

Exploring Pedagogical Representation of Visual Images in EFL Textbooks: English in Focus for Grade VII Junior High School

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the pedagogic visual images used in the English in Focus textbook for Grade VII junior high school students and to assist teachers in critically evaluating the textbooks they utilize. The primary goal is to examine how visual images are incorporated into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks to support systematic knowledge acquisition, enhance learner motivation, and facilitate engagement and language proficiency development. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method, analyzing selected visual and verbal elements in the textbook. The instruments used include a checklist for verbal analysis based on Eggins (2004) and a framework for visual analysis derived from Van Leeuwen (2006). The data consist of 80 images, analyzed to identify representations of ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. The findings show that the textbook effectively combines verbal and visual modes. Verbal elements emphasize relational processes to deliver clear information, declarative statements for interaction, and multiple themes for varied ideas. Visual elements rely on narrative processes, indirect gaze, long-shot perspectives, and left-right information distribution for coherence. These results underline the importance of visual literacy in EFL classes and well-designed textbooks. The English in Focus textbook meets its objectives with an organized layout and clear content, promoting learner engagement and enabling consistent evaluation across grades.

Keywords: Semiotics, Interpretation, Communication context, Pedagogical value, Peirce's theory

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Citation in APA style: Febrianthy, C., Ine Suminar, & Vanessa Dwi Septianti. (2025). Exploring Pedagogical Representation of Visual Images in EFL Textbooks: English in Focus for Grade VII Junior High School. *JADEs Journal of Academia in English Education*, 6(2), 275-290.

Received Dec 10, 2023; Accepted Dec 31, 2025; Published Dec 31, 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32505/jades.v6i2.7550>

1. INTRODUCTION

Semiotics is a discipline of linguistics that derives its name from the Greek term *Simeion*, which means sign. Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols and their interpretation, provides a valuable framework for understanding how meaning is created, communicated, and understood. According to Tinarbuko (quoted by Arum, 2021), semiotics encompasses various disciplines, including linguistics, communication studies, cultural studies, and philosophy. In this context, semiotics not only examines verbal signs, such as words and sentences, but also non-verbal signs, such as images and visual representations. Visual elements, as part of semiotic resources, play an essential role in conveying meaning. Images can help raise attention or stimulate more deep processing of textual data, as well as explain and make clear stuff that is difficult to understand (Shabiralyani, Hasan, Hamad, & Iqbal, 2015). As a result of the importance of visuals in the learning process, most English textbooks contain several images. Visual representations serve critical functions in teaching and learning the language when generating English resources. Visual pictures, according to Tomlinson (2011), can be employed as novelty to illustrate texts.

The introduction of visuals in English textbooks helps readers comprehend the complete substance of the topic. In order to fulfill pedagogical goals and involve students in the teaching and learning process, images in textbooks must cover fascinating themes (Elmiana, 2019). Levin (1981) identified the instructional roles of visual pictures as ornamentation, representation, organization, interpretation, and transformation. The pedagogical representation of visual images in EFL textbooks involves carefully selecting and designing visual materials to effectively convey meaning, stimulate critical thinking, and foster communicative competence. Visual images allow students to connect learning content in a meaningful way by helping students prepare for an exercise, assignment, or activity in a textbook (Liu & Qu, 2014; Weninger, 2021).

By incorporating visual images, EFL textbooks aim to create a visually rich and interactive learning environment that caters to learners' diverse needs and learning styles. Visual representations can promote engagement, motivation, and active participation in language learning activities. They can also facilitate comprehension and retention of

language structures and vocabulary through visual association and mental imagery.

However, the pedagogical representation of visual images in EFL textbooks also presents challenges. The selection and design of visual materials should consider cultural appropriateness, avoiding biases, stereotypes, and cultural misinterpretations. It is essential to promote cultural sensitivity and global understanding through the visual representation of diverse cultures and perspectives. This paper explores the pedagogical representation of visual images in EFL textbooks, aiming to examine the effectiveness of visual images in facilitating language learning and their alignment with learners' cognitive processes. It investigates the types of visual images used, their pedagogical purposes, and the impact on learners' motivation, engagement, and language proficiency.

