can be obtained upon request from the corresponding author.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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