



Blending Technology and Pedagogy: Optimizing Maharah al-Qirā'ah through the Alef Education Platform

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Abstract

Keywords: Alef Education, maharah al qira'ah, MA DDI Lil Banat Parepare	This study aims to examine Optimizing Reading Skills (maharah al qira'ah) through the Alef Education Platform utilizing the Alef Education platform at MA DDI Lil Banat Parepare. The background of this research is based on the need for innovative, interactive, and technology-based learning media to effectively enhance students interest and ability in reading Arabic texts. This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that the use of the Alef Education platform has a positive impact on the teaching of <i>maharah al qira'ah</i> , particularly in increasing learning motivation, text comprehension, and active student participation in the learning process. Although there are some technical challenges, such as limited internet access and insufficient initial training for teachers, the platform generally serves as an effective alternative learning medium in the madrasah environment. This study recommends the continued use of Alef Education with proper teacher training and improved technological infrastructure support in madrasah. The contribution of this study lies in providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of using Alef Education in improving Arabic reading
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skills in madrasahs, as well as offering strategic recommendations for the sustainable utilization of this platform with teacher training support and the enhancement of technological facilities.

Abstrak	
Kata Kunci: Alef Education, maharah al qira'ah, MA DDI Lil Banat Parepare	Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji penggunaan platform Alef Education sebagai pembelajaran maharah al qira'ah (keterampilan membaca) pada siswa Madrasah Aliyah DDI Lil Banat Parepare. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasari oleh kebutuhan akan inovasi media pembelajaran yang interaktif dan berbasis teknologi, guna meningkatkan minat serta kemampuan membaca teks Arab siswa secara efektif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan platform Alef Education memberikan dampak positif terhadap pembelajaran maharah al qira'ah, terutama dalam aspek peningkatan motivasi belajar, pemahaman teks bacaan, serta keterlibatan aktif siswa dalam proses pembelajaran. Meskipun terdapat beberapa kendala teknis seperti keterbatasan akses internet dan kurangnya pelatihan awal bagi guru, secara umum platform ini dapat menjadi alternatif media pembelajaran yang efektif di lingkungan madrasah. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pemanfaatan Alef Education secara berkelanjutan dengan dukungan pelatihan bagi guru serta peningkatan fasilitas penunjang teknologi di madrasah. Kontribusi penelitian ini terletak pada pemberian bukti empiris mengenai efektivitas penggunaan Alef Education dalam meningkatkan keterampilan membaca bahasa Arab di madrasah, serta menawarkan rekomendasi strategis berupa pemanfaatan platform ini secara berkelanjutan dengan dukungan pelatihan guru dan peningkatan fasilitas penunjang teknologi.

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Introduction

Learning Arabic has an important role in the world of Islamic education, especially in Islamic high schools. As the language of the Qur'an and classical Islamic scientific literature, Arabic language skills are a basic need in understanding Islamic teachings more deeply. One of the most important language skills is *maharah al qira'ah* (reading skills), because through good reading skills, students can access various sources of Arabic literature, both classical and contemporary.(Asse et al., 2024)

However, learning *maharah al qira'ah* still facing various challenges, especially at the madrasah level. Among them are the lack of student interest in Arabic reading texts, limited interesting learning media, and methods that are still conventional and less varied. This has an impact on students low understanding of reading materials and their weak ability to understand the structure of Arabic texts properly.(Fatimah et al., 2019)

Along with the development of digital technology in the world of education, various innovations in learning media have begun to be developed to improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. One form of this innovation is the use of interactive and adaptive digital-based learning platforms. Educational technology (edutech) allows students to learn more independently, visually, and enjoyably, including in learning foreign languages such as Arabic.(Razida, 2023)

One of the technology based learning platforms that is starting to be known in Arabic language learning is Alef Education. Alef Education is a digital platform that provides interactive learning content with a modern approach designed to support the teaching and learning process effectively. (DINIATI, 2023) Although initially developed for general learning, the features in Alef can be adapted in the context of Arabic language learning, including in strengthening reading skills (*maharah al qira'ah*).(Saepurrohman et al., n.d.)

The use of Alef Education in madrasah environments, such as MA DDI Lilbanat Parepare, is an innovative step in responding to learning challenges *maharah al qira'ah*. The integration of this technology is expected to increase students learning motivation, help teachers in delivering materials interactively, and make it easier for students to understand Arabic reading texts through visual displays, audio, and direct evaluations offered by the platform.

