

ABSTRACT

Dinanti, Nadia Syifa Aqilah Syama (2025). **Visual Elements in Indonesian High School English Textbooks Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka: A Comparative Content Analysis**. A Paper. English Education Department, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teaching Training, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

This research examines the visual elements employed in two senior high school English textbooks, entitled Pathway to English for SMA/MA Grade X, developed under the Curriculum 2013 and the Curriculum Merdeka. The study aims to identify the types of visual elements and their functions in supporting students' language learning, particularly in Unit 1 and Chapter 9 of both textbooks.

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using comparative content analysis as the primary method. The visual elements were classified based on theories by Mayer (2009), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), and Maier (2025), with a focus on images, visual aids, layout, and typography.

The analysis revealed that both textbooks contain various types of visual elements, including representational, compositional, and interactive visuals. However, the Curriculum 2013 textbook predominantly features static and representational visuals, such as photographs, tables, and illustrations, with conventional layouts and uniform typography. These visuals mainly serve to support vocabulary learning and comprehension through literal representation. In contrast, the Curriculum Merdeka textbook demonstrates a more dynamic visual design, characterized by flexible layouts, varied color schemes, and multimodal elements that encourage active learner engagement. It also shows a more pedagogically aligned approach, as the visuals are directly connected to learning objectives, for example, the use of infographics to summarize key concepts, QR codes linking to interactive exercises, and self-assessment tables that foster learner autonomy.

The findings suggest that visual elements in the Curriculum Merdeka textbook are more integrated to support comprehension, learner autonomy, and engagement compared to those in the Curriculum 2013 textbook. These results highlight the importance of strategic visual design in enhancing the learning experience and suggest that newer curriculum materials have improved alignment with 21st-century learning objectives.

Keywords: *Visual Elements, English Textbooks, Curriculum 2013, Curriculum Merdeka, English Language Learning, EFL Materials, Comparative Analysis*