Furthermore, the paper explores the significance of visual literacy skills in utilizing visual images in EFL classrooms and addresses potential challenges in incorporating visual representations effectively. It emphasizes the importance of integrating visual images in a way that complements the overall language learning objectives and encourages active engagement and interaction among learners. By examining the pedagogical representation of visual images in EFL textbooks, this paper contributes to the ongoing discussion on EFL textbook design and development. It provides insights into the effective use of visual images as valuable tools for enhancing language learning outcomes and encourages further research and exploration in this area.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Semiotics explores the complex interplay between signs, their representations, and the processes by which humans assign meaning to them. Semiotics is concerned with marking, representation, reference, and meaning. Semiotic thinkers, such as Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), an expert linguist recognized as the Father of Modern Semiotics, suggest several interpretations of signs. Meanwhile, in his trichotomy idea, philosopher and logician Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) analyzes the sign as a signifier (representamen), object (referent), and interpretant (signified), which are all represented in the triangle of the triadic connection theory. As a philosopher and logician, Peirce thought that

human reasoning is always carried out through signals. Because he felt that logic and semiotics were interchangeable terms and that semiotics could be used to describe any form of sign, the term semiotics grew in favor over semiology. Tinarbuko, (in Mudjianto and Nur,2013).

According to Kasmaienezhadford, Pourrajah, and Robbani, (in Qoriah,2020), visuals can improve students' imagination or creativity when they are studying English. Furthermore, because images reflect a component of reality, they assist students focus on experience as a part of their lives (Dimopoulos, Koulaidis, & Sklaveniti, 2003). Next, visuals can raise attention or stimulate more detailed processing of textual data, as well as explain and clarify difficult-to-understand content (Shabiralyani, Hasan, Hamad, & Iqbal, 2015). As a result of the importance of visuals in the learning process, most English textbooks include several images. It might be effective as an appealing presentation that can pique learners' interest and attention.

Furthermore, the language and visual imagery might make the kids feel at ease. Rather than just words, the information can make pupils feel more at ease by using visuals. The right use of visual images in English textbooks can be a technique to aid in foreign language learning. In this situation, English will be used as a foreign language for students. Individuals may store images and words in their minds and retrieve them later.

Textbook evaluation is the way to choose which text is suitable for the tutoring literacy process. Grounded on Cunningsworth, the purpose of text evaluation is to help the schoolteacher to decide the literacy resource with the stylish material in order to gain good literacy (Nisa, 2021). The focus of this exploration is to estimate English in Focus for Grade VII Junior High School Literate. Therefore, understanding the efficacy of this book by doing an evaluation was thus important. The experimenters also want to know if the book is valid and complete the successful text conditions or not. This can thus be told that the estimated text is applicable for use in the classroom or not.

Textbook used as a main source in class in tutoring literacy exertion. Both scholars and preceptors use handbooks as homemade instruction. Mahmoud, (2024) states that handbooks can help scholars understand the material fluently. Handbooks contain written material which has been arranged totally that can help scholars to understand material besides the

schoolteacher's explanation in class. In this case, the text isn't only a course book but also as a set of tutoring literacy guidelines. Hakim and Saputra also state, text means an assignment book schoolteacher and scholars have, and it's followed totally as the base of language courses. This book contains some corridors of material, similar as alphabet, vocabulary, reading textbook, writing material and exercises. (Hakim & Saputra, 2018)

It also has numerous filmland and other illustrations to attract the compendiums when using it. (Sarem, Hamidi,H, & Mahmoudie,2013) Currently, numerous handbooks are published. School teachers should dissect the book before choosing it as the source of tutoring material in class.

The meaning of a representation is what the image signifies to the viewer. It is about the people, locations, and objects contained inside an image, as well as what the image is expressing to the observer (Harrison, 2003). It also demonstrates how they relate to one another in significant ways. In other words, it is about who or what the participants are who are portrayed and how they are related to one another. The image can be examined in the representation meaning by selecting the pattern of the presented participants. Because the process is divided into narrative and conceptual patterns (Yang & Zhang, 2014), the first step is to understand how they are represented in the image.

