

Pedagogical Challenges in Balaghah Teaching for Higher Education: A Dual Perspective Analysis from Students and Lecturers

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap tantangan-tantangan yang dihadapi dalam pengajaran ilmu Balaghah, dengan melakukan analisis komprehensif dari perspektif mahasiswa dan dosen di perguruan tinggi. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode pengumpulan data berupa wawancara, kuesioner terbuka dan observasi digunakan untuk menggali pengalaman dan pandangan mahasiswa serta pengajar terhadap proses pengajaran ilmu Balaghah. Temuan penelitian ini, Pertama, masalah dalam aspek proses pembelajaran mencakup kurangnya motivasi mahasiswa, penggunaan metode pembelajaran dan kegiatan yang monoton, ketidakmemadaannya kemampuan mahasiswa terhadap materi prasyarat, dan kendala pada perkuliahan daring. Kedua, dalam aspek fasilitas pendukung, terdapat kendala terkait media pembelajaran yang digunakan, ketidaksesuaian buku utama dengan kebutuhan, dan keterbatasan sumber belajar bagi mahasiswa. Ketiga, permasalahan pada aspek evaluasi mencakup kecenderungan evaluasi yang hanya menguji aspek teoretis ilmu Balaghah semata. Dengan demikian, pemahaman mendalam terhadap ketiga aspek ini menjadi penting dalam meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran ilmu Balaghah.

Kata Kunci: *Tantangan Pedagogik, Ilmu Balaghah, Perguruan Tinggi*

Abstract: This study aims to unveil the challenges encountered in teaching Ilm Balaghah course by conducting a comprehensive analysis from the perspectives of both students and lecturers in higher education. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing data collection methods such as interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and observations to explore the experiences and views of students and lecturers regarding the process of teaching Ilm Balaghah. The research findings identify several challenges, encompassing issues in the learning process, support facilities, and evaluation aspects of teaching Ilm Balaghah. Firstly, challenges in the learning process involve issues such as students' lack of motivation, the use of monotonous teaching methods and activities, inadequacies in students' understanding of prerequisite materials, and constraints in online lectures. Secondly, concerning support facilities, challenges arise related to the use of instructional media, discrepancies between main textbooks and needs, and limitations in learning resources for students. Thirdly, issues in the evaluation aspect include a tendency for evaluations that only test the theoretical aspects of Ilm Balaghah. Therefore, a profound understanding of these three aspects is crucial in enhancing the quality of teaching Ilm Balaghah.

Keywords: *Challenges in learning, Balaghah, Higher education*

1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of Balaghah in higher education presents a unique set of pedagogical challenges that affect both students and lecturers. Balaghah, the art of

Arabic rhetoric, requires not only a deep understanding of linguistic rules but also the ability to apply these principles creatively and contextually. Despite its importance, students often face difficulties

in engaging with the material, stemming from a lack of motivation and perceived irrelevance to their daily lives and future careers. Concurrently, lecturers grapple with the task of making this complex subject accessible and engaging, often hindered by monotonous teaching methods and insufficient pedagogical resources. The State Islamic University Imam Bonjol Padang or UIN IB Padang is a highly sought-after institution for Islamic higher education in the city of Padang, West Sumatra (Abdi, 2023). This university has earned a distinguished reputation with eight faculties and over 30 study programs. Among these, the Arabic Language Education Study Program stands out for its excellent quality and has attained accreditation A at UIN IB Padang (0_Home_UIN, 2022).

The Arabic Language Education Program at UIN IB Padang has the primary mission of producing highly qualified Arabic language teachers. This mission is implemented through a holistic education approach that involves students in the comprehensive development of Arabic language skills (Abdi, 2023). In the effort to achieve this objective, the curriculum planning in this program is designed by considering competencies in various scholarly fields, encompassing both the methodologies of teaching and Arabic linguistics. As graduates of this program, students are expected to possess not only competence in teaching methods but also a profound expertise in Arabic linguistics.

