

Teachers' Perspectives On Students' Challenges In Understanding Arabic Metaphors: A Qualitative Study In Government-Aided Islamic Religious Schools In Malaysia

Received 2025-10-27
Accepted 2026-09-19
Published 2026-04-02

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To cite this article: Mohd Yusoff, Nur Hidayah., Asbulan, Lily Hanefarezan., Hj Ahmad, Suhaila Zailani. (2026). Teachers' Perspectives On Students' Challenges In Understanding Arabic Metaphors: A Qualitative Study In Government-Aided Islamic Religious Schools In Malaysia. Ijaz Arabi: Journal of Arabic Learning, 9 (2), 767-782, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.V9i2.37118>

Abstract

This study aims to explore the challenges faced by students in understanding the concept of isti'arah, which is one of the important elements in the subject of Balaghah. In addition, this study also assesses the level of effectiveness of the teaching approach currently practiced in religious education institutions under the management of the Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council (MAIWP). The approach of this study was qualitative, using a semi-structured interview method involving five Form Six students from two selected religious secondary schools who implemented the Early Curriculum at the STAM level. The data obtained was analyzed using a thematic approach to identify patterns, key issues, and suggestions for improvement submitted by students. The results of the study showed that students faced various challenges such as confusion in distinguishing between literal and figurative meanings, difficulty in understanding Balaghah's technical terms, as well as the absence of effective visual aids. In addition, the teaching method that is too teacher-centred and theory-oriented is also a factor in low and passive student involvement. Students suggest that learning resources be renewed with more interactive, engaging and contextual approaches such as the use of animation, digital mind maps, virtual reality (VR) technology, as well as visual materials sourced from modern media and contemporary literary works. Based on these findings, this study proposes the development of a Technology-Based Instructional Learning Model that emphasizes elements of visualization, interactivity, and application of real-world contexts. Overall, this study contributes to efforts to empower the pedagogy of Balaghah to be more innovative, student-centric, and in line with the needs of Islamic education in the digital era and the 21st century.

Keywords: Isti'arah; Balaghah; Virtual Reality; VR; MAIWP; Arabic Rhetoric

INTRODUCTION

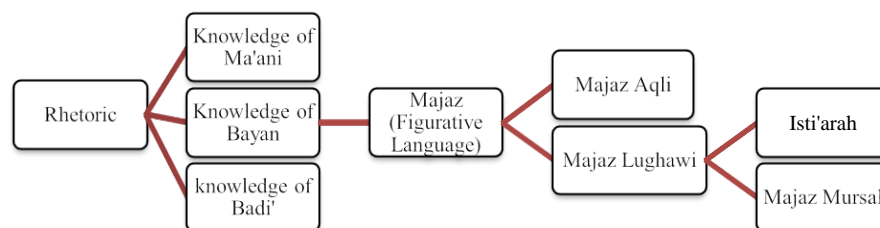
The teaching and learning of the subject of Balaghah is an important component of Islamic education at the upper secondary level, especially for students who follow the Malaysian Higher Religious Certificate (STAM). This subject is offered to students Form 6 at Sekolah Menengah Agama (SMA), Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SMKA), and religious institutions under the administration of state and federal Islamic Religious Councils such as Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council (MAIWP) (Sapudin & Othman, 2022). In STAM, Balaghah is taught as one of the 10 basic subjects

of Islamic studies and helps to increase students' awareness of the aesthetic nature of the Arabic language, especially in relation to the understanding of classical literature and the Quran (Aflisia, 2022).

One of the main topics in the science of Balaghah isti'arah, the form Majaz (metaphor) in Bayan knowledge which requires students to interpret meaning implicitly through figurative language (Azizah & Huda, 2021). However, studies show that isti'arah is a challenging component due to its abstract and symbolic nature, making it difficult for students to understand the implicit meaning if they only use a theoretical approach without visualization (Sobian, 2023). Furthermore, the overly teacher-centered method, based on memorization and textbooks, makes it difficult for students to connect isti'arah with their actual experiences (Fitriyani & Ma'mun, 2022). Since implementation Early Integrated Curriculum (KBD) in registered religious institutions in 2017, emphasis was placed on the integration between The Knowledge of Naqli and Aqli, including the study of Arabic rhetoric (Balaghah) based on the syllabus of Al-Azhar University (Zawawi et al., 2011). However, the Teaching and learning approach to topics such as isti'arah is still conventional and lacks technology or interactive teaching aids. This has led to a gap between the delivery method and the needs of the new generation of students (Stevani & Tarigan, 2022).