The role of visual images in EFL textbooks has been widely studied. Damayanti (2014) investigated the construction of gender in visual images in Indonesian primary school textbooks. Her study emphasized how visual elements can influence students' perceptions of gender roles. Similarly, Nugroho (2010) analyzed mathematics textbooks used in Singapore, focusing on the intersemiosis of visual and verbal elements. His findings highlighted the critical role of visual aids in improving students' understanding of abstract concepts. Meanwhile, Liu and Qu (2014) explored the multimodality of EFL textbooks for Chinese college students, identifying how visual and textual modes work together to enhance learning outcomes. These studies illustrate the significant impact of visual images on learning processes, particularly in EFL contexts.

Unlike previous studies, which often focus on specific aspects of visual images, such as gender representation (Damayanti, 2014) or intersemiosis in mathematics (Nugroho, 2010), this study specifically

examines the implementation of ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions in both verbal and visual modes in an Indonesian EFL textbook. Moreover, while Liu and Qu (2014) addressed multimodality, their study targeted college-level materials, whereas this research focuses on a junior high school textbook, providing insights into how visual images cater to younger learners' needs.

The novelty of this study lies in its application of a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) framework to analyze visual images. By investigating metafunctions in both verbal and visual modes, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how visual elements support meaning-making in EFL textbooks. Additionally, the findings highlight the pedagogical implications of integrating visual literacy into classroom practices, emphasizing the importance of cohesive verbal-visual integration to improve learner engagement and comprehension.

3. METHODS

This exploration was collected through content analysis and uses a qualitative descriptive approach to read a textbook entitled English in Focus for class VII SMP students. This approach uses Charles Sanders Peirce's trichotomy theory, which divides image objects in textbooks into representamen, object, and interpretant. Analysis was carried out on the visual media in the book to obtain in-depth results.

This study is in order to estimate the quality of an English text entitled "English in Focus" for Grade VII Junior High School. This book is published by Setia Purna Inves on Pusat Perbukuan Departemen Pendidikan Nasional. This system adds visual media textbook analysis. To explain the contents of the text and the process of carrying the source document, content analysis was used to gain detailed results (Krippendorff, 2018, cited in Rezeki & Sagala, 2021).

According to Charles Sanders Pierce's proposition, the picture objects in handbooks are grounded on the conception of trichotomy, so the triple model consists of representamen, objects, and interpretants (Usman, 2017).

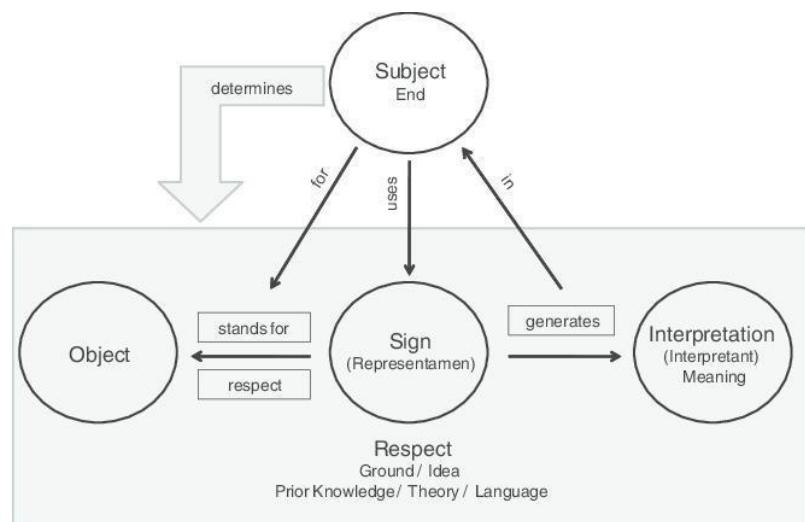


Figure 1 The object of exploration on the material illustrated in the text contains values on pedagogy.

