



Pedagogical Design and Learning-Support Gaps in an Arabic Textbook for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah: A Content Analysis of the 2020 Grade V Ministry of Religious Affairs Textbook

Azzalya Itmi Nurekta¹ 

Dian Risky Amalia²  

Farhan Muhammad³ 

^{1,2} Universitas Ma'arif Lampung, Indonesia, ³ Al-Azhar University, Egypt

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Correspondence Author : Azzalya Itmi Nurekta azzalyaitmii@gmail.com

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Abstract

Textbooks play a strategic role in translating curriculum objectives into learning experiences; therefore, the quality of material organization and pedagogical support provided within textbooks is essential for Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. This study aims to identify and describe the pedagogical characteristics of the Bahasa Arab Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Kelas V textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2020, while also identifying components that require further enhancement. This research used a qualitative descriptive approach through a literature review and content analysis. The primary data source was the aforementioned textbook, while secondary data were obtained from books, scholarly articles, and relevant literature. Data were collected through document review and analyzed by identifying, categorizing, and interpreting the learning components in the textbook. The results indicate that the textbook demonstrates a systematic learning organization through user instructions, sequential learning activities, the integration of mufradāt and tarākīb, as well as the development of istimā', kalām, qirā'ah, and kitābah skills. The textbook also includes a content framework, images and illustrations, and formative assessments. However, the analysis shows that it does not include summaries of learning materials, answer keys, or a dictionary/glossary. These findings indicate that the textbook has established a pedagogical architecture that supports Arabic language learning; nevertheless, support for independent review, verification, and enrichment activities can still be strengthened. Future research should examine the textbook's implementation in classroom practice by involving teachers, students, and learning outcomes.



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A. Introduction

Arabic language learning in madrasahs holds a distinctive position in the Indonesian education system because Arabic is not only studied as a foreign language but also serves as a means of accessing Islamic sources and as a communicative competence developed through formal education (Hidayat et al., 2024). In this context, textbook quality is essential because textbooks remain one of the primary references linking curriculum policies, learning objectives, classroom activities, and student assessment (Haniah et al., 2019). Recent studies indicate that Arabic language education in Indonesia continues to face gaps between curricular objectives and students' actual competencies, while learning practices are moving toward more contextual, communicative, differentiated, and technology-based approaches (Nugraha & Syafe'i, 2025; Zain & Inayah, 2025). These developments make evaluating the quality and characteristics of instructional materials increasingly relevant. Textbooks should not merely provide linguistic content but also need to organize vocabulary, structures, receptive and productive skills, exercises, visual media, and assessment components coherently in order to support learning processes that are appropriate to students' developmental levels (Husna et al., 2025; Nisa et al., 2026; Rahmandha et al., 2025). Therefore, the study of Arabic textbooks for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) needs to be situated within a broader context: the interconnectedness among instructional material design, the needs of elementary school-aged learners, and the curriculum orientation of madrasah education.

This urgency grows even more significant in light of recent transformations in madrasah education policies. The Grade V MI Arabic textbook examined in this study was published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2020 as part of implementing Minister of Religious Affairs Decree Number 183 of 2019 concerning the Islamic Religious Education and Arabic Language Curriculum in Madrasahs. The textbook has 84 pages and six chapters, distributed across two semesters, and was developed with genre-based, communicative, and scientific learning orientations. Subsequent policy developments indicate that the madrasah curriculum has continued to undergo adjustments and reinterpretations, particularly regarding the relationship between regulations, competencies, instructional design, and classroom practices (Hidayat et al., 2023; Rahayu & Magdalena, 2026). At the same time, recent Arabic language education research has shown growing attention to implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, differentiated instruction, technology integration, and aligning language competencies with students' needs (Annova et al., 2026; Aulia Rahman et al., 2025; Zain & Inayah, 2025). This context makes evaluating the 2020 textbook important—not to alter the original data or assess it against standards that were not applicable at the time of its development, but to systematically understand its pedagogical characteristics and identify areas that can still be strengthened.

Theoretically, instructional materials are learning resources systematically designed to help learners achieve specific competencies. In language learning, textbooks not only serve as repositories of information but also shape learning sequences, provide linguistic input, guide practice activities, and connect declarative knowledge with language use. Therefore, the development of Arabic language textbooks should ideally consider the integration of linguistic elements, particularly *mufradāt* and *tarākīb*, with the four major language skills, namely *istimā'*, *kalām*, *qirā'ah*, and *kitābah* (Ilyas & Sulkifli, 2022; Syaifullah & Izzah,

2019). Research on instructional material development in Indonesia further emphasizes that effective teaching materials should fulfill pedagogical functions, be comprehensible, systematic, contextual, and aligned with learners' characteristics (Abusyairi, 2013). Recent studies have further expanded this perspective, showing that Arabic textbooks can simultaneously serve as a medium for value formation, social representation, national identity construction, and the internalization of moral and spiritual values (Jaeni et al., 2025; Satori et al., 2025). Therefore, the analysis of the Grade V MI textbook cannot be limited to whether linguistic materials are available; it must also examine how these materials are organized into learning experiences that are gradual, communicative, contextual, and appropriate to the needs of elementary-level learners.

