

**The Semiotics of Educational Images:
An analytical study of the National Primary School Textbook**

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Abstract:

Our study aims to answer the following question: What are the denotative and connotative value dimensions embedded in the educational images on the covers of the national primary school textbook?..To address this problem statement, we analyzed a sample of Arabic language textbook covers for primary school, purposefully selected based on Martin Jolly's approach.

Our results revealed significant differences in the value dimensions presented on the covers of first-year and fifth-year textbooks. The values on the fifth-year textbook covers were fewer compared to those on the first-year covers, with a focus on values associated with educational and pedagogical aspects, as well as national and communicative dimensions. Aesthetic value dimensions were neglected, which can be explained by demographic factors (age) and social factors (levels of comprehension, cognition, and awareness) between the two age groups.

Keywords: Image semiotics; semiological analysis; textbook; value dimension; educational image

ملخص :

تهدف دراستنا للتعرف على سيميائيات الصورة التعليمية عبر مختلف الأبعاد القيمية المتضمنة في أغلفة الكتاب المدرسي الوطني للطور الابتدائي، وقد حاولنا الإجابة على هذه الإشكالية بتحليلنا لعينة من أغلفة كتب اللغة العربية للطور الابتدائي اعتمادا على مقارنة (مارتن جولي) للتحليل السيميولوجي، لتتوصل لمجموعة من النتائج أهمها: اختلافات في الأبعاد القيمية التي تتضمنها كل من صور غلاف السنة الأولى وصور غلاف السنة الخامسة، حيث كانت القيم قليلة مقارنة بكتاب السنة الأولى، فتم التركيز على القيم ذات البعد التعليمي التربوي، والأبعاد القيمية الوطنية والتواصلية، وتم إهمال البعد القيمي الجمالي، وهذا يفسر باختلاف الفئتين العمريتين من حيث العامل الديمغرافي (السن) ومن حيث العامل الاجتماعي (درجات الاستيعاب والإدراك والفهم والوعي).

الكلمات المفتاحية : الصورة السيميائية، التحليل السيميولوجي، الكتاب المدرسي، الأبعاد القيمية، الصورة التعليمية

1. INTRODUCTION :

The image is a significant and effective means of communication for explaining and clarifying what humans need, giving it a crucial role in our daily and social lives. It is not a modern creation; the human mind, thought, and sentiment have long been preoccupied with images to convey ideas and express feelings and concerns. The image can be regarded as a heterogeneous amalgam combining and organizing different information types within a specific framework. Today's image culture is a new civilization that carries imaginary yet perceptible worlds, as French critic Martine Joly highlighted in her book "Introduction to Image Analysis." She indicates that we read images, decode their symbols, and interpret them without qualifications while simultaneously and unconsciously succumbing to immersion in seemingly innocent images that, in reality, conceal hidden symbolism and can manipulate minds.

The image finds space in the home, school, street, institution, and elsewhere. It flows and overwhelms us in different situations, mainly school textbooks that aim to promote students' skills in school and support their cognitive acquisitions as well as their linguistic and visual-methodological skills to fulfill the desired educational level, given the critical educational value dimension as a fundamental principle that significantly contributes to the success of the educational process in general and the formation of the learner's personality in particular. Besides, we decided to study the value dimensions of images in primary education textbooks, choosing primary education because it is the most sensitive stage where children discover the world of school and remain attracted to and enthusiastic about colors and drawings.

Based on the above, we summarize the essence of our study's problem statement in the following question :

What are the value dimensions of educational images across the covers of first and fifth-year Arabic language textbooks ?

The following set of questions stems from this central question :

What is the denotative level of educational images across the covers of first and fifth-year Arabic language textbooks ?

What is the connotative level of educational images across the covers of first and fifth-year Arabic language textbooks ?

What are educational images' denotative and connotative value dimensions across the covers of first and fifth-year Arabic language textbooks ?

Therefore, our study falls under descriptive analytical studies, aiming to identify the meanings of school images, their contents, and the role of their hidden symbolism in instilling values in primary school students through the Arabic language textbook for both the first and fifth years.