Several courses related to Arabic linguistics, designated as integral components of this program's curriculum, include Nahwu, Sharf, Maharaat Lughawiyah, and Ilmu Balaghah (Wartiman & Ilyas, 2022). The entirety of these courses is directed towards strengthening students' understanding and skills in crucial aspects of Arabic linguistics, providing a solid foundation for graduates to become competent and high-quality educators in the field of the Arabic

language (Hasibuan & Siregar, 2023; Triana et al., 2018).

The study of Ilmu Balaghah is presented in the fifth semester as part of the curriculum of the Arabic Language Education Program. A profound understanding of the Arabic language is an essential prerequisite for exploring this course. Ilmu Balaghah addresses various aspects of the Arabic language in the context of expression to effectively convey messages, both orally and in writing (حسنای و عیسانی, 2014; مایدی, 2022). In this context, a sufficient understanding of the fundamental sciences of the Arabic language, such as nahwu and sharf, serves as a crucial foundation for studying Ilmu Balaghah (الوائلی, 2004). Mastery of this course is expected to enrich students' knowledge in detailing and presenting messages clearly, systematically, and persuasively (شیخون, 1974; العالم, 2006).

Based on the researcher's observations, it can be concluded that the course of Ilmu Balaghah is perceived as a significant challenge by a number of students, with some even considering it difficult. The academic performance of students during this course is also assessed as low (Fitriyani, 2023). This phenomenon poses a challenge that necessitates in-depth and careful handling. A comprehensive analysis is required to identify the root causes in order to take appropriate actions (زینب, 2023). Therefore, this research is expected to make a significant contribution by engaging the perspectives of both students and faculty members. The collaborative insights from both parties are anticipated to narrow down the focus and map out the core elements of the issue. This is envisioned to provide a foundation for the formulation of accurate and relevant solutions to address the challenges arising in the teaching of the Balaghah course.

Consistent with the content of this article, several prior studies have been

referenced. Firstly, there is research examining the challenges of online Arabic language learning, which meticulously identifies difficulties in all four Arabic language skills (Corinna et al., 2020). Secondly, there is research focusing on the challenges of teaching *Ilm Balaghah* to higher education students, indicating difficulties in design aspects, teaching methods, materials, and assessment of *Balaghah* learning (Muqit, 2019a). The third study explores the issues faced by Arabic language teachers in teaching *Balaghah*. The results reveal five main issues, including teaching methods and approaches, student motivation, pedagogical aspects, learning evaluation, and the lack of adequate references (Sulaiman & Wahid, 2021). The similarity of this research with previous studies lies in collectively highlighting the challenges of teaching *Balaghah* in the context of Arabic language instruction. The difference with previous studies is that this research will explore issues from various aspects, including the learning process, supporting facilities, and evaluation, both faced by lecturers and students.

In reviewing previous studies, this research is regarded as a highly essential contribution, considering its broad and significant implications in the realm of education, particularly in the context of Arabic language learning at the tertiary level. These implications encompass various aspects related to curriculum formulation, instructional material development, selection of teaching methods, student mentoring, and faculty training. The research implications are expected to yield a positive contribution to the advancement of educational practices in this domain, aligning with contemporary demands to enhance the quality of higher education in Indonesia.

2. METHOD

This research applies a qualitative descriptive research design with the aim of obtaining a profound understanding of the

challenges faced by students in learning *Ilm Balaghah*. The qualitative approach provides space for researchers to explore nuances, contexts, and meanings that form the basis of the challenges encountered by students (Merriam, 1988). The data used in this study were directly obtained by the researcher from fifth-semester students in the Arabic Language Education Program at the State Islamic University Imam Bonjol Padang who were currently undergoing *Balaghah* learning.

The researcher employed data collection techniques comprising open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and observations. In the initial phase, the study commenced by distributing questionnaires to all participating students. The responses from the questionnaires were then recorded and analyzed to identify patterns that could support and reinforce the aspects under investigation (Creswell, 2008). Subsequently, in-depth interviews were conducted with the lecturers teaching *ilm Balaghah* and the students. The aim of these interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of potential issues arising in the process of learning *ilm Balaghah*, both from the perspectives of the lecturers and the students undergoing the instruction (Rukajat, 2018). Finally, the gathered data underwent further scrutiny through additional observations to ensure the accuracy and precision of the collected information (Cowie, 2009).