At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, this issue becomes increasingly important because students' developmental characteristics require instructional materials that are concrete, structured, visually engaging, and provide opportunities for gradual practice (Khotijah et al., 2022; Yamin et al., 2023). The textbook analyzed in this study utilizes images as instructional media to introduce vocabulary, support reading comprehension, facilitate listening exercises, and assist writing and speaking activities. Illustrations in Arabic language teaching materials are not merely decorative, as visual representations can help students connect linguistic forms with meanings and contexts of use. Hilmi (2017) highlights the importance of visual media in Arabic language learning, while more recent studies indicate that the demand for multimodal and contextual instructional materials has increased alongside the development of technology-based learning practices and the characteristics of contemporary learners (Kartini & Ihsan, 2025; Syadi et al., 2025). Furthermore, contemporary studies on Arabic language education in Indonesia show a growing tendency to use digital environments and artificial intelligence to enhance students' engagement, retention, and contextual understanding (Nugraha & Syafe'i, 2025). This trend does not diminish the relevance of printed textbooks; rather, it reinforces the need to examine the extent to which the fundamental structure of textbooks provides an adequate pedagogical foundation before implementing additional innovations.

Several previous studies have analyzed Arabic language textbooks from various perspectives; however, their focus tends to be fragmented by educational level, feasibility, competencies, or specific evaluation perspectives. Salamah (2023), for instance, analyzed a Grade V MI Arabic textbook authored by Agus Wahyudi, focusing on content feasibility, presentation, and graphic aspects. Khaliza (2023) evaluated a Grade VII Madrasah Tsanawiyah Arabic textbook based on content, presentation, language, and graphical aspects. At a higher educational level, Wicaksono et al. (2022) examined the Grade XI Arabic textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs for Madrasah Aliyah from the perspective of Abdurrahman Ibrahim Al-Fauzan's criteria for instructional materials, while Nurrosyid & Aziz (2022) investigated Arabic textbooks based on principles of instructional material development and their relevance to basic competencies. More recent studies have expanded the scope of evaluation through analyses of the feasibility of Kurikulum Merdeka textbooks (Annuari et al., 2025), the integration of global and local standards (Zakiyah et al., 2025), and the representation of national values in textbooks endorsed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Jaeni et al., 2025). This body of literature shows significant developments in textbook research; however, it also indicates that textbook evaluation may use diverse units

of analysis, meaning findings from a particular educational level or textbook cannot be automatically generalized to the 2020 Grade V MI textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The research gap becomes more evident when these studies are compared with the characteristics of the current research object. Some studies emphasize alignment with curricula or feasibility standards, while others focus on cultural values, morality, nationalism, or competency distribution. Meanwhile, research examining how the internal elements of a Grade V MI textbook are organized into a sequence of learning experiences remains relatively limited. Recent studies indicate that Arabic textbook analysis has shifted from general evaluation toward more specific inquiries, such as the integration of moral-spiritual values in qirā'ah texts (Satori et al., 2025), the representation of national values through verbal and visual elements (Jaeni et al., 2025), the relationship between international standards and local contexts (Zakiyah et al., 2025), and the alignment of writing tasks with specific pedagogical principles in Grade V MI textbooks (Nadhifah et al., 2026). However, these increasingly specific focuses still leave a need for a comprehensive mapping of the pedagogical architecture of the 2020 Grade V MI textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs: how user instructions, activity sequences, content frameworks, illustrations, and formative assessments function as an integrated whole, as well as which supporting components are absent. At this point, the present study contributes not by generating new data on students' learning outcomes, but by analytically examining the textbook's structure and characteristics as a learning document.

Another issue underlying this study concerns the relationship between learner autonomy and the completeness of supporting elements in textbooks. A textbook that provides materials and exercises does not necessarily offer equally strong support for independent learning if it lacks resources that enable students to review, verify, and enrich their learning. In this textbook, three major limitations were identified: the absence of material summaries, answer keys, and a dictionary or glossary. Each component serves a different pedagogical function. Summaries can help consolidate key ideas; answer keys can support self-checking and reflection on exercises; and dictionaries or glossaries can help students overcome limitations in vocabulary mastery. Karomah et al. (2022) showed that dictionaries play an important role in supporting Arabic language learning, particularly in understanding meanings and expanding vocabulary. At the same time, recent research on instructional materials emphasizes the importance of scaffolding, feedback, and aligning learning activities with instructional objectives (Kartini & Ihsan, 2025). Therefore, the absence of these three components is relevant to discuss as a characteristic of textbook design, without altering or exaggerating the study's original findings.