Based on that background, this research aims to examine how the Alef Education platform is used as media in learning *maharah al qira'ah*, identifying the advantages and constraints faced in its implementation, and analyzing student responses to its use. It is hoped that the results of this study can be a

reference and contribution to the development of more innovative Arabic language learning media that are in accordance with the times.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to deeply understand Optimizing Reading Skills (*maharah al qira'ah*) through the Alef Education Platform utilizing the Alef Education platform at MA DDI Lil Banat Parepare. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to describe phenomena holistically and contextually, and emphasizes the meaning, process, and subjective experiences of participants, both from the teacher and student sides. (Sugiyono, 2019) The subjects in this study were Arabic teachers and students of MA DDI Lilbanat Parepare who were directly involved in using the Alef Education platform in the learning process. Meanwhile, the object of the study was the *maharah al qira'ah* learning activity using the Alef platform as a supporting media. The determination of informants was carried out purposively, namely by selecting individuals who were considered to understand and play an active role in the implementation of the learning media.

Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe the learning process using the Alef Education platform. Interviews were conducted in depth with teachers and several students to explore their views, experiences, and responses to the use of the media. Documentation in the form of photos of activities, platform displays, and learning notes were also collected to strengthen the data findings. (Siyoto, Sandu & Sodi, 2015)

Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The collected data was analyzed thematically to find patterns, meanings, and relationships between components related to the effectiveness of using Alef Education in learning *maharah al qira'ah*. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation techniques of sources and methods, as well as discussions with informants to ensure the

validity of the interpretation. (Sugiyono, 2008)

Result and Discussion

Implementation of Maharah al Qira'ah Learning Using Alef

Implementation of learning *maharah and qira'ah* at MA DDI Lilbanat Parepare experienced significant changes after implementing the Alef Education platform as a learning medium. Before using this platform, the teaching and learning process was dominated by conventional methods such as lectures, reading together, and text translation assignments. Although this method has been used for generations, many students find it difficult to understand Arabic texts due to lack of visualization, lack of direct feedback, and limited vocabulary. (Razida, 2023) Teachers also face challenges in measuring students understanding objectively and comprehensively in limited time in class.

With the presence of Alef Education, the learning process *maharah al qira'ah* become more structured and interactive. Teachers use Alef as the main platform in delivering Arabic reading materials that have been adjusted to the students ability levels. (Nuroh & Ubaidillah, 2023) The materials available on the Alef platform are packaged in the form of interactive videos, reading comprehension quizzes, and structured exercises that guide students to understand the contents of the text gradually. Students are not only asked to read the text, but also to answer contextual questions and choose the right vocabulary based on the reading. (Mutiarra, 2023) This helps increase students focus in understanding the structure and meaning of the reading more deeply.

Based on classroom observations, during one reading session with class XI, out of 25 students present, 18 students managed to complete the Alef comprehension quiz with scores above 70. This indicated an increase compared to the pre-observation evaluation, where only 10 students reached that score. In addition, documentation showed that during a lesson on the theme *al-'usrah* (family), 70% of students replayed the audio feature at least twice before answering comprehension questions, indicating active engagement with the

material.

The implementation of learning usually begins with an introduction from the teacher regarding the theme or topic of the reading to be studied. After that, students are directed to open their respective accounts on Alef using digital devices such as laptops or mobile phones. The teacher ensures that all students access the same material and gives a certain amount of time to listen to or read the text. In this session, students can enlarge the text, play the reading audio, and access the glossary available on the platform. This makes it easy for students who have varying levels of understanding to learn at their own pace.

After the reading stage, students are directed to answer questions related to the reading. The questions provided by Alef include understanding the contents of the text, identifying sentence structures, and important vocabulary in the reading. One of the interesting features of Alef is the automatic feedback. If students answer incorrectly, the platform provides an explanation directly, so that errors can be corrected immediately and become a separate learning experience. (Aprilia & Syarifuddin, 2024) Teachers use this moment to provide assistance to students who are experiencing difficulties and re-explain parts of the text that are considered complicated.