The data analysis process involves several steps: first, the collection of data from the three implemented techniques. Subsequently, the data is streamlined by eliminating irrelevant information not aligned with the research focus. The simplified data is then summarized and analyzed. Finally, data from both methods will be juxtaposed, and a narrative will be crafted to draw conclusions (Miles, 2014). This approach enables the researcher to attain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges in teaching *Balaghah* from various perspectives, encompassing both

students and lecturers involved in the learning process.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The explanation of the research results is structured into three main interconnected sub-discussions: the aspect of the learning process, the aspect of supporting facilities, and the aspect of evaluation.

Learning Process Aspect

The issues within the Ilm Balaghah lectures, as observed in the aspects of the learning process, encompass challenges in the teaching and learning activities from both student and lecturer perspectives.

Firstly, there is a notable lack of learning motivation among the students. Students demonstrate insufficient enthusiasm and motivation to actively engage in the lectures, showing a reluctance to explore their potential within this course. This assumption is supported by factual findings indicating that some students are not earnestly participating in the learning process, with instances of individuals dozing off, thereby neglecting attention and demonstrating limited involvement in class activities. The tendency for students to sleep and their lack of enthusiasm toward learning may be attributed to the perception that the teaching methods employed are uninteresting and a lack of motivation to consider the course as significant. Additionally, other factors may also contribute to this issue.

The study of learning motivation is a common focus in educational science (Sánchez-Santamaría et al., 2021). Motivation plays a crucial role in students' learning achievements, with research indicating that high learning motivation is positively associated with academic performance (Jannah et al., 2021; Palittin et al., 2019). Students with high learning motivation tend to exhibit strong performance in learning activities, and conversely, those with low motivation may show suboptimal performance (Hasibuan, Fitriani, et al., 2023). In this context, the

lack of enthusiasm among students in the study of Ilmu Balaghah indicates low learning motivation.

Data analysis reveals that a primary cause of students' low learning motivation is their insufficient understanding of the concrete objectives and benefits of studying Balaghah. Therefore, it is imperative for educators to explicitly elucidate the urgency and objectives of the learning process to students before commencing the material delivery (Dörnyei, 2020). A clear comprehension regarding the goals, relevance, and instructional methods is poised to impact students' learning motivation (Susanti, 2020).

Another factor that can contribute to students' lack of enthusiasm for learning is the perceived disconnect between the course material and their daily lives. Some students may encounter difficulty in recognizing the relevance of the coursework to their career development or future lives. Therefore, efforts should be made to provide concrete and applicable examples of how the knowledge gained from the course can be beneficial in their real-world experiences.

According to learning motivation theory, the connection between learning material and daily life is a crucial factor influencing students' motivation levels. This theory encompasses the concept of "relevance" as one of the key elements in shaping intrinsic motivation among students (Silva et al., 2022). If students can perceive the connection between learning materials and their personal experiences and needs, they are more likely to experience engagement and value in the learning process (Ferrer et al., 2022). This theory emphasizes that when students recognize how acquired knowledge can be applied in their daily lives, they become more motivated to comprehend and master the subject matter (Haerullah et al., 2024; Zaharo et al., 2024). Therefore, the lack of relevance between course content and everyday life can serve as a barrier to

fostering students' intrinsic motivation, subsequently impacting their enthusiasm for the learning process (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Hence, efforts to create a more relevant and contextual learning context can aid in enhancing students' motivation and interest in the course (Ramadhanti et al., 2024).

Secondly, the teaching methods and activities are monotonous. The methods applied in conducting lecture activities are perceived as monotonous and insufficient in stimulating student engagement within the classroom during each meeting. Based on the researcher's observations, the teaching methods for Ilmu Balaghah lectures are generally confined to lectures and group presentations.