Evaluation is also important because textbooks not only organize learning materials but should ideally provide opportunities to assess students' developing understanding. The Grade V MI textbook examined in this study incorporates formative evaluation activities within the learning process, which are intended to determine students' comprehension before proceeding to subsequent materials. This finding is significant because, pedagogically, formative evaluation does not merely determine right or wrong answers; it also provides information that can be used to improve the teaching and learning process. Magdalena et al. (2020) emphasize that formative evaluation involves collecting information about

learning progress so deficiencies in the instructional process can be identified. In recent developments in educational research, Arabic textbook evaluation has increasingly focused on the relationship between activities, competencies, and levels of cognitive demand rather than merely the presence of exercises (Annuari et al., 2025). Therefore, including formative evaluation in this textbook is a structural strength; however, an assessment of textbook characteristics must still consider the overall learning-support system, including summaries, answer-checking tools, and vocabulary assistance that enable students to engage in more independent reflection.

Based on the aforementioned review, this study's novelty lies in its effort to comprehensively map the pedagogical characteristics of the 2020 Grade V MI Arabic textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, while treating the textbook itself as the primary unit of analysis. This novelty does not claim that previous research on Arabic textbooks at the MI level has never been conducted, as such studies have clearly existed (Nadhifah et al., 2026; Salamah, 2023). Rather, the contribution of this study lies in the integration of several dimensions directly identified within the research object, including textbook usage instructions; the organization of four learning activities integrating *mufradāt*, *tarākīb*, *istimā'*, *qirā'ah*, *kalām*, and *kitābah*; the presence of a content framework; the function of images and illustrations; and formative evaluation, complemented by the identification of three unavailable components. Based on this foundation, the working proposition of this study is that the textbook provides a relatively systematic, communicative, contextual pedagogical structure that supports the development of four language skills; however, its support for independent learning is not yet fully optimal due to the absence of summaries, answer keys, and a dictionary/glossary. This proposition is analytical in nature rather than a statistical hypothesis because the study employs a descriptive qualitative design and content analysis of a document.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify, describe, and explore the characteristics of the 2020 Grade V Arabic textbook for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs; analyze how materials, linguistic elements, the four language skills, learning activities, content frameworks, illustrations, and formative assessments are organized within the textbook; evaluate the feasibility of the textbook as instructional material within the scope of the available analysis; identify the limitations contained within it; and examine its alignment with the curriculum orientation underlying its development. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to discussions on the evaluation and characteristics of Arabic language instructional materials at the elementary education level through an integrated mapping of pedagogical components. Practically, the findings may serve as a reference for teachers to use textbooks more effectively, for instructional material developers to improve elements that support independent learning, and for future researchers to design more comprehensive textbook evaluations by triangulating documents, teacher perspectives, student experiences, and learning outcome measurements.

B. Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design to identify, describe, and interpret the pedagogical characteristics of the 2020 Grade V Arabic language textbook for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) published by the

Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The selection of a qualitative approach was based on the nature of the research data, which consists of texts, material structures, learning activities, illustrations, and evaluation instruments contained within the textbook, rather than numerical data or measurements of students' learning outcomes. In qualitative research, researchers understand a phenomenon through in-depth interpretation of data within its natural context; therefore, this approach is appropriate for revealing how textbook components are organized and function pedagogically (Creswell & Poth, 2016). More specifically, this study employed library research and content analysis as its primary strategies. Content analysis was selected because it enables researchers to systematically examine the characteristics of messages, structures, categories, and meanings contained within a document (Krippendorff, 2018), while document analysis is relevant when written documents serve as the primary source for understanding the phenomenon under investigation (Bowen, 2009).

The primary data source of this study was the Buku Ajar Bahasa Arab Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Kelas V textbook, published by the Directorate of Madrasah KSKK, Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2020 and authored by Ahmad Zamroni. The textbook was developed to implement Minister of Religious Affairs Decree (KMA) Number 183 of 2019 concerning the Curriculum of Islamic Religious Education and Arabic Language in Madrasahs. The textbook consists of 84 pages and six chapters, with three chapters allocated for the first semester and three chapters for the second semester. All sections of the textbook were treated as the corpus, or research unit, because this study aimed not to compare multiple textbooks but to gain an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of a specific textbook. Therefore, this study did not involve human populations, respondents, informants, or students as samples; consequently, it did not use probability or non-probability sampling techniques involving individuals. The textbook selection was purposive, based on its direct relevance to the research focus: the official Grade V MI Arabic textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2020 and used to implement the madrasah curriculum. Secondary data sources included journal articles, academic books, policy documents, and other relevant literature used to support the explanation and interpretation of findings from the primary source, as established in the original research design.