Therefore, this study was conducted to explore the real challenges faced by students in understanding isti'arah in the context of MAIWP institutions. This study also assesses the effectiveness of existing Teaching and learning approaches and suggests use of interactive technologies such as virtual reality (VR) as a medium of visualization to improve students' understanding of the concept of metaphor in Balaghah (Shadiev & Yang, 2020). Rhetoric (figure 1) includes three main branches, namely Knowledge of Ma'ani, Knowledge of Bayan, and Knowledge of Badi'. Ma'ani science focuses on the use of sentence structures that are appropriate to the situation and context. Bayan knowledge on the other hand includes figurative language styles including tasybih, isti'arah, kinayah and others. In this component, isti'arah falls under the category of Majaz Lughawi, which is a breakdown of Majaz, which is the non-literal use of language. Next, the Knowledge of Badi' emphasizes the elements of beauty and subtlety of language such as jinas and saj'. An understanding of these three branches is essential to master an effective and beautiful Arabic delivery style.

Figure 1 : Components of Balaghah Knowledge (Zakaria et al., 2020)



According to Azizah and Huda (2021), there are two types of isti'arah, namely Isti'arah Makniah and Isti'arah Tashrihiyah, each of which has its own method of conveying meaning and explaining abstract concepts. However, the nature of the figurative and non-literal nature of isti'arah is often a major challenge for students, especially when the teaching process is not supported by interactive and visual elements that can facilitate understanding. This challenge is faced among students who follow Balaghah subjects at the Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia (STAM) level, the topic of isti'arah

is an important component of the syllabus. The style of *isti'arah* language plays a significant role in helping students interpret implicit meanings as well as transform abstract concepts into more concrete and easy-to-understand forms (Ulum, 2022). However, based on preliminary findings, this concept is often considered complex by students in Federal Territories Islamic Religious Council (MAIWP) institutions. In the context of Malaysian education, the challenge of teaching figurative language concepts such as *isti'arah* is increasingly evident following the implementation of the Early Integrated Curriculum (KBD) which has study elements by Al-Azhar Egypt, hence the need for a more innovative and interactive pedagogical approach.

One of the main issues in *isti'arah* learning is the level of complexity of this concept which is considered too high by most students, resulting in their lack of involvement and motivation to delve into this subject. Without visual aids, students often struggle to understand and appreciate the metaphors contained in classical Arabic texts. The visualization method is one of the approaches that can make abstract concepts more concrete and easy to understand (Hetty Zaharani et al., 2023).

The use of conventional teaching methods that rely solely on theory and textbooks may not be sufficient to meet students' diverse learning needs. This can lead to a gap between the teaching approach and the student's level of understanding. According to Stevani and Tarigan (2022) a more innovative and responsive approach to teaching is urgently needed to bridge this gap. Therefore, there is an urgent need for more innovative teaching resources that utilize modern technology to increase students' interest and understanding of *isti'arah*. Therefore, this study aims to identify the factors contributing to students' difficulty in understanding the concept of *isti'arah* in Balaghah in institutions under MAIWP. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a clearer picture of the factors that hinder student understanding and assess the potential of digital technology integration as a tool to create a more engaging and effective learning experience.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach, with structured interviews as the primary instrument, to obtain comprehensive and focused data. This design was chosen to identify the challenges students face in understanding the concept of *isti'arah* and to analyze the need to integrate immersive technology into the teaching and learning process of Balaghah subjects at the Form 6 level. These interviews were conducted face-to-face and focused on predetermined questions aligned with the study's objectives.

The data collected will be analyzed thematically, using NVivo software to identify recurring patterns, issues, and categories in student responses. This method allows researchers to collect descriptive, in-depth information about students' real experiences, thereby providing a clearer picture of the effectiveness of current approaches and the potential of technologies such as virtual reality (VR) to facilitate understanding of *isti'arah* concepts. This approach was chosen for its structured yet flexible nature, which allows for more accurate triangulation of findings and, subsequently, suggests pedagogical interventions that are relevant and based on the students' actual needs.