This study relied on the semiological analysis tool employing Martine Jolly's approach to semiological image analysis.

We will analyze the front cover images of first- and fifth-year Arabic language textbooks : the first year is the first stage of primary education, and the fifth is the last.

Before delving into the semiological analysis, we must provide a theoretical background to facilitate the practical work, crystallized on the one hand through defining values and procedurally

identifying the value dimensions, and on the other hand, defining educational images and determining their types and features.

2. Values and Value Dimensions

2.1. Values Definition

The term "values" is widely used not only among sociologists and those interested in social psychological studies but also among a large segment of general students and many interested in popular culture. However, despite this widespread use of the term, its exact meaning tends to be a subject of debate among researchers, leading to diverse and sometimes differing definitions of values depending on their proponents' specializations, doctrines, and tendencies. The absence of a specific, universally accepted definition for values highlights this lack of consensus.

In everyday usages and discussions, values can refer to various meanings : sometimes, people speak of value in the sense of benefit or utility. Their focus may be limited to economic benefit when highlighting the value of money, saying, for example, "The value of this gold pound is now seven pounds." (Diab, 1980)

Objectively, the concept of "values" is regarded as one of the most significant topics addressed by ancient philosophies in human thought ; it has been studied by philosophers since ancient times and received significant attention during the era of Greek thought through the writings of philosophers such as Plato, for example. Even though they did not explicitly employ the term "values," they used many terms that ultimately referred to value, such as truth, goodness, and beauty. Philosophy views these three values as guiding the life of a human being, and it believes that a person cannot indeed be human without adhering to these three values (Helmi, 2002). This emphasizes the significance of values for human beings as qualities that distinguish and make them deserving of appreciation.

Some attempt to clarify the common confusion between the concept of standards and the concept of values and those standards illustrate prohibitions, directions, and restrictions for behavioral practices. In contrast, values express commands, preferences, and priorities. Therefore, they argue that standards are negative rules, whereas values are positive principles, (Chokri, 2002) emphasizing the difference between the two concepts, as standards are associated with rules that should be avoided and prevented because they are fundamentally negative. In contrast, the concept of values remains connected to everything that is positive and should be adhered to and preferred.

From an Islamic perspective, values are viewed as derived from religion (Islam). They are regarded as immutable values that do not change regardless of people's changing attitudes and orientations towards them. This definition leads us to what Aziz Abdelrahmane presents in his "Value Determinism in Media" theory, viewing value as the guiding force for human behavior, serving as the foundation, regulator, and standard for all human activities. It is commendable and positive if behavior or action aligns with the value. If it deviates from or contradicts the value, it is considered negative and deviates from the truth.

According to Abdelrahman, values are "the effort of a person to elevate oneself, that which transcends the ordinary and is associated with what is hidden in the imagination." (Marrah, 2009)

From this perspective, values serve as a cognitive map that provides individuals with appropriate rules for behavior and conduct in different situations. They serve as the central focal point against

which we measure our behaviors, thoughts, and actions, and they are closely linked to our communicative and media activities. In other words, values act as a regulator for communicative and media actions.

2-2 Values Types:

Some sociologists have classified values into two fundamental categories : positive and negative. However, Azzi Abdul Rahmane criticizes this classification, highlighting the need to differentiate between values and virtue. Values can be diverse, leading to negative and positive values related to intellect and behavior. Virtue, on the other hand, within its ethical inevitability, cannot be negative as its source is religion, which cannot be a source of negativity, focusing on behavior, which can be either positive or negative.

