

POTENTIAL USE OF VIRTUAL REALITY IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF BALAGHAH IN RELIGIOUS SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract: This paper critically reviews the existing literature to identify the potential of integrating Virtual Reality (VR) into the teaching and learning of speech in Religious High Schools . The core challenge in teaching balaghah lies in the abstract nature of its components such as isti'arah, tasybih, and kinayah which students find difficult to master when relying solely on conventional methods like lectures, memorization, and textbooks. Previous studies have highlighted VR as an educational technology that provides visual, interactive, and immersive experiences, enhancing understanding of difficult and abstract concepts. However, critical analysis reveals a significant pedagogical gap: although the potential of VR is recognized for general Arabic language learning, there is no established framework or specific content design strategy for using VR to illustrate and contextualize the complex figurative concepts of balaghah. Therefore, this paper suggests that applying VR to speech requires a systematic pedagogical framework that focuses on the visual transformation of abstract rhetorical devices. This transition allows students to move beyond memorization to actively interpret and experience the transfer of meaning as required in the topics of isti'arah and tasybih in a contextual virtual environment. The study's findings indicate that successful implementation requires careful planning across content design, pedagogical alignment, and technical support from all stakeholders. Overall, this study supports the development of VR-based speech-learning resources as an important innovation to enhance mastery, increase student engagement, and foster a deeper appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of Arabic in Religious Secondary Schools.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, Balaghah, Learning Resources, Interactive

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INTRODUCTION

The science of balaghah is an important component of teaching and learning in Religious Secondary Schools. Balaghah is the foundation of the Arabic language and literature and can significantly improve mastery and clarity of communication in Arabic. Balaghah is recognized as a key element for its role in promoting fluency and accuracy in Arabic (Zakaria et al., 2020). As part of the Arabic Language, balaghah refines linguistic expressions and ensures effective communication involves a detailed exploration of linguistic tools and techniques that reinforce the beauty and effectiveness of the use of Arabic (Fahmi & Hasyim, 2023).

Basically, the knowledge of balaghah includes three main components, namely the knowledge of al-ma'ani, the knowledge of al-bayan and the knowledge of al-badi'. The knowledge of al-m'ani focuses on the suitability of the structure of the sentence with the context, the knowledge of al-bayan studies different styles of language to convey the same meaning in different ways, while the knowledge of al-badi' emphasizes the beauty and aesthetic effect of the language. Figure 1 below shows the three basic components that make up the main structure in the science of balaghah (Hashimi, 2008).

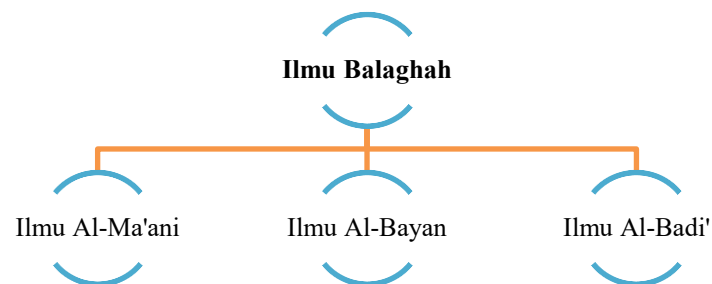


Figure 1 : Components of Balaghah Knowledge (Hashimi, 2008)

However, many students face difficulties in understanding the knowledge of balaghah when teaching only relies on conventional methods such as lectures, memorization, and the use of textbooks (Sopian & Jafri, 2011). This difficulty affects their interest in learning balaghah as a whole.

High school teachers also face this problem, especially when there are time constraints and limited teaching aids to convey abstract concepts. Based on the highlights of previous studies, technology-based teaching approaches have shown potential in helping students understand difficult concepts, especially through visual and interactive learning. One of the technologies that is getting more attention is VR which allows students to experience simulations of three-dimensional environments that can stimulate their understanding of abstract content (Sosnilo, 2021).

In this study, the use of VR in the teaching of balaghah is seen as a high-potential alternative to help teachers convey the content of Arabic texts more effectively. However, the application of VR in Islamic education in high school remains poorly explored (Salleh et al., 2024). Therefore, this paper proposes that VR-based learning resources be developed to take into account the platform's content, appropriate pedagogical approaches, and realistic technical support. The integration of virtual reality (VR) into balaghah instruction is a promising approach to enhancing the presentation of Arabic texts. Despite its potential, the use of VR in Islamic education, especially at the Religious Secondary School level, has not been extensively studied (Salleh et al., 2024). This paper examines how VR can improve students' understanding of abstract balaghah concepts and proposes pedagogical strategies for its effective implementation in Religious Secondary Schools.

