



# Content Analysis of English Textbook of Religious Seminaries of District Swat

**Maaz Ahmad Khan**, Lecturer in English, University of Buner. Email: ahmadmaaz131@gmail.com

**Dr. Liaqat Iqbal**, Assistant Professor of English, Abdulwalikhan University Mardan, Pakistan.  
Email: liaqatiqbal@gmail.com

**Madam Islam Bibi**, Lecturer in English, University of Malakand, Pakistan, Email: ibegal@yahoo.com

**Arshad Ali**, Mphil Scholar, Qurtaba University, Peshawar, Email: ali17449@gmail.com

**Syedad Khan**, Lecturer in English, University of Buner

**Sardar Ali**, Lecturer in English, University of Buner

**Abstract-** The research study aims to describe the course contents and teaching methodology of English in religious seminaries of Pakistan. It also gives a description of Madrassas and their curricula. The data for the study is collected through qualitative method using interview as tool for data collection. A total of 8 respondents are interviewed who were teachers at various madrassas located in District Swat. The findings reveal that course contents and teaching methodology need reforms. The study also strongly recommends that course book and teaching methodology should have communicative activities and focus on oral communication respectively.

**Keywords:** language; English language; course contents; teaching methodology; Madrassa; curriculum

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to Yule (2010), a language is learnt under two major forces on the part of foreign learners, that is, instrumental and integrated motivation. When one learns a language to achieve something else with the help of language. This is termed as instrumental motivation of language learning, and when one learns a target language to have interaction with the target community of the language. This is usually called interactive motivation. In Pakistan, English language enjoys the status of being second language. Article (52) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1973) consists of three points regarding the linguistic aspect of the state. First of all, Urdu is the national language; English is the official language, and local languages can be promoted but not at the cost of the national language. Moreover, attempts shall be made to replace English with Urdu within fifteen years. There is a clear description of English language as the official language.

English is not used in the religious seminaries of Pakistan. According to Rahman (2004), Ulema have been writing in Urdu in defense of the affairs pertaining to madrassa. They write in defense against alien philosophies, heretical beliefs, and the other sects. Pakistani ulema's work is polemical and tendentious. It also criticizes secular politicians. A survey by the Institute of Policy Studies and a book by Saleem Mansur Khalid describe this in detail. According to Rahman, Pakistani English is an interference variety. It has the features of different local languages, that is, Pashtu, Punjabi, Sindi, etc. He describes three sub varieties of Pakistani English: acrolect, mesolect and basilect. Acrolect is a variety in Pakistani English, used by the educated in the English medium institutes. Mesolect is used by the ordinary, Urdu-educated people. Basilect of Pakistani English is used by people of little formal education, such as guides and waiters.

English language is one of the languages widely used all over the globe for different purposes: interactive and utilitarian purposes. According to Jenkins (2015), English language has four positions: English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL), English as a foreign language (EFL), and English as a lingua franca (ELF). English is used as a native language in five countries, such as, UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It is used as a second language in Pakistan, India, etc., and used as a foreign language in Japan, China, Russia etc. This model was actually given by Kachru (1992). Jenkins (ibid) argues that English as a lingua franca is used in intercultural communication, being world's largest English. Crystal (2003) accounts six reasons for English as a lingua franca of the world: historical, internal political, external economic, practical, intellectual and entertainment reasons.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Collins English dictionary (2006), the word 'madrassa' refers to a place of learning. It is an educational institution where students (Taliban) get religious education, that is, the Quran, Hadith, jurisprudence, and the like. Historically madrassa contributed to various aspects of life of Muslim society, such as, law, literature, divinity, medicine, etc. According to Sajjad (2009), there is dilemma with the term

'madrassa'. The West attached stereotypes with madrassa. He highlights the significance and contribution of madrassa, saying that all madrassas do not promote violence. Rather, they have a constructive role in society. Jamal (1996) argues that madrassas in Pakistan are significant in four ways – as part of educational policies, in religious drives, as recruitment of clergy, and for their social impact. Hence, it is essential first to place them within the overall educational setup of the country, and to examine the significance of Deen in education policy. The Pakistan Education Statistics handbook describes that marginalized group of society send their children to madrassa since the private schools do not cater to their needs. Rahman (2006) maintains that the educational role played by madrassa should be recognized.

According to Rahman (2004), registered madrassas are controlled by central organizations or boards that determine the syllabi, curriculum, collect registration and examination fee. Examinations are given and taken in Urdu and Arabic.