Azzi distinguishes between three types of values :

- a) **Faith Values** : Faith in God, respect for divine books, piety, reliance on God, religious commitment, etc.
- b) **Intellectual Values** : These may be interconnected, such as ambition, self-respect, appreciation for knowledge and scholars, openness, or non-interconnected, such as intellectual laziness, internal tension, lack of interest in studying, neglecting work, and wasting time.
- c) **Behavioral Values** : Interconnected ones entail respect for family relationships, honoring parents, cooperation, justice, and positive relationships with others. Non-interconnected ones include lying, hinting at excitement and sexuality, not adhering to Arab customs, and associating with bad company. (Taki al-Dine, 2012)

2-3- Value Dimensions :

Azzi Abdul Rahmane believes that values can manifest in human behavior through different dimensions. According to the classification of the values inevitability theory in communication, he outlined the following dimensions: the faith dimension (related to belief, religion, and faith in God, etc.), the communicative dimension (linked to the ability to communicate, interact, and build friendships), the temporal dimension (preserving time and respecting schedules), the spatial dimension (referring to maintaining space, environmental cleanliness, and surroundings), the linguistic dimension (about verbal communication and good speech), the psychological dimension (associated with psychological aspects such as honesty and love), the social dimension (love for others), the economic dimension (financial aspects and expenditures), the educational dimension (education, virtuous ethics, and learning), the political dimension (country and politics), the aesthetic dimension, and the humanitarian dimension. (Azzi, 2013)

We have relied on this categorization in our analysis of values included in the covers of Arabic language textbooks and their classification. We do not intend this division to imply that each dimension is isolated with its values separately from the other dimensions. Instead, we consider the list of values under study as a unified entity belonging to one family and stemming from one source: the religious belief (Islam). Values dimension is the field or level in which values are practiced or reflected.

3. Educational Image: Its Significance, Types, and Features:

3-1- Definition of Educational Image : Various technical definitions of images exist as they are present in different fields, from media and communication to literature and education. Here are some of those definitions :

An image is "the embodiment of reality, differing from it due to its static nature, and it can be either drawings (engraving, colors) or photographic. It is a form of art that conveys either the fabric of imagination or creates a scene based on tangible reality." (Aumont, 2013) This definition classifies the image into two types: either imaginative drawings or photographic, reflecting reality.

Salah Fadel defines it as "a symbolic sign based on a triadic system of relationships between the following components : the expression material, which entails colors and distances ; the expression forms, which are the visual representations of objects and individuals; and the expression content, which includes the cultural content of the image on one hand and its symbolic structure illustrating this content on the other hand." (Fadel, 1997)

The image has been used in education, and its communicative and cultural significance and ability to influence and persuade have been acknowledged. This realization is apparent in the Algerian educational system, particularly in the textbooks for different educational stages, where images have been incorporated in primary education and some linguistic activities because the educational system comprehends that they convey meanings at both a superficial and a profound level, simply upon visual perception.

The **educational image** is " a tool teachers resort to employing to bring the intended concepts closer to the learner's mind, ensuring their understanding and comprehension of the given information, leading to interaction and response. Examples include maps, photographs, images of animals, and images of plants." This definition underscores the significant role of educational images in building understanding and achieving comprehension for learners, given their ability to clarify concepts, decode symbols, and eliminate ambiguity.

Abduladim Al-Farjani believes that the educational image is common in most visual presentations, live displays, and textbooks. Thus, it is one of the pillars of any educational system. To clarify the primary role of the image in education, it is necessary to identify some significant aspects and their essential connection to education. The educational image is regarded as a persuasive communicative message that plays an active role in education. Both teachers and learners resort to it to elucidate and facilitate information, underscoring its tremendous significance. (Fadel, 1997)

After presenting these definitions of the image in general and the educational image in particular, it is evident that the collective definitions of the educational image highlight its role in education, regarding it as a means of illustration, explanation, and dispelling ambiguity within the text. Therefore, it is a complementary tool to the educational text, providing clarification and enhancement.

3-2- Educational Images Types : Educational images can be classified into animated and static images. Within each category, there are different subtypes, as represented in Figure 1.

