VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN THE SEVENTH-GRADE ENGLISH TEXTBOOK "ENGLISH FOR NUSANTARA"

A THESIS

Submitted to fulfil one of the Requirements for *Sarjana Pendidikan* Degree at the English Education Department

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MOTTO

Learning English is not about being perfect, but being brave to try.

Learn, grow, and never give up!

-A-

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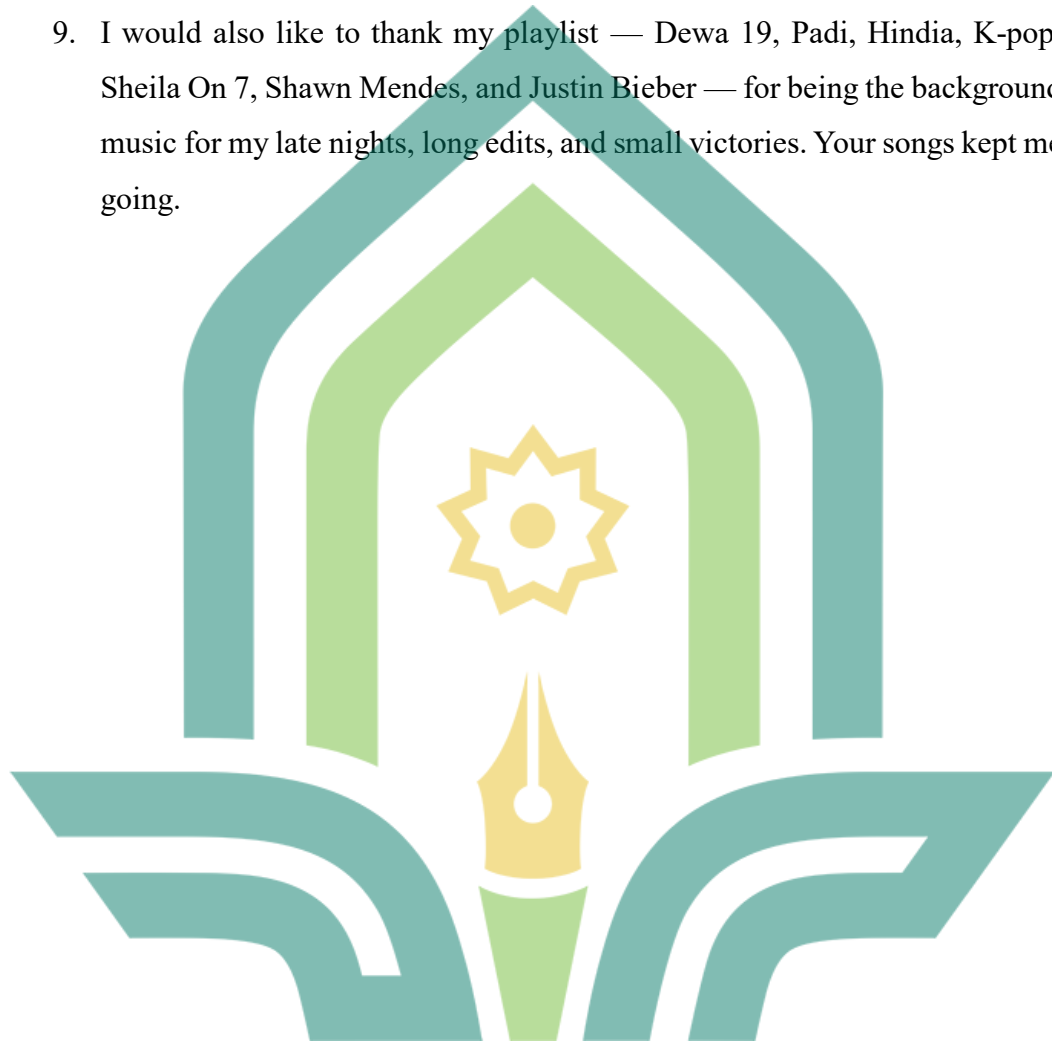
ABSTRAK