#### Central Boards of Madrassas in Pakistan

Name	Sub-Sect	Place	Established
Wafaq ul Madaris	Deobandi	Multan	1959
Tanzim ul Madaris	Barelvi	Lahore	1960
WafaqulMadaris (Shia) Pakistan	Shia	Lahore	1959
Rabta-tul-madaris-al-Islamia	Jamat-i-Islami	Lahore	1983
Wafq-ul-Madaris	Ahl-i-Hadith	Faislabad	1955

In April 2002, Dr. Mahmood Ahmed Ghazi, the Minister of Religious Affairs, gave the figure at 10,000, with 1.7 million students. They belong to the major sects of Islam, the Sunnis and the Shias, but mostly the former, Pakistan being a predominantly Sunni country. Among the Sunni, there are three sub-sects: Deobandis, Barelvis and the Ahl-i-Hadith (salafi). Besides these, the revivalist Jamat-e-Islami also has its own madrassas. There are two major sects having their own madrassa across Pakistan: Sunni and Shia. Sunni sect is further divided into two major sects: Deobandi and Barelvi.

Deobandi school of thought is associated with Darul Uloom Deoband established in 1867. It produced a number of great religious scholars and makhtabs (seminaries) across subcontinent, especially Pakistan. It focuses on the observances of Sharia, opposing the importance attached to cultural customs and rituals. Moreover, it also does not oppose mysticism.

There are 21 madrassas in Swat, following curriculum given by the Deobandi school of thought. According to Rahman (2004), Mulla Nizam Uddin standardized the curriculum known as the Dars-i-Nazami, different teachers taught different texts to students. Shah Abdul Rahim (d. 1718) had made an attempt to create a fixed curriculum which was taught at the Madrassa-i-Rahimiya and emphasized the manqulat (such as hadith). The Dars-i-Nazami, on the other hand, emphasized the maqulat. Thus, there were more books on grammar, logic and philosophy than before. Jalandari (2005), describes the subjects taught at different levels in madrassas as follows:

#### DARS E NIZAMI

##### SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN FIRST YEAR

Biography of the prophet, (syrat), conjugation, grammar, syntax, (sarhv) Arabic literature, calligraphy, chant illation (tajweed).

##### SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN SECOND YEAR

Conjugation, grammar, syntax, Arabic literature, jurisprudence, logic, calligraphy, chant illation

##### SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN THIRD YEAR

Quranic exegesis, jurisprudence, syntax, Arabic literature, hadith, logic, Islamic brotherhood, chant illation, external study, (Tareekh e millat awr khilfat e rasheda, and other Islamic movements.

#### SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN FOURTH YEAR

Quranic exegesis, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, rhetoric, hadith, logic, history, chant illation, modern sciences of Arabia, geography of the Arab, peninsula, and other Islamic countries.

#### SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN FIFTH YEAR

Quranic exegesis, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, rhetorics, beliefs, logic, Arabic literature, chant illation, external study, history of Indian kings

#### SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN SIXTH YEAR

Interpretation of the holy, jurisprudence, Arabic literature, philosophy, chant illation, external study, Urdu texts

#### SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN SEVENTH YEAR

Sayings of the prophet, jurisprudence, beliefs, responsibility, chant illation, external study (Urdu texts)

#### SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN EIGHTH YEAR

Ten books by various authors focusing on the sayings of the Holy Prophet.

#### MUTAWASITAH

Mutawasitah is a stage in religious education, that is prior to Dars e Nizami. It is equivalent to middle. It is a requirement for the admission to Dars e Nizami for those students who do not have middle certificate. It comprises three substages:

1. Mutawaitah 1st
2. Mutawasitah 2nd
3. Mutawasitah 3rd

Sajjad (ibid) argues that Darsi Nizami is a rich history and is shared by various madrassas of the country. Academically vast and structurally organized, it corresponds to mainstream education. Moreover, 20 subjects are purely religious and the rest of them are secular in nature. Due to limited facilities, secular subjects are sacrificed. As a result, economic opportunities are almost non-existent. However, this might be a deliberate strategy since otherwise religious inclination would decrease and madrassas might end up being overcrowded. For Rahman (ibid), Darsi Nizami has been modified though the canonical texts are still there. These functions act as the symbol of continuity and identity. Historically speaking, madrassa preserved the identity and heritage during the colonial era when secular subjects displaced religious subjects and the prestige of classical languages of Muslim: Arabic and Persian. Despite of repeated reforms, these canonical texts have not been changed yet. One of the famous critics of traditional curriculum of the madrassas was Maulana Maudidi who maintained that being based on the memorization of the canonical texts, madrassas do not provide relevant education to Muslim society. Old works like Sarf-e-Meer and Kafiya are in the course, but easier and more modern books are used to supplement them. Arabic, for instance, is taught through modern and much easier texts than the canonical works mentioned in the Dars-i-Nizami. The canonical texts are taught in Arabic but, because students do not really gain competence in the language, they are either memorized or understood from Urdu translations available in the market. Basically, stagnation and ossification of knowledge are associated with Darsi Nizami. The canonical texts are explained with the help of commentaries, glosses, marginal notes and super commentaries. Students strive hard memorizing the stuff. They do not use their analytical powers. Rather, they learn the things by heart. Madrassas take the assumption that everything had been done in the golden age, now it is the function of madrassas to preserve the things done. Al Hadith madrassas have been teaching Pakistan Studies, English, mathematics and general science. Now there is a trend of the secularization of the subjects across Pakistan. Pakistani government gives financial assistance to madrassas to modernize and secularize the traditional subjects and the Wafaq has shown interest in the step too. There is a common thing that scholars of the madrassas do is the refutation of other sects and their beliefs and practices. This is done in the form of bitter debate in which scholars of both sides put forwards arguments in favor of their own and against others. Moreover, they give Fatwa regarding a controversial topic. One of the aims of madrassas is to refute heretical beliefs in Pakistan and across the world. They also refute alien philosophies that are regarded as invading the Muslim ideological space intellectually, refuting Greek and Western philosophies, like capitalism, socialism, feminism, secularism, etc.

According to Irfan (2015), bringing reforms in madrassas is a major concern. This attracted attention in Pakistan after 9/11. Government of Pakistan has made several efforts to make changes to madrassas. Moreover, various Ulema have endorsed the reform agenda of government. In this regard, the then president General Musharraf tried to curb the influence of religious institutions and tried to bring madrassa education within the mainstream education. He banned foreign students to come to Pakistan getting education in the madrassas. The Pakistan Madrassa Education was an ordinance passed in 2001, dealing with registration, regularization, standardization and uniformity of curricula. This ordinance took on board different schools of thought. It was not implemented effectively. The reason being that the religious organizations did not cooperate with the government in this matter. The government reviewed its policy of

registration and standardization. It passed another ordinance named Madrassa Voluntary Registration and Regularization Ordinance, 2005. It deals with these points. No madrassa shall operate without registration. Madrassas shall submit an annual report of their educational activities and performance to the registrar. Madrassas shall also submit an annual report about the financial aspects. This ordinance also focused on the point that no madrassa shall produce literature that promoted militancy, violence and hatred. Madrassa Reform Project is one of the steps taken government to bring reforms in madrassas. It focused on the incorporation of English, Pakistan Studies, Mathematics, and General Science.

According to Hall (2011), teaching methodology is a way of presentation that teachers actually practice in classroom to achieve stated objectives. It is different from method in that method is an ideal way of doing something designed by experts for an ideal situation. Grammar translation, audiolingual, direct method, etc., are language teaching methods. Hall (ibid) argues that it is a post method era. Teachers need to use eclectic or integrated method to cater to the needs and demands of the foreign learners. He further distinguishes between method, approach and technique. Technique refers to the activities designed to put target language in practice. For example, listing, information gap, sharing personal experiences, etc. Approach refers to a set of assumptions about the nature of a phenomenon. Approach is subsumed in theory.

### III. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Exploring the curriculum of madrassa, it is clear that is no room for English language throughout the curriculum. Rather, almost all the subjects are related to the holy Quran and Hadith. Logic, history, philosophy, and rhetoric are secular subjects that supplement the study of the holy Quran and Hadith. Now English language is taught at the Mutawasita. What is Mutawasita? It is equivalent to the middle level of the secular education, meaning from 5th to 8th class. The basic point is that a candidate who has passed middle level can be enrolled in the Darsi Nizami directly. If a candidate has not passed middle level, meaning he or she is primary-passed then he or she is supposed to be enrolled in the mutawasita, which is a gateway for Darsi Nizami. As has already been described above that there is no room for English language in the madrassa curriculum, English language is only taught at Mutawasuta, which covers three levels: mutawasita 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. the contents of the English course taught at Mutawasita include lessons on the topic of the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Hazrat Muhammad Qasim Nanatwi, Hazrat Shah Wali Ullah, poems based on moral values and faith, seven continents of the world, and stories based on the edification of spiritual and moral values. Moreover, the things are described with reference to Pakistan. For example, the seven continents are described in terms of their physical features and their relationship with Pakistan. Students have been given information regarding the role of Ulema in gaining independence of Pakistan. In short, the contents have been described keeping in view the national agenda of Pakistan. Besides, one of the hallmarks of the contents is that there is no reference to the beliefs, practices, etc., of other sects. All the topics are about the Deobandi school of thought. There are no charts, pictures, etc., which make the students easily understand. Exercises of the lessons are filling in the blanks, true false, matching columns, substitution drills, synonyms and antonyms, analogy, and word meaning. There were grammar points in exercise, like parts of speech, tenses, active passive voice, and direct and indirect narration. What lacks in the contents is pronunciation, comprehension, and creative writing. There is nothing about sounds, stress, intonation, etc. comprehension question was also missing in the contents. Reading comprehension is vital for learning a language. Besides, there are no tasks or activities in the contents, focusing on the development of critical and creative writing. Though the main function of the course is to speak and write English language correctly and effectively, but the major things necessary for language learning were missing. Last but not least, there is no point seen regarding oral communication that is one of the goals of language teaching learning process.

