

Evaluating English Language Skills of Balochi Students of Islamic Studies

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Abstract

In the present scientific modern age, English language has assumed a prominent position in the whole world. Even the countries like China, Russia, Japan, Korea etc. are also giving preference to English language. In the beginning the medium of instruction was not English in these countries but due to the growing demand of the world, they have been compelled to declare English as the medium of instruction. In almost all the countries of the world, English is taught as a subject because all the latest and modern research is being carried out in English.

In Pakistan there are following levels of Education:

- i. Primary Education Grade one to eight.
- ii. Secondary Education Grade 9 to 10.
- iii. Higher Secondary / Inter Mediate Education Grade 11 to 12.
- iv. ADP Programme / Graduation
- v. BS Programme
- vi. Post Graduate Programme

The present Research has focused on the needs and requirements of the students of Islamic Studies acquiring the education of Grade 11 and 12 in the Baluchistan Province (Pakistan). After Grade 12 many of the students get admission in BS Islamic studies in which research is required. After BS Islamic Studies they obtain the education of M.Phil. Along with other languages, they have to be proficient in English Language.

Keywords: English Language Skills, Learning, Islamic Studies, Proficiency, Education.

Introduction:

The present research paper aims at evaluating the present and future needs and requirements of this specific class which demands the consideration of Higher Authorities and syllabus designers so that the difficulties in the syllabus may be overcome. Baluchistan Province is the largest province in the Pakistan as far as the area is concerned but at the same time it is under developed due to its barren hilly and remote villages / Town. However, the Govt. of Baluchistan has managed to provide the education of Grade 11 to 12 and BS Islamic Studies. Although it is considered back word province yet the people like to adhere to the teachings of Islam. Therefore, a large network of Madrassas and Govt. educational institution are present so that the people may be able to quench the thirst of knowledge. The researcher has paid full attention to the curriculum of English Language being taught at Grade 11 and 12 Curriculum has a vital role in the educational system "Curriculum is concerned with the planning implementation, evaluation, management and administration of education programmes"¹.

At the same time the problems faced by the students of Islamic Studies have also been kept in mind. In order to make research effective. Two types of questionnaires were developed, one for the teachers of English teaching to Islamic studies students and the other

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¹ Nunan, David. *The learner-centred curriculum: a study in second language teaching*. Cambridge (England: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

for the students of Islamic Studies. Owing to COVID-19 face to face Interview could not be possible. However with the help of some college managements, online interview from the students and teachers was made possible some teacher showed reluctant to give their own views and ideas. The syllabus designers and the concerned authorities were also consulted in this regard. It was come to the notice that that the persons involved in syllabus designing process are neither have experienced not they have done specialization. Either they are retired teachers who have never gone any training regarding the syllabus designing and needs analysis of the students which is the part and parcel of educational system developments.

“Needs analysis is the ability to comprehend and/or produce the linguistic feature of the target situation”.²

In other words, the procedure for collecting information about the learner and the situation in which he uses the target language is known as needs analysis. Richard (1990)

“Needs analysis is the process of determining the needs which a learner or a group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities. It makes uses of both subjective and objective information”. John Munby.³

The most thought-provoking and widely known work on needs analysis has been done by John Munby (1978) which consists of:

- (i) A set of parameters
- (ii) A range of questions

In Balochistan for Grade 11 and Grade 12 literature based syllabus has been introduced. For this class, two books Intermediate book 1 and 2 have been in vogue. First of all, these books are being evaluated.

Suitability for the Level of Learning:

Both the books don't contain appropriate selection of material. They have not been arranged in systematic and in organized way. In fact the linguists are agreed to move from easy to difficult, interesting to understanding. The stories and plays in their books are difficult both conceptually and linguistically. These create difficulties for the students. for Example.

“Then there was the treadmill, and there were the overhead swings to train her against space sickness. . . and there was the vibration table, another fiendish device, where she was rattled and shaken at a rate of 200 vibrations per minute. There was the noise chamber, where loudspeakers screeched and howled, clattered and hissed with painfully loud and hideous sounds. There was the heat chamber, which was like a Turkish bath, and in which she had to sit, fully clothed, and operate knobs and levers to a set programme while her examiners peered in at her through plate-glass windows. They told her to write her name, again and again, while they pumped the air out of the chamber, watching for the moment when she blacked out. Then they pumped the air back in, again noted the readings on the dials when she showed signs of life—and told her to write her name again”.

“Suddenly they would be hurled round by the Wheel, shaken by the vibrating table, deafened in the noise chamber, scorched and suffocated in the heat chamber, dropped by parachute into a forest or lake. When the students do not comprehend such types of

² Richards, Jack .C. “Frontmatter.” In *The Language Teaching Matrix*, i- iv. Cambridge Language Teaching Library. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

³ Munby, John. *Communicative syllabus design: a sociolinguistic model for defining the content of purpose-specific language programmes*. (Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press. 1978).

paragraphs they don't take interest in the lessons. They are inclined towards cramming. Following paragraphs is another example:

Literary Background:

For understanding the poems the students must have strong literary background but they have no liking for these difficult terms of poetry. Before purchasing this book the students must have clear concepts of paradox, ballad, metre, simile, metaphor, and alterations etc.

Cultural Relevance:

Neither the stories of the first book nor the plays of book III have any cultural relevance. The students take interest only where there is cultural relevance in the stories and plays. For example the paragraph from the Heroes and Herons is given to illustrate this point.

"Take London at this moment look at the scores and scores of attractions to induce people to leave home in the evening and break up the family circle..., restaurants, concert rooms, entertainments, theatres. Look at the music-halls. Do you know how many musical halls there are in London and Greater London at this moment?"

