The Readability Level of Arabic Textbook
"Silsilah Fī Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah"

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ENGLISH ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to know the readability level of textbook "Silsilah Fī Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah: Al-Mustawā Ats-Tsāniy, Al-Qirā`ah", and factors affecting readability level in terms of word class tendencies and linguistic findings. This study also analyzed the level of reading ability of first-semester Arabic students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta and the types of texts recommended for use or further development by other researchers. This research was carried out using descriptive qualitative methods, and data were collected from 83 students who enrolled in the Qirā`ah course. Readability analysis techniques using the Cloze Procedure Test. The research showed that the readability of textbooks was 46% at the frustration level and 29% at the moderate level. The tendency of the word class to make errors generally occur in 1) 27% of perfect verbs, 2) 24% of nouns, 3) 16% of imperfect verbs. Other factors are 1) Reader Factor: about 43% of students in the Arabic Language Education Department come from general/vocational high schools, 35% from Islamic high school, and only 22% from Islamic boarding schools; 2) Reading Factor: the textbooks writers from native Arabic speakers generally rely on their experience and culture in presenting the text regardless of readers ability as foreign speakers. 3) Book Factor: this book lacks vocabulary and illustrations in the form of pictures, so that it was less helpful in independent understanding.

Keywords: Readability Level of Textbook, Arabic Reading Skills, Word Class Tendencies

INDONESIAN ABSTRACT

Tujuan dari penelitian ini untuk mengetahui tingkat keterbacaan teks buku ajar "Silsilah Fī Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah: Al-Mustawā Ats-Tsāniy, Al-Qirā`ah", mengetahui faktor tingkat keterbacaan teks ditinjau dari kecenderungan kelas kata dan temuan linguistik.

Penelitian juga menganalisa level kemampuan membaca mahasiswa bahasa Arab semester pertama di Universitas Negeri Jakarta, serta jenis teks yang direkomendasikan untuk digunakan atau dikembangkan oleh peneliti lainnya lebih lanjut. Penelitian dilaksanakan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Data bersumber dari mahasiswa semester pertama yang mengikuti mata kuliah Qirā`ah berjumlah 83 mahasiswa dengan teknik analisis keterbacaan menggunakan Cloze Procedure Test. Penelitian menghasilkan tingkat keterbacaan buku teks 46% berada pada level frustasi dan 29% pada level sedang. Kecenderungan kelas kata yang menjadi kesalahan umumnya terjadi pada 1) 27% verba perfek (fi'il mādhi), 2) 24% nomina (ism), 3) 16% verba imperfek (fi'il mudhāri'). Faktor lainnya yaitu 1) Faktor Pembaca, mayoritas input mahasiswa ke program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab 43% dari Sekolah Menengah Umum/Kejuruan; 35% dari Madrasah Aliyah; dan hanya 22% yang berasal dari Pondok Pesantren. 2) Faktor Bacaan, tim penulis buku teks dari penutur asli bahasa Arab umumnya mengandalkan pengalaman, penilaian dan budaya mereka dalam menyajikan teks tanpa melihat kemampuan para pembacanya sebagai penutur asing. Hasil penelitiannya juga menunjukkan rendahnya tingkat keterbacaan buku teks karena kelangkaan pilihan buku teks dari negara Arab. 3) Faktor Buku Bacaan, buku ini minim dalam hal kosakata dan ilustrasi berbentuk gambar sehingga kurang membantu dalam pemahaman mandiri.

Kata kunci: Keterbacaan Teks Buku Ajar, Kemampuan Membaca, Kecenderungan Kelas Kata

Introduction

Reading is an essential part of the learning process; when students move from elementary school to high school, then to college, students switch from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" (Herman, Perkins, Hansen, Gomez, & Gomez, 2010). In universities, especially those taking foreign language Departments such as Arabic, in courses that focus on Arabic reading skills, students will start over from "learning to read" Arabic script and gradually move up to the level of "reading to learn".

When the lecturer wants to determine a text as teaching material, a significant concern is the suitability of the text's readability level (Daud, Hassan, & Aziz, 2013). In specific courses on Arabic reading skills (*Qirā`ah*), text selection is as important as determining learning components such as approaches, methods, and learning strategies used by lecturers in the classroom. In several Arabic Language Education Departments in Indonesia, the lecture process for the *Qirā`ah* course for the first semester is very focused on reading techniques, reading content understanding, and interpretation of reading texts in Arabic. Learning takes place by increasing reading exercises, understanding texts, and interpreting texts.

Like learning other foreign languages, Indonesian students' reading and studying Arabic texts has several phonologies, morphology, and grammar difficulties. At the phonological level, the difficulty that occurs is in the pronunciation of the letters such as ق ظ ط ض ص غ ع (', ġ, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ẓ, q) or *'ayn, ġayn, ṣād, ḍād, ṭā', ẓā', qāf*, because almost

every language in the world does not have phonemes and symbols like this (S. Alenazi, 2018). At the morphological level, one of the problems is the difficulty distinguishing the root of the word and the source of the verb. The source of Arabic verbs consists of three acoustic letters. If a student wants to look up a foreign word in the Arabic dictionary, he needs to know the root and source of the word he wants to look for. Moreover, one word can have many meanings, so in finding meaning, the use of an Arabic dictionary depends on the root word and derivatives of the root word (Dajani, Mubaideen, & Omari, 2014).

In determining textbooks, the text is easy to understand if the text's language follows the development of the reader's cognition (Andriana, 2012). Not only text in Indonesian, but also in text in foreign languages such as Arabic, the structure of the language greatly affects the level of readability of its contents. This does not mean limiting the transmission of knowledge to students, but the structure of the language should be adapted to the cognition and ability of the reader, especially for first-semester students. This language structure affects the readability of the text, which directly leads to an effective learning process, and contributes to learning motivation.