Data collection was conducted through document and literature reviews. In qualitative document analysis, researchers do not treat documents as passive sources of information; instead, they systematically examine them to identify data relevant to the research questions (Bowen, 2009). In accordance with the focus of this article, the analysis was directed toward components that are explicitly contained within the textbook, including textbook usage instructions, learning activity patterns, linguistic elements, the integration of listening (*istimā'*), speaking (*kalām*), reading (*qirā'ah*), and writing (*kitābah*) skills, content frameworks, the use of images and illustrations, and formative evaluation forms. The investigation also identified supporting components that were either available or unavailable in the textbook. The documentation process involved thoroughly reading the textbook, marking sections relevant to the research objectives, categorizing information by characteristics, and recording textual and visual evidence for each category. This approach aligns with the principle that document analysis involves skimming, in-depth reading, and interpretation of the materials examined (Bowen,

2009). Secondary literature was then used as a conceptual framework to explain the pedagogical functions of the identified components, rather than as a substitute for or source of findings about the textbook itself.

Data analysis used qualitative content analysis, with the textbook as the primary unit of analysis. Following the principles of content analysis proposed by Krippendorff (2018) and qualitative data processing by Miles, Huberman & Saldaña (2014), the analytical procedures were operationalized through several interconnected processes: determining analysis units, recording data, categorizing or reducing data, interpreting, and drawing conclusions. In the first stage, the researchers identified units directly related to the characteristics of instructional materials. The researchers then classified the data based on patterns emerging from the textbook. Based on the research corpus, the identified analytical categories included (1) textbook usage instructions, (2) learning activities, (3) content framework, (4) images and illustrations, and (5) formative evaluation. The subsequent analysis examined how each category contributed to organizing Arabic language learning and integrating the four language skills. In the next stage, the researchers also recorded components not found in the textbook, which, based on the research findings, included material summaries, answer keys, and a dictionary/glossary. After establishing the categories, the researchers interpreted each finding by comparing it with relevant theories of instructional materials and previous studies. Thus, the analytical process moved from evidence in the document to categorization and interpretation, ensuring the conclusions remained grounded in the analyzed textbook data rather than external assumptions.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the study applied the principles of trustworthiness in qualitative research by considering credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this document-based study, credibility was strengthened by repeatedly examining the entire textbook and comparing primary findings with relevant academic literature and curriculum regulations; thus, interpretations were not based solely on isolated excerpts. Dependability was maintained by consistently applying analytical categories across sections of the textbook, ensuring the same criteria were used when examining usage instructions, learning activities, illustrations, and evaluations. Meanwhile, confirmability was strengthened by linking each interpretation to traceable evidence in the primary document and clearly distinguishing factual findings from the textbook from theoretical explanations drawn from the literature. This strategy aligns with the concept of an audit trail in qualitative research, which emphasizes transparency about data sources, categorization processes, and the basis for conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles et al., 2020). Since this study did not involve human participants as research subjects, it does not have a field research location (research locus) in terms of geographical setting, respondent population, or individual samples. The analytical locus of this study is the 2020 Grade V MI Arabic textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This research design aligns with the article's objectives and does not alter the data or findings obtained from the research object.

C. Findings and Discussion

Pedagogical Structure and Organization of the Arabic Textbook

The analysis findings indicate that the Bahasa Arab Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Kelas V textbook, published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of

Indonesia in 2020, has a systematically structured, gradual learning framework. The textbook was authored by Ahmad Zamroni and published by the Directorate of Madrasah KSKK, Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, as one of the instructional resources supporting the implementation of Minister of Religious Affairs Decree (KMA) Number 183 of 2019 concerning the Curriculum of Islamic Religious Education and Arabic Language in Madrasahs. Physically, the textbook has 84 pages divided into six chapters, with three chapters for the first semester and three for the second semester. This structure shows that the materials are not presented as isolated collections of vocabulary or grammatical rules but are organized into learning units with sequential activities. The textbook usage guidelines state that the materials and exercises are developed based on genre-based, communicative, and scientific approaches. The four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—receive continuous attention, alongside linguistic elements such as vocabulary (*mufradāt*) and sentence structures (*tarākīb*).

Table 1. General Profile of the Analyzed Textbook

Aspect	Findings
Title/level	<i>Bahasa Arab Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Kelas V</i>
Author	Ahmad Zamroni
Publisher	Directorate of Madrasah KSKK, Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia
Publication year	2020
Curriculum reference	KMA No. 183 of 2019
Number of pages	84 pages
Number of chapters	6 chapters
Semester distribution	3 chapters in the first semester and 3 chapters in the second semester
Main language elements	<i>Mufradāt</i> and <i>tarākīb</i>
Language skills	<i>Istimā'</i> , <i>kalām</i> , <i>qirā'ah</i> , and <i>kitābah</i>
Stated instructional orientation	Genre-based, communicative, and scientific approaches

Source: Content analysis of the Arabic textbook examined in this study.



