

# Conjectural Analysis on the Consequences of Illustrations as a Visual Communication Language

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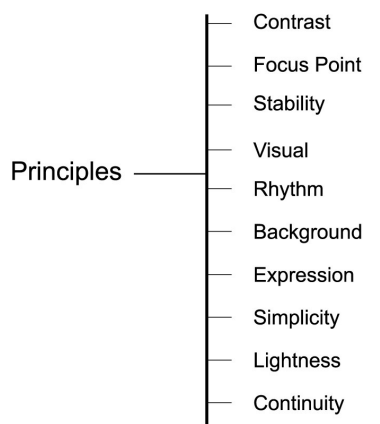
## Abstract

The purpose of this descriptive study is to point out the importance of using illustrations as a visual communication language. The study is composed with some sections: importance of illustrations as materials, and use and significance of illustrations in global perspective. Illustrations and different kinds of images are used for education purposes from the very beginning of human's life. Our brain is sensitive to pictures even before we can speak. A child begins perception of the around world as a number of objects since babies can think only non-abstractly. That is the reason why illustrations are used to educate us and to develop our imagination. Similarly, illustrations are widely used for presentation of complicated scientific, engineering concepts. Illustrations are needed for all kinds of instructional literature for better understanding of the material. The human brain functions in such a way that it perceives visual information more quickly, fully and holds it longer in the memory. In modern world it is believed that illustration is being used as global visual communication language by its diversify function.

**Keywords:** Language, Illustration, Visualizations, Communication and Generalizations

## 1. Overture

Language is a means of communication whether it is spoken or written. We not only learn our mother tongue but also other languages to communicate. Learning a language other than our mother tongue is among the basic needs of today's globalized world. Now, the world has been in a constant flux in terms of technology and communication. Besides, the world is getting smaller and becoming a global village. Therefore, it has been a must to get in touch with other nations. For this reason, illustration might be used as a language aside from our mother tongue to maintain good relations with other societies and to meet our needs.



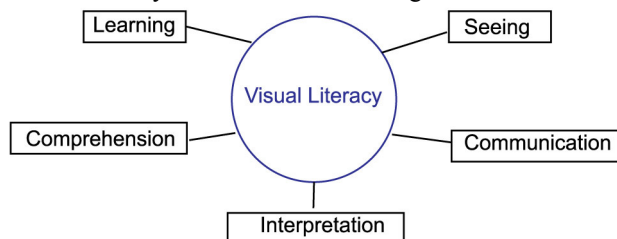
Principles of Visual materials

An illustration may be defined as a displayed visualization form presented as a drawing, painting or photograph that is used to make some subject more pleasing or easier to understand. An illustration is a visualization or a depiction of a subject made by an artist, such as a drawing, sketch, painting, photograph, cinema or other kind of image of things seen, remembered or imagined, using a graphical representation. Illustration is one of the most versatile art forms in today's visual culture. Somehow it has always crossed boundaries between fine art and drawing into a "grey" area. The "label" illustration is ambiguous. The definition of the form is amorphous and indefinite, constantly challenging notions and perceptions of contemporary image making. Illustration has often been partnered with the publishing industry, advertising campaigns, or used politically for satire, but more recently, illustrators are creating bodies of work that excite and experiment with the notions of contemporary visual art and its hybrid forms. As a genre, illustration has been born out of many things, grown broader in its context through new media and technology, and this has signified that illustration now shares a valid platform with fine art. Today's illustrators go beyond caricature and visual representation to observational statements about current trends and popular culture. Contemporary illustration is a new movement with illustrators drawing influences from graffiti, fashion, computer games and animation. There are fewer

boundaries and more friction.

## 2. Study Progressions

The visual language is a system of communication using visual elements. Speech as a means of communication cannot strictly be separated from the whole of human communicative activity which includes the visual and the term 'language' in relation to vision is an extension of its use to describe the perception, comprehension and production of visible signs. An image which dramatizes and communicates an idea presupposes the use of a visual language. Just as people can 'verbalize' their thinking, they can 'visualize' it. A diagram, a map, and a painting are all examples of uses of visual language. Its structural units include line, shape, color, form, motion, texture, pattern, direction, orientation, scale, angle, space and proportion. The elements in an image represent concepts in a spatial context, rather than the linear form used for words. Speech and visual communication are parallel and often interdependent means by which humans exchange information.