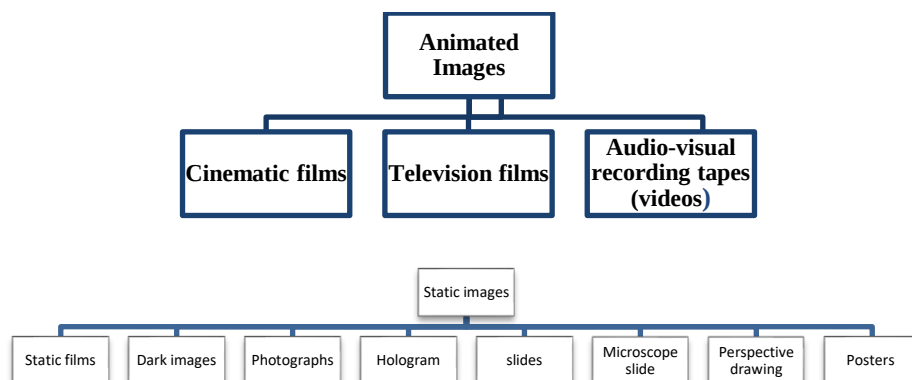


Figure 1: Diagram illustrating types of educational images (Mourad & Boudina, 2020-2021)

4. Results and Discussions :

Semiological Analysis of the Cover Images of Arabic Language Textbooks for the First and Fifth Years of Primary Education:

In our semiotic analysis of the cover images of Arabic language, Islamic education, and civic education textbooks for the primary education stage, spanning from the first and the fifth year, we adopt the approach of the French researcher Martine Joly. Her analysis focuses on the intersection of three contrasting yet integrative levels, namely:

- Plastic descriptive Level : Examining different components of the visual and graphic representation, such as colors, shapes, internal composition, frame, support, framing, image capture angle, and lighting.
- Iconic Level : including all systems of iconic signs that lead to invoking original, acquired, cultural, and abstract knowledge.
- Linguistic Level : Language analysis is essential for producing meaning and eloquence. Language plays a role in solidifying and establishing the message. The researcher highlights the need to address linguistic formal elements such as printing style, writing color, font size, etc.
- Interpretation and the Second Connotative Reading (Jolly, 2011)

4-1- Semiotic Analysis of the Cover Image for the First Year Textbook :

4-1-1 Descriptive Overview : The image occupies more than half of the cover page and is characterized by multiple colors on a green background. The page is centered around three illustrations of various buildings : on the right, a white minaret of a mosque with a green palm tree in front. In the center, a predominantly yellow two-story building with various windows, surrounded by green trees, and a flagpole bearing the national flag with its three colors (white, green, and red). This suggests that the building is a school. The third building on the left side of the

page is white and has a governmental character, topped with the national flag in its three colors, slightly smaller in size than the second building.

The image's focal point is two happy and smiling children around six years old. The boy on the right is wearing a blue apron, holding the Arabic language textbook for the first year in his left hand while waving to the reader with his right hand. The girl on the left is also wearing a pink apron, and although her hands are not visible, there is a red pouch on her right side, accented with blue, containing different school supplies such as a yellow notebook and large, colorful pens.

At the bottom of the page, from the bottom edge, blooming pink, red, and purple flowers are scattered among green grass.

4-1-2 Denotative Level of Analysis:

A) Plastic sign:

- **Carrier:** The primary support, the image, appears on the cover of the Arabic language, Islamic education, and civic education books for the first year of primary education on thick, large-sized paper (19×28).
- **Frame :** The image appears without a frame, indicating that the page borders identify the frame, with a mix between the frame and the page borders.
- **Framing :** It refers to adjusting the frame or the image, relating to the size of the image and the supposed distance between the drawing and the lens. The linguistic sign appeared at the top of the image, leaving the phrase "First Year of Primary Education" at the bottom of the page, emphasizing the drawing of the two children (students), whose size is prominent and attention-grabbing in the book. The children appear larger than the buildings in the upper background, giving an impression of distance, unlike those who appear very close.
- **The Image Capture angle :** The image capture angle was direct and normal, facing the reader.
- **Composition and Layout on Paper :** The focus during layout was on the joyful and smiling images of the two children on one hand and the linguistic message "My Book," which appeared prominently in red with a large size.
- **Shapes :** Curved lines, one open, drawn from the top of the page to its bottom on the right edge, and four closed curved lines, used to depict white clouds, were observed. Besides, the school had 11 yellow stars, a rectangular-shaped purse, and square and rectangular windows.
- **Colors and Lighting :** The image contained 11 colors: green, black, red, white, yellow, blue, brown, human skin color, pink, orange, and purple.