LITERATURE

Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Religious Secondary Schools

Arabic is one of the core subjects in high school which plays an important role in understanding religious texts and the content of the Quran and hadith. However, the teaching and learning of Arabic also faces challenges, especially in terms of grammatical mastery and in-depth understanding of content (Samah & Isahak, 2024). Most high schools today, still maintain teaching with traditional approaches such as memorization, lectures and the use of textbooks (Sopian & Saja, 2022). This causes students to be less actively involved in the learning process, especially when faced with abstract or theoretical content such as balaghah knowledge.

Teachers also face constraints in terms of time, technological convenience, and appropriate teaching methods (Amiruddin et al., 2021). In addition, the lack of interactive teaching aids also makes it difficult for teachers to make Arabic lessons more interesting and easy to understand (Naufal & Aini, 2024). This is in line with the latest literature review which found that the factors of the learning environment and teaching resources also influence the effectiveness of teaching and learning Arabic. Teachers need adequate support resources such as digital materials and interactive media to help students understand the subject more effectively (Wibawanto et al., 2022). Therefore, there is a need to explore more creative and effective teaching approaches, including the integration of educational technologies in Arabic classes.

The teaching of Arabic using technology has gained increasing attention in the last five years. A meta-analysis study by Yusuf et al. (2022) emphasizing that today's students' learning styles require the use of digital applications as a more flexible, interactive learning medium. In fact, the use of learning software and mobile applications has become an increasingly important alternative medium in learning this language (Zuhri et al., 2022). According to Zaki (2022) Technologies such as learning software and smartphone apps can also enrich the learning experience, increase student engagement, and help them better understand. Furthermore, several other studies also support this finding, such as Naufal and Aini (2024) which emphasizes the development of audio-visual technologies in Arabic learning and Sarah et al. (2024) which examines the use of technological media in Arabic language teaching. This shows that educational technology has the potential to make the teaching and learning process more interactive and effective.

In conclusion, the recent literature underlines that Arabic language teaching in Religious Secondary Schools can be improved through innovative technology-based approaches. While there are constraints such as teacher attitudes and facilities that need to be overcome, empirical evidence shows the clear benefits that higher student engagement, increased learning motivation, deeper understanding of grammar and vocabulary, as well as better overall learning performance. Therefore, in an effort to strengthen the mastery of Arabic among high school students, creative teaching strategies with the use of the latest educational technologies should be emphasized. This approach not only helps to overcome existing challenges, but also has the potential to produce students who are more proficient in Arabic and able to apply this knowledge in real-life contexts.

The Concept of Balaghah

The science of balaghah has been introduced by many classical scholars. One of the famous scholars is Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani in his book *Dalā'il al-Ijāz and Asrār al-Balāghah*, which describes the principle of the beauty of the Arabic language and the secret of the greatness of the Quranic verse arrangement (Jurjānī, 1969). Al-Jurjani emphasizes the concept of nazm, which is an orderly arrangement of words as the key to the beauty of meaning, and his view explains that the beauty of an expression results from the relationship of meaning between words in context, not solely from words separately (Al-Mubassyr et al., 2024). Al-Jurjani's approach and writing have formed the conceptual framework of balaghah that continues to be a reference to this day, especially in explaining concepts such as majaz (figurative), haqiqah (literal), the beauty of metaphors, and the uniqueness of the Quranic language style (Al-Mubassyr et al., 2024).

In the Malaysian context, Balaghah is an important subject in the Malaysian Higher Religious Certificate (STAM) examination and is taught at the higher education level (Wahid et al., 2022). Balaghah also emphasizes the aspect of beauty and accuracy in the use of language. However, teaching balaghah in high school faces some unique challenges. Among the biggest challenges is the abstract and complex nature of the concept of balaghah itself, which can make it difficult for students to understand if the pedagogical approach is less effective. Past studies have shown that traditional balaghah teaching in Malaysia tends to be teacher-oriented and centered on the memorization of students who are instructed to remember definitions, classical examples and methods with limited application (Sardaraz & Rubina, 2020).

One of the main elements of balaghah is isti'arah, which is a form of metaphor that involves figurative transfer of meaning (Amalina et al., 2024). According to Zailani (2020), isti'arah is referred to as the borrowed use of words, i.e. transferring the meaning of one word to another meaning that has a similar relationship (musyabahah). It is not used in its original meaning, but rather is lent to something else, and the use of that original meaning is prevented by the qarinah (sign). Isti'arah is also considered a specific form of majaz (figurative) and is part of tasybih (comparison), but does not explicitly state the two elements of comparison. This concept requires students to understand the relationship between literal meaning and implicit meaning, as well as to be able to interpret the use of language in a particular context (Sopian & Saja, 2022).