## 3. Critical Literature Review

The visual language begins to develop in babies as the eye and brain become able to focus, and be able to recognize patterns. Children's drawings show a process of increasing perceptual awareness and range of elements to express personal experience and ideas. <sup>[1]</sup> The visual artist, as Michael Twyman<sup>[2]</sup> has pointed out, has developed the ability to handle the visual language to communicate ideas. This includes both the understanding and conception and the production of concepts in a visual form in around the world. What we have in our minds in a waking state and what we imagine in dreams is very much of the same nature. <sup>[3]</sup> Dream images might be with or without spoken words, other sounds or colors. In the waking state there is usually, in the foreground, the buzz of immediate perception, feeling, mood and as well as fleeting memory images. <sup>[4]</sup> The visual language is a system of communication using visual elements. Speech as a means of communication cannot strictly be separated from the whole of human communicative activity which includes the visual <sup>[5]</sup> and the term 'language' in relation to vision is an extension of its use to describe the perception, comprehension and production of visible signs. An image which dramatizes and communicates an idea presupposes the use of a visual language.

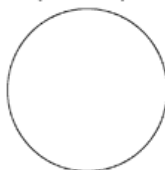
## 4. Statement of the Study

Learning a language other than our mother tongue is among the basic needs of today's globalized world. Now, the world has been in a constant flux in terms of technology and communication. Besides, the world is getting smaller and becoming a global village. Therefore, it has been a must to get in touch with other nations. For this reason, illustration might be used as a language aside from our mother tongue to maintain good relations with other societies and to meet our needs. In parallel to changes in communication and technology, changes in language teaching have also emerged.

## 5. Study Analysis and So On

Speaking, in terms of communication, textual ubiquity is brand new. Thanks to millions of years of evolution, we are genetically wired to respond differently to visuals than text. For example, humans have an innate fondness for images of wide, open landscapes, which evoke an instant sense of well-being and contentment. Psychologists hypothesize that this almost universal response stems from the years our ancestors spent on the savannas in Africa. Psychologist Albert Mehrabian demonstrated that 93% of communication is nonverbal. Studies find that the human brain deciphers image elements simultaneously, while language is decoded in a linear, sequential manner taking more time to process. Our minds react differently to visual stimuli.

**Graphic Description**



**Textual Description**

a curved line with every  
point equal distance  
from the center

People think using pictures. John Berger, media theorist, writes in his book *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin Books, 1972), "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak." Dr. Lynell Burmark, Ph.D. Associate at the Thornburg Center for Professional Development and writer of several books and papers on visual literacy, said, "...unless our words, concepts, ideas are hooked onto an image, they will go in one ear, sail through the brain, and go out the other ear. Words are processed by our short-term memory where we can only retain about 7 bits of information (plus or minus 2).

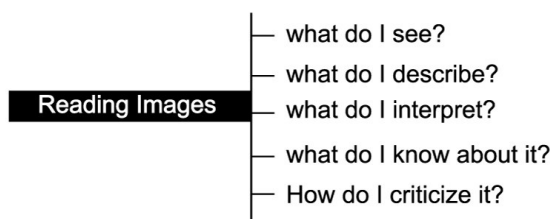
This is why, by the way, that we have 7-digit phone numbers. Images, on the other hand, go directly into long-term memory where they are indelibly etched." Therefore, it is not surprising that it is much easier to show a circle than describe it. Good illustrations can contribute to the overall development by stimulating our imagination, arousing perception, developing potential. In this study we want to discuss a few reasons why we may need illustrations for better understanding or easy communication method with others in global perspective. When we speak or write, our words act as symbols for what we are meaning.



For instance, if you see a sign saying EXIT over a door you know that you are allowed to leave by that door. If someone asks you if you would like a cup of tea, you have a picture in your head of a hot drink served in a cup or a mug possibly with milk and/or sugar added. People who are unable to use words in the traditional sense because they are not able to speak need some other symbol system available to them to get their message across.

## 6. Conveying a Message

Using illustrations is easy to convey an idea which is difficult to express or it would take a lot of time to explain and describe what you mean. The human brain functions in such a way that it perceives visual information more swiftly, fully and holds it longer in the memory. Even when reading a book most people draw a kind of illustrations inside our heads using imaginations. Sometimes we need to convey messages which importance do now allow relying only on imagination but needs crisp and concrete visual representation. These are various technological advanced illustrations, sketches, flowcharts etc. it can also be useful for people with little attention span and for those with hearing disabilities.



### 6.1 Education

Illustrations and various kinds of images are used for education purposes from the very beginning of human's life. A child begins perception of the around world as a number of objects since babies can think only non-abstractly. That is the reason why illustrations are used to educate children and to develop their imagination. That is why it is important to have good illustrations for children's books. Illustrations help children associate words with objects and sentences with illustrated actions and what is important illustrations designed for children's book are purposed to fascinate children with reading.

