

Mastery and Problems of the Study of Balaghah: an Initial Review

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Abstract

This study aims to look at students' perceptions, problems and mastery Religious Secondary Schools (SMKA) and Government Aided Religious Schools (SABK) in the state of Melaka on the Arabic language, especially the science of balaghah and identify the problems faced by students in learning this knowledge. A total of 30 form five students out of 504 students were selected as study respondents early in SMKA and SABK Melaka state. There are several problems identified faced by students that can interfere with them to master knowledge this. Several measures are suggested to strengthen students' mastery of this knowledge is also presented in this study.

Keywords: Mastery, Study, Effectiveness, Knowledge of Balaghah and Arabic Language

Introduction

Balaghah or Arabic rhetoric is one of the basic elements of teaching and learning Arabic other than grammar and nerves. In the education system in Malaysia, there are several examinations that contain balaghah subjects. For Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia examination (SPM), the subject of balaghah is in the Arabic paper. For Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) examination, it is found in the balaghah Arabic paper II. This indicates that for both exams there is no special paper for balaghah subject. Balaghah only included in Arabic papers. However, it is different from the Certificate paper Tinggi Agama Malaysia (STAM). There is a paper specific for the subject balaghah i.e. balaghah paper. This paper is the highest level that use in the education system in Malaysia to test the ability of students in this subject.

Statement of Problem

Through the syllabus of the Ministry of Education Malaysia, the knowledge of balaghah has introduced the basis of learning in Arabic language subjects at Certificate level Malaysian Examination (SPM) and Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM). While for Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia (STAM) examination, balaghah is a distinctive subject without being inserted in the Arabic subject.

Students from Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SMKA) and Government Aided Religious School (SABK) in Melaka who are taking Arabic language subjects that has the components of balaghah knowledge, were at a moderate level in the examination for the eyes the lesson. Most of the students acknowledge their abilities in mastering the knowledge of balaghah is still at a weak level especially when connecting studies at the tertiary level (Anuar et al., 2013).

This can be seen through the results of the SPM 2010 examination the number of candidates who took Higher Arabic (BAT) subjects were a total of 549 people in 9 SMKA and SABK in Melaka. Number of students getting A+ in this subject were 18 people (3.2%), while those who got A were 26 people (5%), the next who got A- was 35 people (6.3%). A total of 63 people (11.5%) got B+. For students who get a B in this subject is a total of 57 people (10.3%). The students who got C+ were 54 people (10%). Next a total of 44 people (8%) got C. Most students got D which is 99 people (18%) while the second highest score is E which is 89 people (16.2%). A total of 62 people (11.2%) failed in this subject and 2 people (0.3%) were not present (Malacca State Education Department, 2014)

Most lecturers are in this field and based on experience the researchers themselves found them to be quite weak in mastery of this field. Basis of this has prompted this study to be conducted to find out about the effectiveness and the ability of students in Arabic before continue their education to a higher level.

Literature Review

Based on the researcher's survey, there are several studies that are closely related and have direct relevance to the title of the researcher's study is a study conducted by Abdul Hakim Abdullah (2003) entitled "Teaching Balaghah at STPM Level in SMKA: Implementation and Problems". Among the findings of this study are that the syllabus content does not meet the goals and objectives of the syllabus, does not meet the theories about the actual goals and objectives of teaching balaghah or language teaching and also does not meet the theories on the principles of syllabus content selection and organization.

Abdul Halim (1999) in his study entitled "Teaching of Balaghah Knowledge (Rhetoric) in National Religious Secondary Schools Under the Ministry of Education" who stated that there are several problems that have been identified in the teaching and learning of balaghah in SMKA schools. He suggested that talk and lecture techniques should perhaps be reduced and supplemented with thinking activities and language skills.

Sohair (1999) in his study entitled "Pioneers Towards Giving New Breath to the Knowledge of Balaghah" stated in his study that the mastery of the knowledge of balaghah among students is very low and it is only studied as a subject that must be passed. Although not in demand or favored. In his study, he also discusses the weakness as a common phenomenon that is contagious among students as a whole not only in Malaysia. Among his opinions on the main reason for this is the separation between the science of balaghah and other sciences of the Arabic language, especially the science of Arabic literature and its criticism.

