The Suitability of Visual Images in *Baina Yadaik* Arabic Textbook

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Abstract

This study was brought up due to 308 mismatches of images with the written vocabulary in the *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbook. This research focused on the compatibility of visual images with written vocabulary. The object used was 1386 images in 8 chapters of the *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbook volume 1A. *Baina Yadaik* Arabic book is an Arabic learning book used to help learners learn everyday vocabulary for beginners. This research used the visual representational mode theory by Kress and Van Leeuwen. The methodology of this study was a descriptive qualitative with multimodal discourse analysis. The VGG Image Annotator corpus tools assisted this research to analyze images with written vocabulary. This study concluded that visual images are one of the essential components of learning Arabic. Many images in *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbook volume 1A do not match the written vocabulary. This book still adheres to Arabic culture, which is very different from the culture in Indonesia, and needs special attention for teacher to use this book as a learning tool.

Keywords: *visual image in textbook, vocabulary, al-'Arabiyah baina yadaik, representational*

Introduction

Students are often surrounded by pictures or images or photos related to any lessons in paper books and e-books. Visual images in textbooks have an essential role in providing an overview of the content or topic of study. Pertama (2018), Sugianto & Prastika (2021) stated that visual images are essential in textbooks because they can convey a particular message. Torres (2015) also said that visual images could illustrate some words or display real communication to attract student's attention. Image interpretation can confirm and strengthen, followed by clarification by written text. The function of visual images in textbooks is not only to complement and support reading the text but as part of the overall meaning in visual-verbal synergy. This study aimed to reveal the importance of visual images and how images can contribute as a scaffolding for language learning.

Tan (2012) commented that the layout and images in textbooks could facilitate and stimulate student's interest in participating in studying language activities, especially Arabic. Salbego (2015), Delani (2017) states the importance of a visual image in learning is because the meaning contained in the visual can grow students' understanding of the content they are learning. Fang (1996), Kasmaienezhadfard (2015) revealed that pictures can motivate students to study the attached text, explain, and clarify content that is difficult to understand, and also pictures make students use their imagination to describe what is happening to facilitate understanding of the written text. Communication in studying foreign languages tends to use multimodality, so more studies are needed to examine images in teaching.

Hidayat and Habibi (2018) believe that vocabulary is one of the essential aspects of learning a foreign language since it is difficult to master them without knowing much vocabulary. An adequate vocabulary will help students understand languages through reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, besides memorizing the words, students must also understand them properly. One way to improve student understanding of vocabulary is by using images. Jatmiko and Jauharai (2018) said that images in vocabulary learning are a strategy that can draw interest, improve memory and attention, and clarify the imagination of students because it can show something that is beyond the learner's experience. The images can show students unfamiliar vocabulary, like old pictures, and old age. Details of visual images can prevent misunderstanding in learning new vocabulary.

This study was brought up due to 308 mismatches of visual images with the written vocabulary in the *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbook. Moreover, there is still a lack of research on the suitability of visual imagery in textbooks, especially in Indonesia. Indonesian students widely use *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbooks at universities, schools, and Arabic learning institutions. However, there is still little research and analysis about visual imagery in *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbooks. It encourages researchers to analyze whether visual images match written text's learning materials. Hopefully, this study can promote visual images as Arabic learning media and as a reference for future research.

Several previous researchers have already conducted research related to the *Baina Yadaik*. Pahlefi (2020) conducted a material analysis of the *Baina Yadaik* Arabic language learning book using a content analysis method following Ali Al-Qasimy's (1998) theory, which consists of components of Arabic book material for non-Arabs and the material presentation process based on F. Mackey's (1966) selection, gradation, presentation, and repetition in his Language Teaching Analysis book. The results showed that *Baina Yadaik* is an Arabic language learning book for beginner non-Arabic students with readings, syntax, exercises, study materials, and dictionaries. From 598 vocabulary in each chapter, 498 are in the noun category, 69 are in the verb category, and 32 are in the letters category. Auxiliary vocabulary is additional vocabulary related to the themes in each chapter of the book. The auxiliary vocabularies in this book are all noun categories, with a total of 162 vocabularies complemented by colorful illustrations based on the topics of each chapter. The *Al-'Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik* book Volume I uses *Fushâ* (formal) Arabic, which is straightforward for beginners. It consists of exercises with colorful illustrations to support student's language skills which follow

the aspects of language elements and the four language skills. This book's shortcomings are that the illustrations are still very dominant with Arab and Middle Eastern cultures, which is less relatable and foreign to Indonesian students. Thus, a teacher must be present for the learning process if using this book. Moreover, the book instruction language is presented using Arabic; even though it is easy, students may find it difficult.