Most lecturers determine the text from existing textbooks, and popular teaching materials are certainly more of an option. Several techniques can be applied to determine the level of readability of a text, either using formulas, applications or tested directly to the reader. The readability test is carried out to calculate and estimate the readability level of a text. This test is widely used in education to develop language teaching materials, select appropriate test books, select reading materials, and assess the level of difficulty of the texts used in language tests (Daud et al., 2013).

Many experts have offered readability tests using formulas. The readability formula developed by these experts can predict whether a reading material will be more difficult or more accessible for readers to understand when compared to other reading material. For example, Flog and Flesch, Automatic Arabic Readability Index (Al-Tamimi, Jaradat, Aljarrah, & Ghanim, 2014), and Dawood formula (Halim, Alias, Othman, Suhane,

& Salleh, 2017). These formulas offer readability tests based on average word length, average sentence length, word frequency, percentage of nominal clauses, and definite nouns. Although these formulas are specifically designed for Arabic, sometimes the length of the sentence does not necessarily indicate the difficulty of the word to understand. Even short words make the text difficult to read.

In addition to the above formulas and applications, which are specific and limited to a particular language, Taylor offers the Cloze Procedure Test. This technique was initially invented by a German scholar named Ebbinghaus in 1897 and was given the name Ebbinghaus Sentence Completion Method. This technique became popular when Wilson Taylor introduced it as a readability measurement tool in 1953. His article entitled *Cloze Procedure: A New Tool for Measuring Readability* was published in Quarterly Journal (1953). This procedure can even be used in all foreign languages by testing directly with readers. Previous studies still show that the Cloze Procedure Test remains the most dominant and good instrument in determining the level of readability of Arabic texts (Hassan, 2002). This statement is reinforced by the results of face-to-face interviews with three experts on the legibility of Arabic texts, namely Toiemah (1978), Yunus (1987), dan Ghani (2010) who gave positive testimony about the suitability of the Cloze Procedure Test as an instrument, especially among non-native Arabic speakers. Researchers in several Arab countries also use the Cloze Procedure Test to analyze Arabic writing variations (Albadi, O'toole, & Harkins, 2017).

Students difficulties in understanding what they read in books emerged as a well-documented problem for researchers to deal with. These difficulties do not only arise from differences in the level of students ability to understand the text but also arise from the characteristics of the text itself (Albadi et al., 2017). *"Text is more than words, sentences, and paragraphs, but they are the basis for the complex meanings that purposeful readers build"* (O'Toole & King, 2011).

Based on the opinion above, the readability index strongly relates to reading comprehension results (KN, Made, & Nengah, 2013). Research on the suitability of cognition and the level of Arabic reading materials for non-native speakers in Indonesia has been widely carried out. Erlina (2018) mentions that the low ability to understand the rules is a source of learning problems and other knowledge, especially when there is heterogeneity in student backgrounds and a lack of basic knowledge of the Arabic

language. And Salah (2008) mentions that vocabulary, word structure and culture factors cause the low readability of the text.

In this study, the readability test was carried out on the book *"Silsilah Fī Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah: Al-Mustawā Ats-Tsāniy, Al-Qirā`ah"* which was studied in Arabic Language Education for the first semester at Universitas Negeri Jakarta. The teaching materials come from King Saud University Riyadh, a country where native speakers are. Tawfiq & Al-khaza (2021) mention that a team of native Arabic-speaking textbook writers generally relies on their experience, judgment, and culture to present texts regardless of the readers' abilities. The research also shows that the low level of readability of textbooks is not due to academic achievement but the scarcity of textbooks from Arabic.

It is essential to do a readability test, considering that difficulties hinder the ability and understanding of first-semester students. The predictions obtained from the readability test on the teaching material are used to determine the level of cognition with the level of reading. This prediction is also used to determine or select reading material that follows the understanding ability of a certain level of readers. Thus, a readability test is carried out to determine the level of readability of a text and to prepare an effective reading learning process.

Based on the description above, this research was conducted to: 1) test the level of readability of the text of the *"Silsilah Fī Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah: Al-Mustawā Ats-Tsāniy, Al-Qirā`ah"* teaching material; 2) describe the tendency of word class as the cause of the low level of text readability for first semester students, and 3) analyze linguistic findings and can explain the low readability of the text.

Methods

The method used was descriptive qualitative, collecting descriptive data by direct observation. Descriptive qualitative research aims to discover phenomena that exist in natural conditions, not in created and controlled conditions, laboratories or experiments.

The data were obtained from respondents, in the form of: 1) the answers of the first semester students obtained from the Cloze Procedure Test readability test in the *"Silsilah Fī Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah: Al-Mustawā Ats-Tsāniy, Al-Qirā`ah"* textbook, 2) the results of the analysis of word-class tendencies and linguistic findings on students

answers. The data came from all first-semester students, 83 students from the Arabic Language Education Department at Universitas Negeri Jakarta.

Due to the research conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic and the entire learning process being held online, data collection could not be done face-to-face. The data collection technique was done online using Google Form by presenting text in Cloze, which was the text that was not complete/there were meaningless sentences, and students answered the blanks with their understanding. The answers presented were multiple-choice, considering that the first semester students were not yet skilled at using the Arabic keyboard, so that it would take time to answer questions that could affect the results of the answers.

The steps for collecting data using the Cloze Procedure Test are as follows: 1) Of the 15 topics, 8 topics were chosen to be tested by considering the length of the topic; 2) Eliminating words in the 5-7th sequence or if the 5-7th words have the same form (*ism, fi'il, harf*), it will be shifted to the next word to get a different word class. Special for conjunctions such as وَ (and), فَ (that; then), ثُمَّ (then; afterward; so), الَّذِي / الَّتِي (that; who) are not counted; 3) In the deleted words, 3-4 answer choices are made, either the original answer, the almost close answer or the wrong answer in terms of inflection and derivation, besides that points are also given to free students in answering.