Benefits of visual materials used in education purpose as follows:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make comparison</li> <li>• To emphasize important points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To explain the concepts</li> <li>• To attract group attention</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make statistics and other data more understandable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To shrink or enlarge objects to see clearly</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To emphasize a point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support verbal messages</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To clarify one point of view</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To visualize things hard to revive in mind</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To show relations, rules or formulas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To benefit from diversity and change</li> </ul>

## 6.2 Attracting Attention

Using visual presentations is a must in the case as visual information is better to remember. Today people spend more time in the Internet activating their visual perception and that is why a presentation of an advertised product by means of various kinds of illustrations is not only one of the cheapest way to advertise online but also one of the most effective. We can also use video and photographs for advertising purposes, but illustrations, however, have a few important advantages over other types of visual advertisement, at least on the web, and namely:

- Illustrations allow implementing almost any idea and this implementation is limited only by client's and illustrator's fantasy.
- Illustrations give possibility to easily represent something which is quite difficult or impossible to film or to
- Illustrations are easier to customize, modify, change, seamlessly add or remove elements;
- Illustrations can be previewed in preliminary sketches before the final illustration is done;
- high quality illustration requires less expensive equipment than a high-quality photograph or video;
- illustrations do not necessarily require models and can be done with participation of a single person;
- Illustrations can be more easily adjusted for printing and using in other media.

Furthermore, illustrations can be used to draw attention to certain information. Illustration is something a person sees first even before reading the text which is next to the illustration. Very often presence of illustrations determines whether a text will be noticed and read. Likewise, a good book cover illustration can determine the general success of the book, unless we are a well known writer who does not even need an illustration on the book cover to be noticed and purchased.

## 7. Some sort of Significant Issues

### 7.1 Illustrations for Books and Book Cover Design:

Book illustrations and especially book cover are designated for visual conveying the textually expressed ideas; therefore professionally created illustrations can reflect not only mere plot aspects of the book but also mood of the narration and characters' temper. Another important thing to be considered while designing a book cover and illustrations is the attention-grabbing function of illustrations. Book cover design is like a brand. This is something a buyer sees before taking decision whether to buy your book or not. We know that one cannot judge a book by its cover, but actually this is a book cover which draws attention and often determines success of your book.

### 7.2 Illustrations for Advertising Purposes:

Another large category of the clients is those who want various kinds of custom illustrations to advertise their business or promote a product. The main aim of advertising is to make a particular product or service appeal to consumer so that the latter would end up buying the product or service. Visual impression has a big power in advertising industry. Positive visual impression through advertising materials is likely to entail overall positive attitude towards the company and the products or services.

### 7.3 Illustration in Concept Art

Concept art is a form of illustration used to convey an idea for use in films, video games, animation, comic books or other media before it is put into the final product. Concept art is also referred to as visual development and/or concept design. This term can also be applied to retail, set, and fashion, architectural and industrial design. Concept art is developed in several iterations. Artists try several designs to achieve the desired result for the work, or sometimes searching for an interesting result.

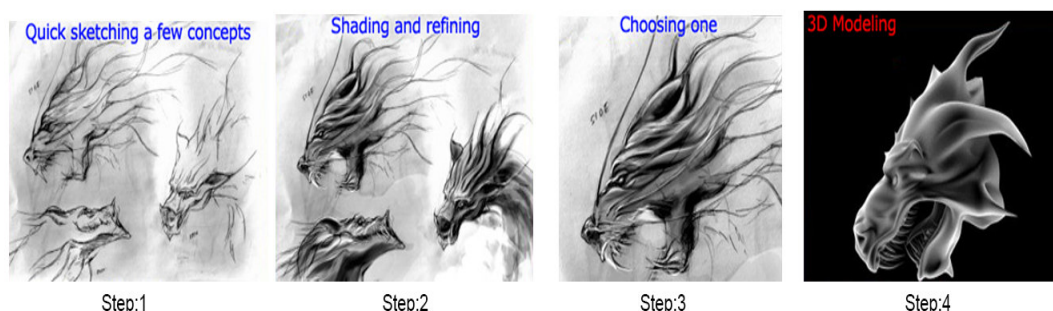
Designs are filtered and refined in stages to narrow down the options. Concept art is not only used to develop the work, but also to show the project's progress to directors, clients and investors. Once the development of the work is complete, advertising materials often resemble concept art, although these are typically made specifically for this purposed, based on final work. Concept art has always had to cover many

subjects, being the primary medium in film poster design since the early days of Hollywood, but the two most widely-covered themes are science fiction and fantasy. However, since the recent rise of its use in video game production, concept art has expanded to cover genres from football to the mafia and beyond.

### 8. Summarizations of the Study

The world has become very fast due to easy accessible communication through advanced and effective illustration procedure by various communication methods. We can observe that each and every moment we are introducing with newly formed illustrated symbol from different society with global meaning, for example facebook introduce a symbol (raised thumbnail) which give us a clear visual information for every citizen in the globe. Visual information more swiftly and effectively store in our memory. It help us in different ways such as education, advertisement, concept art, trade & commerce, tourism and so on. Picture or illustration is the fundamental issue for communication for human mind. Every human brain are being functioned in the same way at the beginning of its life, and it is modify and store the information by the influence by its surrounding information like culture, verbal language.