Data were collected using two main methods, i.e. semi-structured interviews were chosen because they provided the flexibility to explore research topics in depth while allowing participants to share their experiences and views more freely (Hanna et al., 2016). A total of five form 6 students were selected as study participants. Interview questions focus on:

1. Challenges in learning isti'arah.
2. Perception of existing teaching styles.
3. Their suggestions for more helpful learning resources.
4. The potential for the integration of interactive technology in the teaching of isti'arah.

Classroom observations are conducted to understand directly how students interact with isti'arah learning materials as well as their responses to the teaching approach used. This method allows researchers to assess the effectiveness of the teaching strategies used by teachers and students' responses to different approaches (Suter, 2012).

The selection of samples in this study was intentional (purposive sampling), taking into account the context of educational institutions under the supervision of the Federal Territories Islamic Religious Council (MAIWP). This decision was made based on the uniqueness of the structures and curricula offered by MAIWP institutions, which reflect the diversity of approaches in mainstream and Diniyyah Islamic education. MAIWP supervises four secondary schools, including two schools based on the Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM), one school that fully implements the Early Curriculum, and one private school that combines the Early Curriculum, KSSM, and Turath simultaneously (Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council) (2022).

This diversity of curriculum approaches makes the MAIWP institution an appropriate and strategic field to deeply understand students' experiences in learning isti'arah especially from the aspects of understanding, teaching, as well as the need for the integration of immersive technologies such as virtual reality (VR). By involving five students from different institutions within the framework of MAIWP, this study was able to obtain rich, specific and meaningful data, in line with the goals of the qualitative approach. This selection is also in line with the recommendations Creswell and Creswell (2023) that small-scale qualitative studies emphasize depth rather than breadth, and allow researchers to explore in detail the perceptions, experiences, and challenges faced by study participants in the context of isti'arah learning. Although the number may seem small, it is quite suitable for qualitative studies that are more concerned with depth of information than numbers. As stated by Creswell and Creswell (2023) Qualitative studies that aim to understand a phenomenon in depth usually only involve between 5 and 25 participants. This allows researchers to truly dive into their challenges in understanding isti'arah as well as see how they respond to the use of immersive technology in teaching and learning.

The sample selection criteria (table 1) were made based on several criteria such as level of education, institution, experience and willingness to share experiences openly and reflectively. Furthermore, the use of structured interviews provides space for dense and focused data collection, in line with inductive approaches in qualitative research.

Table 1. Sample Selection Criteria

Criteria	Details
Ed Level	Form 6
Institutions	2 Secondary Schools under the MAIWP Institution that have Form 6 Early Curriculum
Experience	Have studied the topic of isti'arah in Balaghah
Willingness	Willing to share experiences and engage in interviews

A thematic analysis approach with the support of NVivo software is used to analyze qualitative data from student interviews. Researchers use this software to support

an inductive approach in qualitative research by helping them organize, manage, and categorize data more systematically and comprehensively (Mortelmans, 2019).

The analysis process begins with a verbatim transcription of the interview recording, followed by a review and cleansing of the data to ensure the accuracy of the information obtained. The transcripts that have been reviewed then go through an inductively initial coding process, where researchers identify repetitive patterns or patterns that appear naturally in the data. This coding is not guided by pre-set categories but rather is centred on meanings that emerge from the participants' own data. The identified codes are then grouped into several key themes that explain the student's learning experience. Among the themes formed include cognitive challenges in understanding terminology, learning experiences through existing approaches, suggestions for new learning resources, and the potential of interactive technologies such as virtual reality in improving students' understanding. These themes reflect an important dimension in the relationship between the content of Balaghah's lessons and the actual needs of students in the classroom. All the themes identified are then critically analysed with reference to past studies and related conceptual frameworks. The findings from this study were compared with previous findings to assess the similarity or difference in outcomes, thus reinforcing the contribution of the study to the current discourse in Arabic language education and technology integration.

