





PEARL: A Multimodal Culturally-Aware Arabic Instruction Dataset

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The Problem: Cultural Bias in Al

Western-Centric Bias

Encodes Western cultural perspectives

Shallow Understanding

Datasets lack cultural depth.

Cultural Uniformity

Overlook nuanced regional variations

Our Solution

Introduce PEARL dataset, benchmarks



PEARL is a foundational resource designed to make LVLMs more culturally intelligent for Arabic.

Massive Scale

Over 309K multimodal examples

- Comprehensive Coverage
 - 19 Arab Countries
 - Spans 10 key cultural domains
- Authentic & Nuanced

Built by 37 native annotators.





تُظهر الصورة واحدة من أشهر وأندر الأشجار في العالم، وهي شجرة دم الأخوين....

تخيّل أنك دليل سياحي في جزيرة سقطرى، كيف تشرح للزوار أهمية شجرة دم





تظهر الصورة حي البستكية التاريخي في إمارة دبي، حيث تظهر مباني تقليدية ذات تصميم معماري فريد مع أبراج الرياح ...

كيف يمكن الحفاظ على المباني التاريخية التي تظهر في الصورة مع التطور الحضري السريع في



























كيف يمكن دمج الزي التقليدي

الذي يظهر في الصورة في الحياة اليومية الحديثة في تونس؟

تُظهر الصورة حكواتيًا معاصرًا في

تُظهر الصورة أحد المشاركين في رقصات الطرق الصوفية في السودان، وهو يرتدي زيّا تقليديّا مميزًا غنيًا بالألوان والرموز.....

بدأ الرجل في الصورة يرقص مع جماعته في احتفال صوفي. اذا توقف عن الرقص في الحفل برأيك، ماذا سيحدث بعد ذلك؟

أحد المقاهي الدمشقية التقليدية،

وهو يرتدي الطربوش واللباس

الشعبي، ويجلس ما هو الأصل التاريخي أو الجغرافي لشخصية الحكواتي الذي يظهر في الصورة؟



كيف يمكن استخدام الأزياء التقليدية القطرية المعروضة في الصورة في عالم اليوم؟













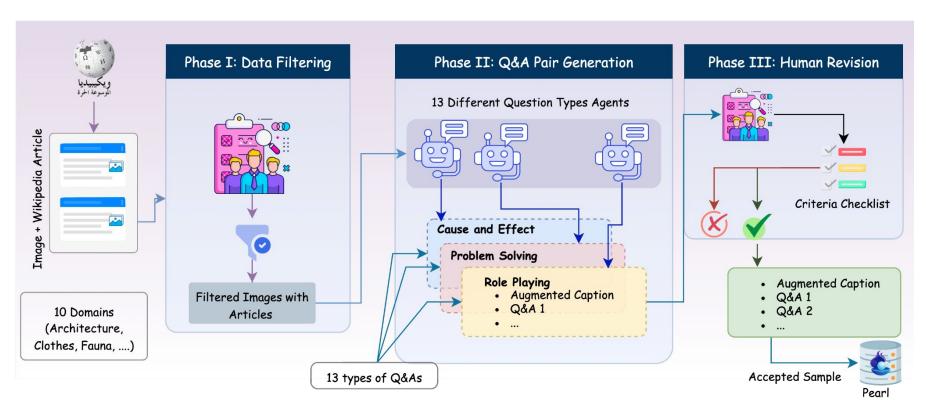








How We Built PEARL: A 3-Phase Workflow





The PEARL Ecosystem: Datasets for All Needs

PEARL isn't just one dataset; it's a suite of resources available to the research community.

- Core Assets:
 - 12k Images
 - 309k Automated Q&A Pairs with captions.
 - 16k Human-Revised Q&A Pairs
- Evaluation Benchmarks:
 - PEARL: The main benchmark with 6,301 samples.
 - PEARL-LITE: A smaller 893 samples.
 - PEARL-X: A specialized benchmark with 367 Q&As with
 61 shared concepts



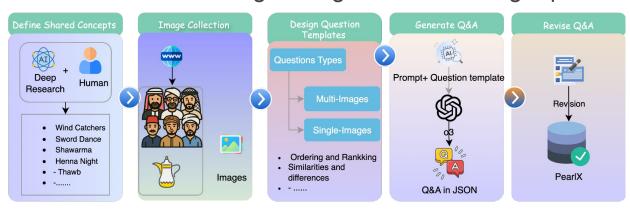
A Deeper Challenge: PEARL-X

The Goal of PEARL-X

To test if models can recognize these nuanced differences.