Figure 1. Textbook Cover/Profile

The most prominent findings are observed in the organization of learning activities. Each unit does not immediately place students in complex language-production tasks; instead, it progresses through four relatively sequential activities. The first activity functions as an introductory stage to the learning theme. At this stage, students are presented with simple texts in the form of dialogues (*ḥiwār*) or short readings (*naṣṣ*). These texts provide contexts for introducing new vocabulary, ensuring that *mufradāt* are not presented as isolated word lists. Images also accompany the vocabulary items to help clarify meanings. After introducing vocabulary, the textbook provides *mufradāt* exercises, *tarākīb* materials, and listening activities. The textbook presents sentence structures as functional grammar within sentence contexts and, based on the description, may introduce them through either inductive or deductive approaches. Meanwhile, several *istimā'* exercises are supported by visual illustrations. Thus, the initial unit connects lexical, grammatical, visual, and receptive skill aspects within an integrated sequence of learning activities.

The second activity shifts the focus from language introduction toward reading comprehension. Students must understand and analyze texts using the vocabulary introduced in the first activity. The exercises provided at this stage include question-and-answer activities, fill-in-the-blank tasks, true-or-false identification, and correction of inaccurate statements. Therefore, *qirā'ah* is not positioned merely as an activity of reading written texts aloud but is associated with comprehension of textual content. The third activity subsequently focuses on collective language production. Students engage in verbal practices through paired question-and-answer exercises and simple dialogues. This finding indicates a shift in students' roles from recipients of linguistic input toward language users through interaction with other learners. Some activities at this stage may also focus on collaborative writing. This structure demonstrates the connection between linguistic input in the first stage, comprehension in the second stage, and oral production in the third stage.

The fourth activity represents a more individualized production stage. At this stage, students engage in *kitābah* exercises, beginning with writing letters into words and then arranging words into sentences. The textbook also includes translation exercises from Arabic into Indonesian and vice versa. In addition, students are required to produce written and spoken language through picture descriptions and stimulus-based questions. These findings indicate that writing activities go beyond copying exercises and progress toward word formation, sentence construction, translation, and description. Some exercises also provide opportunities for individual oral production. The overall pattern of activities can be summarized as a progression from input introduction → comprehension → guided collective production → individual production. This pattern reflects the textbook's activity structure; this study does not experimentally test whether this sequencing improves students' language proficiency.

Table 2. Sequence of Learning Activities and Language Components

Learning stage	Main activities found in the textbook	Language component/skill	Mode of participation
Al-Nashāt 1	Short dialogue/text, introduction of vocabulary, vocabulary	Mufradāt, tarākīb, istimā'	Introductory/guided

	exercises, grammar, listening activities		
Al-Nashāt 2	Reading text, question-answer activities, fill-in exercises, true-false analysis and correction	Qirā'ah and reading comprehension	Guided comprehension
Al-Nashāt 3	Pair questions and answers, simple dialogue, verbal demonstrations; some collective writing	Kalām, with possible kitābah integration	Pair/collective
Al-Nashāt 4	Writing letters, words and sentences, translation, picture description, stimulated oral/written production	Kitābah and possible individual kalām	Individual production

Source: Content analysis of learning activities in the textbook.

In addition to these activities, the textbook provides a content framework presented in the form of a diagram.



Figure 2. Content Framework Diagram

From a documentary perspective, the content framework distinguishes this textbook from materials presented only in a linear sequence. Students are given an overview of the components of the learning materials and the relationships among them before or during each unit. Since this study is limited to document analysis, the findings that can be confirmed are the existence and structural function explicitly presented by the textbook, rather than empirically measured improvements in concentration or learner autonomy.

Visual Support, Formative Assessment, and Missing Learning-Support Components

The textbook presents images related to vocabulary, themes, and learning activities. These images appear alongside vocabulary items and learning topics so students do not get information solely from Arabic texts. The analysis also shows that visual media are primarily utilized when students engage with vocabulary, tarākīb, qirā'ah, and descriptive exercises. Therefore, images represent an integrated component of the learning activities rather than merely decorative elements on the pages. However, it is important to limit the conclusions to the available evidence. Document analysis confirms that images are present and used

as supporting elements in material delivery. However, this study did not collect experimental data, interviews, or learning outcome assessments to demonstrate that such images directly improve students' retention or achievement. Therefore, the effectiveness of visual media in this research context is a pedagogical interpretation that should be discussed through relevant literature rather than a causal finding derived from research data.



