



Perceptions Of Madrassa Students And Teachers Towards English Language Learning

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Abstract

The purpose of this descriptive research study is to find out the perceptions of students and teachers about the problems and challenges in learning and teaching of English language in Madrassas located in urban area of District Mardan. The main objectives of the study are to assess the attitude of both the students and teachers towards English language; to find out the required facilities for the teaching and learning of English and to put forward the recommendations of the students and teachers for the eradication of the problems and challenges to English language learning and teaching in Madrassas. The population of the research study consist of all Madrassas and all male students and teachers in Urban Madrassas in District Mardan. The researchers use convenient sample for the selection of Madrassas. Selection of students is based on thirty percent proportionate sample; while teachers are selected on the basis of hundred percent proportionate samples accordingly. Two separate questionnaires are the instrument for data collection. The questionnaires comprised on both closed and open ended items. The collected data were analyzed using percentage and thematic analysis. Findings of the study revealed that there are no proper facilities for the teaching of English language. The results of this research study may be helpful for the policy makers to emphasize more on the importance of English language learning in Madrassas across Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular.

Key Words: Madrassas students; Madrassas teachers; English language learning; English language teaching in Madrassas; perceptions about English language



Introduction

English language plays a pivotal role in the process of teaching and learning. Being an international language it is recognized and spoken in various countries. In Pakistan the English language is given due importance on account of its status as an international language. English language has been declared as an official language in many countries as well as in Pakistan. English has been adopted as an official language in English colonies e.g. Australia, sub-continent, Middle East, Africa, Australia, USA, Ali (2014).

Teaching of English as a subject is considered as a compulsory subject in curriculum in Pakistani educational policy. English is placed as major subject in Pakistan in educational curriculum. Similarly English language has great importance in Dini Madrassas as well. The Govt. of Pakistan has established a well-organized department for Dini Madarris in Pakistan known as Wifaq ul Madarris. According to Ahmed (2009), quoted by Ghulam (2011), that “today, there are five distinct types of Madrassas in Pakistan, divided along sectarian and political line” (p. 2).

The madrassas registered under Wifaq ul Madarris has devised curriculum for affiliated Madrassas in which English language is also given importance. English as a subject in these Madariss is being taught regularly. English is considered as a major subject in Madrassas.

As a matter of fact unfortunately there are many problems and challenges to the students and teachers in Madrassas. In order to go with the world and advancement in technology and wide range of English language the need of learning English has become order of the day. English language is a dire need of the students in Madrassas but due non availability of teachers and other facilities these students remained weak in English language. The purpose of this research paper was to investigate the core issues and problems the students and teachers faced in Madrassas.

After the incident of 9/11 the Madrassas have been targeted and presented a place for extremism and terrorism. Riaz, (2005). According to Haqqani (2002), quoted by Ghulam Farooque Laghari (2011), majority of the western writers have connected extremism and terrorism with Pakistani Madrassas. In fact Madrassa propagate humanism, peace and harmony. Madrassa has been a seat of learning in Islamic education system in the past. In Pakistan Madrassa education system is a part of the three education system; private, public and madrassa



education system. Unfortunately lack of facilities and of government ignorance, Madrassa education system face difficulties and challenges. Apart from all other problems, English language is also a big problem for the students in madrassas because of non-availability of facilities and English teachers.

Madrassas provides services to humanity. Madrassas are contributing a lot in the field of Islamic education by providing suitable atmosphere to the learners. It develops amongst the individual sense of responsibilities and harmony. It molds the personality of an individual. Theses madrassas are the only place for grooming the personality according to Quran and Hadith. The importance of madrassas cannot be denied. It is the state responsibility to streamline theses madrassas and devise strategy for smooth running. Unfortunately these madrassas have been ignored since long. The problems to madrassas need special consideration. According to Ghulam Farooq (2011), Madrassa education imparts peace and condemns extremism.