a) **Iconic Sign:** Artificial shapes (drawings) of two children at the age of first-year students and buildings representing societal institutions (mosque, school, government building), school tools, and scattered flowers.

b) **Linguistic Sign:** The image is accompanied by a linguistic message illustrated as follows: At the top of the image, a written text appears amidst four clouds and some yellow stars. This text takes the form of various titles in various sizes and colors:

-Firstly: The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, beneath which is the Ministry of National Education, in medium size and black color. Following this is the phrase "My Book" in large red font, below is the word "In" in smaller size and the same red color. Underneath, at the center, is "Arabic Language" in medium font and black color. In the same line, the number "1" is presented in white color inside a red circle.

- Below the term "Arabic Language," the words "Islamic Education" are on the right, and "Civil Education" is on the left, both in bold font but with a smaller size and in black color.
- Beneath the drawing of the two children, the phrase "First Year of Primary Education" is written from the right side of the page to its left, in large and clear black font.

4-1-3 Connotative Level:

The description of image shows us a school textbook approved by the Ministry of National Education, regarded as one of the ministries of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. Through the segmentation and dissection of the cover elements, it becomes apparent that these visual and linguistic components are functionally connected to provide a cover for a textbook intended for an age group around six years old.

The prominent feature in this image is that most visual and textual components appear clear and designed in a large size. This design choice seeks to facilitate the control of the gaze of the target audience (first-year students), who are attracted to prominent, large-sized stimuli such as illustrations and vibrant colors. These are features of an effective cover.

Regarding the plastic sign:

- The carrier of the image is made of thick paper compared to the book's pages. This thickness is necessary to protect the rest of the book's pages, requiring the use of thick and sturdy paper to fulfill this.
 - The image appears without a frame, showing that the page borders define the frame. This gives the impression of an incomplete image, allowing room for imagination for the targeted students.
 - The focus is on the drawing of the two children (students), whose size stands out in the book, capturing the reader's attention and creating a sense of proximity. Their size is even larger than that of the buildings in the upper background, conveying a sense of distance, providing an impression of the **friendship** depicted between the two drawn children, highlighting its **social value**.
- Used a direct, face-to-face angle to capture the attention, which is the ordinary angle that gives the impression that the reader or viewer is on the same level as the characters in the image. Hence, the level indicates the first year of primary education, so the student feels a sense of belonging to the same age group and the same educational stage, creating a closer relationship between the student and the characters in the image, possibly assisting them to feel closer to school, love it, and build friendships. Therefore, values such as "**love for others and building friendships**" appear as social values, along with "**love for school**" and "**love for learning**," which are **educational values**.
- Multiple shapes were employed to attract the attention of the young student, such as clouds and shining yellow stars at the top of the page, with the phrase "My Book" in the middle. It emerges as if this textbook is present in the sky among the stars and clouds, proposing loftiness and elevation. Hence, the value of **respecting and appreciating textbooks** is emphasized, illustrating an **educational value**. Furthermore, various simple and familiar shapes for a six-year-old child, such as rectangles, curved lines, and squares, were utilized, aiming to capture the child's attention and fulfill **aesthetic dimension** in the image.
- **Colors:** The image of the textbook page is dominated by cool colors such as green, blue, and purple, which are often found in nature and known for their calming impact on the mind and

providing a sense of psychological comfort. For instance, the background of the image is green, reflecting the color of trees and plants, symbolizing the beauty of nature and inviting environmental protection. Hence, the value with a **spatial dimension** is emphasized.