English language in Mutawasita is taught using traditional grammar translation method. Teacher is considered the source of authority, teaching the contents word by word and line by line with translation and students are supposed to do as directed by the teacher. Some of the common techniques used in the methodology of teaching English language are as follows. Translation of grammar is practiced for the most part. Grammar is translated to students, telling them the structural complexities of language. For example, how an exclamatory sentence is translated from English to Urdu. Meanings of difficult words are written on the board by teacher. Students annotate in the book. Memorization is a very common technique that teachers encourage in teaching English language. To memorize stuff, students use repetition as an effective strategy.

#### IV. RATIONALE FOR THE CONTENTS AND METHODOLOGY

6 madrasa teachers of different madrassas across Swat were interviewed, giving the rationale for the course contents and teaching methodology. First of all, they say they do not need English language as it does not prove to be helpful in the understanding of the holy Quran and Hadith. They say their main goal is to teach Sharia (the combination of Quran and Hadith). They argue that language of the curriculum and instruction are either Arabic and Urdu. Students need to work on Arabic and Urdu so as to get full knowledge of Sharia. Second, they say the English subject taught at Mutawasita covers contents colored by our cultural, historical and religious association; or those contents have been incorporated which are neutral in nature. Speaking about teaching methodology, they argue that the best methodology is grammar translation because it has been tested in other subjects and has been effective. Students are used to this method and learn things quickly. They supported their claim with an Arabic expression (anything that has been repeated is learnt). Moreover, they argue, for the improvement of writing in English essay is given to students. For the enhancement of speaking in English, students perform speech competition, dialogue and debate.

#### V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is demonstrated that English language is not included in the curriculum of madrasa in Swat, Pakistan. English is taught at Mutawasita, a stage prior to Darsi Nizami and being equal to middle level. The contents are about seven continents, a lesson on the holy Prophet (SAW), religious figures, poems based on faith and moral values and edification. Exercises focus on traditional structural aspect of language. There is no room for oral communication. For example, speaking activities.

#### VI. SUGGESTIONS

1. Sounds of language should be added to the English book.
2. Oral communication should be given focus.
3. Critical and creative writing practices should be included in the book.
4. Teachers need to use eclectic or integrated method rather than grammar translation method only.
5. Teachers need to use audiovisual aids to make the students understand and to make teaching effective.

#### VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This study can be extended to the rest of madrassas of KPK and Pakistan.
2. It can also be applied to government schools, like the course contents and teaching methodology of government schools.
3. It can be extended to established syllabus of madrassas, that is, Darsi Nizami.

#### REFERENCES

1. Rahman, Tariq. "The Use of Words in Pakistan." *English Today*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1991, pp.32\_38.
2. Iqbal, Abdul Rauf. "Madrassa Reforms in Pakistan: A Historical Analysis" *ISSRA Papers*. 2015, pp. 39\_45.
3. Sajjad, Muhammad Waqas. "Madrassa in Pakistan: Thinking beyond Terrorism based Reforms" *London School of Economics* 2009, pp. 4\_8.
4. Jalandari, Muhammad. "Wafaqul Madarisatul Arabia". 2006, Pp. 10\_17
5. Hall, Gram. "Exploring English Language Teaching: language in Action" 2011, pp. 76\_79.
6. Jenkins, Jennifer. "Global Englishes" 2015 pp. 11\_17
7. Yule, George. "The Study of Language. 2010, Pp. 192\_193.
8. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Modified 2012.