In measuring the text readability, data analysis was carried out using the exact method scoring technique; namely, the answer is considered correct if it matches the deleted word exactly, and the acceptable method, namely the answer is not too similar but close to the deleted word, then it is considered correct. The scoring results and text readability guidelines are distinguished based on the following (Cunningham & Tierney, 1979) (Widyaningsih & Zuchdi, 2015) :

Table 1. Test Scoring Guidelines for Text Readability

Readability Level	Score	Level	Explanation
High	61% - 100%	Independent	Students can understand the text well, according to their abilities.
Average	41% - 60%	Instructional	Students can understand the text but still need the guidance of the lecturer.

Readability Level	Score	Level	Explanation
Low	0% - 40%	Frustrated	Students have difficulty understanding the text because it is not following their level.

To get the tendency of errors in certain word classes and linguistic findings using the following technique: 1) Presentation compiles and classifies data in groups and detail to provide a complete picture of the research. Patterns and relationships determine this data to draw the correct conclusions. 2) Data reduction is a data analysis process that summarizes the research results and focuses on things researchers consider necessary. Data reduction aims to facilitate understanding of the data collected so that the reduced data provides a more detailed picture. 3) Drawing conclusions is the final stage in the research process to give meaning to the data analyzed.

Text Readability Level of the *"Silsilah Fī Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah: Al-Mustawā Ats-Tsāniy, Al-Qirā`ah"*

Nassiri, Lakhouaja, & Cavalli-Sforza (2018) define readability as several text elements affecting the readers' understanding, reading speed, and interest in reading material. The following is a big picture of the percentage and readability level of the 8 (eight) topics/texts that have been tested on students:

Table 2. Text Readability Percentage and Rate

Sequence of Text	Topic	Readability level			Readability Sequence
		High	Average	Low	
Text 1	سُلَيْمَانُ يَدْرَسُ فِي مَعْهَدِ تَعْلِيْمِ اللُّغَةِ العَرَبِيَّة	22%	45%	33%	5
Text 2	عِنْدَ الطَّبِيْبِ	22%	11%	67%	6
Text 3	فِي السُّوْقِ	43%	14%	43%	1
Text 4	رِحْلَةٌ قَصِيْرَةٌ	19%	36%	45%	7
Text 5	يَوْمٌ فِي حَيَاةِ الطَّالِبِ	40%	20%	40%	2
Text 6	قِيْمَةُ العَمَلِ	29%	29%	42%	3

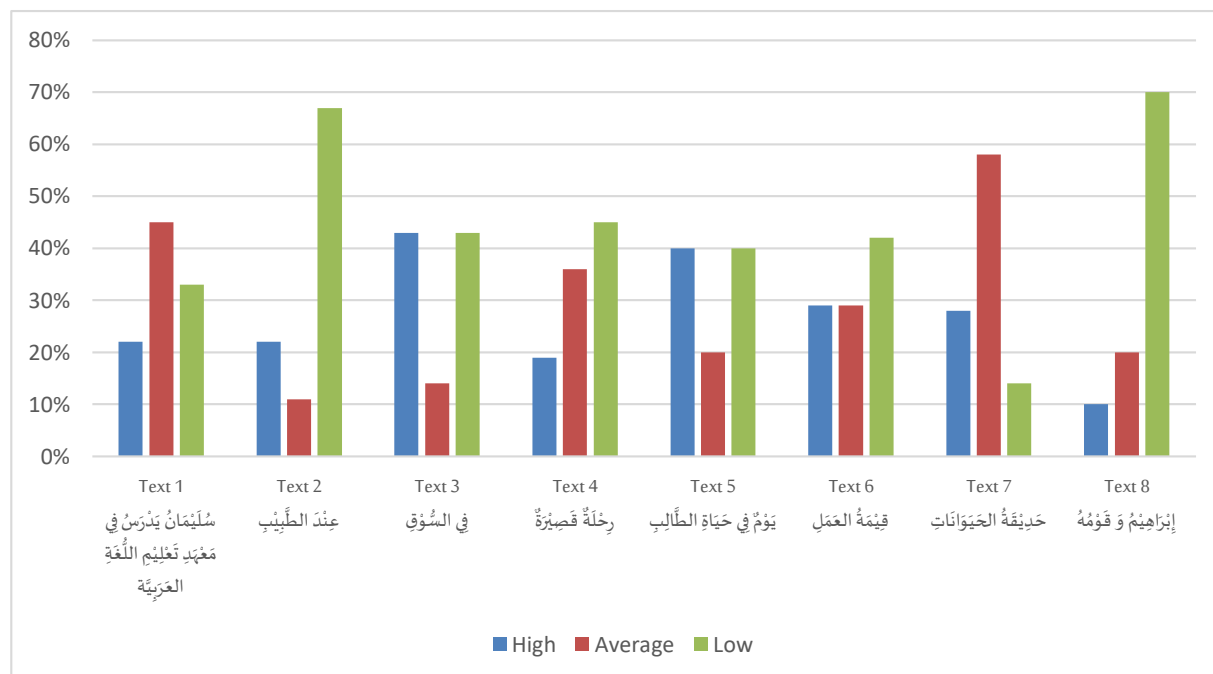| Text 7	حَدِيْقَةُ الحَيَوَانَاتِ	28%	58%	14%	4
Text 8	إِبْرَاهِيْمُ وَ قَوْمُهُ	10%	20%	70%	8
Total		**25%**	**29%**	**46%**	

Figure 1. Text Readability Percentage and Rate

Based on **Table 2** and **Figure 1** above, the level of text readability is generally in the low (46%), average (29%) and high (25%) level. The text with high readability is in the topic of فِي السُّوْقِ and يَوْمٌ فِي حَيَاةِ الطَّالِبِ. In this text, students can understand the text independently, do assignments independently because the level of the text is at the level of ability of first semester students. Medium readability text is on the topic of سُلَيْمَانُ يَدْرَسُ فِي مَعْهَدِ تَعْلِيْمِ اللُّغَةِ العَرَبِيَّة and حَدِيْقَةُ الحَيَوَانَاتِ, at this level students can understand the text but still need the guidance of the lecturer. And the text with low readability is on the topic of إِبْرَاهِيْمُ وَ قَوْمُهُ and عِنْدَ الطَّبِيْبِ، رِحْلَةٌ قَصِيْرَةٌ، قِيْمَةُ العَمَلِ. At this level, the text is confusing

and difficult to understand because it does not follow students' level of cognition and knowledge.