Meningkatnya urgensi krisis lingkungan menuntut intervensi pendidikan yang melampaui instruksi tekstual, terutama dalam konteks seperti Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris (ELT) di mana literasi visual sering kurang dimanfaatkan. Di Indonesia, buku teks Kelas VII Bahasa Inggris untuk Nusantara—yang disahkan secara nasional di bawah Kurikulum Merdeka—menawarkan kesempatan unik untuk mengintegrasikan pendidikan lingkungan (EE) dalam materi bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana pendidikan lingkungan direpresentasikan secara visual dalam buku teks ini, menggunakan Teori Tata Bahasa Visual Kress dan van Leeuwen (2006) dan enam tujuan EE dari UNESCO–UNEP Belgrade Charter (1976) sebagai kerangka kerja analitis. Pertanyaan penelitian utama mengeksplorasi bagaimana gambar dalam buku teks mencerminkan dan mendukung tujuan pendidikan lingkungan seperti kesadaran, pengetahuan, sikap, keterampilan, kemampuan evaluasi, dan partisipasi. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan analisis dokumen, penelitian ini berfokus secara eksklusif pada 8 visual terpilih yang secara eksplisit atau implisit menggambarkan tema lingkungan. Visual-visual ini dianalisis untuk metafungsi representasional, interaktif, dan komposisinya, dan kemudian diselaraskan dengan tujuan EE. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun buku teks tidak secara gamblang memprioritaskan pendidikan lingkungan, beberapa gambar secara halus menyampaikan pesan ekologis melalui konteks, aktivitas karakter, tata ruang, dan simbol lingkungan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa elemen visual—yang sering kali diremehkan dalam evaluasi buku teks—dapat secara signifikan meningkatkan literasi lingkungan jika dirancang secara strategis. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada studi literasi multimoda dalam ELT, menyediakan model yang dapat direplikasi untuk menganalisis visual dalam materi pendidikan, dan menawarkan wawasan praktis bagi para pendidik, pengembang kurikulum, dan pembuat kebijakan yang ingin meningkatkan integrasi EE. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi peran visual tidak hanya sebagai elemen dekoratif, tetapi juga sebagai alat ideologis dan pedagogis yang mampu membentuk perspektif dan perilaku ekologis siswa.

Kata kunci: *Analisis Tata Bahasa Visual, Pendidikan Lingkungan Hidup, Buku Teks Bahasa Inggris*

ABSTRACT

The increasing urgency of environmental crises demands educational interventions beyond textual instruction, particularly in contexts like English Language Teaching (ELT), where visual literacy is often underutilised. In Indonesia, the Grade VII textbook *English for Nusantara*—endorsed nationally under the Kurikulum Merdeka—offers a unique opportunity to integrate environmental education (EE) within English language materials. This study aims to investigate how environmental education is visually represented in this textbook, using Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar Theory (2006) and the six EE goals from the UNESCO–UNEP Belgrade Charter (1976) as analytical frameworks. The central research question explores how images in the textbook reflect and support environmental education goals such as awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, evaluation ability, and participation. This study focuses exclusively on eight selected visuals that explicitly or implicitly depict environmental themes by employing a qualitative descriptive method and document analysis. These visuals were analysed for their representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions and aligned with EE goals. The findings reveal that while the textbook does not overtly prioritise environmental education, several images subtly convey ecological messages through context, character activities, spatial arrangements, and environmental symbols. The study concludes that visual elements—often underestimated in textbook evaluation—can powerfully promote environmental literacy when strategically designed. This research contributes to multimodal literacy studies in ELT, provides a replicable model for analysing visuals in educational materials, and offers practical insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers aiming to enhance EE integration. It underscores the role of visuals not merely as decorative elements but as ideological and pedagogical tools capable of shaping students' ecological perspectives and behaviour.

Keywords: Visual Grammar Analysis, Environmental Education, English Textbook

PREFACE

All praises and gratitude are devoted to Allah SWT for the blessings, guidance, health, and patience given throughout the process of completing this thesis. This thesis, entitled **"Visual Representation of Environmental Education in an Indonesian English Textbook for Junior High School Students"**, is submitted to the English Education Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, as one of the requirements to obtain the degree of Sarjana Pendidikan in English Education.

This research was inspired by the growing importance of environmental education and the increasing role of visual media in language learning. The study examines how visual elements in an English textbook reflect environmental values and support students' awareness of environmental issues. It is hoped that this research will provide insights for English teachers, material developers, and education stakeholders on incorporating environmental messages through visual representations in ELT (English Language Teaching) materials.