Another study on this balaghah was conducted by (Rosni, 2005). This study revolves around the mastery of balaghah and its problems among students (STAM). This study was conducted

in Selangor state religious schools. In this study, among the students' problems identified is that the objective and purpose of this balaghah subject is still not clear to them. In addition, the topics studied in the subject of balaghah are too difficult to understand. Similarly, students found that teachers taught too fast and did not celebrate the varying levels of students in the classroom. The findings of the study also found that the level of mastery of the target students on this subject is too weak. This is because their learning is oriented to memorization of examples and methods, as well as less emphasis on application elements.

Azhar (2006), has made a study related to the effectiveness of learning Arabic rhetoric or balaghah in religious secondary schools (SMA) of the Johor government. This study aims to find out the perception and knowledge of students towards the study of balaghah knowledge, in addition to identifying the problems faced by students in the learning of balaghah knowledge among students and the application of this knowledge. Among the problems faced by students is that students have problems to use the textbook of Higher Arabic (BAT) fully for their learning of balaghah. Apart from that, the students were not able to understand all the lessons given by the teacher on the rules of balaghah and certain topics in the science of Balaghah. Teachers were also found to tend to use Malay in teaching Balaghah knowledge compared to Arabic. This may affect students' mastery of this science.

Apart from that, the study of Hazirah (2012) entitled "Mastery of balaghah among IPT students". Among the conclusions made by the author is that the students were found not to be able to understand all the lessons given by the lecturer on the methods of balaghah and certain topics in the science of balaghah.

Research Objective

Overall, the aims of this study is to identify definitely the mastery and problems of learning Arabic language, especially science balaghah among SMKA and SABK students in the state of Melaka. While The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- a. Identify students' perceptions of learning balaghah.
- b. Identify the problems faced by students in learning the science of balaghah.
- c. Identify the extent of the effectiveness of teaching and learning knowledge balaghah among students as well as the application of such knowledge in the use of their language style.
- d. Identify the level of mastery of students in the field of knowledge balaghah.

Significance of The Study

In general, the findings of the study have the potential to help relevant parties especially parts of the Arabic language curriculum such as the Department of Islamic and Moral Education (JAPIM) at the Ministry of Education Malaysia, a state religious education institution especially the Malacca Islamic Religious Department (JAIM), the state education foundation and others to further refine the level of mastery of students in this field.

In addition in practice, the research conducted is also expected to provide benefits and benefits to the teachers who teach the subject balaghah. by viewing this study as a form of self –assessment them. Referring to the analysis and results of the study findings, teachers

can make planning and succeeding in various appropriate endeavors towards improve the performance and quality of teaching and learning.

In addition, the results of this study are also expected to provide to some extent guidelines on teaching and learning methods for appropriate balaghah subjects are applied in the classroom and indirectly directly able to arouse enthusiasm among students for love the language of Jannah as well as at the same time can also cultivate interest students learn that knowledge. This effort can also facilitate the parties schools to arrange all appropriate plans and strategies for improve students' mastery of the subject balaghah to a more proud level.

Limitations and Scope of The Study

This research only examines matters related to knowledge mastery Arabic rhetoric limited to a sample conducted in High School Religious Streams (SMKA) and Government Aided Religious Secondary Schools (SABK) In the state of Melaka, it includes 9 schools, namely:

- a. SMKA Sultan Muhammad Batu Berendam Melaka.
- b. SMKA Sharifah Rodziah Telok Mas Melaka.
- c. SMA (JAIM) Darul Falah Kuala Sungai Baru Melaka.
- d. SMA (JAIM) Al Ehya El-Karim Tanjong Bidara Melaka
- e. SMA (JAIM) Al-Asyraf Bukit Merchat, Alor Gajah. Malacca
- f. SM ARAB (JAIM) As-Sayyidah Khadijah Merlimau Melaka
- g. SM ARAB (JAIM) Al-Ahmadi Sungai Udang Melaka.
- h. SM ARAB (JAIM) As-Syakirin Selandar Melaka.
- i. SM TAHFIZ AL-QURAN Chenderah Jasin Melaka

Research Methodology

Researchers used questionnaire and interview research methods to collect all required primary data. As for secondary data, researchers use library research methods to get everything information. A total of 30 students were selected as the initial respondents of the study a total of 504 form five students in 2012 in SMKA and SABK throughout the state of Melaka The selected study sample is based on random group i.e. involving the form five students who will be occupying Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination. Information on the study obtained from respondents is based on feedback from the questionnaire against students (samples) from those schools.