Another research related to *Baina Yadaik's* book was conducted by Ghofur (2019) on the effectiveness and efficiency of learning Arabic by using *Al-'Arabiyah Baina Yadaik* at Ma'had Abu Bakar, University of Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The study was conducted on 69 Arabic language students Participants of the Arabic Language Preparation Program and Islamic Studies Ma'had Abu Bakar As-Shiddiq Academic Year 2011/2012. Before following regular lectures, students must take a placement test. The test determines the student's initial ability in Arabic. Then, students will be grouped based on their levels of understanding. The results of the evaluation of lectures for two semesters using the *Baina Yadaik* book as a textbook are very significant. After attending lectures for two semesters, students that initially did not know Arabic and were in the lower group on the placement test got a significant increase in grades after using used the *Baina Yadaik* textbook during lectures. The frequency and duration of focused learning and the material delivery in *Baina Yadaik's* book are a success factor for the Participants of the Arabic Language Preparation Program and Islamic Studies Preparation Program Ma'had Abu Bakar As Shiddiq for the Academic Year 2011/2012.

In previous research, there is still no analysis of the images used in the Arabic language learning book *Baina Yadaik*. Even though Pahlefi (2020) explained briefly that the images are still very dominant in the representation of Arab and Middle Eastern cultures, there is still a lack of research related to visual images in *Baina Yadaik's* Arabic book, especially in Indonesia. As mentioned, visual images and books are inseparable and need special attention.

Unsworth and Wheeler (2002) asserted that readers must understand how images represent and construct meaning. Visual images in textbooks should not confuse students in understanding the meaning conveyed. Visual images must represent the vocabulary and be understood immediately since the reader or student cannot interpret what the image does not show or introduces. There is a mutual relationship between visual images and written meanings.

The theory of the suitability of visual images is discussed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) in their book Reading images: the grammar of visual design. They proposed a theory of visual models known as KvL theory and stated that visual mode draws upon the same semantic system as language and that the following three metafunctions produce a visual design grammar: interactive mode, image composition mode, and representational mode. The interactive mode is to see how visual images deal with potential interactions with students. Composition mode focuses on the page layout aspects of coherence of visual elements and verbs in the text.

In this study, the researcher used the representational mode by KvL to analyze the suitability of visual images in the book. Representational mode is closely related to the visual structure that represents an animal, place, object, or person, as well as the experiences, actions, qualities, and characteristics associated with the image. To analyze

the intention of visual images is firstly to understand the objects in the image, such as humans, animals, objects, gender, children, and adults, and frequency. Then investigate hidden meanings in visual images, such as gender stereotypes and socio-cultural connotations of images based on their relationships and characteristics.

Method

This study analyzed the suitability of the visual images in the *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbook with the written vocabulary. The researcher was assisted by the corpus tools VGG Image Annotator (VIA), a simple manual annotation software for annotating images, audio, and video. VIA was performed on a web browser and did not require application installation or setup. The data was collected by inputting the textbook's visual images into the VIA and the instruments, such as vocabulary meaning, participants, process, circumstances, and image suitability. Then, the image was analyzed following the image representational mode theory by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021).

The subjects were 1386 images in the *Baina Yadaik* Arabic book volume 1A, used initially as a handbook for Indonesian beginner students to learn Arabic. This research used a descriptive qualitative method with multimodal discourse analysis. Creswell (2014) stated that qualitative research uses theory to explain behavior, attitudes, variables, constructs, and hypotheses. The qualitative method used in this research methodology is descriptive qualitative. Creswell (2014) also stated that descriptive qualitative research is built by rich and detailed descriptions of related phenomena. The descriptive qualitative method was chosen because, in this study, the researcher wanted to analyze the mismatch of visual images in the *Baina Yadaik* Arabic book based on the representational mode theory by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021).

