



Transforming *Balaghah* Instruction through Infographic-Based E-Modules: A Phenomenological Study in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This study explores students' learning experiences in studying Arabic rhetoric (*balāghah*) through an infographic-based e-module. It employs a qualitative phenomenological approach conducted over one academic semester. Participants consisted of 30 Arabic Language Education students who had completed the *balāghah* course, used the e-module throughout the semester, and voluntarily participated in interviews and written reflections. The findings indicate that the use of the e-module provided a comprehensive learning experience across four dimensions: cognitive, affective, motivational, and transformational. Students reported enhanced conceptual understanding, analytical skills, self-confidence, and enthusiasm for learning, along with a perceptual shift viewing *balāghah* as a relevant and meaningful discipline rather than a complex subject. However, some students still encountered difficulties in analyzing extended texts, highlighting the need for additional practice and more interactive learning features. Theoretically, this study contributes to strengthening transformative learning models in digital Arabic pedagogy by integrating multimodal infographic design that enhances reflective and experiential learning. It is recommended that future research investigate the integration of more interactive components and evaluate the long-term effects on students' analytical and pedagogical competencies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the integration of digital learning technologies in higher education has revolutionised the delivery and reception of teaching materials. Modern pedagogical approaches emphasise learner-centred learning, the use of multimodal media, and interactive tools that enhance student engagement (Nurbayan & Sanusi, 2025; Pysarchyk, 2024). In Arabic language studies, these developments offer significant opportunities to modernise traditional courses without losing their linguistic depth and cultural value (Chalghoum, 2024; Jamil & Abdullayev, 2024).

One of the main branches of advanced Arabic language studies is *balaghah*, the science of rhetoric that examines the beauty of language, style, and the art of argumentation (Umam & Setiyawan, 2025; Windariyah & Masruri, 2025). Mastery of *Balāghah* is crucial for developing advanced reading skills, literary appreciation, and practical communication skills (Nuha et al., 2024; Nurbayan et al., 2020). However, despite its strategic position, *Balāghah* is often considered abstract, complex, and difficult to understand without visual and contextual support.

Advances in educational technology, particularly the emergence of infographic-based e-modules, offer new possibilities for making abstract concepts more concrete and accessible (Alabsi & Al-kahtani, 2025). Infographics combine visual design with concise text to enhance comprehension and retention of material, making them a potential medium for teaching rhetorical devices in *Balāghah* (Rahman et al., 2024). Research on Arabic grammar learning shows that the use of infographic modules can increase learning motivation while reducing cognitive load (Hamid et al., 2025).

However, teaching *Balāghah* in higher education still faces significant challenges. Conventional methods generally rely on textual explanations and memorisation, which are often less relevant for the digital generation of learners (Aini, 2025; Wijaya, 2024). Students report difficulty visualising rhetorical concepts, finding examples in authentic texts, and connecting theory to creative expression skills (Abdurahman et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have explored the application of digital technology in Arabic language learning, such as a needs analysis for developing an infographic-based *Balāghah* module and validating module designs using the Fuzzy Delphi method (Syahfutral., 2024; Zainudin et al., 2024). Other innovations include problem-based learning and the use of assignment-based modules to enhance literary appreciation (Sarip et al., 2024; Musyafa'ah et al., 2024). However, most of this research focuses on the design and effectiveness evaluation stages, without delving into students' direct experiences using them.

The lack of phenomenological studies that capture students' learning experiences represents a significant research gap. Quantitative approaches can demonstrate effectiveness, but often overlook the cognitive, emotional, and motivational dimensions related to how students interpret and respond to *Balāghah* learning through modern digital media (Maulana et al., 2025). Understanding these experiences is crucial for aligning learning designs with students' needs and expectations.

The urgency of this research has grown even stronger post-pandemic, as higher education are continually required to innovate in teaching methods. For *balaghah*, a discipline steeped in aesthetic beauty and rhetorical refinement, the implementation of infographic-based e-modules presents both an opportunity for modernisation and a challenge in maintaining its scientific depth. Therefore, this study aims to explore and interpret students' learning experiences in learning *Balāghah* through infographic-based e-modules using a phenomenological approach. By capturing students' perceptions, challenges, and transformative moments, this study provides a new perspective connecting learning design theory, digital pedagogy, and the specific needs of teaching *balaghah*. The research findings are expected to serve as a reference for future curriculum development and enrich the discourse on the modernisation of classical Arabic language learning.

2. METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach, aiming to deeply explore students' learning experiences in learning *Balāghah* through infographic-based e-modules. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it is appropriate for exploring students' subjective meanings, perceptions, and personal experiences, which cannot be reduced to mere numbers (Creswell, 2018).

Research Participants

The research participants consisted of 30 students in the Arabic Language Education study program at a university in Jambi Province. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) having taken the *Balāghah* course for at least one semester. (2) having used the infographic-based e-module for the entire lecture. (3) willingness to participate as a participant through in-depth interviews and written reflections.

Research Instruments

The primary research instrument is the researcher herself, who plays a key role (human instrument) in designing procedures, collecting data, interpreting findings, and maintaining the credibility of the research. To enrich the data, supporting instruments were also used, including:

- a. A semi-structured interview guide, containing a list of open-ended questions about students' experiences in understanding the *Balāghah* material, their perceptions of the infographic e-module, the challenges they faced, and the transformative moments they experienced.
- b. A written reflection sheet, which allowed students to express their experiences in a more personal and in-depth manner.
- c. Non-participant observation notes, which the researcher used to record students' interactions with the e-module during the learning process.

With this combination of instruments, the data collected encompassed the cognitive, affective, motivational, and transformational dimensions of the students' learning experience. More detailed indicators in the study are summarised in the following table.

Table 1. Indicators of students' experiences in participating in *Balāghah* learning

Dimensions	Indicators studied
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the concept of <i>Balāghah</i> through e-modules • Ability to connect theory with authentic texts
Affective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' feelings about the ease/complexity of <i>balaghah</i> • Motivation and interest in learning with digital media
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiasm for using infographics • Perceived benefits for long-term learning
Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in perception towards <i>balaghah</i> • Meaningful experience in using e-modules

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was conducted systematically, combining several techniques to comprehensively capture students' experiences across four main dimensions: cognitive, affective, motivational, and transformational. The data collection stages were as follows:

a. Orientation

In the initial stage, the researcher explained the research objectives to participants, provided detailed information about the research procedures, and obtained written informed consent. The researcher also built rapport, allowing students to feel comfortable sharing their experiences, particularly regarding their perceptions of *Balāghah* (religious dialogue) and digital learning media.

b. Exploration

Students attended six *Balāghah* lectures using infographic-based e-modules. This stage provided a real-world context for students to internalise *Balāghah* concepts. The researcher recorded student engagement, how they understood the concepts (cognitive dimension), their attitudes when facing difficulties (affective dimension), and their enthusiasm for using infographics (motivational dimension).

c. In-Depth Interviews

Two semi-structured interview sessions were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences. Questions were aimed at uncovering:

- 1) Students' understanding of the concept of *Balāghah* and their ability to connect theory with authentic texts (cognitive).
- 2) Students' feelings about the ease or complexity of *Balāghah* when using the e-module (affective).
- 3) Their level of enthusiasm and perceptions regarding the long-term benefits of

infographic-based learning (motivational).

- 4) Moments of change in perception (aha moments) experienced by students when understanding *Balāghah* more meaningfully (transformational).

d. Written Reflection

Each student compiled a written reflection at the end of the learning series. This reflection served to strengthen interview data, record conceptual understanding (cognitive), attitudes and learning interests (affective and motivational), and meaningful experiences that changed their perspective on *Balāghah* (transformational).

e. Non-Participant Observation

The researcher conducted non-participant observation throughout the learning process. Observations focused on students' interactions with the e-module, their emotional expressions, the dynamics of class engagement, and spontaneous responses that reflected cognitive, affective, motivational, and transformational indicators. These observation notes were combined with interview data and reflections to strengthen the validity of the findings.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as developed by Smith et al. (2009). IPA was chosen because it was appropriate for exploring how participants interpreted their learning experiences, particularly in the context of using infographic-based e-modules in the *Balāghah* (Basic Speech) course. The analysis process was carried out in the following stages:

- a. Reading and re-listening to the data: Researchers repeatedly read the interview transcripts and written reflections, and listened to the interview recordings to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' narratives.
- b. Identifying significant statements: Important sections of the transcripts reflecting students' learning experiences, challenges, and perceptions were recorded and given initial codes.
- c. Grouping themes: Initial codes were categorised into main themes representing dimensions of experience: cognitive, affective, motivational, and transformational.
- d. Developing a thematic structure: Emerging themes were then connected to form a pattern that illustrates the dynamics of students' learning experiences.
- e. Interpretation of meaning: The findings are interpreted by linking students' experiences to the theoretical framework of digital pedagogy, cognitive load theory, and the concepts of aesthetics and rhetoric in *balaghah*.

Data Validity

To ensure data validity, this study adhered to the four trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985):

- a. Credibility: Achieved through method triangulation (interviews, written reflections, and observations) and member checking to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations.
- b. Transferability: Maintained by providing detailed contextual descriptions of the research setting, participants, and learning situation, so that findings can be considered in similar

contexts.

- c. Dependability is ensured through an audit trail, which provides complete documentation of the research process from planning and data collection to analysis, allowing the process to be traced and replicated.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The findings of this study indicate variations in the experiences of 30 students across four main dimensions: cognitive, affective, motivational, and transformational. Each dimension reflects how students understand, perceive, interpret, and experience change through the use of infographic-based e-modules. To clarify these findings, the research results are presented in a visual representation, as shown in the following figure.

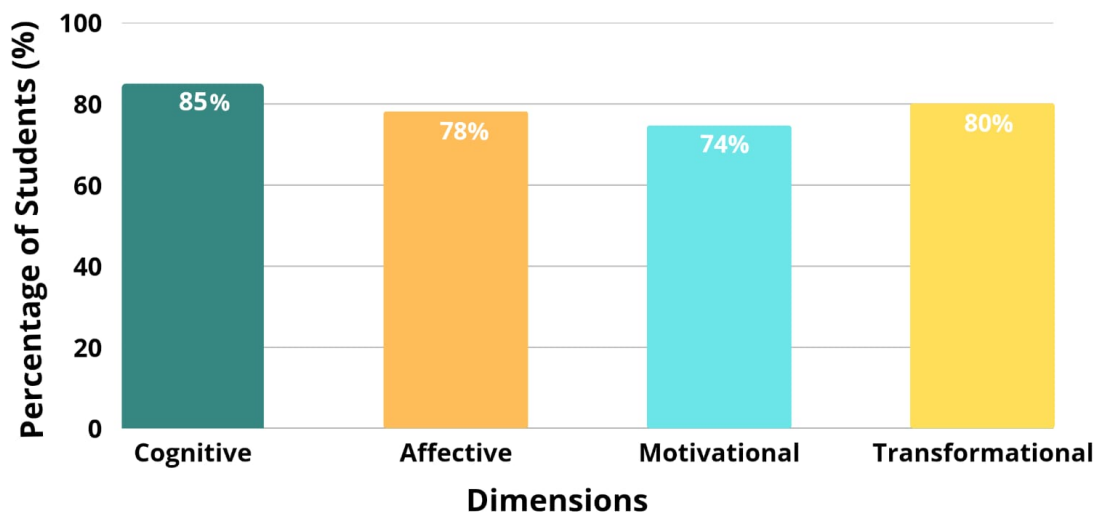


Figure 1. Students' Positive Learning Experiences through Infographic-Based E-Modules

Cognitive dimension

In the context of this research, the cognitive dimension focuses on two leading indicators: students' understanding of rhetorical concepts and their ability to connect theory to authentic texts. Findings indicate that 85% of students (26 participants) experienced significant improvement in their understanding of rhetorical concepts when using infographic-based e-modules. The majority of students confirmed that visual representations such as charts, icons, and concise tables helped them understand the differences between rhetorical concepts that were previously difficult to remember when relying solely on conventional textbooks.