### Visualization by images



Therefore illustration might be way to establish as visual language in the globe to maintain good relations with other societies and to meet our needs. The contemporary culture has become enormously dominated by visual communication. Not only locally or national but also because visual language structure has a much more global character then a verbal language will ever have. Take the profane symbols used to indicate the male and female toilets; as long as visuals are used most people end up in their gender specific toilet. On the contrary if there are used capitals to indicate L(adies) and G(entlemen), in the Netherlands this would be D(ames) and H(eren) and in France even M(adames) and M(essieurs). So Visual Literacy works better for the viewer to understand the message.

### 9. Recommendations and Vigilances

We are heading to world of visual literacy as we have been dominate (since Gutenberg) by a world of verbal literacy. The conventions of visual communication are a mixture of universal and (parametric) cultural conventions, so easy accessible to all. Illustration or visual communication is more ubiquitous than ever before. Because it does what text alone cannot do? The necessity of illustration is highly improvise because a good illustration convey a vast but simplified message where it would take many pages to express or visualize a concept or depiction a story there an illustration might be more effective or easy accessible for the readers. For more advance global interaction, the use of illustration must be increased. Illustration like graph, chart, diagram, and picture are being used in various media or in presentation in education sector. It is the way to introduce multidimensional teaching technique as well as global visual communication approach in more widely in each and every part of the world.

#### 9.1 Further Study

Visual Literacy is a combination of syntax and semantics, form and content, syntax is the appearance limited by the visual elements. Semantics (semiotics) are the content, the way images fit into the process of visual communication. In the next steps we will try to find out the semiotics influence and benefits in marketing communication materials which are missing in most of the cases in today's communication process.

#### End Notes

Human communication has existed for about 30,000 years. In the beginning of recorded history, the vast majority of what we communicated was not text based. The ability of visual stimuli to communicate and influence is undeniable and inescapable. Through evolution, human beings are compelled to view and

disseminate visuals. Recognizing the importance of visual communication is the key to success. Allen Ginsberg, poet and author, stated, "Whoever controls the media: the images and control the culture." As early as the late nineteenth century, advertisers, based on their collective experience, were convinced that illustrations sold goods. The development of the visual aspect of language communication in education has been referred to as graphically, as a parallel discipline to literacy and numeracy. The ability to think and communicate in visual terms is part of, and of equal importance in the learning process with own cultural background.

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## Author's Profile



**Md. Mehedi Billah** received MFA in Graphic from University of Development Alternative, Bangladesh and also accomplished of his B. A. (Honors) in Graphic Design and Multimedia from Shanto-Mariam University of creative Technology, Bangladesh. He is functioning as a Lecturer and Advisor, Department of Graphic Design & Multimedia at Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology, Bangladesh and engaged with Navana Furniture Ltd as a visual communication specialist in the department of Business Development, and also joined with BRAC as an animator to develop educational content for last three years. His area of interest is Ultra-Multimedia, Motion Graphics, Visual Scrutiny, Design Management and Illustrational Software Integration. He has some publication in different journal like journal of Education and Practice, Journal of International Affairs and Global Strategy, Journal of Resources Development and Management. He participated in a number of professional Trainings and Workshops and frequently participates as a freelancer to contribute the business phenomenon. He engaged with several types of social and cultural activities. He attained in some of the International Conferences, Trainings and Workshops in Malaysia, Thailand and India.



**Arafat Hosen** received MFA in Fine Art from University of Development Alternative, Bangladesh and also accomplished of his B. A. (Honors) in Fine Art from Shanto-Mariam University of creative Technology, Bangladesh. He is functioning as a Lecturer and Advisor, Department of Graphic Design & Multimedia at Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology since 2009, besides that he has done several successful solo and group painting exhibition in Bangladesh. As an artist he is very much fascinated about doing portraiture especially regional people and their expression. In 2006 he went to India Darjeeling and stayed one month long to capture the beauty of mountain (Himalayan part of India), tea garden and indigenous people and their lives. Later on in 2008, he reflected those by his first solo exhibition named “Passage to the Soul”. His last exhibition “Lively Lives” in 2013 was a great expression of diverse colorful attribute of local people, where artist inspired from traditional rickshaw art. As a teacher he love to work with child art, consequently he went to Kamalapur Railway station to tech art among street children to quest their inner feeling about their life by art, as a part of research project of his Honors Dissertation. Later on from 2009 to 2012 he worked as a part time guest art teacher at American International School Dhaka Bangladesh. He conducted some art workshop with Rangpur, Dinajpur High school students- funded by CIDA education project. His present focus is on Digital Illustration which is a newly merged subject in his teaching area, experimenting with contemporary digital drawing tab to create character drawing for comic book illustration and for games industry.