From the ethical aspect of research, this study has obtained approval from the relevant institutional research boards before the data collection process is carried out. All participants are provided with an informed consent form detailing the purpose of the study, the right to confidentiality, as well as the freedom to withdraw at any time without any implications. The identity of the participants is fully protected, and any personal information is not disclosed in any publication. The implementation of this ethics proves the commitment of researchers to the principles of academic integrity and responsibility.

To ensure that the study findings are reliable, several strategies have been used to improve the credibility and accuracy of the data analysis. Validity in qualitative research refers to how the findings of the study reflect the real reality, while reliability refers to the consistency of the results of the study if it is repeated in the same context (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Data triangulation is used to improve the validity of the findings by combining various sources of information in the analysis. In this study, a semi-structured interview was used to ensure the consistency and validity of the information obtained from the study participants (Lemon & Hayes, 2020). Interviews allow researchers to gain an in-depth perspective on the challenges students face in understanding *isti'arah*.

Expert review is another strategy used to ensure that researchers' interpretation of the data obtained is accurate and not misinterpreted (Candela, 2019). In this study, participants were provided with a summary of the interview transcripts to confirm that their views were correctly interpreted and not distorted by the researcher's bias. This method not only improves the accuracy of the analysis but also ensures that the collected information accurately reflects participants' experiences and perspectives. If there are any discrepancies or misunderstandings, participants have the opportunity to make corrections or provide additional clarifications to clarify their meaning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study shows some of the problems faced by Form 6 students when they understand the concept of *isti'arah* in the subject of Balaghah. It also shows their views on the effectiveness of the teaching methods they currently use, and they make concrete recommendations on how to make learning resources more appropriate and interactive.

In a semi-structured interview, four main questions are prioritized: Students face difficulties in understanding the term, their experience with the chosen teaching methodology, as well as suggestions for more effective teaching resources and methods perspectives on the use of digital technologies such as virtual reality in *isti'arah* learning. Interview data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which allowed researchers to identify patterns and themes that reflected students' authentic experiences.

Through this process, four main themes emerge that comprehensively describe the dimensions of students' challenges and needs: challenges in understanding *isti'arah*, less impactful teaching approaches, need for interactive learning resources, the importance of contextual applications in students' daily lives, challenges in understanding *isti'arah*.

CA1: "I find it difficult to understand the *isti'arah*. I became less enthusiastic because I didn't understand."

CA2: "I feel demotivated to learn Arabic, especially when it comes to Balaghah."

CA3: "Sometimes when I want to translate into Malay it is a bit difficult because I don't understand the meaning."

CA4: "I don't understand the meaning of *isti'arah* sentences, so when I want to equate it with Bahasa Melayu I don't know how to relate it at all."

The results of the interviews show that students face significant challenges in understanding *isti'arah*, particularly in distinguishing between literal and figurative meanings in Balaghah texts. Confusion often occurs when students are confronted with sentences that contain metaphorical elements, as they tend to interpret literally without being aware of the implicit meaning they want to convey. This difficulty is further complicated when the texts used have a broad context and allow for various forms of interpretation.

Technical terms in Balaghah are also a big challenge for students. Terms such as *isti'arah asliyyah* (الاستعارة الأصلية) and *isti'arah tabi'iyah* (الاستعارة التبعية) used in the analysis of Balaghah are often considered complex and difficult to understand. Most students state that they just memorize definitions without really understanding how *isti'arah* is used in sentences. This causes difficulties in identifying *isti'arah* in Arabic literary texts, especially when the verses are not accompanied by clearer examples or explanations. In addition, students also face difficulties in describing abstract metaphors found in learning texts. The concept of *isti'arah* is often associated with symbolic parables and figurative depictions, which require a high level of imagination to understand. However, without the support of auxiliary materials such as illustrations, diagrams, or animations, students face the challenge of visualizing these concepts clearly.