One student (S7) explained: *"When I used to read rhetorical books, I often confused the difference between tashbīh and isti'ārah. But when I saw the charts and visual examples in the e-modules, the differences were immediately clear."* This statement confirms that infographics not only clarify concepts but also reduce terminological confusion that often arises with traditional approaches. Similarly, another student (S12) added: *"Infographics*

make abstract rhetorical terms more concrete, because they provide brief examples and images that make it easier for me to remember."

In addition to conceptual understanding, students also demonstrated improved ability to connect theory to authentic texts. Interviews revealed that 22 students reported finding it easier to identify rhetorical devices in Quranic verses or classical Arabic poetry. One participant (S15) stated: *"When reading the verse 'وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ' , I could immediately understand that it was an example of isti'ārah, because the e-module explains the analogy of wings as a symbol of humility."* This example demonstrates how the e-module acts as scaffolding, guiding students in connecting theory to real-life texts.

However, 15% of students (4 students) still encountered difficulties, especially when analysing long or complex texts. One student (S27) admitted: *"If the text is short, I can understand it. But if the verses or poems are long, I'm still confused about finding the elements of the rhetorical argument, even though there are explanations in the e-module."* This finding indicates a limitation: while the e-module is effective at the level of basic understanding and conceptual introduction, in-depth practice is still needed to develop more comprehensive analytical skills.

Overall, the cognitive dimension analysis confirmed that the infographic-based e-module successfully shifted students' learning orientation from simply memorising terminology to a more meaningful, applied understanding. The high achievement percentage (85%) demonstrates that visual media is not merely a tool, but rather a pedagogical instrument capable of strengthening the absorption and application of rhetorical argumentative knowledge in both academic contexts and authentic texts.

Affective Dimension

This dimension is important because the learning experience is determined not only by how well students understand the concepts, but also by how they perceive, appreciate, and enjoy the learning process itself.

First, regarding students' perceptions of the ease and complexity of *Balāghah* (basic *balaghah*), the majority of students felt that the use of infographic-based e-modules simplified previously abstract *Balāghah* concepts. One student stated: *"I usually find Balāghah complicated, especially when explained only through long texts. But after using digital modules with infographics, I feel it's easier and I grasp the essence of the material more quickly."* This statement indicates that the presence of digital media serves not only as a technical tool but also influences the affective side, resulting in increased self-confidence and reduced anxiety around challenging material. However, a small number of students still felt confused by classical *Balāghah* terms even after visualisation, indicating that their individual backgrounds still influence the affective experience.

Second, in terms of motivation and interest in learning with digital media, students demonstrated a significant increase in enthusiasm. The use of e-modules was perceived as more interactive, less monotonous, and enabled them to learn independently outside of class.



Figure 2. *Balāghah* Learning Process through infographic-based e-modules

One participant stated: "If I study using digital modules, I'm more enthusiastic; I can access them anytime on my phone. It feels closer to my everyday world." This statement demonstrates the connection between learning media and the learning styles of the digital generation, fostering intrinsic motivation. Overall data also shows that approximately 78% of students felt the presence of e-modules positively boosted their affective aspects. However, a small proportion admitted they still felt more comfortable with conventional face-to-face methods.

Thus, this affective dimension confirms that students' emotional experiences are not only related to understanding the material but also closely related to psychological comfort and growing interest thanks to the integration of learning technology. This situation reinforces previous findings on the cognitive aspect, which suggest that the success of *Balāghah* e-modules lies not only in the delivery of content but also in their ability to shape students' positive attitudes toward the learning process.

Dimensions of motivation

In addition to the cognitive and affective dimensions, this study also revealed students' motivational dimensions in using infographic-based e-modules in *Balāghah* (Basic Speech) learning. This dimension focused on the extent to which students demonstrated enthusiasm in interacting with digital media and how they perceived its benefits for long-term learning. In general, the majority of students (approximately 74%) exhibited a strong motivational drive, although there was variation in their experiences among individuals.

First, regarding the indicator of enthusiasm for using infographics, students responded positively. Many of them reported being more enthusiastic about attending lectures due to the engaging visuals, concise presentation of the material, and the availability of concrete, easy-to-understand examples. The enthusiasm of students in learning *Balāghah* through e-modules based on infographics is depicted below.