The plays have no attraction because they have been meant for English people. In the same way the poems, "He who wishes for the clothes of Heaven" is completely unimpressive.

Vocabulary Structure:

The syllabus designers did not keep in mind the methods and techniques to develop vocabulary structure and whether these books are catering the needs of the students or not. In Baluchistan province the English medium schools are scanty. Almost 80% students come from Urdu medium schools. When they come across the following words Homeric fight, Trotted backs, nearby etc. they feel difficulties.

Exercises:

Although at the end of each lesson exercises have been provided but language enriching exercises are the demand of the students as per survey conducted by that researcher. The Exercises neither increase the proficiency level of the students nor develop the interest to learn English language willingly. Both the books lack language exercises. The students are unable to develop reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. They wish to appear in different examinations of Police, judiciary, Army, Banks and get admission in BS Islamic studies. They require a lot of proficiency in reading and writing skills while the syllabus designers have focused their attention to the reading skills of the students.

All other skills have been neglected but even in reading skills, the students are unable to read the paragraph fluently due to jumbled and un-systems material. The inclusion of foreign culture, the ideas words and terminology have no charm for the students who want to have topics related to Pakistan culture. Teacher manual plays a significant role in effective lesson planning and teaching both the books do not contain teachers manual which is guiding star for the teachers to make the concepts of the students clear examination requirements. The examination requirements compelled the students to purchase guide books, notes and cram them. The questions related to language learning are not included in the papers as a result they do not read these books. They cram the answers of the questions and get through the exam.

So both the books have no contributions in the improvement of proficiency in language for the students of Islamic studies. Majority of the students do neither take interest nor comprehend the language skills. The students of Islamic studies wish to gain the knowledge of English language due to the teachings of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). 6 As

narrated by Ibn e Majaa from the the Hadees of Anas bin Maalik who said “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim.’”⁴

In the Holy *Qur’ān*,⁵ the learning has been emphasized in these words:

“Then Allah taught Adam (man) the names of all things.

He presented to the angels the things and asked them about their names.

‘An ye? If ye are right in your claim’ 31.

The angles submitted, ‘Glorious is Thy name, We know only what we have been taught.

Thou are the Knower, the Wise, 32.

Conclusion:

After the lengthy process of research in which hardships, difficulties and obstacles were faced due to this remote region where majority of the teachers are untrained regarding latest teaching technique and methodology which may be beneficiaries for the students of Islamic Studies to embellish their creative and innovative qualities because the present syllabus/material cannot equip them with the language skills. If they are enriched with the language skills, the students of Islamic Studies will face no problems in obtaining jobs and appearing in competitive examination because the subject of Islamic Studies is considered jobless subject due to the apathy of the syllabus designs who have designed the syllabus of English Language for grade 11 to BS four year programme in Islamic Studies in such a way that it does not help the students to enable them to write an application for every job. In future, they can conduct research on the different topics of Islam after studying the latest books of Islam in English language provided that functional syllabus according to the needs and requirements are implemented instead of literature based syllabus. If literature based syllabus is necessary to be incorporated in the curriculum Islamic stories and topics having cultural launches should be given importance. Moreover, language games topics for group discussion, brain storming, story writing, highlighting the teachings of Islam and pointing out the importance of Pakistan ideology should be included in the syllabus. For BS Islamic Studies, all four language skills should be imparted to the students specially the students must be taught to develop free writing skill. If spoken skill is preferred in BS Islamic Studies, the people of other religions may be apprised of the tolerant peace mission of Islamic religion. The researcher deems it necessary that spoken skills should be the integral part of Intermediate and BS Islamic Studies English because in Islam. The acquisition of knowledge is made a duty. Even the Holy Prophet is asked to wish and pray for increase in knowledge. Muslims are to acquire knowledge where ever it may exist and from which ever source it may come. Ignorance stands accursed. Adam is said to have acquired a better placed than granted to angels because of knowledge given to him. And “only those people understand the *Qur’ān* who have knowledge.

The students of Islamic studies can spread the message of Islam to all communities in English language. As the Holy *Qur’ān* lays emphases on learning of all the ways of life and concepts of Faith Islam (the Direction typified in the Holy *Qur’ān*) stands out as the best and most conducive to the advent of millennium. It was revealed to Adam and then to his illustrious descendants, in parts through the ages (14:4, 15:10, 16:36, 34:34). The last word in revelations is the *Qur’ān*. Anybody who has the urge to know the Truth and follow it can himself compare the Principles of the *Qur’ān* with those in earlier scriptures the *Sruti*, the

⁴ Ibn Maajah from the hadeeth of Anas bin Maalik, who said: “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim.’” (220. Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah.

⁵ *Al-Qur’ān*, *Al-Baqara*:3,32.

Torah are the Bible, Zinda Avesta or Buddhist Jhatkas (verses), or with the newfangled cults of agnosticism, nativism, capitalism, or communism. He will certainly find that while all others are sectarian, only Islam gives the Law Super-excellence for the Guidance of all humanities. Nowadays, there are conflicts of races, tribes, terrorism, and sectarianism. The students of Islamic Studies can become the torchbearer to the world by spreading the message of *Qur'ān* through English language. As in the Holy-*Qur'ān* this point is stressed.

“Wealth and Children are an ornament of life of the world. But the good deeds which endure are better in the Lord’s sight for reward, and better in respect of hope.” Therefore, the authorities responsible to design, syllabus of English of all grades specially BS Islamic Studies, ponder this issue and redesign the syllabus of English while keeping in the mind the needs of the students and the present word scenario.