Main Factors Influencing Students' Difficulty in Understanding *Isti'arah*

The findings of this study reveal that there are several key factors (table 2) that significantly influence the level of difficulty of students in understanding the concept of *Isti'arah* in the subject of Balaghah. These factors are not only related to the learning content but also involve aspects of the pedagogical approach and teacher delivery. One of the most dominant factors is students' confusion of figurative language. Many students

show a tendency to interpret the meaning of Isti'arah literally, whereas this style of language demands an understanding of the implicit and connotative meaning. This confusion often stems from a lack of exposure to metaphorical interpreting techniques in the context of classical Arabic. As a result, students fail to grasp the layers of meaning contained in the text, thus compromising their understanding of the rhetorical structure of the sentence.

In addition, the use of complex technical terms and abstract concepts in Balaghah is also a significant challenge. Terms such as *musyabbah*, *musyabbah bih*, and *wajh al-shabah*, which are the main components of the analysis of Isti'arah, are often considered foreign and difficult for students to master, especially when they are not accompanied by contextual explanations or examples that are relevant to everyday life situations. Students state that they find it difficult to relate these terms to the experience or reality they understand, thus making the learning process mechanical and meaningless.

Furthermore, the absence of visual aids in the teaching process was also identified as a factor that worsened the situation. Teachers' teaching approaches that rely too much on written texts without the support of graphics, illustrations, or interactive visual media such as videos and animations cause students to be unable to imagine or visualize the relationships between the elements in the Isti'arah. This lack of visual material limits students' comprehension, especially for those with visual and kinesthetic learning styles. In the era of digital technology, the absence of integration of multimedia materials in Balaghah's teaching is seen as a significant shortcoming.

These findings can be summarized as table 2, showing that confusion of figurative language, difficulty understanding abstract terms, and absence of visual aids work collectively in forming cognitive barriers that make it difficult for students to master the concept of Isti'arah. Therefore, efforts to improve the teaching process of Balaghah need to take into account a more contextual, technology-based, and student-friendly approach so that the rhetorical elements in Arabic can be understood more effectively.

Table 2. Challenges Affecting Students' Difficulties in Understanding Isti'arah

Main Themes	Issues/ Challenges	Suggestions by Students
Confusing Figurative Language	Students interpret literally; fail to understand the implicit meaning	Use a literal vs metaphorical comparison illustration; Examples of everyday situations
Abstract and Complex Terms	Technical terms are difficult to understand without context	Explanations through mind maps and contextual analogies
Absence of visual aids	Relies entirely on written text	Use images, graphics, short videos, and interactive animations
Passive Teaching Strategies	Existing approach is too teacher-centric, lacks student involvement	Use collaborative and interactive learning methods such as simulations and group discussions
No Interactive Technology Integration	No use of VR/AR in the teaching of abstract concepts	Proposed use of VR to present Isti'arah in 3D and dynamic environments

1. Less Impactful Teaching Approaches

The results of the interviews show that the existing teaching methods for isti'arah in Balaghah subjects are still theory-oriented and do not provide an interesting learning experience to students. Most students noted that the teaching is often delivered in the form of textbook-based one-way lectures only, and even the teaching only emphasizes the memorization of definitions and isti'arah rules without the application of interactive elements or practical application in real-life contexts. As a result, students

face difficulties in connecting the concept of isti'arah with examples that are closer to their understanding. One of the main challenges identified is the lack of use of digital tools in teaching, such as animations, interactive applications, and visual simulations that can help students understand the difference between literal meaning and metaphor. Although technology has been used in a variety of other subjects, Balaghah's teaching approach still relies on printed materials such as textbooks and written notes, which are less appealing to students.

Furthermore, the lack of visual examples in teaching also makes it difficult for students to understand. The concept of isti'arah often requires students to imagine the relationship between two elements that are metaphorically compared. Without the support of visual materials such as diagrams, mind maps, or illustrations, students are forced to rely entirely on the teacher's oral explanations, which can sometimes be difficult to follow, especially for students who do not have a strong foundation in Balaghah. In addition, students also reported that the passive lecture approach made them less interested in actively engaging in learning sessions. Most students note that teaching is more teacher-centered, without many opportunities for them to interact, ask questions, or discuss in groups. This approach makes it difficult for students to build a deep understanding because they do not have the opportunity to apply isti'arah in more practical exercises or activities.