The illustration book created by the illustrator platoon of Setia Purna Invest contains a diverse range of illustrations, showcasing their artistic expertise and creativity, which aim to captivate the audience and convey complex ideas through visual storytelling. This text was written by Artono Wardiman, Masduki B. Jahur and M. Sukirman Djosma. Also, it was explained that the book as part of the perpetration of the KTSP class which focuses on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspect. This means that the character education given to scholars must also be imitated by the schoolteacher through the schoolteacher's pedagogic capability. To achieve literacy objects, pedagogic capabilities can be enforced in understanding developments starting from one's brainpower and supported by preceptors to encourage scholars to be more confident. There are 8 chapters and consists of 176 runners in this book which are divided into the first and alternate semesters. The representation of pedagogical values handed down by the preceptors in the English textbook for junior high school serves as a crucial foundation for fostering critical thinking, character building, and linguistic competence among students.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Due to the limitation of the study, merely visual images relevant to the learning material were chosen for in-depth analysis by KvL' model (2006). There are 8 chapters, 176 pages, 230 figures, and we found 7 figures that consist of teacher pedagogical activities.

| Sign | Object | Interpretan |
|---|--|--|
|  | The teacher gives a compliment to the student's drawing to motivate the students to develop his skill. | Figure #1 shows that the teacher gives positive feedback to the student's task so that the students are motivated to develop his skill in drawing. |

Table 1. The teacher gives the compliment to student's task (Source: Chapter 1, 4)

In Figure 1 the teacher is represented by a man with short hair and wearing glasses. Meanwhile the student with the neat uniform and short hair sits in the polite way. Figure 1 shows the polite students with his ability to draw and he shows his drawings to the teacher. The teacher gives the compliment to motivate the student to draw. It can increase the student's self-confidence to develop his skill. The research found that the personal and social benefits of drawing include Drawing activities stimulate creativity, help individuals explore new ideas and develop imagination (Shabiralyani et al., 2015). Therefore, in Figure #1, the teacher gives the compliment so that in the future students can improve their skills for their future.

| Sign | Object | Interpretan |
|---|---|---|
|  | The teacher encourages the students to increase their motivation to study in the classroom. | The teacher forces the students to participate actively in the classroom, so they will be motivated to answer the teacher's question in front of the classroom and develop their confidence to share their ideas in front of their friends. |

Table 2. The teacher motivated the students to participate actively in the classroom (Source: Chapter 3, P40)

The sign in Figure 2 shows that the teacher asks and encourages his students to raise their hands up in participating actively in the classroom. This activity can be used to increase students' motivation and make sure that the students understand the instruction and the materials that have been delivered. It is related with (Indah, 2023) that stated complex tasks and responsibilities of achieving educational goals relate to teacher motivation, so that good intentions will encourage teacher activities. Teachers become educators because of their motivation to teach. If a teacher is not motivated then they will not be effective in educating or teaching. So, the teacher should keep motivating them to be more active during the class, so the teaching learning process will be more alive and effective.

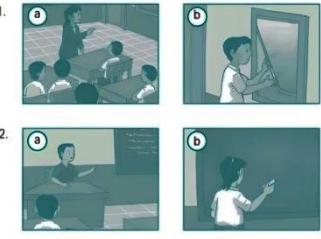
| Sign | Object | Interpretan |
|--|---|--|
|  | <p>The teacher gives the instructions to the students to use English.</p> | <p>The teacher encourages the students to follow the instructions given to make sure the students understand about the lesson.</p> |

Table 3. The teacher encourages the students in class (Source: Chapter 3, P46)

Figure 3 shows that the teacher gives the command to their students to do something. The teacher uses this activity to make sure the students' understanding of the lesson. This demonstrates the teacher's pedagogical abilities, as a teacher must be able to evaluate both the learning process and the learning results achieved by the students. Students also get experience by learning by doing activities. This is directly proportional to the experimental learning method. The situation has an impact on the process of the teaching practice implementation, especially the teaching and learning process will not be maximum, without the teacher guidance. Mannathoko (2013) mentioned that teaching practice is a continuation of teacher education, because it allows prospective teachers to apply theories into practice.

| Sign | Object | Interpretan |
|--|--|---|
|  <p>Source: Publisher's Documentation</p> | <p>The teacher tries to wake the student up in a nice way. She pays attention to the student's responses in her classroom and uses it to improve the next lesson plan.</p> | <p>The teacher reprimanded the students because the students slept during the lesson. The teacher teaches about the norms that apply to students.</p> |

Table 4. The teacher reprimanded the student in English class (Source: Chapter 3, P44)