Interaction between teachers and students also increased through discussions after reading sessions. Teachers encouraged students to convey their understanding of the reading text, both verbally and in writing. In some cases, teachers asked students to summarize the contents of the reading or explain it again using their own vocabulary. This activity is very helpful in practicing understanding and the ability to construct Arabic sentences correctly. In addition, teachers also use the learning outcome report feature in Alef to evaluate the development of each student's understanding. One Arabic teacher stated, *"Alef sangat membantu saya memberikan umpan balik instan. Jika biasanya saya harus memeriksa latihan satu per satu, kini siswa bisa langsung tahu jawabannya benar atau salah."*

Learning activities with Alef also encourage students to study independently outside of class hours. Most students feel more motivated to review the reading material that has been studied because this platform can be accessed at any time. (Meiliyati & Dewiyati, n.d.) One student expressed, "*Saya biasanya kesulitan memahami teks Arab karena banyak kosa kata yang tidak saya ketahui, tetapi dengan Alef saya bisa langsung klik kata yang sulit dan melihat artinya. Jadi lebih cepat paham.*" This testimony reflected that Alef's interactive features effectively reduced barriers in vocabulary comprehension and motivated students to engage more actively with texts.

However, the implementation of learning is not free from several technical constraints. Some students have difficulty accessing due to limited devices or unstable internet networks. Teachers also revealed that not all features in Alef can be optimized for the context learning Arabic at MA level, because some of the content is still general or not entirely in accordance with the national curriculum. Even so, teachers get around this by combining material from Alef with additional teaching materials that are adjusted.

Overall, Alef Education platform at MA DDI Lil Banat Parepare have a positive impact on the quality and learning experience of students. The learning process becomes more interesting, focused, and responsive to students' needs. Teachers feel helped by the existing features, and students are more active in understanding Arabic reading texts. This technology supported learning experience shows that learning *maharah al qira'ah* can be developed further with the integration of appropriate digital media. (Meiliyati & Dewiyati, n.d.)

Analysis of Effectiveness and Constraints Faced

The use of the Alef Education platform in learning *maharah qira'ah* shows a fairly high level of effectiveness in several aspects. First, in terms of learning motivation, students show increased enthusiasm for Arabic reading lessons. This is due to the interactive appearance of the Alef interface, the presence of audio-visuals that support text understanding, and the practice question feature that provides direct feedback. This platform is able to change the impression that has

so far been considered quite rigid in learning Arabic texts into a more interesting and communicative experience. (Dilla & Anwar, 2023)

Second, in terms of understanding the material, Alef provides a systematic learning structure. The material presented in the form of reading texts accompanied by a glossary and visual explanations greatly helps students understand the meaning of words and the context of sentences. The presence of audio readings also trains students in pronouncing and listening to the correct Arabic language structure, so that it not only improves reading skills (*qira'ah*), but also supports listening skills (*istima'*). Teachers can monitor individual student progress through learning outcome reports provided by the system.

However, in its implementation, there are several technical and non-technical constraints that affect the optimization of platform use. The most dominant technical constraint is limited access to digital devices and internet connections. Not all students have personal devices or stable networks, especially when learning is done at home. This causes limitations in accessing Alef materials evenly. Teachers also need to provide alternatives such as printed assignments or sharing screenshots of the material for students who are constrained.

In addition, in terms of content and curriculum, although Alef Education provides quite varied materials, some learning contents are still not fully integrated with the Arabic curriculum at the MA level. Some reading texts are not yet in accordance with the local context or the level of student ability. Therefore, teachers must modify and select materials selectively so that they remain relevant to learning objectives. (Aprilia & Syarifuddin, 2024) This certainly requires teachers to be prepared to manage digital materials and adapt them to students' needs.

Teachers also face the challenge of adapting to technology, especially for those who are not used to using digital media in the learning process. Training and mentoring are needed to maximize all of Alef's features. Likewise, students who are less familiar with using the platform need time to adapt so that they not

only follow technically, but can also benefit from substantive learning. (Oktaviani, 2024)

However, overall it can be concluded that the effectiveness of using Alef Education is more dominant than its constraints. This platform has succeeded in becoming an auxiliary media that supports the achievement of competencies. *maharah al qira'ah* students more interactively and adaptive. (Yanti, n.d.) With efforts to improve technical aspects, teacher training, and content adjustments, Alef Education has the potential to become a sustainable innovation in Arabic language learning in madrasah.