Key Challenges Affecting Teaching Effectiveness: less use of digital tools, the teaching method is still traditional such as lectures and memorization and does not apply digital technology to improve the understanding of isti'arah, disadvantages of visual examples, students find it difficult to understand isti'arah because there are no visual materials such as animations, concept maps, or illustrations that can help them visualize the relationships between the elements in isti'arah, passive lecture approach, the lack of interaction and activities that actively involve students makes them less interested in learning isti'arah.

2. Pedagogical Approach Is Ineffective

it can be concluded that the existing teaching methods are less effective because they do not account for the needs of more interactive, visual learning. Students need more innovative approaches, including the use of digital technologies and visually assisted learning methods, as well as more dynamic learning activities such as group discussions, simulation-based exercises, and collaborative projects. This approach can not only improve their understanding of isti'arah but also help them apply this concept in a broader context.

3. Need for Interactive Learning Resources

The interviews found that students, as a whole, expect more interactive, visual, and practical learning resources to help them understand the concept of isti'arah more deeply. Students are of the view that the traditional approach, which relies too much on textbooks and lecture delivery, is not sufficient to explain the concept of isti'arah, which is abstract in nature and requires contextual understanding. In this regard, they suggest several improvements by using teaching aids that are more engaging, modern, and aligned with current learning needs.

Key Recommendations for Improvement of Learning Resources: use of visual aids. Students note that materials such as mind maps, diagrams, and concept illustrations can help them understand the relationship between literal meaning and metaphor in isti'arah more clearly. With visualization, it is easier for them to

remember and understand how *isti'arah* is used in a sentence as well as how it functions in a broader context.

4. Integration of Digital Technology and Virtual Reality (VR)

One of the main suggestions from students is the use of digital technology in *isti'arah* learning. They noted that interactive learning apps, animated videos, and virtual reality (VR) can enhance their understanding by allowing them to experience for themselves the transition of meaning from the literal to the metaphorical in a more dynamic and fun form. The students also suggested an artificial intelligence (AI)-based application that is able to provide instant feedback and correct errors directly.

5. Discussion-Based Learning and Collaborative Projects

In addition to visual and digital aids, students also suggest learning methods that involve them more actively, such as group discussions, simulations, and collaborative projects. They believe that by interacting and discussing with friends, they can build a deeper understanding as well as strengthen their understanding of *isti'arah* through application in various communication situations.

6. The Need for Interactive and Modernized Resources

Overall, the majority of participants stated that students were more likely to understand *isti'arah* through a more visual and high-tech approach. The integration of interactive and digital elements into the teaching of *Balaghah* can enhance students' concentration, understanding, and interest in *isti'arah*. Therefore, educators and curriculum developers need to consider more innovative strategies, such as developing digital learning modules, integrating virtual reality into teaching, and using gamification to ensure learning is more effective and relevant to current technological developments.

7. The Importance of Contextual Applications in Students' Daily Live

The findings of the study show that students emphasize the need to understand *isti'arah* through a real-life context so that the concept can be applied more effectively and significantly in daily situations. Students are of the view that the teaching of *isti'arah* should not be limited to the mere memorization of definitions and analysis of classical texts but rather should be extended to practical and contextual applications that are authentic. Students admit that they find it easier to understand *isti'arah* when it is linked to examples from modern literature, contemporary media, and everyday communication, as it allows them to see how *isti'arah* is used in the current environment and popular culture.

8. Case Studies and Examples from Literature and Popular Media

Students suggest that *isti'arah* teaching involves case studies related to classical and modern literary texts, including poems, short stories, novels, and Islamic literary works. In addition, they also suggested that examples of *isti'arah* be taken from contemporary media such as movies, dramas, advertisements, and songs, as this allows them to understand how *isti'arah* is used in daily communication. This approach can make learning more relevant and engaging and help students relate *isti'arah* to a wider cultural and social context.

9. Use of Dynamic Multimedia and Visual Resources

Students also suggested the use of videos and animations as tools to explain the concept of *isti'arah* in stages. They believe that moving visual illustrations can help them understand the difference between literal and metaphorical meanings more clearly. For example, animation can be used to show how an object or idea undergoes

a transformation of meaning in the term, providing a more concrete and easy-to-understand picture.