The color blue was employed for the student's uniform in the drawing, providing a sense of comfort, relaxation, and harmony with nature. Moreover, blue is the standardized color for boys' uniforms in primary schools in Algeria, indicating the affiliation of the drawn student to the same school and environment. Warm colors like red, yellow, orange, and different shades of pink were also utilized in the cover. Red was employed for the word (my book) and as a frame for the number one, referring to the first year of primary education. The significance of the color red, symbolizing strength, confidence, and authority, is highlighted as a sign of the book's importance and its empowering and confidence-building role for students. Once again, the value of "**respect for and appreciation of textbooks**" is emphasized, illustrating an **educational and moral dimension**. The color pink was employed for the girl's uniform, introducing the standardized color for girls in national schools.

Regarding the iconic sign:

The emphasis has been placed on the illustrations of the two drawn children, as drawings are appealing to children of this age group. The drawings convey a sense of happiness and joy apparent on their faces due to their enrollment in school, both wearing uniforms indicating that they are students. The boy extends his right hand towards the targeted students, as if welcoming them, while embracing the Arabic language book with his left hand, bringing it close to his heart, illustrating the value of "**love for textbooks**." This is an educational and moral value, along with the values of "**smiling at others**" and "**greeting**," which are **values with communicative dimension**. The two children appear close to each other, suggesting a relationship of friendship and camaraderie, representing a **value with social dimension**.

The iconic sign goes beyond this, featuring drawings of buildings appearing smaller behind the children, indicating a certain distance. Notably, there is coherence and harmony between these drawings and the linguistic sign, confirming that the textbook is dedicated to the Arabic language, Islamic education, and civil education. The phrase "Islamic education" is positioned on the right above the drawing of the minaret, showing a **value with a religious dimension**. The phrase "Arabic language" is placed above a building suggesting a school through the national flagpole, while on the left, the phrase "civil education" is above a government building topped with the national flag, resembling a municipality or courthouse. Hence, the **values with a national dimension** become evident. The scattered flowers below the cover symbolize the childhood stage characterized by play and joy amid fields and orchards.

After conducting a semiotic analysis of the cover of the first-year textbook, it becomes apparent that the cover images are rich in drawings and colors, loaded with various values falling within several dimensions. The educational and pedagogical dimension dominates, followed by the aesthetic, spatial, communicative, social, religious, and national dimensions. All these value dimensions contribute to the social upbringing of the student, particularly regarding that the school is one of the significant social upbringing institutions after the family. It is worth noting the absence of values with a temporal dimension, given that students at this age are somewhat distant from the value of time and scheduling.

4-2 Semiotic Analysis of the Cover Image of the Fifth-year Textbook:

4-2-1 Descriptive Overview: The image occupies more than half of the cover page and is centered. It lacks many colors, appearing against a green background. The image characteristics the upper half of a real, dark-skinned child with black hair and dark eyes, approximately 11 years old. The child is smiling, showing white teeth, dressed in a black jacket, holding a white paper in his right hand with the Arabic letter "Dhad" written on it in blue. The child is attempting to show it to the reader. Furthermore, he is surrounded by five circles drawn with white lines, varying in size and intersecting at various points.

4-2-2- Denotative Level of Analysis:

A. Plastic Sign:

- **Carrier:** The image is illustrated on the cover of the Arabic language textbook, on thick paper compared to the book's pages, with a large size (19×28).
- **Frame:** The image emerges within a circular frame drawn in white.
- **Framing:** The child's face is prominent in the image, entitled to the left, exposing his right ear while concealing the left. Furthermore, the Arabic letter " Dhad " is written in blue on a white paper, placed forward on the child's face as if presenting it to the reader. It appeared closer to us than the child, who seemed somewhat distant.
- **Angle of Image Capture:** The angle of image capture is a regular direct angle, illustrating the reader's point of view.
- **Composition and Layout on Paper:** During the layout, focus was on both the smiling child's image and the white paper in his hand with the " Dhad " letter. Simultaneously, emphasis was on the linguistic sign "Arabic Language," prominently displayed in white, directly above the image.
- **Shapes:** Five circular lines form an outline around the image, positioned at different sizes and intersecting at multiple points on the cover. Moreover, the shape of the paper with the written " Dhad " letter is presented as a straight line.
- **Colors and Lighting:** The image does not contain many colors. The cover utilizes green, tending towards blue, overall. White is employed for writing (linguistic sign) and drawing circles. Blue is used for writing the " Dhad " letter, black for the child's clothes, hair, and eyes, brown for his skin color, and red for the small frame below the paper with "School Publications" written on it.
- a) Iconic Sign:** The image indicates a human-like shape of a child at the age of fifth-year students, alongside a realistic image of a paper with the Arabic letter "Dhad" written on it.