Illustration on table 4 shows a teacher reprimanding a student for falling asleep in class while the lecture is in process. This demonstrates the teacher's pedagogical abilities, as a teacher must be able to assess both the learning process and the learning results. This is done to help students improve their abilities and to instill in them a sense of responsibility for their responsibilities at school. In general, the sign in Figure 4 refers to an item in the form of an index that is linked to the teacher's rebuke for student faults in replying. Teachers (i.e., adults who, because of their formal position) always try to create the right situation (teaching) so as to enable learning experiences to occur in students, by mobilizing all sources (learning resources) and using appropriate teaching-learning strategies. It is related to Zakiyah Daradjat (1976) that stated "Teachers are professional educators, because implicitly the teacher has volunteered himself to accept and assume some of the responsibility for education that falls on the shoulders of parents".

| Sign | Object | Interpretan |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1.</p>  <p>Source: Publisher's Documentation</p> | <p>The teacher tries to figure out why the student's conduct deviates in order to keep this behavior from damaging other students.</p> | <p>The teacher teaches about the norms that apply to students so that students do not re-act the harmful norms.</p> |

Table 5. The teacher educated student to not to come late (Source: Chapter 3, P44)

Figure 5 shows the teacher doing one of her jobs to educate her student, she tried to figure out the reason why the student came late. It is related with Sudarwan Danim and Khairil (2010), "Teachers are meaningful as professional educators with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in the formal education pathway. In order to succeed in school education, teachers must be able to cultivate student discipline, especially self-discipline. To enforce discipline is not easy for a teacher at school, and words are not enough. For teachers to enforce discipline, it takes a fairly long time and requires a certain amount of patience. The teacher teaches good values to the students to always follow the norms.

| Sign | Object | Interpretan |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Source: Publisher's Documentation</p> | <p>The teacher is able to use technology and forces the student to continue using the technology in the teaching learning process.</p> | <p>The teacher teaches the students to use technology to provide material about her understanding to foster students' learning motivation in achieving the learning objectives.</p> |

Table 6. The teacher gives command to English student in class (Source: Chapter 5, page 42)

Illustration on Table 6 shows that the teacher gives the commands to her student not to turn off the computer. Pedagogical capacities that must be possessed by the teacher are suitable to estimate the literacy process and also the literacy issues carried out by the student. In general, the sign in Figure 6 refers to the command given by the teacher so that the student is suitable to carry out learning into their daily life. The command judgment mark is the pedagogic sign in the figure. One of the advantages of the command tutoring style is that it's easy to understand and follow. The students know what they need to do, and the teacher is in control of the assignment. This can be particularly salutary for them. A study by Mosston, M., & Ashworth, S. (2008), mentions that: By following the cues, pace, and rhythm defined by the teacher, learners achieve performance

precision. The command style emphasizes automaticity, resulting in immediate synchronized, orchestrated performance.

| Sign | Object | Interpretan |
|---|---|---|
| <p>2. </p> | <p>The teacher pays attention to the response of the student when she hears something unbelievable or surprising.</p> | <p>The teacher asks students about students' responses to encourage her telling her ideas and increase her self-confidence.</p> |

Table 7. The teacher pays attention to her English students in class (Source: Chapter 7, page 127)

In table figure 7 the teacher pays attention to the student and responds enthusiastically to what the students say. The student tells her ideas to the teacher, and the teacher listens to her. This practice about harkening, preceptors educate how to hear well. And this treatment is done to increase her tone- confidence.

6. CONCLUSION

The exploration of visual images in EFL textbooks, specifically in "English in Focus" for Grade VII Junior High School, reveals the pedagogical representation of visual images and their impact on language learning. The analysis of the visual images in the textbook demonstrates the use of various pedagogical strategies, such as giving compliments, demanding the use of English, and giving commands, aimed at motivating students, enhancing their language skills, and fostering a positive learning environment. The incorporation of visual images in the textbook aims to increase students' motivation, engagement, and self-confidence, as well as to facilitate their language proficiency development. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The analysis focused only on visual images relevant to the learning material, and the sample size was limited to seven images. Future research could expand the analysis to include a larger sample size and investigate the effectiveness of different types of visual images in EFL textbooks.

Overall, this study highlights the significance of visual images in EFL textbooks and their potential to enhance language learning outcomes. By utilizing visual literacy skills and incorporating visual representations effectively, EFL teachers can create engaging and interactive learning experiences for their students.

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