Completing this thesis would not have been possible without the help and support of many individuals. Therefore, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation, which are further detailed in the acknowledgements section. Constructive suggestions and feedback are welcome to improve this work. May this thesis be helpful for those who are interested in environmental education and English language teaching.
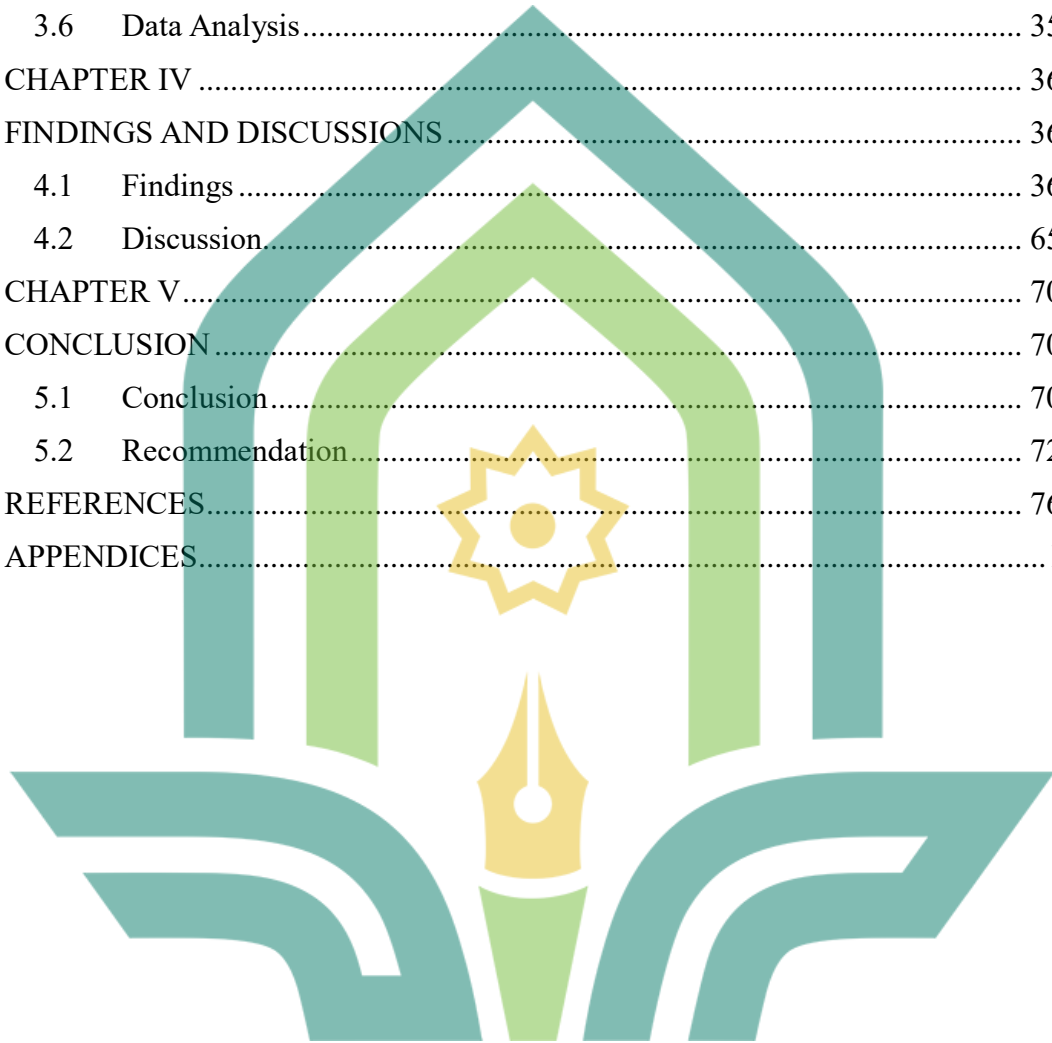
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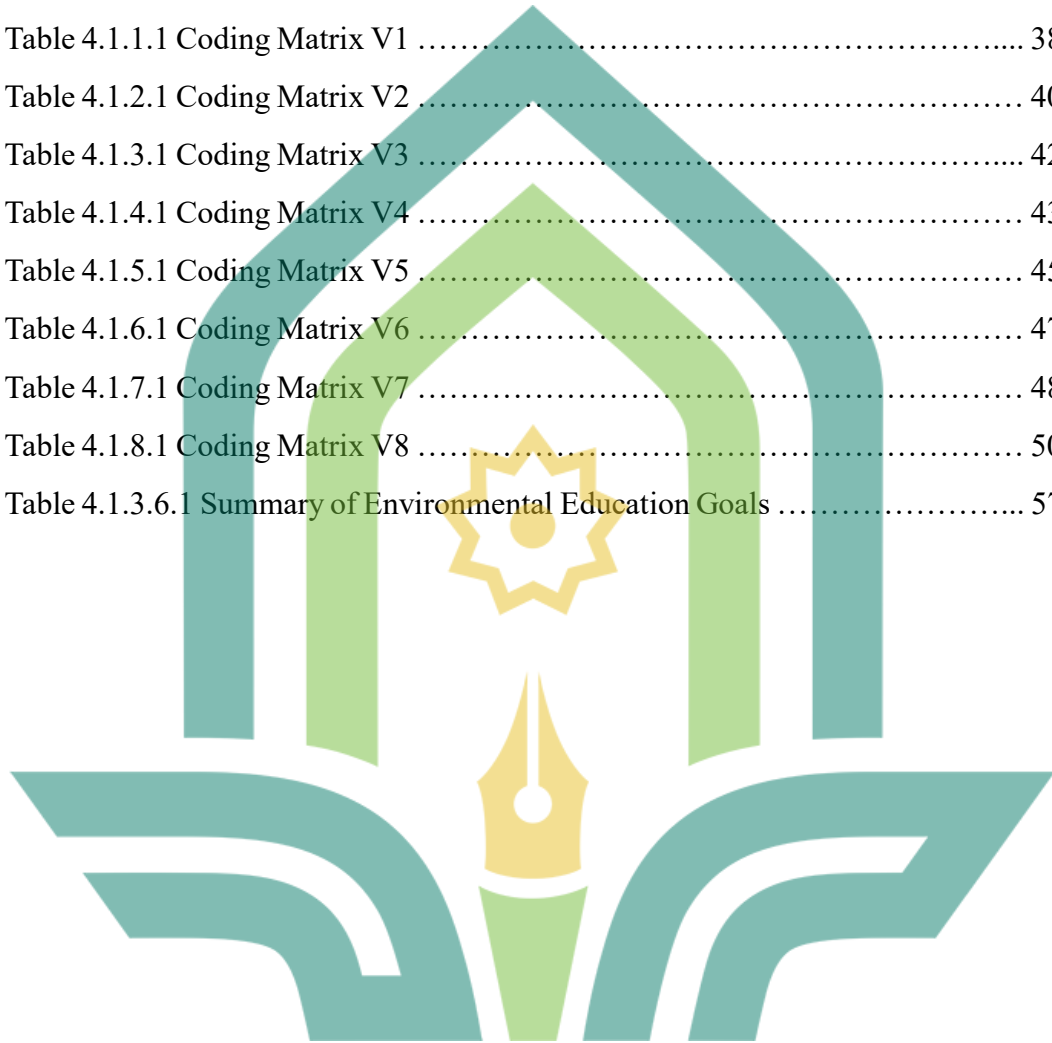Andira Mumtahanah