Scale of Measurement of Level of Control

No	Scale	Min
1	Strongly disagree	1.00-1.49
2	Disagree	1.50-2.49
3	Not Sure	2.50-3.49
4	Agree	3.50-4.49
5	Strongly Agree	4.50-5.00

Findings

Gender

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

item	Gender	Frequency	Percent
1	Male	13	43.3
	Female	17	56.7

Table 1 shows that the distribution of study respondents is based on gender. Schedule showed the respondents consisted of both male and female students. Seramai 13 male students or covering a total of 43.3% were involved. Students females were 19 students or 56.7% involved in this study.

Students' Perceptions of the Study of Balaghah Science

Table 2

Percentage Distribution And Mean For The First Objective

No	Things	Percent Frequency (%)					Mean
		SD	D	NS	A	SA	
1	I feel happy when learning the science of balaghah	12 (40%)	8 (26.7%)	10 (33.3%)	-	-	2.26
2	I am interested in learning the science of balaghah	16 (53.3%)	-	5 (16.7%)	-	9 (30%)	3.06
3	I can understand the learning of balaghah taught by the teacher clearly	16 (53.3%)	13 (43.3%)	1 (3.3%)	-	-	2.96
4	I feel the study of balaghah is important to learn	15 (50%)	5 (16.7%)	10 (33.3%)	-	-	2.83
5	I feel the study of balaghah encourages me to think creatively and critically	5 (16.7%)	16 (53.3%)	9 (30%)	-	-	3.13
6	The study of balaghah gave me satisfaction in mastering the Arabic language	3 (10%)	12 (40%)	2 (6.7%)	6 (20%)	7 (23.3%)	3.06
7	The study of balaghah is able to help me understand the Quran & hadith better	17 (56.7%)	6 (20%)	7 (23.3%)	-	-	2.90
8	I can appreciate the elements of balaghah in Arabic	12 (40%)	3 (10%)	8 (26.7%)	7 (23.3%)	-	3.33

9	I have mastered the knowledge of balaghah well as far as I have learned	9 (30.05)	10 (33.3%)	11 (36.7%)	-	-	3.06
10	The study of balaghah can help me understand the Arabic text well	19 (63.3%)	5 (16.7%)	6 (20%)	-	-	2.93
11	I am interested in learning balaghah to a higher level	1 (3.3%)	14 (46.7%)	8 (26.7%)	7 (23.3%)	-	2.70
Overall mean							2.70

In the objectives of the first part in general, it clearly shows the overall mean recorded is with a total of 2.70 which is at a less certain level. Researcher found that most of the items found in this section got negative responses from the selected respondents. This situation explains that students' views on the subject of balaghah are negative. Therefore can be concluded for this first objective is perception and knowledge students towards the study of balaghah knowledge are negative where they are not interested, have no awareness of its importance and want to delve into it this science.

Problems Faced By Students In Learning Knowledge Balaghah

Table 3

Percentage Distribution and Mean for The Second Objective

No	Things	Percent Frequency (%)					Mean
		SD	D	NS	A	SA	
1	I still can't identify the parts of balaghah knowledge	4 (13.3%)	16 (53.3%)	7 (23.3%)	3 (10%)	-	3.30
2	<i>Ma'ani</i> knowledge is difficult for me to understand	2 (6.7%)	21 (70%)	7 (23.3%)	-	-	2.40
3	<i>Badi'</i> knowledge is difficult for me to understand	13 (43.3%)	8 (26.7%)	9 (30%)	-	-	2.86
4	<i>Bayan</i> knowledge is difficult for me to understand	3 (10%)	8 (26.7%)	4 (13.3%)	10 (33.3%)	5 (16.7%)	3.20
5	I am not clear about the connection between the	15 (50%)	7 (23.3%)	7 (23.3%)	1 (3.3%)	-	2.80

	topics taught in the balaghah	6	8	13	3	-	2.96
6	I find it difficult to understand the examples and descriptions of balaghah found in Arabic textbooks.	(20%)	(26.7%)	(43.3%)	(10%)		
7	I feel that the time allotted to learn balaghah in class is not enough	10	7	13	-	-	3.10
	(33.3%)	(23.3%)	(43.3%)				
8	The methods of balaghah learned are difficult to understand	18	5	7	-	-	2.63
	(60%)	(16.7%)	(23.3%)				
9	Teachers use more Malay translation when teaching balaghah than Arabic	15	10	5	-	-	2.66
	(50%)	(33.3%)	(16.7%)				
10	The descriptions and explanations made by the teacher are difficult to understand	4	13	11	2	-	3.36
	(13.3%)	(43.3%)	(36.7%)	(6.7%)			
11	I had a problem while doing the exercises given by the teacher because I did not understand the teaching of balaghah in the classroom	15	7	8	-	-	2.76
	(50%)	(23.3%)	(26.7%)				
12	The format and form of the questions used helped me to master the knowledge of balaghah	5	9	6	-	-	3.36
	(16.7%)	(30%)	(53.3%)				
13	The teacher does not give examples other than those printed in the textbook	9	6	15	-	-	3.20
	(30%)	(20%)	(50%)				
14	Examples of sentences found in textbooks are difficult to understand.	7	12	11	-	-	3.13
	(23.3%)	(40%)	(36.7%)				
15	Balaghah teaching and learning activities in the classroom effectively helped me to learn Balaghah knowledge well	12	10	4	4	-	3.0
	(40%)	(33.3%)	(13.3%)	(13.3%)			