Figure 3. Students' enthusiasm for participating in Balāghah learning

Besides that, one participant (S9) stated: *"If the module is full of text, I get bored quickly. But if there are infographics, I become more interested in reading and want to learn more."* This testimony demonstrates that visual media can trigger emotional engagement, which plays a direct role in motivating learning. In fact, several students reported revisiting the module outside of class hours because they were intrigued by its design.

Second, regarding the perceived benefits of long-term learning, the majority of students assessed that using infographic-based e-modules not only helped them understand the material now but would also be beneficial in developing their academic and professional skills in the future. One student (S18) stated: *"I think this module is useful not only for my studies now, but also for when I become a teacher. I can use the way the material is presented."* This statement indicates a reflective awareness that the experience of learning with digital media provides them with transferable pedagogical skills. However, some students (around 26%) felt the benefits were limited to short-term understanding, primarily due to the limited interactive features in the modules.

Furthermore, interview data showed that students also linked the learning experience to long-term expectations. This statement points to the perceived benefits dimension. When students stated that infographics could serve as models for their future as future educators, they demonstrated an internalisation of pedagogical values. They not only learned the content of the *Balāghah* (prophetic discourse) but also absorbed the effective delivery methods.

Thus, the motivational dimension demonstrates that infographics are not merely a presentation aid but also a source of intrinsic energy that encourages active student engagement. The connection between current enthusiasm for learning and perceptions of

long-term benefits strengthens the argument that digital technology can play a transformative role in Arabic language education, particularly in the field of *Balāghah* studies.

Transformation Dimension

The transformation dimension in this study relates to how students' experiences during the *Balāghah* lecture using the infographic-based e-module changed their perspective on the material, while simultaneously creating a meaningful learning experience.

The first indicator, a change in perception of *balaghah*, reveals a significant shift from the initial assumption that *Balāghah* is a complex, abstract, and rhetorical science that is difficult to access, to an understanding that *Balāghah* can be studied systematically and enjoyed. Before the intervention, some students viewed *Balāghah* as merely a normative course requiring memorisation of rules and examples of classical texts. However, after using the infographic e-module, they saw that *Balāghah* concepts could be visualised in diagrams, charts, and logical flowcharts. This change not only reduced academic anxiety but also fostered an appreciative attitude toward *Balāghah* as a science relevant to modern language analysis skills.

The second indicator, a meaningful experience in using the e-module, emerged when students felt that the learning process they were undergoing was not merely a classroom routine, but rather a deeply impactful intellectual journey. In-depth interviews revealed that some students described this experience as "a new way of understanding the language of the Quran and Arabic literary texts." In contrast, others considered the e-module to have opened methodological insights for future Arabic language teaching. This meaningful experience arose because the e-module not only presented material but also guided students to conduct independent exploration, connecting theoretical concepts with authentic texts, and reflecting on the relationship of rhetoric to communication skills in everyday life.

Thus, the transformation was not simply an increase in understanding, but rather a paradigm shift. Students no longer viewed rhetoric as an academic burden but as an intellectual asset accessible through innovative approaches. This transformation was twofold: cognitive, as it involved restructuring knowledge and conceptual understanding; and affective, as it provided a learning experience that fostered self-confidence, personal meaning, and connectedness to the academic world and future professions. Thus, the innovation of infographic-based learning media has proven to be able to encourage students to move beyond traditional learning patterns and toward reflective and transformative learning.

Overall, the research results show that the use of infographic-based e-modules in *Balāghah* learning can provide a comprehensive learning experience, starting from improving students' conceptual understanding and analytical skills, the birth of a positive attitude characterized by self-confidence and interest in the material, to the growth of continuous learning motivation through enthusiasm for using digital media and belief in

its benefits for long-term mastery. Furthermore, this experience gave rise to a fundamental transformation in the form of a change in perception of *Balāghah* from a course considered complicated to a relevant science, while also providing a meaningful experience that encourages students to connect theory, text, and practice reflectively.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that students' experiences using infographic-based e-modules in *Balāghah* learning have multiple dimensions, encompassing cognitive, affective, motivational, and transformational aspects. Each dimension demonstrates how digital technology functions not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a pedagogical agent that shapes students' understanding, attitudes, and learning orientation.