Figure 3. Examples of Images and Illustrations in the Learning Materials

Another identified characteristic is the presence of formative assessment. The textbook includes exercises after or within the sequence of learning activities to check students' understanding before moving on to subsequent content. These assessment activities connect to previously completed learning tasks and help check students' mastery of the material within each unit. The presence of formative assessment is an important finding because it shows that the textbook's organization includes not only input and practice activities but also a stage for monitoring comprehension. However, this study does not evaluate the quality of each assessment item in terms of difficulty level, construct validity, discrimination index, or cognitive domain distribution. Therefore, the findings can only indicate that formative assessment components exist and form part of the learning structure. In contrast, this study does not address psychometric quality or its impact on learning outcomes.



Figure 4. Example of Formative Assessment

In addition to the available components, the analysis identified three components not found in the textbook: material summaries, answer keys, and a dictionary/glossary. First, each unit does not provide a specific summary that consolidates the vocabulary, structures, or main ideas learned. Second, the textbook exercises are not accompanied by answer keys that would enable students to check their work independently. Third, the study found no dedicated dictionary or glossary at the end or in other sections of the textbook that compiles vocabulary items and their meanings. These three absences are documentary findings and should be distinguished from conclusions about their impacts. This study does not examine whether students using the textbook experience difficulties because of the absence of these components; the only factual conclusion is that these components are unavailable in the analyzed textbook.

Table 3. Summary of Major Findings on Textbook Components

Textbook component	Status	Evidence from content analysis	Analytical significance
Instructional guidelines	Available	Explains genre-based, communicative, and scientific orientations	Provides instructional direction
Vocabulary	Available	Integrated with themes, sentences, exercises, and images	Supports lexical input
Grammar (<i>tarākīb</i>)	Available	Presented functionally in sentence contexts	Connects form with language use
Listening	Available	Included in learning activities, some supported by images	Represents receptive oral skill
Reading	Available	Text comprehension, questions, fill-in, true-false/correction	Represents receptive written skill
Speaking	Available	Pair questions, dialogue, collective and individual production	Represents productive oral skill
Writing	Available	Letters → words → sentences, translation and picture description	Represents productive written skill
Content framework	Available	Diagram showing relationships among lesson components	Makes lesson organization explicit
Images/illustrations	Available	Used in vocabulary and several learning tasks	Visual support for the material
Formative evaluation	Available	Exercises used to examine understanding during the learning sequence	Provides an assessment component
Chapter/material summary	Not found	No dedicated summary identified	A review component is absent

Answer key	Not found	Exercises are not accompanied by an answer key	Independent verification facility is absent
Dictionary/glossary	Not found	No consolidated lexical reference identified	Additional lexical reference is absent

Source: Authors' content analysis. No numerical score was assigned because the original study did not employ a quantitative textbook-rating instrument.

Overall, these two groups of findings address the research objectives in two directions. First, the textbook demonstrates pedagogical characteristics, including usage instructions, a sequence of learning activities, the integration of mufradāt and tarākīb, the four language skills, a content framework, visual support, and formative assessment. Second, the analysis identified three missing supporting components: summaries, answer keys, and a dictionary/glossary. These findings align with the study's original conclusion that the textbook generally provides a structure that supports Arabic language learning but still lacks several areas that could be further strengthened.

The findings on how learning activities progress from language introduction to language use show that the textbook is not constructed merely to transmit grammatical knowledge. The sequence of mufradāt-tarākīb-istimā'-qirā'ah-kalām-kitābah indicates an effort to integrate linguistic elements with receptive and productive skills. From an instructional material development perspective, this organization aligns with the principle that language materials should provide meaningful input while also giving learners opportunities to use the language through various activities (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). Ilyas & Sulkifli, (2022) further emphasize that Arabic language instructional materials should be systematically organized around learning objectives, students' needs, materials, activities, and assessment. The present study demonstrates this principle in the Grade V MI textbook: vocabulary is introduced through contextualized materials, then applied in reading comprehension activities, followed by productive language practices. Importantly, this study does not experimentally verify the effectiveness of this sequencing; rather, it identifies how this learning architecture is represented in the document.

The integration of the four language skills also intersects with Wicaksono et al. (2022), who studied the Grade XI Arabic textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs for Madrasah Aliyah. Their study found that one of the criteria for effective Arabic language instructional materials from the perspective of Abdurrahman Ibrahim Al-Fauzan is the integration of linguistic components with the skills of istimā', kalām, qirā'ah, and kitābah. The present study reveals a similar pattern at a lower educational level, but with a structure explicitly divided into four gradual learning activities. The difference lies in the analytical focus: Wicaksono et al. (2022) evaluated qirā'ah materials using Al-Fauzan's framework in a Grade XI MA textbook, whereas this study maps the overall characteristics of the Grade V MI textbook, including activity structures, visual elements, evaluation components, and missing supporting components. Therefore, this study does not duplicate the Al-Fauzan-based evaluation approach; instead, it expands the discussion of how skill integration is realized within the organization of instructional materials at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level.