The selection of teaching methods significantly impacts the effectiveness of material understanding and learner acceptance (Hasibuan, Haerullah, et al., 2023). The lack of diversity in teaching methods and the monotonous nature of activities can have a detrimental effect on the quality of learning (Ali et al., 2023; Tian et al., 2020). Variation in teaching methods is a crucial element to stimulate students' interest and participation (Davis, 2011). Lecture-based methods and group presentations, if limited, may not create an interactive and dynamic learning environment. This can lead to a loss of interest and engagement among students in the classroom (Fakhrunnisa & Hasibuan, 2024; Zaini, 2016). It is essential to acknowledge that each individual has different learning preferences, and a monotonous approach may fail to cater to these diverse needs (Henry, 2019). Therefore, efforts are needed to recognize a more diverse range of teaching methods, such as interactive discussions, case studies, or practical activities, to stimulate the activity and participation of students in the study of Balaghah. Thus, a more engaging learning atmosphere is created, supporting the understanding of the concepts being taught (Sari et al., 2024).

The author emphatically asserts that, even in the university environment, variation in the application of teaching methods is necessary, considering the specific needs of the conveyed material (Alyahyan & Düşteğör, 2020). Therefore, efforts should be made to diversify lecture activities to enhance material understanding and foster student motivation (Haerullah et al., 2024). The concept of diversification in teaching methods reflects the principles of constructivism in education. Introduced by Jean Piaget, this theory emphasizes that students not only "receive" knowledge from teachers but also construct their own understanding through experience and interaction with the learning material (Piaget, 2020; Waite-Stupiansky, 2022). In the context of higher education, diversifying teaching methods takes into account the diversity of learning styles and the specific needs of students (Hasibuan, 2023). By providing variation in lecture activities, such as guided discussions and hands-on learning, lecturers can offer opportunities for students to build a deeper and more relevant understanding. Moreover, this approach aligns with the concept of active learning, emphasizing the active role of students in their learning process (Amirul Amin et al., 2023). Therefore, diversifying teaching methods at the university level not only helps enhance material understanding but also fosters student motivation through active engagement and the application of constructivist concepts.

Thirdly, the students exhibit inadequate proficiency in prerequisite materials. Throughout the learning process, they encounter difficulties in grasping the substantive content of Ilmu Balaghah. The author's analysis indicates that this challenge arises from several fundamental aspects of the Arabic language that have not been mastered by the students. The study of Ilmu Balaghah demands a complex understanding of its materials, wherein students are expected to possess a

foundational comprehension of Arabic language rules, such as Nahwu and Sharf (معمرى et al., 2018). Beside that, it should also be complemented by a comprehensive grasp of Arabic vocabulary. Considering that vocabulary plays a pivotal role in comprehending and acquiring a language, it is imperative to acknowledge its significance in language learning and understanding (Jundi, 2023; Jundi & Hasibuan, 2023; Jundi & Nabila, 2023).

This is due to the fact that the scope of Ilm Balaghah is closely related to a profound understanding of two fundamental sciences, namely *nahwu*, which deals with grammar, and *sharaf*, which deals with morphology (Ibrahim, 2013; Jundi et al., 2021). A minimal mastery of these basic principles poses a serious obstacle, considering that Ilm Balaghah requires a strong foundation in Arabic language comprehension (Muqit, 2019b). Therefore, efforts to strengthen students' mastery of nahwu and sharaf need to be reinforced through more in-depth and applicable learning strategies, such as collaborative learning model (Jundi et al., 2023). This will enable students to easily apply these concepts comprehensively in understanding Ilm Balaghah.

One of the impacts of this issue is the lack of understanding of the principles inherent in Ilmu Balaghah, including difficulties in applying comprehension to examples found in the Quran. Students encounter challenges in applying these principles in practical contexts while simultaneously connecting them with concrete examples present in primary sources such as the Quran. A more focused learning strategy on understanding these foundational principles is required so that students can overcome difficulties in comprehending Ilm Balaghah material more effectively.

Fourthly, the challenge of online lectures. Several issues arise when conducting the learning process for this course through online platforms. The choice of online lectures as a substitute for

face-to-face classes is generally made in situations where physical meetings are not feasible, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic a few years ago. Online lectures become an alternative for both students and lecturers when it is difficult to find a suitable replacement schedule at another time.