Results and Discussion

The image suitability analysis revealed that 308 or 22% of images in the *Baina Yadaik* Arabic book did not match the vocabulary written. The average number of images that do not match is 38 in each chapter. This number is relatively high, considering *Baina Yadaik* Arabic volume 1A is a handbook for beginner Arabic learners. The visual images presented should be able to assist and explain the vocabulary in the book so that students can unquestionably understand. The mismatch between the images and the vocabulary will confuse students in understanding Arabic.

Chapter	Total of Images	Total of Unsuitable Images	Unsuitable Images
Chapter 1	183 images	57 images	Images of women
Chapter 2	227 images	30 images	Images of women
Chapter 3	192 images	51 images	Images of buildings and rooms

Chapter 4	149 images	9 images	Images of time
Chapter 5	169 images	23 images	Images of verbs and foods
Chapter 6	157 images	45 images	Images of verbs
Chapter 7	142 images	52 images	Images of buildings and places
Chapter 8	156 images	41 images	Images of occupations and places
Total	1386 images	308 images	

These are not following the representational modes theory of visual images by Kress and van Leeuwen (2021), where representational images require the writer to decide on a suitable expression that represents their intention, choose the most suitable image that makes sense in a particular context. Foreign language speakers must choose the closest and most easily recognizable image to express their intention. For example, a circle can represent a wheel, and several wheels can represent a car, and so on.

Many of the visual images in *Baina Yadaik's* Arabic textbook do not choose the proper representation, are not specific, and are difficult to understand, especially for beginner foreign language students. Chapter 1 discusses introductions with 183 images, 57 of which do not match the written vocabulary. The images of women in this chapter are only taken from the side. They do not have their faces shown even though some vocabulary words require face display, such as vocabulary: me, she, Turkish woman, female doctor, and more.

Figure 1. The image is meant to represent
the word مصرية *(mishriyah)* "Egyptian woman"

Figure 1 was meant to represent the written vocabulary of مصرية *(mishriyah)* "Egyptian woman." However, no specific characteristics indicate that the woman is Egyptian. It only shows women from the side, which can be confusing because that woman can be from other countries, not just Egypt. Students are required to understand the meaning of the word "misriyah" independently and cannot trust the image entirely. Meanwhile, in this chapter, the images of men are presented clearly.

أخ

Figure 2. The image is meant to represent أخ *(akhi)* "brother".

Chapter 2 discusses family with 227 images, of which 30 do not match the written vocabulary. Not much different from chapter 1, the images of women in chapter 2 are shown from the side but are used to represent vocabularies like the grandmother, aunt, daughter, and others. There are no special features to distinguish these women because the images used are unclear and not specific. The vocabulary of grandmothers, aunts, and daughters can be described with unique characteristics; for example, the grandmothers are represented with images with older facial expressions. Chapter 2 also introduced the verb and profession vocabularies where the images do not match.

صَالِحَةٌ – الـمُصَلَّى – تُصَلِّي

Figure 3. The image is meant to represent the word الصالحات - مصلّى - تصلي *(as-shâlihât-al-mushalla-tushalli)* "shalehah women – mushalah – prayer"

Figure 3 should have presented images of *shâlihah* women praying in the *mushalah*. However, the image shows women who are not praying. Students that do not know the meaning of تصلي *(tushalli)* as praying will be confused and require a dictionary to understand.

Vocabulary about women in this book is visualized with images of women with unclear figures and faces, only shown from the side, and some are only shown from behind, like in chapter 1 and chapter 2 of the *Baina Yadaik* book. It indicates that the patriarchal culture in Arabia still plays a significant role in making books. Omar's (2018) research stated that there is still a clear bias between males and females in Arabic books in Jordan, which is shown by the rare appearance of images of women in books because women are judged with negative stereotypes if they appear in a media, including the textbook.

Chapter 3 of *Baina Yadaik* discusses living places with 192 images, of which 51 do not match the written vocabulary. Most images that do not match are about buildings like apartments, rooms, and more.
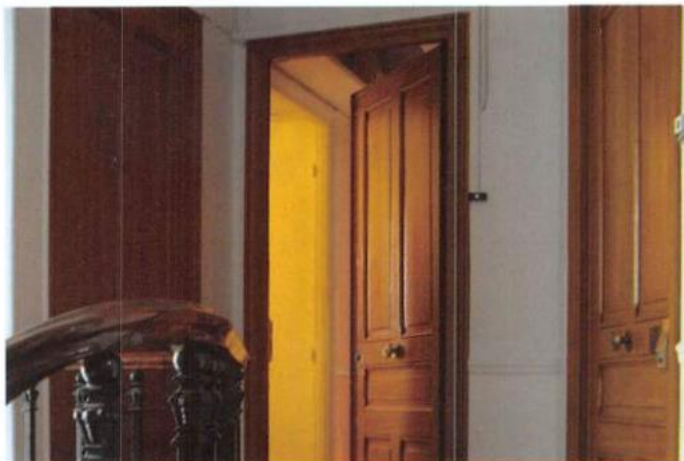

Figure 4. The image is meant to represent the word شقة *(syaqah)* "apartment".