When viewed from the readability of the text, it shows that the text that is easy to read and understand by students starts from the third, fifth, sixth, seventh, one, second, fourth, and eighth text. This shows that reading texts for non-foreign speakers are graded not sequentially according to the degree of readability for second language learners.

The Tendency of Word Class as the Cause of the Low Level of Text Readability

Arabic is part of pure flexion languages, namely languages whose word formation is carried out by declination and conjugation (Amanah, 2010). Declination or also known as *tasrif* (تَصْرِيْفٌ) or change of form is a flexion or change in ending combined to a morpheme and shows a difference in the case, gender, number, and so on. Conjugation or known as *tashrif lughawi* is a change in the form of a verb related to the number, gender, mode, and time in a particular language.

Word classes in Arabic are divided into three groups, namely: (1) اسم/*ism*/noun, (2) فعل/*fi'il*/verb, and (3) حرف/*harf*/particle. Group of اسم/*ism*/noun is a group of words that experience declination, group of فعل/*fi'il*/verb is a group of words that undergo conjugation, whereas حرف/*harf*/particle is a group of words that have never changed form, either declinatively or conjugatively.

The first word-class group is اسم/*ism*/noun divided into 3 (three) categories, namely:

(1) اسم جامد or real nouns, broken down into two groups, namely:

(a) gender nouns like رجل (male) dan مرأة (female);

(b) proper noun like محمد.

(2) اسم مشتق or derivated nouns, broken down into three groups, namely:

a) اسم فاعل or noun as an agent like كاتب (writer)

b) اسم مفعول or noun as patient مكتوب (written)

The two derived nouns come from كتب (has written).

c) اسم صفة or adjective like كبير (big), أكبر (bigger or biggest). This form in Arabic is also known as إسم التفضيل

d) اسم زمن و اسم مكان or noun as temporal and locative like مطلع (time of publication or place of publication)

e) اسم آلة or noun as instrument مفتاح (unlock or lock tool)

f) اسم مصدر or noun deverbals like قتال (murder) from the word قتل, or word نكاح (wedding) from the word نكح

g) عدد/adad/ noun as numbers like وحد (one), ست (six), سادس (the sixth).

(3) اسم ضمير or pronouns, including:

a) ضمير منفصل or personal pronoun like أنت

b) اسم إشارة or demonstrative pronoun like هذه

c) اسم إستفهام or interrogative pronoun like مَن

d) اسم موصول or relative pronoun like الذي

The second-word class group is فعل/fi'il/verb. Based on the time the verbs in Arabic are divided into:

(1) فعل ماضى or perfect verb

(2) فعل مضارع or imperfect verb

(3) فعل الأمر or imperative verb

The third-word class group is حرف/harf/particle including حرف الجر or preposition, حرف العطف or conjunction, and حرف النداء or interjection.

Based on the Arabic word class, the results of the readability test indicate the tendency of students to use specific word classes or word class factors that cause errors/difficulty for the text to be read and understood by students, described in the following percentage:
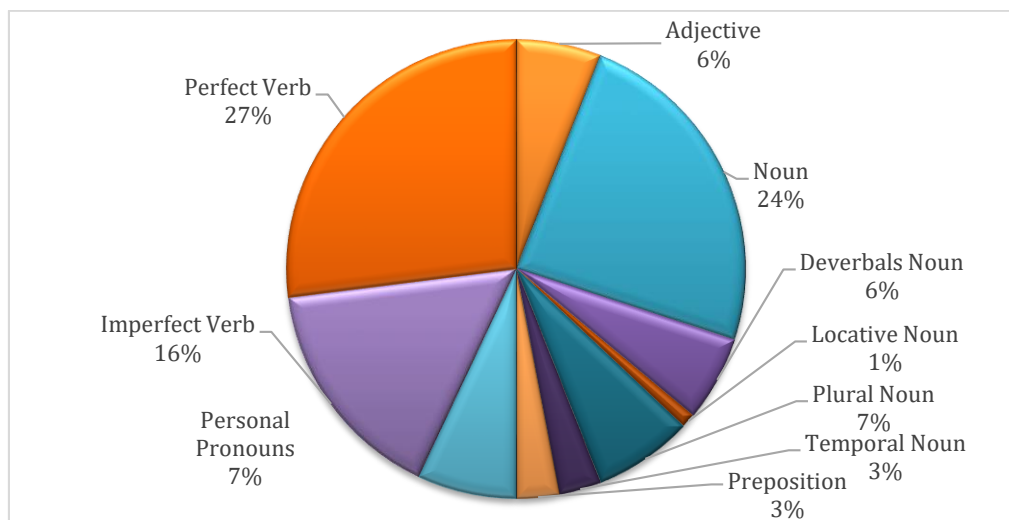

Figure 2. Word Class Tendency Causes Text Comprehension Difficulty

Looking at the chart above, many errors occur in the verb class (verb), both perfect verbs (*fi'il madhi*/past verbs) and imperfect verbs (*fi'il mudhari*/present and future verbs), and in noun class (*ism*). The following is a breakdown of the word class tendency data that causes errors/difficulty in understanding the text based on its readability level.

High Readability Level

In texts with a high level of readability, the tendency of the word class that becomes the highest difficulty and error in understanding the text occurs in nouns (اسم), and noun

deverbal (اسم مصدر).

Table 3. Word Class Errors in High Readability Text

No	% Readability	The Tendency of the Word Class That Becomes an Error
1	22%	Noun
2	22%	Deverbals Noun

3	19%	Temporal Noun
4	19%	Imperfect Verbs
5	18%	Perfect Verbs

In the noun class (اسم), errors generally occur in the choice of vocabulary. This is normal for beginner-level students (first semester). This problem can be corrected by increasing the knowledge of vocabulary. Here is an example of the error.