16	I am clear about the purpose of learning the science of balaghah	15 (50%)	7 (23.3%)	8 (26.7%)	-	-	2.76
17	I can relate Arabic balaghah to Malay style	16 (53.3%)	7 (23.3%)	2 (6.7%)	5 (16.7%)	-	2.86
18	The teaching and learning activities of balaghah in the classroom increased my interest in learning balaghah	13 (43.3%)	8 (26.7%)	9 (30%)	-	-	2.86
19	The balaghah assignment given increased my creativity	15 (50%)	2 (6.7%)	4 (13.3%)	9 (30%)	-	3.23
20	The balaghah assignments given effectively strengthen the understanding of the knowledge of balaghah.	15 (50%)	4 (13.3%)	11 (36.7%)	-	-	2.86
21	In my class, teachers diversify balaghah teaching techniques	5 (16.7%)	15 (50%)	3 (10%)	7 (23.3%)	-	2.40
Overall mean							3.08

In the objective of this second part is to identify problems faced by students in learning the science of balaghah. After made an overall analysis for the objectives of this second part the researchers found that the overall mean score is 3.08, which is at an uncertain level. This means that the respondent has problems in learning the science of balaghah in class. So the answer to the second research question is in overall students in fact have problems in learning the science of this balaghah.

The Effectiveness of Teaching and Learning Balaghah among Students

Table 4

Percentage Distribution and Mean for The Third Objective

No	Things	Percent Frequency (%)					Mean
		SD	D	NS	A	SA	
1	I know in Arabic many verses that are literary in nature	6 (20%)	12 (40%)	7 (23.3%)	5 (16.7%)	-	2.76

2	I can determine in the Arabic texts there are some elements of balaghah	13 (43.3%)	6 (20%)	6 (20%)	5 (16.7%)	-	3.10
3	I can understand the style of language based on the knowledge of al-Bayan such as al-Tasybih and others as far as I have learned	16 (53.3%)	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	5 (16.7%)	-	3.0
4	I can understand the style of language based on the knowledge of al-Ma'ani such as the verses of Insya ' and Khabar	5 (16.7)	15 (50%)	4 (13.3%)	6 (20%)	-	2.36
5	I was able to understand the style of Language based on al-Badi's knowledge such as al-Jinas, al-Tibaq and others as far as I learned in class	13 (43.3%)	1 (3.3%)	9 (30%)	7 (23.3%)	-	3.33
6	I know many verses of the Quran that have elements of balaghah	2 (6.7%)	7 (23.3%)	11 (36.7%)	8 (26.7%)	2 (6.7%)	3.03
7	I was able to determine the element of balaghah found in the verses of the Quran as far as I learned	23 (76.7%)	2 (6.7%)	5 (16.7%)	-	-	2.40
8	I found out how beautiful the Arabic style is after learning balaghah in class	8 (26.7%)	13 (43.3%)	9 (30%)	-	-	3.33
9	I realize that learning balaghah has helped me a lot to process and reveal good verses in Arabic	16 (53.3%)	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	5 (16.7%)	-	3.0

10	Teaching and learning balaghah made me more interested in learning Arabic	10 (33.3%)	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	1 (3.3%)	-	3.26
Overall mean							2.95

In the objective of the 3rd part it is found that the respondent denies that the teaching and learning of balaghah makes them more interested learn Arabic. This shows the teachings of Balaghah have not been given impact on respondents to be interested in learning Arabic. In a way overall, the mean obtained is 2.95 which is at an uncertain level. This means that the majority of respondents have not yet felt the effectiveness of that method applied in the teaching and learning of the knowledge of balaghah that they go through as long as they learn in class. Overall, the researchers have divided part B into three parts namely Parts I, II and III. Table 5 below displays the mean overall for each of those parts