Previous studies have shown that students often face difficulties in understanding isti'arah due to its abstract nature and cannot be understood directly (Zakaria et al., 2020). Students need to have high-level thinking skills to interpret the implicit meaning in the text, but the existing teaching methods are not helpful enough in building that understanding. This shows that there is a need for a new approach that can explain isti'arah in a more contextual way and is easy for students to understand.

VR Technology in Education and Potential in Teaching Abstract Concepts

In the digital age, educational technology is evolving and providing a variety of new opportunities for teachers and students. Among the technologies that are gaining attention is

VR which allows users to experience a virtual environment designed in three dimensions (Sosnilo, 2021). For example, VR has been used in various areas of learning including Arabic, which has been found to increase motivation, student engagement, as well as understanding of difficult content (Ali & Ghalib, 2024). Study Nordin (2025) states that The use of VR in Arabic learning is gaining attention as it offers a more interactive and flexible learning experience. VR allows students to interact directly with environments that simulate real-life situations related to the Arabic language (Nordin, 2025). According to studies Ali and Ghalib (2024), students show a high need for the use of VR technology in Arabic grammar learning. However, the study only focused on Arabic grammar in general and did not include the balaghah component. Additionally, there is no specific pedagogical approach to teaching figurative concepts or high language through VR.

In the context of teaching language and abstract concepts, VR has the potential to help students see, hear, and interact with learning elements in a more realistic setting (Ali & Ghalib, 2024). Although the use of VR in Islamic education is not yet widespread, some studies show that this technology can be adapted for content such as the teaching of Quranic verses, hadiths and language (Salleh et al., 2024). However, the use of VR in the teaching of balaghah is still not explored. Therefore, this study aims to examine the potential of VR as a medium that can help teachers deliver balaghah teaching in a more engaging, interactive and effective way. To support this discussion, highlights of previous studies involving the teaching of balaghah and the use of technology in education are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Highlights of Previous Studies Related to the Teaching of Balaghah and the Use of Technology in Education

Reviewer / Year	Study Focus	Key Findings	Study Gap
(Samah & Isahak, 2024)	To identify the main challenges faced in the process of learning and teaching Arabic in Malaysia.	The teaching methods used by teachers still rely heavily on translation techniques and teacher-centered.	Lack of a deep emphasis on the effectiveness of innovative approaches and the use of technology in Arabic language learning.
(Naufal & Aini, 2024)	Focus on The use of 3D (three-dimensional) learning media in helping Arabic vocabulary learning.	Increased vocabulary proficiency of students when they engage with 3D materials compared to conventional materials (2D text or pictures).	This study only focused on vocabulary, but the effectiveness of 3D media on more complex Arabic components such as sentence structure (nahu), literature, or balaghah (including isti'arah, tasybih

			and kinayah) has not been explored.
(Suhane et al., 2021)	Identify past research, find gaps in relevant studies, and analyze new issues regarding the teaching and testing of Balaghah	This study proposes the development of an instrument as a model for the Balaghah Test at the Higher Education Level (UPBal)	Balaghah assessment focuses more on cognitive domains such as knowledge, understanding, and analysis, and pays less attention to application aspects
(Amalina et al., 2024)	Using the method of isti'arah in the first verse of surah Ibrahim, as stated in Tafsir Al-Mishbah by Quraish Shihab.	The balaghah approach, especially the isti'arah method, is important to depict the profound beauty and meaning of the Qur'an and is suitable for use in the study of modern interpretation.	Educational technology was not discussed in this study. It is only done descriptively.
(Nordin, 2025)	To study the use of VR technology in Arabic language learning in Malaysia.	VR can significantly increase student engagement by providing a more interactive and immersive learning experience compared to traditional methods.	studies on the integration and delivery of isti'arah through VR have not been widely explained or developed
(Sopian & Saja, 2022)	Examining the level of mastery and problems of Form 5 students of SMKA and SABK in learning the science of balaghah, especially in Arabic.	Students face several problems in mastering balaghah, including constraints in understanding abstract concepts, limited use of aids, and lack of interest. Suggestions for improvement were also given.	The study only examined the problem and general mastery of balaghah, There are no concrete recommendations involving the use of technology as an alternative approach to help students' understanding of abstract concepts.
(Sosnilo, 2021)	Analyze the use of VR and augmented (AR)	VR/AR technology has great potential	This study is general, not