Table 4. Examples of Errors in Noun Class

Topic	Right Text	Wrong Answer
إِبْرَاهِيْمُ وَ قَوْمُهُ	فَأَخَذَ **فَأْسًا** وَ كَسَّرَ بِهَا الأَصْنَامَ، وَ تَرَكَ الصَّنَمَ الكَبِيْرِ *Then Ibrahim took an **axe** and used it to destroy the idols, then he left one of the biggest idols*	فَأَخَذَ **عَصًا** وَ كَسَّرَ بِهَا الأَصْنَامَ، وَ تَرَكَ الصَّنَمَ الكَبِيْرِ *Then Ibrahim took a **stick** and used it to destroy the idols, then he left one of the biggest idols*
حَدِيْقَةُ الحَيَوَانَات	وَفِيْهَا حَيَوَانَاتٌ مُفْتَرِسَةٌ كَالتِمساح، وَ النَّمِرِ، وَ الثَّعْلَبِ *Inside there are wild animals such as **crocodiles**, tigers and wolves*	وَفِيْهَا حَيَوَانَاتٌ مُفْتَرِسَةٌ كَالحِصَانِ، وَ النَّمِرِ، وَ الثَّعْلَبِ *Inside there are wild animals such as **horse**, tigers and wolves*

In the noun deverbal word class (اسم مصدر), the error occurs because the formation of the word *mashdar* is not known and studied by students in the first semester. Even though the vocabulary/meaning is correct, most of the students choose the form of the verb, which does not follow the sentence's form. Here is an example of the error:

Table 5. Examples of Errors in Noun Deverba Classes

Topic	Right Text	Wrong Answer
فِي السُّوْقِ	كَانَ السُّوْقُ **مُزْدَحِمًا** *At that time, the market was **crowded***	كَانَ السُّوْقُ **يَزْدَحِمُ** *At that time, the market was **crowded***
رِحْلَةٌ قَصِيْرَةٌ	قَبْلَ **طُلُوْعِ** الشَّمْسِ	قَبْلَ **يَطْلَعُ** الشَّمْسِ

| | *Before **sunrise*** | *Before **sunrise*** |

Average Readability

In texts with average/instructional readability, the tendency of the word class that becomes the most serious difficulty and error in understanding the text occurs in adjectives. (اسم صفة), and perfect verb (فعل ماضى).

Table 6. Word Class Errors in Average Readability Text

No	% Readability	The Tendency of the Word Class That Becomes an Error
1	14%	Personal Pronouns
2	14%	Perfect Verbs
3	13%	Imperfect Verbs
4	13%	Noun
5	12%	Adjective
6	12%	Preposition
7	11%	Locative Noun
8	11%	Plural Noun

In the adjective word class (اسم صفة), errors generally occur in the choice of equivalent words and the formation of plural words. For first-semester students, this error can be said to be natural because they are not used to knowing the equivalent of an adjective with a characteristic and the formation of plural words in the form of plural broken/changed (*jama' taksir*). This obstacle can be corrected with reading habits and practice forming/changing words. Here is an example of the error:

Table 7. Examples of Errors in Adjective Word Class

Topic	Right Text	Wrong Answer

رِحْلَةٌ قَصِيرَةٌ	قَالَ فَهَد : "هَذِهِ فِكْرَةٌ **جَيِّدَةٌ**" *Fahd said: "This is a **great** idea"*	قَالَ فَهَد : "هَذِهِ فِكْرَةٌ **جَمِيْلٌ**" *Fahd said: "This is a **great** idea"*
حَدِيْقَةٌ الْحَيَوَانَات	...... لِيُشَاهِدُوا مَا فِيْهَا مِنْ حَيَوَانَاتٍ وَ طُيُوْرٍ مُخْتَلِفَةِ الأَشْكَالِ وَ الأَنْوَاعِ و **الأَلْوَانِ** *To see in it, animals and birds of various shapes, types, and **colours***	...... لِيُشَاهِدُوا مَا فِيْهَا مِنْ حَيَوَانَاتٍ وَ طُيُوْرٍ مُخْتَلِفَةِ الأَشْكَالِ وَ الأَنْوَاعِ و **اللَّوَانِ** *To see in it, animals and birds of various shapes, types, and **colours**.*

In the perfect verb class (فعل ماضى), the error occurred still in the choice of words in the form of verbs, which was caused by most students not paying close attention to the context in the previous sentence which explained that Ahmad's position at that time was in the dormitory (فَأَعُوْدُ إِلَى المِسْكَنِ). In addition, errors occur in the form of passive sentences (مبني للمجهول), i.e., the subject receives the action of the verb. Both of these obstacles can be corrected with reading habits and practice forming/changing words. Here is an example of the error:

Table 8. Examples of Errors in the Perfect Verb Class

Topic	Right Text	Wrong Answer
يَوْمٌ فِي حَيَاةِ الطَّالِبِ	أَحْيَانًا **ذَهَبْتُ** إِلَى المَعْبَدِ بَعْدَ صَلَاةِ العَصْرِ *Sometimes I **go** to ma'had after the Asr prayer*	أَحْيَانًا **أَرْجِعُ** إِلَى المَعْبَدِ بَعْدَ صَلَاةِ العَصْرِ *Sometimes I **go home** to ma'had after Asr prayer*
إِبْرَاهِيْمُ وَ قَوْمُهُ	وَلَمَّا عَادَ النَّاسُ إِلَى المَعْبَدِ وَ رَأَوْا الأَصْنَامَ قَدْ **كُسِّرَتْ** *And when the people returned to the place of worship, they saw that the idols **had been broken**.*	وَلَمَّا عَادَ النَّاسُ إِلَى المَعْبَدِ، وَ رَأَوْا الأَصْنَامَ قَدْ **تَرَكَتْ** *And when the people returned to the place of worship, they saw that the idols **had been abandoned**.*

Low Readability Level

In texts with moderate/instructional readability, the tendency of the word class that becomes the most significant difficulty and error in understanding the text occurs in plural nouns (اسم جمع), personal pronoun (ضمير منفصل), perfect verb (فعل ماضى) and the imperfect verb (فعل مضارع).