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The worsening state of the environment throughout the world requires rapid action from governments, businesses, and schools. Climate instability, resource depletion, deforestation, and water pollution are urgent issues that now impact students' lives. McBride et al. (2013) contend that achieving environmental sustainability necessitates a profound revolution in ideas, knowledge, and behaviour, perhaps facilitated by education. In this setting, Environmental Education (EE) is not only an elective discipline; it is a fundamental element of the comprehensive framework for sustainable development.

In Indonesia, education is responsible for making people both literate and mindful of the environment. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology has been putting more and more emphasis on sustainability and character education by including them in changes to the curriculum and the construction of new textbooks. The Grade 7 English textbook English for Nusantara (Damayanti et al., 2022), which is approved by the government, is a main teaching tool that meets both of these goals. The textbook is mostly meant to help people learn a language, but it is also expected to teach values like civic responsibility, empathy, and environmental awareness, especially through multimodal elements like pictures.

This study focuses on the *English for Nusantara* Grade VII textbook not only because it has been officially endorsed by the Indonesian Ministry of

Education under the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, but also because its contents consistently reference themes related to environmental education (EE), both explicitly and implicitly. Preliminary analysis shows that numerous visual elements in the textbook depict nature, ecological practices, and sustainable lifestyles. Another reason for selecting this book is its nationwide distribution and use; it is one of the primary textbooks circulated to junior high schools across Indonesia. Although not every school uses every chapter or activity within it, the textbook is widely available and often becomes the shared reference material agreed upon by teacher working groups *(Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran)*. Therefore, studying this textbook provides a relevant and representative lens to assess how visual components contribute to students' environmental literacy within a standardised national curriculum.

Visuals in educational materials are often not given enough credit for how well they teach. Research shows that pictures in textbooks are not merely for decoration; they are also symbolic, ideological, and carry meaning (Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Zhang, 2023). Visuals guide learners' attention, provoke emotional responses, and generate interpretations that may not be overtly expressed in the accompanying text. Visuals can serve as a potent, implicit curriculum, shaping learners' understanding of complex social and environmental issues (Deng, 2023). Images may either help or hurt educational goals by using vectors, salience, gaze, and framing.

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar theory, derived from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, provides a comprehensive

framework for examining the semiotic role of visuals in the construction of meaning. This theory divides the meaning of a picture into three metafunctions: representational (what is seen), interactive (how the image interacts with the viewer), and compositional (how parts are put together to create emphasis and structure). When employed in educational resources, these metafunctions facilitate researchers in analysing the ways pictures may consciously or subconsciously shape learners' views of their environment.