These findings also differ methodologically from Salamah (2023), which evaluated an Arabic textbook for Grade V MI authored by Agus Wahyudi using indicators of content feasibility, presentation, language, and graphic aspects, and produced quantitative scores for each aspect. Salamah reported an overall feasibility score of 86.18% and categorized the analyzed textbook as "highly feasible." This study does not produce feasibility percentages because the object, instruments, and analytical procedures used are different. Therefore, assigning scores or percentage-based categories to the 2020 Ministry of Religious Affairs textbook based on this study's data would not be methodologically justified. Khaliza (2023) also employed BSNP dimensions to evaluate Arabic textbooks at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level and generated scores for content feasibility, presentation, language, and graphical aspects. Compared with these two studies, the present research is more descriptive and structural. Rather than determining textbook feasibility through numerical scores, it explains how pedagogical elements are organized and identifies which components are available and unavailable.

The findings on images and illustrations can be interpreted through multimedia learning theory; however, this interpretation must be limited by the research design. Mayer (2021) explains that learning may benefit when words and visual representations are organized in a relevant manner without excessively burdening cognitive processing. In the context of Arabic language learning, Hilmi (2017) reported the usefulness of visual media in supporting the learning process, while Furoidah (2020) positioned instructional media as an important component in delivering Arabic language materials. The Grade V MI textbook examined in this study shows characteristics consistent with these perspectives because it integrates images with vocabulary items and uses them in several learning exercises. Nevertheless, the findings of the present study only indicate the availability and pedagogical positioning of images. No pre-test–post-test data, classroom observations, or student perceptions were collected to support claims that illustrations directly caused improvements in comprehension. Therefore, a more academically appropriate formulation is that the textbook's visual design has the potential to support meaning-making and contextualization processes, rather than claiming this study empirically proved its effectiveness.

Formative assessment is another important aspect. Black & Wiliam (2009) explain that assessment becomes formative when teachers use evidence of learning to adjust instruction and address students' needs more effectively. In the analyzed textbook, exercises appear in the learning sequence to check students' mastery of the material before they move on to later sections. This structure is consistent, at the design level, with the concept of assessment conducted during the learning process. However, the full effectiveness of formative assessment in classroom practice depends on how teachers and students utilize the results of these exercises. Magdalena et al. (2020) also emphasize formative assessment as a source of information for improving the learning process. Because this study does not include implementation observations, it cannot be determined whether teachers actually use the exercise results to provide follow-up activities, remediation, or instructional adjustments. Therefore, the findings confirm the existence of a formative design, but not the effectiveness of its implementation.

The absence of answer keys matters when formative assessment is viewed through the lens of independent learning. Without answer keys, students lack an

internal textbook resource to compare their responses directly with the expected answers. This does not mean the exercises become ineffective, as teachers can still provide corrections and feedback; however, the textbook itself cannot provide a self-checking mechanism. Within the framework of formative assessment, feedback helps learners understand their position relative to learning objectives and determine their next learning steps (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Therefore, the findings support the proposition that the textbook includes formative assessment, while the facilities that could strengthen its independent use remain incomplete. This interpretation should be understood at the level of instructional material design, as the present study does not measure students' levels of learning autonomy.

The absence of a dictionary or glossary is also relevant to the characteristics of Arabic language learning at the elementary level. Vocabulary represents one of the dominant elements in the initial stages of each lesson and is subsequently reused in reading, speaking, and writing activities. Literature on vocabulary acquisition indicates that learners require repeated exposure, connections between form and meaning, and opportunities to use words across various contexts (Nation, 2022). In the context of Arabic language learning in Indonesia, Karomah et al. (2022) showed that dictionaries can serve as learning media that help learners understand word meanings and support language competency development. Therefore, the absence of a glossary in this textbook represents a relevant design gap, particularly because *mufradāt* constitutes a central component of the textbook. Nevertheless, this study does not show that every student needs the same level of glossary support or that its absence reduces learning outcomes; rather, the finding is better interpreted as the absence of a form of referential support that could facilitate independent learning.

The same consideration applies to the absence of summaries. Summaries at the end of each unit can function to reorganize key information and provide reference points when learners conduct review activities. In instructional material development, repetition and reconnection with previously learned material matter because language acquisition requires opportunities to revisit and use linguistic elements across contexts (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). The analyzed textbook provides indirect reinforcement through vocabulary reuse in subsequent activities; however, it does not include a dedicated section that summarizes each unit. Thus, this limitation does not mean the textbook completely lacks reinforcement processes, but rather that we did not identify reinforcement through explicit summaries. This distinction matters to ensure interpretations of the findings do not exceed the available evidence.