How it Works

- It focuses on 61 shared cultural concepts.
- It uses both single-image and multi-image questions.





PEARL-X (Examples)











أي من الصور التالية تُمثِّل الثوب القطري؟

English Translation: Which of the following images represents the Qatari thobe?

Single Image Questions



اشتقُ اسم هذه النسخة من القطايف من كلمة عربية تعني «العصفور». أي خيار يشرح بدقة سبب التسمية؟

English Translation: The name of this variation of qatayef is derived from the Arabic word for "sparrow." Which option accurately explains the reason for this naming?



The Experiment: Testing the Best Al Models

- Models Tested
 - Open Models and Proprietary Models
 - Different sizes and architectures
 - Reasoning and non reasoning models
- Evaluation Protocol
 - LVLM-as-Judge (InternVL3.5-38B)
 - Accuracy for Closed-form questions.
 - Correctness, Coherence, Fluency, Detail, and Overall for open-ended questions
 - Cultural Awareness Score (CAS) binary score for open-end questions
- Validated by human evaluators and found a strong correlation (ICC=0.708)



Key Finding 1: Reasoning Beats Scale

- The Surprise Winner
 Reasoning model
 outperformed larger
 - outperformed larger one.
- The Takeaway
 Reasoning alignment is key.
- Proprietary Models Lead
 Proprietary models
 superior overall.

Model	Open-Ended						Closed
	COR	СОН	DET	FLU	OVR	CAS%	ACC%
Qwen2.5-VL-3B-Instruct	2.59	3.12	2.15	3.68	2.83	37.09	73.10
gemma-3-4b-it	2.97	3.56	2.62	4.12	3.25	47.68	70.73
Qwen2.5-VL-7B-Instruct	$\bar{3.02}^{-}$	$\bar{3.66}^{-}$	-2.55	-4.11	$-3.\overline{27}$	47.68	$7\bar{3}.\bar{7}7$
ya-vision-8b	3.23	3.85	2.67	4.21	3.44	46.69	70.56
emma-3-12b-it	3.10	3.63	2.54	4.14	3.30	52.65	76.82
gemma-3-27b-it	$\bar{3.38}^{-}$	$\bar{3.81}^{-}$	-2.95	$4.2\bar{6}$	3.55	60.93	80.88
iya-vision-32b	3.37_	3.92	2.76	4.31_	3.55	_51.66	75.63
Qwen2.5-VL-32B-Instruct •	_3.69	-4.09	3.39	4.42	3.85	66.56	80.03
Qwen2.5-VL-72B-Instruct	-3.36	-3.91	$-\bar{2.76}^{-}$	-4.25	3.53	$55.\overline{6}3$	79.36
laude-sonnet-4-20250514	3.77	4.03	3.71	4.43	3.94	76.49	79.53
gemini-2.5-pro 🕈	4.36	4.48	4.45	4.77	4.48	83.11	89.00
3-2025-04-16 •	4.39	4.44	4.52	4.71	4.49	87.09	86.97

Results for the PEARL-LITE subset. The metrics are as follows: Correctness (COR), Coherence (COH), Detail (DET), Fluency (FLU), Overall Score (OVR), Cultural Awareness Score (CAS) for open-ended questions, and Accuracy (ACC) for closed-ended questions.



Key Finding 2: Nuance is Hard

The PEARL-X benchmark proved to be a difficult test for every model.

The Challenge

Identifying subtle differences is tough.

Performance

Top models show difficulty.

Implication

Reasoning is critical for nuance.

Model	Accuracy %
Qwen2.5-VL-3B-Instruct	59.67
gemma-3-4b-it	64.58
Qwen2.5-VL-7B-Instruct	61.31
aya-vision-8b	64.03
gemma-3-12b-it	69.21
gemma-3-27b-it	69.21
aya-vision-32b	71.66
Qwen2.5-VL-32B-Instruct ◆	71.66
Qwen2.5-VL-72B-Instruct	73.57
gemini-2.5-pro-preview-05-06	77.93
o3-2025-04-16 •	78.75

Accuracy on the Pearl-X shared-concepts benchmark.



- Our Contribution: First large-scale Arabic benchmark.
- Key Insight: Reasoning-alignment is most effective.
- New Frontiers: With PEARL-X, we've provided a novel way to measure a model's understanding of nuanced, cross-country cultural variations.
- Limitations: Wikipedia bias, representation gaps.



