This study integrates semiotics and references the globally recognised Belgrade Charter (UNESCO–UNEP, 1976), which specifies six essential objectives of environmental education: awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, evaluative ability, and participation. These goals do not stand alone; rather, they form a whole picture of what it means to be environmentally literate. Each component signifies a unique facet of ecological engagement: recognising challenges, understanding systems, valuing nature, taking initiative, making decisions, and committing to instigate change (Gavilan et al., 2024; Basya & Maulidia, 2024).

Even though more and more people in Indonesia are interested in environmental education, there isn't much research on how English textbooks teach environmental information, notably through pictures. Most of the research that has been done recently has centred on textual analysis or discourse features (Triyono et al., 2023; Rahayu, 2017). While these elements are important, they overlook the role of images as crucial conveyors of meaning, particularly in

early adolescent education, where students often respond more vigorously to visual stimuli than to abstract text (Zhang, 2023; Deng, 2023).

Many academics have focused on the ideological dimensions of imagery in EFL texts. Setyono (2018) demonstrated the visual integration of gender ideology in national textbooks. Raphael and Nandanan (2024) assert that Green English Language Teaching (GELT) must use the full spectrum of communication tools, incorporating visual components. This study regards textbook images not just as supplemental examples, but as fundamental components of language learning and the development of environmental consciousness.

Moreover, within Indonesia's character-based curricular framework, the visual representation of environmental messages has a strategic function: it enables the integration of ecological concepts across several disciplines, eliminating the need for direct narrative instruction. Images of planting trees, recycling, or clean rivers softly promote sustainability as a goal (Gürsoy & Sağlam, 2011; Meliawati & Hamied, 2020). These representations may influence student perceptions and behaviours independently of classroom discourse, operating as what Basya and Maulidia (2024) characterise as "eco-critical narratives".

This research recognises textbook illustrations as an undervalued yet crucial educational resource. This study methodically examines the English for Nusantara textbook through the lenses of Visual Grammar and EE goals to

elucidate how visual design either contributes to or undermines the primary goal of fostering environmental literacy among Indonesian students.

1.2 Limitation of the Problem

This study is a qualitative document analysis focusing solely on the visual representation of environmental education in the English for Nusantara textbook for seventh-grade SMP/MTs students in Indonesia. It limits its scope to images—such as drawings, photographs, infographics, and other visual designs—analysed through Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar framework, which includes representational, interactive, and compositional meanings. Textual content like dialogues, reading passages, and instructions is excluded to maintain methodological coherence with the visual semiotics approach.

The study does not involve empirical data such as classroom observations, interviews, or surveys, as its aim is not to assess real-world reception but to explore the pedagogical affordances of visuals in multimodal educational materials. By focusing on a single textbook and excluding verbal elements, the research acknowledges its limitations in generalizability and in capturing the interplay between text and image. Nevertheless, it maintains a clear analytical focus on how images alone communicate environmental messages in line with the goals of the UNESCO–UNEP Belgrade Charter (1976).

1.3 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background described above, this research seeks to investigate how environmental education is visually represented in the Grade 7 English textbook *English for Nusantara*. It aims to identify how the visuals within the textbook reflect and support the six goals of environmental education as outlined in the UNESCO–UNEP Belgrade Charter (1976).

1.4 Operational Definition

The definitions of key terms in this research are briefly defined as follows:

1. **English Textbook** : Books are used by teachers and students as the main source in the English learning process in the classroom (Russell & Airasian, 2012).

2. **Visual Grammar Analysis** : An analytical framework developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to deconstruct and understand the nuanced language of visual communication.