Responses and Perceptions of Alef Education Media

Based on the results of interviews and observations conducted, in general, students' responses and perceptions of the use of the Alef Education platform were very positive. Most students expressed that learning *maharah al qira'ah* become more enjoyable and easier to understand than the conventional methods they previously experienced. They felt helped by Alef's interactive features, such as audio readings, picture illustrations, vocabulary presentations, and practice questions that provide direct feedback. This makes the process of reading Arabic texts no longer monotonous and scary, but more challenging and interesting. (Alyammahi, 2019)

Students also feel more confident when facing Arabic reading texts. Some of them stated that previously they were reluctant to read because they did not understand many of the vocabulary. However, through Alef, they can click on difficult words to see their meaning, as well as hear their pronunciation. This not only helps in understanding the meaning but also in strengthening aspects *tarakib* (sentence structure) and *lafzhiyyah* (pronunciation). (I. Miolo & Jannah Langkau, 2023) This response shows that students have experienced an increase *self-efficacy* in dealing with Arabic reading materials.

On the other hand, students also appreciate the flexibility of Alef which can be accessed outside the classroom or madrasah. They feel helped because they can repeat lessons at home anytime, especially when they get home, as long

as they have internet access. Some students even stated that they became more interested in learning new texts outside of class material because they felt challenged by the assessment and scoring features on the platform. Motivation they are intrinsically driven by a system that makes learning feel like an educational game (gamification).

However, not all students feel the same convenience. Some students who do not have personal devices or are constrained by internet networks express feelings of discomfort because they cannot follow learning optimally. In addition, students who are not yet familiar with digital technology need more time to understand how the platform works. However, the majority of them still show an open attitude and enthusiasm for learning, especially after receiving guidance from teachers or peers.

This study confirms that the use of the Alef Education platform makes a significant contribution to the teaching of maharah al-qira'ah at MA DDI Lil Banat Parepare. Alef not only facilitates the improvement of students' reading skills through its interactive features but also fosters motivation and self-confidence in understanding Arabic texts that were previously considered difficult. Although some technical challenges remain, such as limited internet access and teachers' adaptation to technology, the positive impact is far more dominant. Thus, Alef Education can be regarded as an alternative learning medium relevant to the demands of 21st-century education, while also providing a foundation for the development of more innovative and sustainable strategies in Arabic language teaching.

In terms of the usefulness of the material, students considered that Alef's content was quite relevant, although there were some texts that they thought were still too difficult or less appropriate for their daily lives. (Adhistia et al., n.d.) This is important input for teachers to be more selective in choosing reading content from Alef, as well as providing more assistance when the material feels complex. However, students still feel that the variety of text types in Alef makes them more trained in understanding various Arabic language styles.

Overall, students' perceptions of Alef Education are very positive, both in terms of convenience, ease of access, and its impact on improving their reading skills. They hope that this kind of platform will continue to be used and developed, even integrated into other Arabic lessons such as *maharah al kalam* and *maharah al kitabah*. These student responses show that digital media such as Alef can bridge the gap between conventional methods and the demands of 21st century learning. (Surayanah et al., 2022)

Conclusion

The findings of this study conclude that the use of the Alef Education platform as a medium for teaching *maharah al-qirā'ah* at MA DDI Lil Banat Parepare has a positive impact on enhancing students' Arabic reading skills. The platform successfully provides interactive and engaging learning experiences tailored to the needs of the digital generation. Students demonstrated increased motivation, active participation, and better comprehension of reading texts. A surprising finding is that beyond improving reading skills, the platform also fostered greater learner autonomy and collaborative learning dynamics, which were not initially expected. This highlights the potential of technology-driven platforms not only as instructional tools but also as catalysts for broader educational transformation in Arabic language learning.

Despite these promising outcomes, the study has certain limitations. The challenges of limited access to digital infrastructure and insufficient teacher training remain significant barriers to maximizing the platform's effectiveness. Furthermore, the relatively small scope of implementation may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research should address these limitations by examining broader contexts, providing comparative studies across different institutions, and assessing long-term impacts. Such efforts will strengthen the understanding of how digital platforms like Alef can be effectively integrated into Arabic language curricula and adapted to diverse educational settings.

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Author Contribution Statement

Mirdawati Razida led the conceptualization, research design, and coordination of the study. Nur Hasaniyah conducted the data collection, literature review, and initial drafting of the manuscript. Abdul Muntaqim Al Anshory performed the data analysis, critical revisions, and final editing. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript and accept full responsibility for its content.

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