10. Relevance of Concepts to the Real World

The results show that students understand isti'arah more easily when it is related to situations and examples that are relevant to their lives. Therefore, the teaching of isti'arah should be multiplied with examples from modern media, case studies, and the use of multimedia technology to ensure a deeper understanding. This approach not only helps students understand isti'arah in Balaghah but also improves critical and analytical thinking skills when they see the use of isti'arah in various forms of communication.

Table 3. An Interactive Technology Approach to Understanding Isti'arah

Theme	Key Findings	Participant Quotes	Encoding
Challenges in Understanding Isti'arah	Difficulty understanding literal and metaphorical meanings	"I'm trying to be interested, distinguish between the literal meaning umm, the metaphorical meaning but I'm not clear on what it means"	Difficulty distinguishing literal and metaphorical meanings, Challenges with figurative language
	Technical terms and rules of isti'arah are difficult to understand	"The terms and, haa, the rules in isti'arah are a bit complicated."	Complexity of terms, Confusion with rules
	It's hard to imagine abstract metaphors	"I had a difficult problem, imagining or kind of really imagining a metaphor."	Difficulties in visualization, Abstract examples
Less Impactful Teaching Approaches	Lecture-based method	"The method used is mostly based on only lectures and writing, which can make it difficult for me to engage with the abstract of isti'arah."	Theory-based teaching methods, Less involvement
	Lack of use of digital tools	"There's not a lot of use, um, digital tools or, like, multimedia materials."	Uses of real-life examples, Limited use of digital tools
Need for Interactive Learning Resources.	Use of visual aids	"Using visual aids such as diagrams or mind maps will really help me to illustrate isti'arah."	Need for visual aids, Visualization of concepts
	Interactive digital resources (apps/virtual reality)	"Interactive digital resources, such as apps or virtual reality, are appropriate."	Desire for interactive digital resources, Interest in virtual reality
	Collaborative learning through group discussions	"Group discussions or collaborative projects will help, because discussing isti'arah with others can reveal different interpretations."	Preference for group discussions, Collaborative learning
The Importance of Contextual Applications in Students' Daily Lives	Case studies and examples from literature and popular media	"Case studies and real examples of isti'arah in literature or the media will help."	Need for real-life examples, Contextual learning
	Use of multimedia resources and Dynamic Visuals	"Multimedia resources such as videos or animations that solve complex examples of step-by-step instructions will be very useful."	Requirements for multimedia resources, Step-by-step explanation

The results of the analysis of interview responses from five form 6 students revealed four main themes that represent their experiences and perceptions of isti'arah learning. Each theme was obtained through an inductive coding process, where the initial codes identified in the participants' transcripts were grouped based on meanings that were interrelated and aligned with the objectives of the study. Challenges in understanding isti'arah, less impactful teaching approaches, Need for interactive and modern learning resources, and the importance of contextual applications in real life. This theme is derived from the subtheme code as shown in figure 2 below:

Figure 2. Difficulty in Understanding Isti'arah in Balaghah Subjects



The results of the observations show that while students appreciate certain aspects of their current learning experience, such as real-life examples, there are significant gaps in engagement and understanding due to the abstract nature of isti'arah and the limitations of traditional teaching methods. Student feedback shows a preference for a more interactive and visually oriented approach to teaching, which they believe can help bridge the gap between abstract concepts and their understanding. This is in line with the study's objectives to analyze the effectiveness of current teaching methods and suggest that the integration of digital tools, such as virtual reality, can address some of the challenges identified.

Furthermore, participants' emphasis on practical applications and relatable examples suggests that teaching methods should not only convey aspects of isti'arah theory but also relate them to real-life contexts. This has the potential to make lessons more engaging and memorable for students, leading to better comprehension and retention.

The findings of this study are in line with the findings of several international and regional studies. For example, a study by Safar and Raman (2021) demonstrate that virtual reality (VR) technology helps students understand abstract theoretical concepts more concretely through immersive visualization. This supports the recommendations of the students in this study to use VR in explaining Isti'arah that is difficult to understand through traditional methods. Furthermore (Parmar et al., 2022) found that the use of interactive presentation software such as PowerPoint can improve understanding of figurative language styles in poetry. These findings also confirm the students' need for visual learning materials such as diagrams and illustrations.