3. **Environmental Education** : The process of reorienting and integrating educational efforts to foster an understanding of environmental issues through a
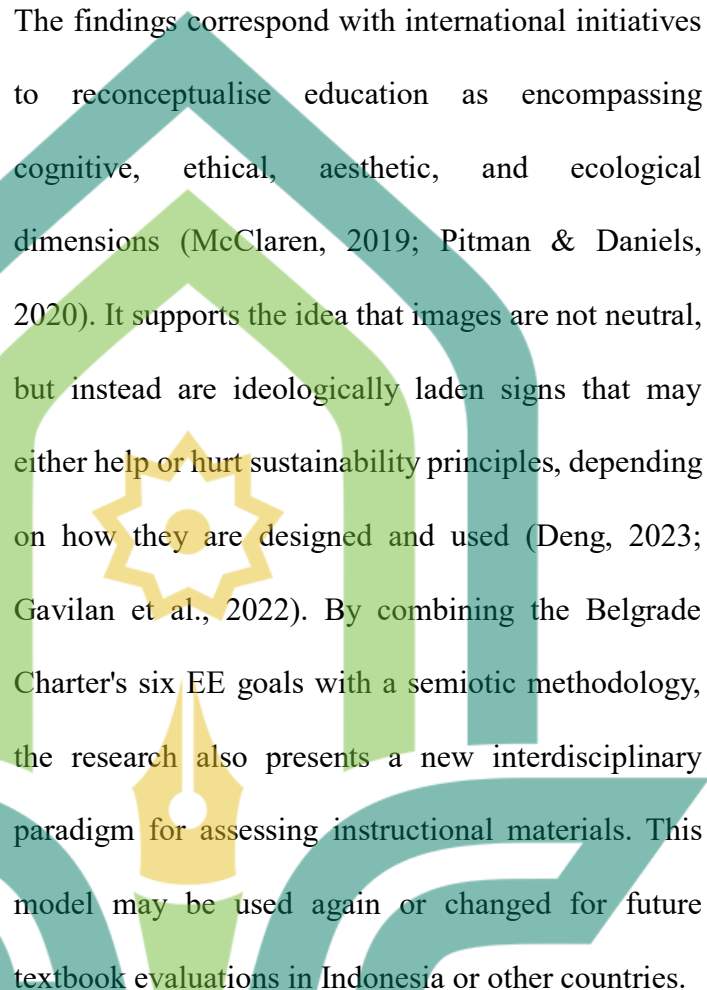
multidisciplinary approach, aiming to
develop responsible attitudes,
knowledge, and skills for
environmental management and
problem-solving (UNESCO, 1978).

1.5 Aim of the Study

This study aims to analyse the visual representation of environmental education in the Grade 7 English textbook English for Nusantara with specific reference to the six goals of environmental education formulated in the UNESCO–UNEP Belgrade Charter. Through the framework of Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar, this research explores how images in the textbook contribute to fostering students' environmental awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, participation, and evaluation regarding environmental issues.

1.6 Significance of the Study

1. **Theoretical** : This study advances the evolution of multimodal literacy theory within educational settings. While much research on environmental education looks at the content, this study looks at the form and mode, especially how visual grammar makes meaning. It improves on the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) by using their approach to look at the ELT-EE

nexus, which is not well-studied in Indonesian academia (Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Zhang, 2023). The findings correspond with international initiatives to reconceptualise education as encompassing cognitive, ethical, aesthetic, and ecological dimensions (McClaren, 2019; Pitman & Daniels, 2020). It supports the idea that images are not neutral, but instead are ideologically laden signs that may either help or hurt sustainability principles, depending on how they are designed and used (Deng, 2023; Gavilan et al., 2022). By combining the Belgrade Charter's six EE goals with a semiotic methodology, the research also presents a new interdisciplinary paradigm for assessing instructional materials. This model may be used again or changed for future textbook evaluations in Indonesia or other countries.

2. **Empirical** : The study provides data-driven insights regarding the incorporation of environmental themes in a commonly utilised junior high school English textbook. This study is one of the first to investigate Grade 7 content in the English for Nusantara series using both Visual Grammar and the UNESCO EE framework, while earlier research has focused on EE in elementary or

senior high school materials (Tatin et al., 2024; Rahayu, 2017). This offers definitive data for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to assess whether national educational resources are meeting their ecological education obligations. This work enhances the extensive dataset on environmental education integration in English Language Teaching materials, particularly in Indonesia, where ecological crises are pertinent yet frequently overlooked in scholarly discourse (Alimi et al., 2021; Meliawati & Hamied, 2020).

3. **Practical** : This study holds direct relevance for various stakeholders involved in education and curriculum development. For textbook authors and publishers, the findings may guide future design practices by emphasising the intentional integration of environmental themes through visuals, rather than treating such elements as accidental or merely decorative. For teachers, the visual analysis offers a practical framework to enhance critical classroom engagement, allowing educators to initiate discussions on environmental issues using images alone, without relying on supplementary reading materials. This can

support task-oriented learning, project-based teaching, and value-driven English Language Teaching methodologies. For policymakers and curriculum developers, the study presents a framework to evaluate how well government-mandated educational materials align with Indonesia's broader educational goals, especially those related to character education, sustainability, and civic responsibility (Gürsoy & Sağlam, 2011; Okeeffe, 2013). Furthermore, for researchers, the methodological combination of visual semiotics and environmental pedagogy introduces a replicable approach applicable across disciplines and educational levels, including science, social studies, and literacy instruction. Overall, this project aims to link visual design with environmental pedagogy, showing how educational resources can actively cultivate ecologically conscious learners through deliberate, evidence-based multimodal communication.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to analyse the visual representation of environmental education in the English for Nusantara Grade VII textbook, a nationally disseminated English language learning resource under the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The study was informed by two principal frameworks: Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar Theory (2006) and the UNESCO–UNEP Belgrade Charter on Environmental Education (1976). This study employed a qualitative descriptive methodology and document analysis to examine 27 visual elements in the textbook deemed pertinent to environmental topics. These visuals were pictures, drawings, and infographics that were used in different parts of the textbook.