In relation to the research propositions, the documentary analysis results confirm the first proposition: the textbook has a relatively systematic pedagogical organization and supports the use of the four language skills. Evidence supporting this proposition appears in the four activity sequences, the integration of *mufradāt* and *tarākīb*, receptive and productive skills, the use of visual media, and formative assessment. The second proposition, which states that support for independent learning is not yet fully complete, is also supported at the textbook-structure level because the study did not identify summaries, answer keys, or a dictionary/glossary. However, these two propositions should not be translated into claims about improvements or declines in learning outcomes because this study did not measure students' performance. In other words, what is supported is

a proposition regarding the characteristics of textbook design, rather than a causal hypothesis concerning learning effectiveness.

Several factors may explain these findings. First, the textbook was explicitly developed within the context of implementing KMA Number 183 of 2019; therefore, the structure of competencies, materials, and activities cannot be separated from the curriculum framework underlying its development. Second, its status as a student textbook may explain the strong emphasis on activities that direct learners toward language practice and production. However, this study cannot confirm whether answer keys or certain explanations are intentionally provided in other sources, such as a teacher's book, because the research corpus was limited to the Grade V student textbook. Therefore, the absence of a particular component should be formulated as "not found in the analyzed student textbook," rather than as a statement that the component is unavailable throughout the entire instructional material ecosystem of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

This study has several limitations. First, the unit of analysis consists of only one textbook; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all Arabic language textbooks for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, whether published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs or other publishers. Second, as a document-based study, it does not involve teachers, students, curriculum developers, or textbook authors; consequently, it cannot explain how the materials are implemented and perceived in actual classroom practices. Third, no learning outcome data were available to examine the relationship between textbook characteristics and the development of students' language skills. Fourth, the original study did not use quantitative instruments such as BSNP standards or generate feasibility scores; therefore, its findings cannot be meaningfully compared numerically with studies by Salamah (2023) or Khaliza (2023). Fifth, if an inter-coder agreement procedure or analysis by more than one evaluator was not conducted in the original study, this limitation should be reported transparently because consistency in categorization is an important aspect of content analysis. Future research may address these limitations by combining document analysis with classroom observations, teacher and student interviews, expert evaluations, textbook assessment instruments based on established standards, and measurements of learning outcomes.

More broadly, this study contributes an overview of the pedagogical architecture of the 2020 Grade V MI Arabic textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Previous studies have provided important information regarding content and graphical feasibility (Khaliza, 2023; Salamah, 2023) as well as specific criteria for qirā'ah materials (Wicaksono et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the present study demonstrates the interconnectedness between usage instructions, the sequence of four activities, linguistic components, the four language skills, visual representation, and assessment, while also identifying three forms of unavailable support. The practical contribution of these findings is not to replace the existing textbook but to provide a basis for teachers to make adaptations, such as preparing additional summaries, controlled answer-checking sheets, or glossaries according to students' needs. For instructional material developers, these findings may serve as an evaluation point when revising or designing future textbooks. For academic research, the results highlight the need to move beyond simple questions about whether a component "exists or does not exist" and instead investigate how each component interacts with actual learning processes and students' language achievements.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the Bahasa Arab Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Kelas V textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2020 shows relatively systematic pedagogical characteristics that support Arabic language learning at the elementary education level. Content analysis indicates that the textbook contains usage instructions, a gradual organization of learning activities, the integration of linguistic elements in the form of mufradāt and tarākīb, the development of four language skills—istimā', kalām, qirā'ah, and kitābah—as well as the use of content frameworks, images and illustrations, and formative assessment as components of its learning structure. The sequence of activities, progressing from vocabulary and structural introduction, text comprehension, collective language production, to individual oral and written production, shows that the textbook is not solely oriented toward mastery of linguistic elements but also guides students toward gradual, contextual language use. Therefore, the research objectives formulated in the introduction—to identify characteristics, examine learning organization, qualitatively evaluate the textbook, and identify its limitations—have been addressed through the findings and discussion. At the same time, the study identified three supporting components missing from the textbook: material summaries, answer keys, and a dictionary/glossary. Consequently, support for review activities, self-assessment, and vocabulary enrichment can still be strengthened. These findings extend previous research on Arabic textbook evaluation by positioning activity structures, skill integration, visual support, formative assessment, and the completeness of learning-support tools within an integrated pedagogical mapping. Furthermore, the findings offer academic implications for instructional material development studies and practical implications for teachers and textbook developers to enrich materials with summaries, controlled answer-checking tools, and glossaries aligned with students' needs. However, because this study used only one textbook as its corpus and did not include classroom observations, teachers, students, or learning outcome measurements, the conclusions are limited to the textbook's design and content. They cannot be used to claim the textbook's causal effectiveness on students' language abilities. Future research should expand these findings through comparative analyses across educational levels or textbooks, expert-based evaluations, classroom implementation observations, teacher and student interviews, and learning outcome measurements to understand better the relationship between instructional material design quality and the effectiveness of Arabic language learning.

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