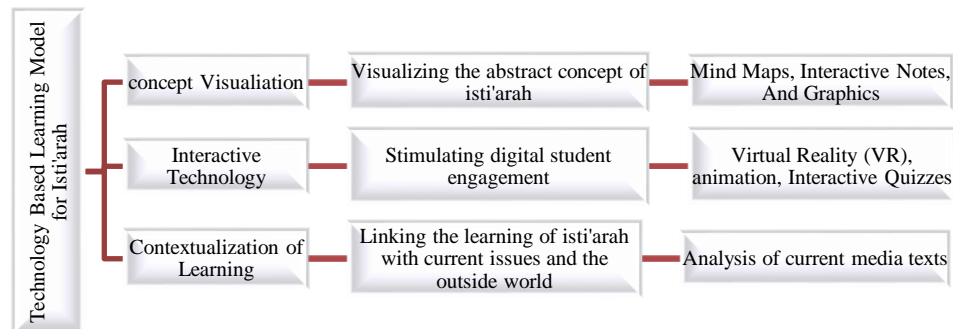
In the context of the use of augmented reality (AR), Cai et al. (2022) report improved students' ability in language skills when they interact with visual elements in the context of actual learning. Luo et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review of 30 empirical studies on Augmented Reality (AR)-supported language learning published between 2008 and 2022. Their analysis covered aspects of the technology used, target language, pedagogical approaches, learning activities, and the main outcomes of the studies. They found that the use of AR in language learning can improve student motivation, engagement, and achievement, especially in learning vocabulary and verbal skills. However, they also emphasize challenges such as teacher training requirements and the design of effective AR applications. This is in line with the findings that students in this study are easier to understand when they are linked to the context of daily life and assisted by animation and multimedia. All these comparisons emphasize that the integration of digital technology in learning is not only effective in terms of content delivery, but also able to improve students' understanding of abstract linguistic concepts such as Isti'arah in a more comprehensive and contextual manner.

The findings of this study show that the understanding of isti'arah among students can be improved through the use of technology in learning. Students who use interactive digital tools, such as apps, videos, and animations, show a deeper understanding than conventional learning methods (Jaxongirmirzo, 2024). In addition, collaborative learning approaches, including group discussions and joint projects can build Baharu resilience (Lam, 2013). This approach also contributes to increasing the understanding of isti'arah. Based on the results of this study, a model was introduced as a new approach as a result of the findings of this study, which shows the need for the integration of technology in the teaching of isti'arah to improve students' understanding. This model, as shown in Figure 3, suggests that a combination of technology and group learning can lead to better and deeper understanding.

The Technology-Based Isti'arah Learning Model consists of three main components: conceptual visualization, interactive technology, and contextualization of learners. This model emphasizes the use of interactive digital tools, followed by an approach that supports students' active and in-depth understanding of the concept of isti'arah. Each element in this model complements each other to create a more meaningful, dynamic and contextual learning experience. This model also supports modern pedagogical principles that meaningfully integrate technology in the classroom.

This model proposal is in line with the findings of previous studies that prove the effectiveness of technology in improving understanding of abstract concepts (Samah & Isahak, 2024). Therefore, the use of this model has the potential to be used as a guide in the teaching of Isti'arah to ensure a more effective, contextual and relevant teaching strategy to current educational needs.

Figure 3. Technology-Based Isti'arah Learning Model



CONCLUSION

This study has some limitations that deserve attention. The small sample size, involving only five participants, is likely not fully representative of the wider student population. In addition, the focus of the study more on the perspective of students without involving in-depth insights from teachers or administrators also limits the breadth of the scope of findings. However, the results of the study show that students' understanding of isti'arah can be significantly improved through a more interactive, visual, and technology-based approach to learning. Conventional teaching methods that are purely theoretical and lecture-oriented have been found to be less helpful in explaining abstract concepts such as isti'arah. On the other hand, students appreciate learning strategies that involve the use of mind maps, diagrams, animations, virtual reality, as well as collaborative methods such as group discussions and joint projects. Overall, these findings provide a strong justification for the need to overhaul the pedagogical approach in the teaching of Balaghah to be more in line with the current needs of students and the development of educational technology.

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