	technologies in management and education; as well as the market outlook and factors influencing its consumption.	in improving learning and management processes. The study found an increase in interest in VR through Google Trends and outlined the advantages and constraints in its implementation.	touching on the application of VR in the context of language education or the teaching of abstract concepts. There is no focus on pedagogical design or specific content that uses VR for language- or religion-based subjects.
(Ali & Ghalib, 2024)	Conduct a needs analysis on the development of VR-based Arabic grammar learning applications among university students in KUIPs.	VR is seen to have the potential to increase students' motivation in learning Arabic grammar.	The study did not have a specific pedagogical approach to the teaching of figurative concepts or high language through VR.
(Salleh et al., 2024)	Design and development of ELT-based VR applications for Year 6 Morality subjects, specifically the topic of visiting remains and graves.	This VR application provides an immersive learning experience that allows students to understand and appreciate the practice of manners virtually.	The study did not discuss the application of VR in conveying linguistic concepts or figurative language that require high cognitive interpretation.

LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS ANALYSIS

In the teaching and learning of Arabic in high school, the main challenge that is often faced is the mastery of grammar and a deep understanding of the content, especially in the aspect of the knowledge of *balaghah* which is abstract in nature (Samah & Isahak, 2024). Most schools still practice traditional approaches such as memorization, lectures, and the use of textbooks, which result in students being less actively involved and having difficulty understanding these abstract concepts. Teachers are faced with time constraints and a lack of suitable teaching aids to explain the knowledge of *balaghah* effectively.

Previous studies have shown that technology-based teaching approaches have great potential in helping students understand complex concepts. For example, the use of three-dimensional (3D) learning media has been proven to improve Arabic vocabulary mastery compared to conventional media (Sosnilo, 2021). In addition, audio-visual technology and interactive media also help strengthen the Arabic language learning process (Naufal & Aini,

2024). However, the effectiveness of technology in teaching balaghah knowledge, especially more complex components such as isti'arah, tasybih, and kinayah, is still poorly explored (Sosnilo, 2021).

The use of VR offers a more interactive and immersive learning experience, while stimulating student engagement and helping them understand abstract content more effectively (Sosnilo, 2021). The study also suggests that the application of VR in Islamic education, especially in the teaching of balaghah in high school, should be given serious attention by taking into account aspects of appropriate content design, pedagogical approaches, and technical support to make it successful (Zakaria et al., 2020).

Overall, the literature outlines several key gaps in technology-based balaghah teaching, among which are: the application of VR in balaghah subjects is less explored and studies are more focused on cognitive aspects such as knowledge and analysis, with no emphasis on the application of the concept of balaghah in a more interactive and meaningful form (Amalina et al., 2024; Salleh et al., 2024).

This paper proposes the development of VR-based learning resources that take into account the needs of students in high school as well as appropriate learning methods to teach balaghah effectively and interestingly. It is hoped that with the use of VR, the quality of balaghah teaching will be improved, and students will be able to appreciate the beauty of Arabic more deeply through more meaningful and fun learning.

LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS ANALYSIS

Analysis of Challenges and Limitations of Existing Methods

The primary and persistent challenge in teaching and learning Arabic in Religious Secondary Schools is mastering grammar and achieving an in-depth understanding of the content, particularly the inherently abstract nature of balaghah (Zakaria et al., 2020). The dominant reliance on traditional teaching methods, such as lectures, rote memorization, and textbooks, results in low student engagement and significant difficulty in internalizing these abstract concepts (Wahid et al., 2022). Furthermore, teachers face constraints related to time, technological convenience, and the lack of appropriate teaching aids necessary to effectively explain balaghah knowledge.

Analysis of Technology Potential and The Critical Research Gap

Previous studies have demonstrated the strong potential of technology-based approaches in helping students grasp complex concepts. For instance, Sosnilo (2021) reported that the use of three-dimensional (3D) learning media has been shown to improve Arabic vocabulary mastery compared to conventional media, and audio-visual technologies help strengthen the overall Arabic language learning process. However, a critical analysis of the current literature reveals a significant research gap in the context of balaghah:

1. **Focus Limited to Lower Cognitive Domains:** Most existing studies and assessments in balaghah primarily focus on cognitive domains such as knowledge, understanding, and analysis. There is a distinct lack of emphasis on the application of balaghah concepts in interactive, meaningful ways (Yusuf et al., 2022). This fails to address the core problem of balaghah mastery: the student's ability to interpret and apply figurative meaning (majaz).
2. **Absence of a Specific VR Pedagogical Framework for Balaghah:** While Virtual Reality (VR) is recognized as having high potential to increase motivation and engagement in general Arabic learning, its application specifically in the teaching of balaghah remains largely unexplored (Sidik et al., 2024). Existing studies do not offer a specific pedagogy or content design strategy to visualize the complex figurative components of balaghah, such as the transfer of meaning in isti'arah or the comparison in tasybih.