Figure 4 represents a conversation about a salesperson selling a 5-bedroom apartment. However, the image shown is just several doors. The association between the images and the vocabulary is inconsistent and difficult to understand. The image cannot display the closest and most easily recognizable visual for the vocabulary "apartment." Moreover, the text stated that there are 5 rooms in the apartment, which does not match the number of rooms shown.

Chapter 4 discusses daily activities with 149 images, 9 of which do not match the written vocabulary. The images in this chapter are pretty suitable because they can properly visualize the written vocabulary.

Figure 5. The image is meant to represent the word يقرأ الصحيفة *(yaqra- al-shahîfah)* "reading – newspaper"

One of the examples is in Figure 4, which is used to represent the word reading newspaper. The image presented is suitable because it shows a man since the verb used is يقرأ *(yaqra)*, which refers to *dhammir* الضمير the pronoun هو *(huwa)* for single men, and the man is shown reading a newspaper which is also in line with the verb.

Figure 6. The image is meant to represent the word يطلب *(yathlubu)* "to request."

Chapter 6 discusses food and drink with 169 images, 23 of which do not match the written text, especially the verb vocabulary. The text in Figure 6 is يطلب *yathlubu* which means requesting or ordering. However, the image shows ambiguous actions that do not represent the ordering act.

Figure 7. The image is meant to represent the word كلية الطب *(kuliyyah al-thib)* "faculty of medicine."

Chapter 7 discusses subjects with 142 images, 52 meant to visualize places to study, such as universities, faculties, and departments but do not match the written vocabulary. For example, the text in Figure 7 is the word medical school. However, the image shows no features that indicate that the building is the كلية الطب *(kuliyyah al-thib)* or the medical faculty. It only shows a random building which is not the closest and not an easily recognizable form for students to understand when thinking about medical faculty. In this chapter, the word medical faculty is represented by using two visual images for the same vocabulary can confuse students since they have not yet understood the written vocabulary.

Figure 8. The image is meant to represent the word كلية الطب *(kuliyyah al-thib)* "faculty of medicine."

Figure 9. The image is meant to represent the word صيدلة *(shaydalah)* "pharmacology."

Chapter 8 discusses work and place, with 41 of 156 images not matching the written vocabulary. The text in Figure 9 stated الصيدلة *(shaydalah)* or pharmacology. However, the image shows a pharmacist. Although pharmacology and pharmacists are still related, they are two different things. Moreover, the image is also used twice in different vocabulary and on the same page, on الصيدلة *(shaydalah)* pharmacology and صيدلى *(shaydalî)* pharmacist. It can confuse students that do not yet understand the meaning of the written vocabulary. Meanwhile, the original function of images in the *Baina Yadaik* Arabic book is to help introduce new vocabulary to beginners. Improper use of images that do not represent the vocabulary can hinder learning and understanding new vocabulary.

Figure 10. The image is meant to represent the word صيدلى *(shaydalî)* "pharmacist."

The analysis of the *Baina Yadaik* Arabic volume 1A reveals that of the 8 chapters, only 1 has relatively good visual imagery that matches the written vocabulary, precisely in chapter 4, with only 9 images that do not represent the written messages. Improper visualization is often found in vocabulary related to women, buildings, and verbs. In *Baina Yadaik,* the verb vocabulary is often visualized with the unsuitable selection of actions. *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbook aims to help novice learners improve their vocabulary-related knowledge. Ratnasari (2020), Pujiasih (2021), good vocabulary mastery will help students in language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Learning vocabulary is memorizing words and understanding them well and correctly. One way that can be done by students in improving the ability to understand students' vocabulary is by using pictures. The picture in this case should able to show students related vocabulary that they do not know like pictures from ancient times. Details in visual images can prevent misunderstandings in students when learning new vocabulary.