The busy schedules of course lecturers sometimes lead to the impracticality of conducting face-to-face lectures, and the available option is through online lectures. Common challenges that typically emerge are related to technical issues, such as constraints on internet connectivity or the devices being used. Additionally, online lectures are unable to provide the same level of interaction as face-to-face classes due to certain limitations (Carliner, 2004). Nevertheless, communication conducted through electronic messages, such as chat between students and lecturers, must proceed seamlessly when discussing academic matters (Jundi & Kasan, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic a few years ago has resulted in significant transformations in various sectors, including the context of education and learning in higher education (Cahyati & Kusumah, 2020; Dewi, 2020). Online lectures, which were previously rarely implemented, have now become the primary alternative when scheduling face-to-face sessions is not feasible. It can be observed that the majority of schools are increasingly intensifying the utilization of their e-learning services, particularly for students (Ali et al., 2022). This trend has seen a rapid escalation, especially in light of the widespread impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the higher education level, lecturers are also leaning towards adopting integrated e-learning services coupled with student academic information systems to conduct lectures and facilitate assignment submissions (Hamid et al., 2023). Despite its significant benefits, there are also several challenges, constraints, and limitations that arise during its implementation.

Responses to online lectures vary among various stakeholders involved in the learning process, including both students and lecturers (Anhusadar, 2020; Aswasulasikin, 2020). From diverse student feedback on online learning in Arabic language courses, such as Nahwu, it is noted that the comprehension of the material is suboptimal, accompanied by various technical obstacles faced by students (Jundi, 2020). On the other hand, in online learning, the affective aspects of learners may be overlooked if the instructional design is not well-crafted (Jundi & Dalle, 2020). Therefore, in the implementation of lectures on Ilm Balaghah, careful consideration is essential before deciding to conduct them in an online format.

Supporting Facilities Aspect

Issues concerning the supporting facilities in the learning environment encompass the utilization of instructional media during lectures and the selection of the primary learning resource, namely the main textbooks used in this course.

Firstly, the main challenge lies in the inadequacy of adjusting the textbooks to meet the students' needs. The primary issue in this aspect is the difficulty students face in comprehending the main textbook used in the lectures of the Ilm Balaghah course. This book is entirely in Arabic, making it challenging for students with limited reading and translation skills. For students, the ability to translate the text in the book is a crucial step before understanding the content. Consequently, this becomes a major obstacle, especially for those who are not alumni of Islamic boarding schools and lack proficiency in reading Arabic books. In essence, reading the book should enable students to comprehend the studied material; however, in this case, students struggle to read and translate each sentence for understanding. Moreover, potential misperceptions and translation errors may arise. Therefore, it is advisable to use a main course guidebook in Bahasa Indonesia to aid students in comprehension.

Books serve as the most common and fundamental teaching materials and instructional media in education, particularly at the university level (Muslimah & Zuhendra, 2022). The selection of instructional textbooks that align with the needs of learners must be carefully considered to ensure these books provide optimal assistance to students in developing their proficiency in specific subjects or courses (Hasibuan & Rosyidi, 2023). It should also be noted that the books used are in line with the learning objectives, and their content aligns with the desired competencies (Laubaha et al., 2022). In this case, there is a need for a change in the selection of instructional textbooks or modification of these books into simpler modules with more explanations in the Indonesian language to aid in accelerating students' comprehension.

Secondly, the limitations of learning resources pose challenges for students, who encounter difficulties in sourcing relevant references for their study materials. This struggle in reference acquisition may complicate the comprehension of Ilm Balaghah. Accessing traditional library resources, particularly readable books, proves to be challenging. Despite the abundance of digital information in the current era, students often face challenges in discerning relevant and high-quality information. Even when alternative sources are acquired, there is no guarantee that students can comprehend them effectively. Therefore, solutions need to be devised to address these limitations in learning resources, such as the development of well-managed digital collections, information literacy training, and facilitating accessibility to needed references. Consequently, students can overcome these obstacles and attain a more profound understanding of Ilm Balaghah.