Implication of VR as a Transformative Pedagogical Solution

The literature, therefore, strongly suggests that VR offers a unique avenue to overcome the abstract nature of balaghah (Ali & Ghalib, 2024). VR is not just an interactive tool; it is a medium for visualizing higher-order thinking. It enables students to visually experience the cognitive process involved in interpreting rhetoric. For concepts like isti'arah, VR can engineer 3D environments in which students witness a visual transformation from literal to figurative meaning, thereby fostering a deeper, higher-level understanding.

For this innovation to succeed, the paper argues that implementing VR in balaghah instruction must be guided by systematic planning. This includes carefully considering appropriate content design, a relevant pedagogical approach that moves beyond memorization, and robust technical support from stakeholders.

To address the identified research gaps, this paper proposes an Immersive Rhetorical Visualization Design Framework to guide the development of VR learning resources. The framework, as shown in Figure 2, is based on the principle that abstract rhetoric needs to be transformed through three main phases: Analysis and Contextualization, Immersive Visualization Design, and Implementation and Evaluation. This framework ensures that VR focuses on cognitive application and interpretation, rather than just the display of information

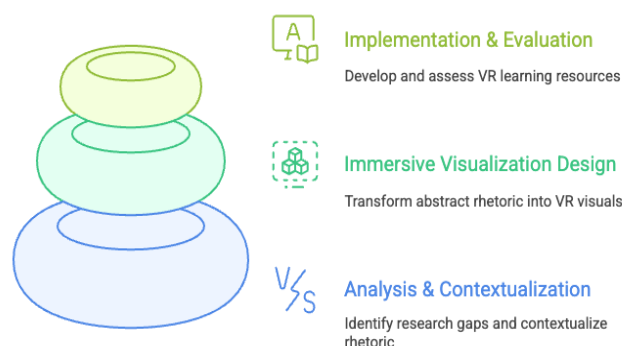


Figure 2 Immersive Rhetorical Visualization Design Framework

The Immersive Rhetorical Visualization Design Framework (Figure 2) emphasizes Immersive Visualization Design to translate the abstract rhetoric of *balaghah* into virtual reality (VR) visuals. This phase is essential because it links abstract rhetorical concepts such as *isti'arah*, *tasybih*, and *kinayah* to an interactive three-dimensional experience. The VR environment is structured to enable students to observe the process of rhetorical interpretation directly. For instance, when teaching *isti'arah tasrihiyyah*, the figurative use of the word 'lion' to mean 'brave' is visually represented rather than presented solely as text. The VR system initiates with a literal 3D scene featuring a lion in the classroom, then activates a real-time transformation in which the lion gradually changes into a teacher as the class *qarinah* (sign) is introduced. This visual transformation enables students to engage with complex shifts in meaning, moving beyond rote memorization and enhancing the overall learning experience.

CONCLUSION

The teaching of *balaghah* in Religious Secondary Schools continues to face significant challenges, primarily rooted in the abstract nature of its knowledge components and the constraints imposed by conventional teaching methods. This reliance on traditional approaches hinders students' mastery of complex rhetorical concepts like *isti'arah*, *tasybih*, and *kinayah*.

A critical review of the literature confirms that educational technology, particularly Virtual Reality (VR), holds immense potential to enhance mastery of these abstract *balaghah* concepts. While previous studies have successfully explored VR integration for general Arabic learning, such as grammar and vocabulary, a critical research gap persists: the application of VR technology within a specific pedagogical framework for teaching figurative language in *balaghah* has yet to be explored in depth.

The core argument of this paper is that VR offers a transformative solution by providing a more immersive, interactive, and meaningful learning experience. VR's unique ability to visualise abstract concepts can move students beyond rote memorisation, enabling them to actively interpret the complex transfer of meaning required for *balaghah* mastery.

Therefore, this paper proposes that successful VR learning materials be meticulously tailored to the needs of students, with effective pedagogical design and adequate technical infrastructure. This initiative is crucial not only for improving the quality of *balaghah* instruction but also for fostering a culture of creative and innovative learning. By implementing a well-designed VR framework, the goal of helping students holistically appreciate the depth and beauty of the Arabic language can be achieved, simultaneously opening avenues for similar technological applications across other areas of Islamic education.

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