b) Linguistic Sign:

Accompanying the image is a linguistic sign introduced as various titles in different sizes and colors at the center of the upper cover (on the edge):

First: "People's Democratic Republic of Algeria" emerges in medium size and white color. Below it, "Ministry of National Education" is written in white, just above the image, as if explaining the letter " Dhad." It is in large, bold white letters. At the bottom of the cover and beneath the image, the number "5" is written in large size, and below it, the phrase "Primary" inside a frame in medium font. The National Office for School Publications logo is placed at the bottom edge of the paper, inside a white frame, written in red and green.

4-2-3- Connotative Level:

The image description indicates a textbook for the Arabic language endorsed by the Ministry of National Education, a part of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria's ministries. Breaking down the elements of the cover demonstrate that these formative and linguistic components are functionally connected to present a cover for a textbook sought at an age group around 11 years, corresponding to fifth-year students.

The prominent feature in this image is the scarcity of visual and textual elements compared to the previous image. Although it appears clear and designed on a large scale to help control the attention of the target audience, it conveys simplicity and seriousness compared to the first-year cover images. This is attributed to the difference in the age group of the target audience. Fifth-grade students differ from first-grade students; they are more aware, mature, and have a greater ability to comprehend. Furthermore, they are approaching end-of-year exams, perhaps explaining why the cover image proposes a more serious tone.

Concerning the plastic sign:

- The cover image for the fifth-year textbook adopted the same medium, somewhat thick paper holder employed in the first-year textbook.
- The image appears within a circular frame, containing what is inside and keeping other things outside. The circular frame provides a sense of security and communication, symbolizing the community, giving the impression of a complete image and does not leave room for imagination for the targeted students. This is due to the seriousness of the grade, requiring them to focus on passing the primary education certificate exams.
- The picture depicts a real image of a child with dark skin, black hair, and dark eyes, wearing a black shirt. He appears to be from the southern region of Algeria. Hence, the value of "equality and non-racial discrimination" is emphasized, suggesting that education in Algeria is a right for every Algerian child, and skin color makes no difference among the people, highlighting both the **religious value dimension and the national value dimension**. The child holds a paper in his hand with the Arabic letter " Dhad " written on it, presenting it to the targeted students with a smile and laughter, reflecting his happiness and pride in his Arabic language. Arabic is known as the language of (Dhad), as it is the only language that contains the letter " Dhad ". Arabs are also recognized for being articulate in pronouncing this letter, known to be one of the most challenging for non-Arabic speakers. The phrase (Arabic Language) is directly above the image, demonstrating harmony and coordination between visual and linguistic elements to highlight that the textbook is dedicated to the Arabic language, specifically the language of (Dhad).
- The frontal angle of the reader's eye was used to capture attention. This is the typical angle that gives the impression that the reader or viewer is at the same level as the character in the image. By "level" here, we refer to both the fifth year of primary education on one hand and the skin color on the other. The student feels a sense of belonging to the same age group and educational stage, creating a close relationship between him and the character in the image. This highlights the values of **"love for school"** and **"love for learning Arabic,"** which is a **value with an educational dimension**.
- The image did not rely on many shapes, except for circles and rectangles, geometric shapes that show a system characterized by efficiency and effectiveness. They tend to symmetry, indicating order, and they suggest eternity as they have no beginning or end. These features are reflected on the fifth-year students who need seriousness, effectiveness, and efficiency in their studies.