Evaluation Aspect

The issues arising pertain to the evaluative aspect. The evaluation

conducted thus far in the course of Ilm Balaghah comprises summative assessments, namely mid-semester exams and final semester exams. Summative evaluation is a type of assessment implemented when the teaching of a particular subject matter has concluded, and it is utilized to measure and ascertain the extent to which the learning objectives have been achieved by the learner (Febriana, 2021; Hasibuan, Chamidah, et al., 2024). The evaluation instrument employed in this study is a test. The types of tests administered include written tests or oral exams, with questions focusing on assessing the fundamental understanding of concepts and theories learned from each subject matter.

In reality, evaluations of this nature are not problematic as the tests provided are intended to assess students' understanding of the concepts and materials they have studied. However, the practical aspects of Ilm Balaghah, which should ideally assist students in developing and constructing expressions that are both effective and contextually appropriate, are not well-implemented. The form of evaluation should be diversified to include various formats that test students' creativity in producing Arabic expressions aligned with the concepts learned in Ilm Balaghah (Sánchez-Santamaría et al., 2021).

In the context of developing evaluation in the teaching of rhetoric, it is crucial to understand that the practical abilities of students in applying rhetorical concepts are not solely confined to theoretical comprehension (Hasibuan, Hasanah, et al., 2024). Evaluation prioritizing practical aspects can offer a holistic depiction of students' proficiency in crafting expressions in Arabic that are not only grammatically correct but also aligned with relevant norms and contexts. As a discipline delving into the beauty and effectiveness of expression, rhetoric demands creativity in composing words and constructing sentences. Hence, an evaluative framework that stimulates

students' creativity in crafting expressions utilizing the principles of Balaghah within appropriate contextualization becomes imperative. Consequently, a comprehensive and in-depth evaluation method can provide a more accurate portrayal of students' proficiency in mastering Ilm Balaghah holistically (Sulaiman & Wahid, 2021).

Based on the researcher's analysis, research findings show that there is a lack of learning motivation among students which hinders their active participation in Ilm Balaghah lectures. One of the main causes of this low motivation is the inability of students to understand the concrete goals and benefits of studying Ilm Balaghah. Therefore, lecturers need to explain the urgency and purpose of this learning process explicitly before starting to deliver the material. With a clear understanding of the objectives, relevance and teaching methods, it is hoped that student learning motivation can increase. Apart from that, lecturers must also connect lecture material with students' daily lives to increase their relevance and intrinsic motivation. This approach is supported by learning motivation theory which emphasizes the importance of the relationship between learning material and students' personal experiences.

Research also finds that monotonous teaching methods are one of the factors inhibiting student involvement in Ilm Balaghah lectures. Variation in teaching methods is essential to stimulate student interest and participation. Lecturers need to apply a variety of teaching methods such as interactive discussions, case studies, or practical activities to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment. This approach is in line with the principle of constructivism in education, which emphasizes that students not only receive knowledge from lecturers but also build their own understanding through experience and interaction with learning material. By applying a variety of teaching

methods, lecturers can provide opportunities for students to build a deeper and more relevant understanding, thereby increasing motivation and active participation in Ilm Balaghah lectures.

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4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions presented, it can be concluded that there are several issues in the teaching of rhetoric. Firstly, issues in the instructional process encompass the lack of student motivation, the use of monotonous teaching methods and activities, inadequate student proficiency in prerequisite materials, and challenges in online lectures. Secondly, concerning supporting facilities, challenges arise related to the use of instructional media, the mismatch between main textbooks and needs, and the limited learning resources available to students. Thirdly, issues in the evaluation aspect include a tendency for assessments that solely test the theoretical aspects of rhetoric.

To enhance the quality of the Ilm Balaghah course in the future, a series of measures need to be implemented. Firstly, there is a need for strategies to boost student motivation, such as the development of more interactive teaching methods and engaging activities. Additionally, improving students' proficiency in prerequisite materials can be achieved through the provision of additional learning resources and extra sessions for those in need. Secondly, a reassessment of supporting learning facilities is necessary, including the instructional media used. Aligning main textbooks with students' needs and improving access to learning resources can make a positive contribution. Finally, in the evaluation aspect, it is essential to develop evaluation methods that encompass practical aspects of Ilm Balaghah, not solely focusing on theoretical aspects. These measures are expected to create a more stimulating learning environment, cater to the students' needs, and stimulate a holistic understanding of this course.

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