Table 5

Overall Mean for Each Section (I, II and III)

Number	Section	Mean
1	Part I (Students' Perceptions and Knowledge of the Study of Balaghah)	2.70
2	Part II (Problems Faced by Students in Learning the Knowledge of balaghah)	3.08
3	Part III (Effectiveness of Teaching and Learning of Balaghah Knowledge among Students)	2.95

Table 5 shown above clearly shows that the mean recorded in Part I is a total of 2.70. This situation explains that students' views on the subject of balaghah are negative. So it can concluded for this third objective is the perception and knowledge of students to the study of the science of balaghah is negative where they are less interested, less awareness of its importance and less desire deepen this science.

While the mean record in part II shows a low turnover that is, 3.08. Overall, the mean in Part II gives an idea that students have difficulty in learning the science of balaghah. Among the problems what students face is that they are unable to understand what they are learning all this while. Unable to apply what they learn in the use of verses another. Additionally students have trouble using a textbook provided and cannot take advantage of it. Such a thing causing them to be unable to perform the tasks assigned to them That's right. In addition, insufficient p & p time for this balaghah as well among the factors contributing to this problem. So the answer to the second research question is that overall students have problems in the study of the science of balaghah.

In part III, the mean recorded is 2.95 which is at a negative level i.e. the level is uncertain. This situation indicates that respondents disagree less with teaching and learning methods adopted in learning balaghah. So the answer to the last research question is teaching and the learning of balaghah has not had a positive effect on the students who delved into this science.

The conclusions in all three sections of the questionnaire have been constructed has received a negative response among respondents. Min yang obtained on all three parts got a less satisfactory response at where most respondents lack motivation and interest to learn the science of this balaghah. They also face problems in learning this science due to inappropriate teaching methods.

Thus, in this preliminary survey, the mastery of secondary school students religion in the state of Melaka is still not at a good level to the study of the science of balaghah. This can be seen in the findings of the study all parts. Therefore, improvements should be made methods of teaching and learning the science of balaghah.

Conclusion and Main Findings of The Study

- a. The majority of students have less interest in learning knowledge balaghah.
- b. Students do not have a high awareness of the existence of balaghah in Arabic and also the existence of the study of the science of balaghah in SPM Higher Arabic paper.
- c. The students were also found not to have a high awareness of the benefits that will be gained from learning this knowledge of balaghah either to their understanding of the Qur'an, hadith and also of the text Arab.
- d. Students were found to be unable to understand all the lessons that had been given by the teacher against the rules of balaghah and certain topics in Balaghah science.
- e. Students have trouble using Arabic textbooks (BA) entirely for their study of the science of balaghah.
- f. Students feel the time allotted for the subject of balaghah is very limited and they feel the time given is not adequate or insufficient.
- g. The process of teaching and learning balaghah knowledge in the classroom is less effective making it difficult for students to understand this knowledge well.

Suggestions

Based on the results of the analysis of the data obtained, discussion and formulations that have been done before, then in this part the researcher would like put forward some suggestions on this study. These recommendations is a step to enhance and improve the mastery of the students towards the study of Arabic rhetoric or Balaghah especially among religious high school students.

Malaysian Education Ministry

Curriculum management is recommended to add time for Language subjects Higher Arabic because of the many fractions of knowledge that lie under the subject such Arabic languages such as Nahu, Saraf, Balaghah and many more are necessary studied. Apart from that, the contents of this al-Balaghah textbook are also found although of good quality yet found quite a lot arranged in a way that less interesting. Therefore efforts to produce more attractive prints are necessary done immediately to address this issue.

School Management and Administration

The school needs to give a lot of support and encouragement to teachers and students are constantly improving their knowledge in the study of rhetoric Arab. The school needs to provide support and cooperation to the party Arabic committee such as holding any activity

that highlights the elements Balaghah is like a competition to memorize Arabic poems, Balaghah quizzes and so on.

Educators

As a person who holds the title of teacher in school, the question that arises is all Balaghah teachers are effective teaching in the classroom ?. By the way as such teachers should be exposed to a variety of new techniques for ensure effective teaching and learning. Among the appropriate methods to teach the knowledge of al-Balaghah is by using the inductive method (al- Tariqah al-Istiqraiyyat / al Tariqat al istinbatiyyat) should be more focused to leverage past information to be combined with new information in order to become integrated scientific material. This Kedah is the latest and most popular method used in language teaching. This should usually be started with examples and then elaborated with the rules.

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