The messages conveyed in textbooks may not be carried by written texts but can be conveyed through visual images. Fujioka (1999), Mendoza and Reeze (2001), pictures in textbooks coexist with written texts to convey real meanings such as situations, culture, colors, and much more to students. Images also make the content explained by written text more intuitive and interesting and stimulate students' interest to be more active in learning. The role of visual images in learning textbooks, especially in language learning textbooks, is significant and needs to be studied according to the learning content and learner culture.

Eliam (2012) states that the absence of help to assist students in interpreting the image on information not shown by the image makes it possible for different interpretations to understand the same phenomenon. In other words, the picture in the textbook must show something that can be seen directly and also represent something in the picture. Students cannot interpret something that isn't shown by the image. The first step in expanding the learner's interpretive repertoire is to pay attention to elements and designs of multimodal texts that may sometimes be overlooked.

Image choices in *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbook do not have special characteristics compared to the written vocabulary. Moreover, the images tend to be inconsistent since one image can be used to describe two different vocabularies that are not located in the same chapter. It is very inversely proportional to using pictures to improve students' vocabulary skills. The visual images presented in this book do not make it easier for students to learn vocabulary.

The vocabulary related to women on *Baina Yadaik* Arabic is often visualized with a patriarchal cultural tendency. Inayah (2013) states that one of the causes of gender bias between men and women in Arabic textbooks is the patriarchal Arab culture, androcentric and discriminatory religious understanding and language limitations to convey divine revelation. Tarrayo (2014) reveals that when women are not referenced as much as men in textbooks, it creates an implicit message that women are not important enough to be included in textbooks. Kantarzi (2003) further states that this bias can be problematic because textbooks play an essential role in creating gender stereotypes for students. The female vocabulary featured in this book plays an important role such as mothers, grandmothers, female doctors, and many more. A face that is not shown or a face facing back can cause confusion, especially since this book is intended for students to understand vocabulary. Students must first interpret the written text to know the vocabulary represented by the visual image.

Several things can be done to help make it easier for students to understand when viewing an image in learning. Postigo and Manjon (2019) mention the use of different colors to highlight important aspects, arrows to focus attention and the addition of verbal elements to provide information shown in the picture. Clark and Lyons (2011), Homer and Plass (2010), Cook (2008), Lowe (2007), Novick (2006) reveal how to choose a good image for learning is to consider the characteristics of the image, purpose of using the image, type of image, image process, learner's knowledge, and learner's strategy in interpreting the image. Visual images *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbook still do not pay attention to the characteristics of the image, type of image and the lack of use of arrows or lines to highlight important aspect or to focus attention on the image.

Conclusion

The representation of visual images of vocabulary does not follow the KvL representational mode theory (2021), stating that visual images must be selected in the most suitable and easily recognizable form. Visual images in textbooks should not confuse students in understanding the meaning conveyed. Visual images must represent the vocabulary and be understood immediately since the reader or student cannot interpret what the image does not show or introduces. The images in *Baina Yadaik* Arabic book cannot present vocabulary and be understood immediately. Thus, students have to make self-interpretations and require assistance from a dictionary to find the meaning of the vocabulary. Images should function as a medium that allows students to understand vocabulary, so they no longer need to open a dictionary.

Only one of the eight chapters contained in this book has visual images that match the written vocabulary. It is quite unfortunate, especially the picture in the first chapter, which is the opening chapter should have a good visual image to make it easier for students to understand Arabic vocabulary. *Baina Yadaik* Arabic textbook also uses many visual images in listening, writing, and reading exercises. The improper representations of imagery can affect the ability of students to accomplish the exercises, especially since the exercises in this book are more complex than they should be. Students should match images with text without the help of a dictionary or peers.

However, due to the improper image representation, students must understand the meaning of the vocabulary before matching the images that do not represent the intended vocabulary. Students with lower proficiency must open a dictionary or ask a friend to do the exercises.

The cultural differences between Arab and Indonesian, seen in the visual images of the *Baina Yadaik* textbook, make teachers pay more attention and provide more understanding to students, especially students with lower proficiency. Teachers must provide other examples and cannot rely solely on visual images from this textbook. Teachers must also provide an understanding of the cultural differences between Arabic and Indonesian, as shown in the picture, to the student.

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