The results of this study indicate that environmental education is graphically represented, but inconsistently included inside the textbook. The pictures often show good environmental behaviour, especially among school-aged kids in school or community contexts. Some of these are pictures showing kids planting trees, cleaning up the school grounds, or posing in front of a lot of green plants. Images like these show the principles of involvement, awareness, and taking care of the environment. They also fit with the Indonesian cultural value of working together (gotong royong).

The investigation of Visual Grammar Theory demonstrated that the majority of images are narrative, establishing children as proactive

participants in environmental stewardship. These pictures generally employ angles that are at eye level, a neutral social distance, and vivid colours, all of which help people feel acquainted, motivated, and involved. The composition often puts nature in the centre and makes it look peaceful, which supports idealistic ideas about taking care of the environment.

The images are especially good at promoting environmental awareness, positive attitudes, and student engagement in line with the ideals of the Belgrade Charter. But other aims, including being able to evaluate, having critical knowledge, and learning certain environmental skills, aren't as well represented. There is a strong trend to talk about environmental problems in a way that is too simple, too positive, and too uncritical, with few examples of how complicated the environment really is, how dangerous it really is, or how to push the learner to think or assess.

The textbook's use of pictures also lacks instructional scaffolding, since there are few exercises or discussion prompts that make students think about how the pictures affect the environment. Because of this, the pictures serve more as ornamental or implicit clues than as intentional methods for teaching about the surroundings.

In conclusion, the textbook does a good job of giving a basic visual introduction to environmental education, especially when it comes to encouraging personal responsibility and showing how to act in a way that is good for the environment. But the images still aren't being used to their full potential in terms of complexity, variety, and teaching. This thesis posits that

enhanced integration, deliberate design, and an expanded thematic scope might render graphics in language textbooks such as English for Nusantara pivotal in fostering critical and comprehensive environmental literacy among young learners in Indonesia.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings and critical analysis of this research, several targeted suggestions are offered for the improvement of environmental education through visuals in language learning textbooks. These suggestions are directed toward educators, textbook developers, curriculum planners, and future researchers.

1) **For Educators and Classroom Practitioners**

Educators are essential in understanding and conveying textbook material. Consequently, they are urged to transcend superficial interaction with pictures and embrace a critical and innovative perspective on environmental imaging. Educators must promote classroom dialogues that examine the significance of the pictures, their connection to students' actual environmental circumstances, and their potential to motivate action. This includes utilising pictures as stimuli for project-based learning, discussions, or reflective journaling. Educators are encouraged to enhance textbook pictures with genuine media, including photographs of local environmental concerns and movies depicting worldwide environmental challenges. This technique facilitates students'

connection between classroom learning and real-world ecological issues, therefore augmenting environmental significance and influence.

2) **For Textbook Developers and Designers**

Textbook publishers and design teams should think of pictures as more than just pictures; they should think of them as tools for teaching. This entails choosing and making visuals that help with not just learning a language, but also developing concepts, thinking critically, and taking action for the environment. Developers need to make sure that environmental themes are included in all units and that they are connected to the texts and activities that go with them. Visuals should cover a larger variety of environmental issues, such as pollution, biodiversity, climate change, waste management, and ways to live sustainably. Also, using problem-based and contrastive imagery, such as polluted vs. clean surroundings, may make learners think critically and evaluate things.

3) **For Curriculum Designers and Policy Makers**

Curriculum planners should understand at the policy level that images play an important role in promoting cross-cutting issues like environmental education. The *Kurikulum Merdeka* already supports the creation of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila,* which involves being a good global citizen and caring for the environment. To make this vision a reality, curricular advice should stress the importance

of visual literacy as a key skill that is used in all areas. Designers ought to establish guidelines and standards for the utilisation of visuals in textbooks that transcend mere aesthetics and correspond with national sustainability objectives. Also, teacher training programs should incorporate lessons on multimodal literacy and visual pedagogy to make sure that teachers can help students understand pictures in a way that is good for the environment.