- **Colors:** The image does not use a wide range of colors; instead, it focuses on cool tones such as green and blue. These colors are often found in nature known for their calming impact on the mind, providing a sense of psychological comfort. Hence, the spatial dimension value stands out, employing green as a background to signify the purity of nature. Blue is used in the letter " Dhad ", imparting a sense of tranquility, relaxation, and harmony with nature.

In contrast to the first-year book, warm colors are not extensively employed, except for a touch of red to signify the National Office of School Publications. Neutral colors (brown, black, and white) are used, representing earth tones. These colors are complex as they are both strong and pure, symbolizing the strength required of the student in this year and the purity of their spirit, as they are still just children, reflecting the **educational and pedagogical value dimension**.

As for the iconic sign:

The focus, as mentioned earlier, was on a real image of a child derived from reality, in contrast to the illustrations in the book for the first year. This difference can be attributed to the age gap between the two targeted age groups. The child in the image radiates happiness and joy apparent on his face, along with pride in his Arabic language. His right ear is prominent beneath the phrase "Arabic Language," indicating his readiness to listen and prepare for learning the language of "Dhad." Hence, **educational, national, and communicative dimensions** become apparent. The boy points with his right hand holding the paper, adding a **religious dimension** to the use of his right hand.

Accordingly, after the semiotic analysis of the cover of the fifth-year primary school textbook, it is clear that the cover images differ from those of the first year in terms of employing a real human image instead of illustrations. The warm and varied colors in the first-year textbook were replaced with neutral tones. The emphasis on values, particularly the educational, pedagogical, national, and communicative dimensions, was less pronounced compared to the first-year textbook. Furthermore, the aesthetic dimension did not receive the same level of emphasis as it bbbggggggghhg gggggggggggg in the first cover image. This difference can be explained by the demographic factor (age) and the social factor (levels of comprehension, awareness, and understanding) varying between the two age groups.

5. CONCLUSION

After dissecting the elements of the cover images of Arabic language textbooks for both the first and fifth years of primary education and analyzing them semiotically employing Martine Joly's three-level approach (descriptive, denotative, and connotative), we reached a set of results, including:

- The cover images of the first-year textbooks were rich in illustrations, colors, and appealing shapes designed for six-year-old children. These images captured their attention and interest, loaded with different values falling under diverse dimensions. The educational and pedagogical dimension predominates, followed by the aesthetic and spatial dimension. Subsequently, the communicative, social, religious, and national dimensions were present, all illustrating value dimensions essential for the student's social upbringing. This is particularly important as the school is regarded as one of the significant institutions for social upbringing after the family.

We observed the absence of values with a temporal dimension, considering that students at this age are still somewhat distant from the value of time and scheduling.

- The cover image of the fifth-year textbook is featured by a scarcity of visual and textual elements compared to the first-year image. Although it appears clear and is designed on a large scale, which helps control the attention of the target audience, it suggests simplicity and seriousness in comparison to the cover images of the first year. This can be attributed to the difference in the age group of the target audience. Fifth-year students differ from first-year students; they are more aware, mature, and have a greater cognitive ability. Furthermore, they are approaching the end-of-year exams, possibly explaining the increased sense of seriousness conveyed by the cover image.
- The cover image of the fifth-year textbook differs from the first-year textbook in various aspects. It employs a real human image rather than drawings, and it avoids the use of several warm colors. Instead, it opts for strong and neutral (earth-toned) colors, conveying a sense of purity and strength simultaneously. The emphasis on values in the fifth-year textbook is not as prominent as in the first-year textbook. The focus is more on educational and pedagogical values, along with national and communicative dimensions. Moreover, the emphasis on aesthetic values is not as pronounced as in the first-year cover image. This can be explained by the age-related demographic differences between the two target age groups, regarding factors such as cognitive abilities, comprehension levels, and social awareness

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7- Appendices: Cover Images for Textbooks of the First and Fifth Years of Primary Education