Table 9. Word Class Errors in Low Readability Text

No	% Readability	The Tendency of the Word Class That Becomes an Error
1	17%	Plural Noun
2	14%	Personal Pronouns
3	14%	Perfect Verbs
4	14%	Imperfect Verbs
5	13%	Preposition
6	12%	Temporal Noun
7	11%	Noun
8	5%	Deverba Noun

In the plural noun class (اسم جمع) i.e. a noun that is used to indicate that the object is more than one. If in Indonesian, the plural is done by reduplication (repetition), in English it is done by adding s/es, while in Arabic there are two ways. **First**, the formation of a plural word pattern that is safe (*salim*) from changes, this pattern is seen from the masculine singular form (*mudzakkar*) or feminine (*muannats*); **secondly**, there is no general pattern in specific nouns (*taksir*). Errors generally occur in the second form, namely the plural of *taksir*, the formation of the word into a plural is *sima'i* (based on how native speakers use the word) and there are also specific patterns for its formation. Here is an example of the error:

Table 10. Examples of Errors in Plural Noun Class

Topic	Right Text	Wrong Answer

كَانَ قَوْمُ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَصْنَعُوْنَ التَّمَاثِيْلَ مِنَ الحِجَارَةِ و الأَخْشَاب *Once upon a time, the Abrahamic people of the United States made **statues** of stone and wood*	كَانَ قَوْمُ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَصْنَعُوْنَ الصَّنَمَ مِنَ الحِجَارَةِ و الأَخْشَاب *Once upon a time, the Abrahamic people of the United States made **an idol** out of stones and wood*	إِبْرَاهِيْمُ و قَوْمُهُ
كَمَا شَاهَدَا الطَّيْرِ المُغَرِّدَة *As they both watch the **birds** whistle*	كَمَا شَاهَدَا المُغَنِّي المُغَرِّدَة *As the two of them witnessed **a singer** whistling*	رِحْلَةٌ قَصِيْرَةٌ

In the first column, the word "التَّمَاثِيْلَ" is the plural form of "تِمْثَال", this plural is in the form of *taksir* (broken). While the word "الصَّنَمَ," is the singular form, with the plural form of the *taksir* "الأَصْنَام". Looking at the context of the sentence, most of the causes of errors are in the students not being careful in seeing the previous verb which is plural, causing the following *ism* to be plural. In the second column, the word "الطَّيْرِ" is the plural form of "الطُّيُوْر". It might be that the plural word is not yet known by the first semester students so that most students choose the word "المُغَنِّي" (singer).

In the personal pronoun class (ضمير منفصل), errors generally occur in third person pronouns. Most students cannot determine which third-person form of the previous word and have difficulty determining masculine (*mudzakkar*) or feminine (*muannats*). Here is an example of the error:

Table 11. Examples of Errors in the Persona Pronoun

Topic	Right Text	Wrong Answer
سُلَيْمَانُ يَدْرَسُ..	.... أَنَّ عَلِمَ سُلَيْمَانُ مِنْ أَحَدِ أَصْحَابِهِ أَنَّ *Solomon learned from one of **his friends** that..*	عَلِمَ سُلَيْمَانُ مِنْ أَحَدِ أَصْدِقَائِهَا أَنَّ .... *Solomon learned from one of **his friends** that..*
قِيْمَةُ العَمَلِ	يُنْفِقُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَ عَلَى حَيَاتِهِ، وَ يَنْفَعُ أُمَّتَهُ	يُنْفِقُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَ عَلَى أُسْرَتِهَا، وَ يَنْفَعُ أُمَّتَهُ

*Provide for themselves and **their lives**, and benefit their people.*	*Provide for himself and **his family**, and benefit his people*

In the perfect verb class (فعل ماضى) and imperfect verbs (فعل مضارع), errors occur in the choice of verbs, types, and forms of verbs. This requires vocabulary and understanding of changes in verb forms that are not easily understood and remembered by students. Here is an example of the error:

Table 12. Examples of Errors in the Perfect Verb

Topic	Right Text	Wrong Answer
عِنْدَ الطَّبِيْبِ	اِسْتَيْقَظَ أَحْمَدُ مِنْ النَّوْمِ، وَقَدْ أَحَسَّ بِأَلَمٍ شَدِيْدٍ فِي رَأْسِهِ، وَ **أَيْقَظَ** زَمِيْلُهُ *Ahmad woke up from his sleep and felt severe pain in his head, then he **woke up** his friend*	اِسْتَيْقَظَ أَحْمَدُ مِنْ النَّوْمِ، وَقَدْ أَحَسَّ بِأَلَمٍ شَدِيْدٍ فِي رَأْسِهِ، وَ **أَقَامَ** زَمِيْلُهُ *Ahmad woke up from his sleep and felt severe pain in his head, then he **set up** his friend*
رِحْلَةٌ قَصِيْرَةٌ	فَرَكِبَا السَّيَّارَةَ وَ **خَرَجَا** مِنَ المِدِيْنَةِ *Then they drive the car and both of them **get out** of town*	فَرَكَّبَا السَّيَّارَةَ وَ **يَذْهَبَا** مِنَ المِدِيْنَةِ *Then they drive the car and both **leave** from the city*
رِحْلَةٌ قَصِيْرَةٌ	قَالَ سَالِمٌ لِفَهْدٍ: "لَقَدْ كَانَ العَمَلُ فِي هَذَا الأُسْبُوْعُ مُتْعِبًا فَهَيَّا **نَتَجَوَّلُ**... *Salim said to Fahd: "This week's work is tiring, let's **go for a walk**"*	قَالَ سَالِمٌ لِفَهْدٍ : "لَقَدْ كَانَ العَمَلُ فِي هَذَا الأُسْبُوْعُ مُتْعِبًا فَهَيَّا **يَزُوْرُ**... *Salim said to Fahd: "This week's work is tiring, let's **visit/ pilgrimage***
إِبْرَاهِيْمُ وَ قَوْمُهُ	فَاسْأَلْهُ إِنْ كَانَ **يَنْطِقُ** *So ask him if **he** can talk*	فَاسْأَلْهُ إِنْ كَانَ **يَنْطِقُوْن** *So ask him if **they** can talk*