In the cognitive dimension, the results show that the majority of students experienced an increase in their understanding of *Balāghah* concepts and their ability to connect theory to authentic texts. This statement aligns with Mayer's (2009), which emphasises that the integration of text and visuals can strengthen dual-channel processing, thereby deepening understanding. Graphical representations in the form of charts and icons in e-modules have been shown to reduce cognitive load, which is typically high when students encounter abstract rhetorical terminology. These findings align with research by Ibrahim et al. (2014) and Schnotz (2002), which demonstrated that the use of infographics in linguistics materials enhances the connection between theoretical concepts and practical applications in the text. Thus, infographic-based e-modules serve not only as aids but also as conceptual tools that broaden students' thinking in interpreting classical Arabic texts and the Quran.

Meanwhile, the affective dimension reveals that students experienced a shift in feelings from anxiety about rhetoric to self-confidence and more positive emotional engagement. Digital media is perceived not merely as a technical instrument but as a means of creating psychological comfort. This statement confirms Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis, which states that a positive emotional atmosphere will lower affective barriers, thus facilitating internalisation of material. Similar results were found by Al-Fraihat et al. (2020), who studied student satisfaction with e-learning, where visual comfort and interactivity were shown to increase positive perceptions of difficult material. Thus, infographic modules have been shown to change not only how students understand content but also how they experience the learning process itself.

On the motivational dimension, students' enthusiasm for using infographics and their perception of long-term benefits demonstrate the growth of intrinsic motivation along with the digital learning experience. Schunk et al. (2014) emphasised that learning motivation can be strengthened through media that foster self-efficacy and relevance to future goals. Student testimonials stating that e-modules can serve as pedagogical models for them in the future demonstrate the existence of a reflective and self-projective dimension. Previous research by Hung et al. (2008) also emphasised that the use of multimedia in language education encourages a lifelong learning orientation, as students

not only learn the content but also absorb effective delivery strategies. Thus, student motivation in this study is dual: actual enthusiasm for the learning process, as well as a long-term awareness of transferable pedagogical benefits.

The transformation dimension then illustrates the paradigm shift experienced by students regarding *Balāghah* (Islamic rhetoric). Previously considered a complex, abstract, and burdensome subject, students now perceive that *Balāghah* can be learned systematically and meaningfully through a visual approach. This transformation aligns with Mezirow's (1991) perspective, which suggests that meaningful learning experiences occur when individuals reflect on their old assumptions and replace them with new, more relevant perspectives. Students in this study experienced not only cognitive improvements but also affective and academic identity shifts, as they began to view *Balāghah* as an intellectual asset relevant to their language analysis skills and future professions. These results align with Alonazi's (2017) study, which found that integrating technology into Arabic rhetoric learning can create profound learning experiences that foster personal meaning and critical reflection.

Thus, this discussion confirms that the success of infographic-based e-modules in *Balāghah* learning lies not only in the technical effectiveness of information presentation but also in their ability to create a holistic learning experience. These experiences touch on cognitive, affective, motivational, and transformational domains, demonstrating the potential of digital media innovation as a pedagogical approach capable of addressing the challenges of learning Arabic in the digital age. Furthermore, practically, this research emphasises that e-module development must consider the integration of content, visual design, interactivity, and reflective strategies to make *Balāghah* learning more meaningful, effective, and sustainable.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of infographic-based e-modules in *Balāghah* learning provides a comprehensive learning experience for students, including increased conceptual understanding and analytical skills (cognitive), the formation of positive attitudes and self-confidence (affective), the growth of intrinsic motivation and awareness of long-term benefits (motivational), as well as a paradigm shift and meaningful learning experience that encourages critical reflection (transformational). However, in substance, this study shows several limitations: the e-module still does not support the analysis of long or complex texts, the presentation of several rhetorical concepts still requires further in-depth study, and some classical *Balāghah* terms are not fully understood by all students. Therefore, additional research is recommended to develop e-modules with more in-depth content, add complex text analysis exercises, enrich visual illustrations for difficult rhetorical terms, and examine the effectiveness of the module in a broader learning context to strengthen conceptual understanding and transform students' learning experiences.

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