4) **For Future Researchers**

This study has several implications for further scholarly investigation. First, future research might broaden the focus by examining textbooks from other areas or educational tiers (e.g., science, civics, senior high school). A comparative analysis of government-published and commercial textbooks may yield insights into the varying approaches of publishers regarding the environmental message. Secondly, researchers should integrate the viewpoints of both learners and teachers, employing interviews, classroom observations, or action research to investigate the actual interpretation and utilisation of visuals in educational settings. Third, future research may concentrate on multimodal discourse analysis, integrating visual, textual, and instructional elements to offer a comprehensive perspective on the construction and communication of environmental education. Finally, investigating the impact of visual signals on students' environmental attitudes or

actions over time may reconcile content analysis with educational results.

In summary, the visual elements in textbooks have great potential to cultivate ecologically aware, critically thinking, and socially responsible learners. This thesis demonstrates that while *English for Nusantara* takes positive initial steps in this direction, there remains significant room for deepening the visual narrative, broadening thematic scope, and enhancing the pedagogical alignment of images with the full spectrum of environmental education goals. Through improved design, intentional integration, and sustained teacher support, visuals can become transformative tools in shaping how future generations engage with the environment—linguistically, cognitively, and ethically.
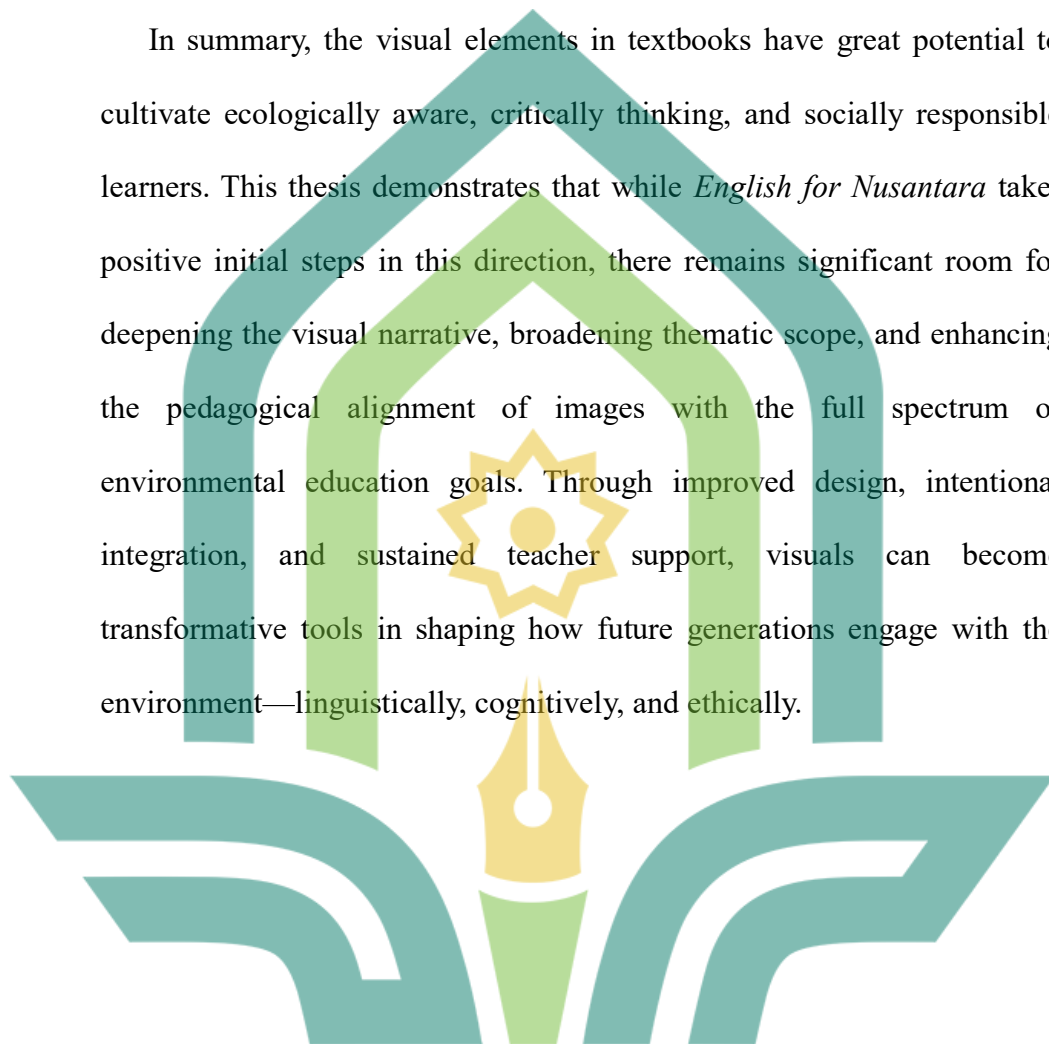
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