Linguistic Findings and Causes of Low Readability of Texts

Based on the results of the text readability, as well as the form and factors of student errors in understanding, it can be concluded that some of the texts used for the *Qirā`ah* course are taken from the book *of "Silsilah Fī Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah: Al-Mustawā Ats-Tsāniy, Al-Qirā`ah"*, 46% of the texts are at the level of frustration, i.e.

students have difficulty and cannot understand the content of the text because it is not following their cognition and language development. Also, 29% of the texts are at the instructional level i.e. students can understand the content but need guidance from the lecturer.

The results obtained above raise several questions: What factors cause this book to be at the instructional and frustrating level? Is the content too complicated, or is the students' ability still low, or the quality of the printed book makes it difficult for students to read and study it? To answer these questions, several questions were distributed to students. The questions are categorized into three things, namely from categories: 1) readers, 2) readings, and 3) reading books. Described as follows:

Reader Factor

From the reader's perspective, students' input or educational background in the Arabic Language Education Department in Universitas Negeri Jakarta is very diverse, from general/vocational high schools, Islamic high schools, and boarding schools. In the first semester, students currently the object of research are 83 students, 43% or 35 students are from general/vocational high schools; 35% or 29 students are from Islamic high schools, and 22% or 19 students are from Islamic boarding schools. The number of students with high schools backgrounds is more dominant than those with Islamic boarding schools or Islamic high schools backgrounds which teach Arabic quite intensively. This is due to: **First**, the pattern of new student admissions in state universities has been regulated by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 70% through National Selection and 30% through independent selection from universities. In this regard, a student whose background of boarding schools will register through the independent selection of the university. **Second**, the three new students' admissions selection pathways were carried out without an Arabic language skill test, only measured by general knowledge, not Arabic skills.

For the two reasons above, the ability to speak Arabic in one class is very diverse. The following is a big picture of the average score of first-semester students in reading Arabic texts using the book of *"Silsilah Fī Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah: Al-Mustawā Ats-Tsāniy, Al-Qirā`ah"*.
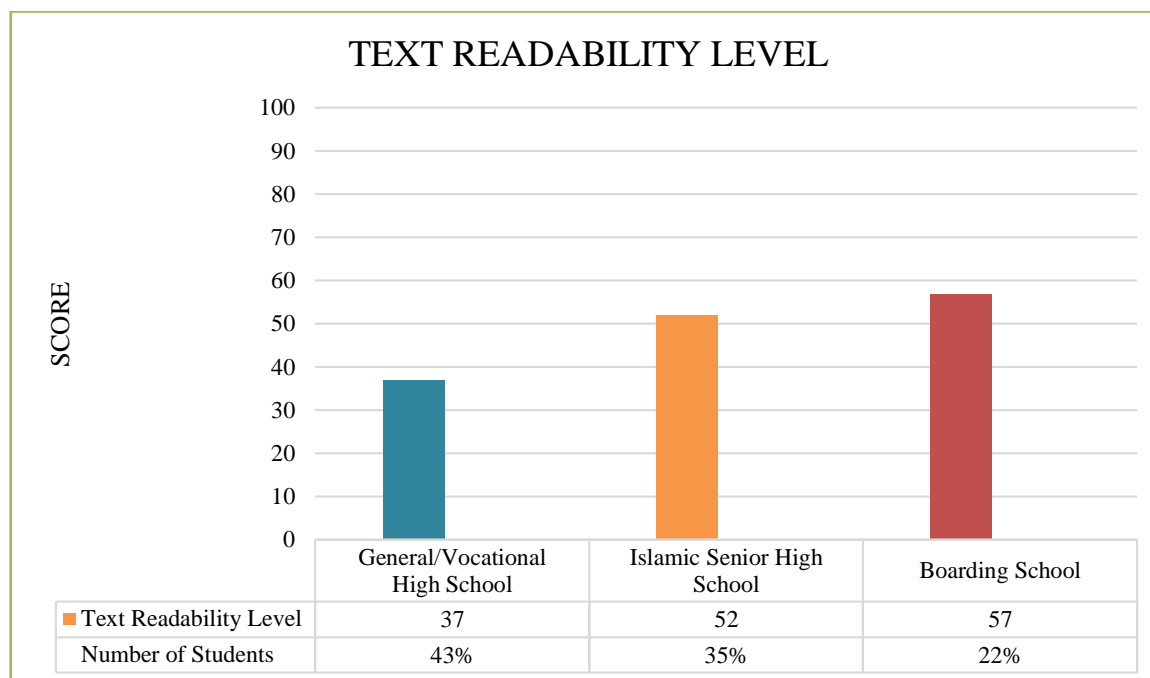
Figure 3. Text Readability Level by Educational Background

Based on **Figure 3**, students from General/Vocational High Schools occupy the dominant quantity in a batch of first semester students but have the lowest reading quality with the textbooks used. Meanwhile, students from Islamic Senior High Schools have moderate reading quantity and quality. Moreover, although the number is the least, students from Islamic Boarding Schools have good text reading quality. Students who come from Islamic Boarding Schools have a good memory of vocabulary. Cavalli-Sforza, Saddiki, & Nassiri (2018) said that vocabulary load plays an important role in readability, and reading is used to develop vocabulary knowledge by using words in context.

Reading Factor

From the reading side, questions about the book's contents in terms of theme and material, sentence structure, word choice, sentence position, and so on. Based on these questions, the answers from students are as follows:

Table 13. Students Assessment on Textbook Content

No	Question	Percentage
1.	The order of the material is easy to understand	71.8%
2.	The proportion of the vocabulary in each unit	64.1%

3.	Sentence structure is easy to understand	56.4%
4.	Word choices are easy to understand	53.8%
5.	The contents of the text are interesting to read	53.8%
6.	Choice of text topics as needed	43.6%
7.	Grammatical rules in text	41.0%

From students' answers, it was found that the textbook has materials that are easy to understand and a proportional amount of vocabulary in each, with an average of 68%. Meanwhile, sentence structure and grammatical rules in the text do get poor results in terms of word choice. If it is associated with readability data, this confirms the results of text readability by students who fall into the instructional and frustrating category. Meanwhile, only 43.6% of students stated that the choice of topic was following their needs, although 53.8% of students considered that the content of the text was interesting to read.

In the textbooks used, the topics presented are related to Islam, the development of Islamic culture by presenting events, situations, and personalities of Islamic figures. In addition, topics raised from daily habits, disease and health, medicine, social issues, education and economics are also presented. The short interviews with several students stated that students need themes whose vocabulary can be used daily, such as learning in the classroom, social interaction, social media, electronics, and inspirational stories.

In general, second language readers are more sensitive to difficulties in terms of vocabulary and syntax. Vocabulary that they often hear and use daily really helps them to understand the content of the reading. While syntactically, Arabic differs significantly from most languages (Nassiri, Lakhouaja, & Cavalli-Sforza, 2021). Thus, it is necessary to prepare reading materials with a tiered syntactic level starting from the basic level.

Reading Book Factors

Regarding reading books, questions about the appearance and layout of text in books include font type and size, color choices, text arrangement, punctuation, image choices, types and exercises, etc. Based on these questions, the answers from students are as follows:

Table 14. Students Assessment of Textbook Display

No	Question	Percentage
1.	The Colour choice is good and beautiful	79.5%
2.	Equipped with Bibliography	79.5%
3.	Order, layout, and spacing between text	79.5%
4.	The type and size of the font is clear and proportional	76.9%
5.	Variety of types and forms of exercise	74.4%
6.	Punctuation and pronunciation are clear and correct	43.6%
7.	The length of the text between chapters is proportional	41.0%
8.	Illustrations like pictures that have aesthetic value	38.5%
9.	Pictorial vocabulary	0.0%

On average, up to 75% of students answered that the textbooks were good in terms of: 1) the type and size of the fonts were clear and proportional, 2) the colour choices were good and beautiful, 3) the arrangement, layout and spacing between texts were proportional, not too tight, 4) the types and forms of exercises vary widely between chapters, and 5) the book is equipped with a mini-dictionary at the end of the page, to help understand the vocabulary that has not been understood from the text.

However, the textbooks were not good in terms of punctuation and clear and correct pronunciation, namely 43.6%. The results of observations of this textbook found several vowels that did not appear and some spelling errors. For novice readers, the pronunciation greatly affects the ease and understanding of the text. Several times, pronunciation errors caused student errors when reading aloud, and student errors in perceiving a word. So, it is very natural that this book is at an instructional level, which requires the role of a lecturer.

In addition, in terms of length of text between chapters, it is 41.0%. It was found in the texts that some texts were too long for students who were not from *pesantren* or Boarding School. Illustrations such as pictures with an aesthetic value of 38.5% found that this book is equipped with pictures at the beginning of each text, but it is unclear and cannot represent the material. More else, this book is not equipped with pictural vocabulary at all.

Textbooks are an important component in successful learning. If the textbook used follows the criteria for a good textbook, the learning will run effectively. There are four criteria for a good textbook that must be contained in the textbooks used: selection, gradation, presentation, and repetition (Ritonga, 2021). Through these four criteria, it makes it easier for teachers to prepare subject matter to achieve the desired learning goals

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that: 1) the readability of the text 46% was at the frustration level, which was not following the level of cognition and initial knowledge of the first semester students, and 29% was at the instructional level, which required the role and presence of the lecturer; 2) 22% of students from Islamic boarding schools have no difficulty understanding reading texts because they have experience reading texts and understanding Arabic texts; 3) the tendency of the word class that causes errors/difficulty in understanding the text occurs a lot in the perfect verb class (فعل ماضى), imperfect verb (فعل مضارع), noun (اسم), adjective (اسم صفة), plural noun (اسم جمع), and personal pronoun (ضمير منفصل). The causes are the lack of vocabulary, understanding of changes in verb form and the formation of *sima'i* plurals (based on how native speakers use words), and ability to distinguish *mudzakkar* or *muannats* references; 4) according to the students assessment, 75% has good appearance, but it lacks punctuation/*harakat*, vocabulary and illustrations, and it has dispropostionate length on each chapter. This causes textbooks to be difficult to study independently, especially during distance learning during the covid-19 pandemic.

Based on these conclusions, the proposed recommendations include: 1) The textbook *"Silsilah Fī Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah: Al-Mustawā Ats-Tsāniy, Al-Qirā`ah"* is suitable for students who have previously studied/have the basics of Arabic because they learn the basics of Arabic. Arabic in one semester is not enough. 2) in connection with the lack of choice of textbooks that come directly from Arab countries, and if these books are still used, then lecturers must pay attention to the development of students, especially those from general/vocational high schools given special attention without reducing attention to students from Islamic boarding schools and Islamic high schools. 3) If a lighter

additional text is needed, the type appropriate to the student's communication needs can be chosen, namely learning in the classroom, social media, and inspirational stories. 4) In addition to the choice of textbooks, *Qirā`ah* teaching needs to be supported by appropriate teaching methods and methods, not monotonous, more varied, especially in the digital era by collaborating with various existing learning platforms and facilities. Successful learning is meaningful learning, so the lecturer can give meaning to learning through the way he teaches, controls the class, pays attention to student development, etc. 5) in connection with the low level of text readability, lecturers can develop text material according to students needs.

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