Statement of the problems

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of madrassa students and teachers towards English language in District Mardan.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

1. To assess the attitude of both the students and teachers towards English language
2. To find out the required facilities for the teaching and learning of English
3. To put forward the recommendations of the students and teachers for the eradication of the problems and challenges to English language learning and teaching in Madrassas.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to:

1. Dini Madarssas in District Mardan
2. Students studying English language
3. English teachers

Methodology

Population



1. All Madrassas in District Mardan in urban area
2. All English teachers
3. All students studying English as a subject

Sample

1. 100% sampling was selected
2. 30% of the students were randomly selected
3. 100% teachers were selected

Instruments

The instruments for data collection were questionnaires.

Tabulation and interpretations

Students' response to the questionnaire

Table 1

Kindly put "yes" or "no" against each item

S. No	Statement	Yes	No	Percentage % "Yes"	Percentage % "No"	Total %
1.	Do you like to learn English Language?	12	01	92.30%	7.70%	100%
2.	Do you prefer to learn English than other languages?	05	08	38.46%	61.53%	100
3.	Do you find your English text book interesting?	12	01	92.30%	7.70%	100
4.	Do you find English language attractive?	13	Nil	100%	0%	100
5.	Do you think English learning is necessary for every one?	13	Nil	100%	0%	100
6.	Do you have library in your Madrassa?	Nil	13	0%	100%	100



7.	Do you feel comfortable in the class while learning English?	06	07	46.15%	53.86%	100
8.	Do you get home assignment regarding learning of English language?	13	Nil	100%	0%	100
9.	Are you satisfied from your teachers who teach you English?	05	08	38.46%	61.53%	100
10.	Do you have internet access for learning English language?	Nil	13	0%	100%	100

Table 1 show that majority of the students at madrassa consider English language attractive, they consider English language necessary for every one and they get home assignment on daily basis. All the students @ 100% responded “yes” to items No. 4, 5 and 8. There is no library nor do they have internet access in any of the target madrassa as shown in the table. All the students @ 100% responded “No” to item No.6. Maximum students like to learn English language and they find their English book interesting. 12 students @ 92.30% responded in “yes” to items no. 1,3. Only 5 students @38.46% responded to item no. 2 and 9 respectively as they prefer English language than others and they are not satisfied from teaching English language. The maximum numbers of students do not prefer learning of English language; they are not satisfied from English teachers. 8 students @ 61.53% responded “No” to items number 2 and 9. Students do not feel comfortable in learning English. 07 students @ 53.86% out of 13 responded to item No.7. Very less number of students dislikes learning of English language as well as consider English text book interesting. Only 1 student @ 7.70% responded to items number 1 and 3 respectively.

Table 2

Students’ response to open ended question:

Suggestions to overcome the problems and challenges in English language



S. No	Statements
1.	Reading is important but we can't read English.
2.	Can't read English
3.	The teachers speaks in English, we cannot pronounce those sentences
4.	English is taught only in class
5.	Outside the class we speak, Pashto or Urdu
6.	We need to learn the language through computer or other device, which we do not have.
7.	We like to learn English
8.	Environment problem
9.	People make fun when we speak English in surrounding
10.	Do not know the basics
11.	We don't know tenses
12.	We are deprived of writing, listening, and speaking which are necessary for learning English.
13.	English is only confine to class, it is necessary to use English outside as well.
14.	Don't know the basics which necessary for English language
15.	Want to learn English
16.	Don't have ample time to learn English
17.	Want to learn but because of other book don't have time.
18.	Want to get Islamic education.
19.	Will try to learn English after Islamic education
20.	I prefer Islamic education.
21.	After Islamic education will try to learn English
22.	Prefer Islamic education
23.	Prefer Islamic education
24.	Like to learn English language
25.	Face no difficulty



Thematic Analysis of the Students' Response to the Open Ended Question

An open ended question was administered to the students in which they were given an open choice to write their problems and suggest a possible solution. Their responses have been organized in above table. Their statements show that they don't know the basic, they have problem in reading. They even don't know tenses. The students have no proper environment for learning of English language. Some say that they do not have the required facilities, such as computer or other modern devices which are useful for learning of English language. Majority of students responded that English language is only confine to classes. It should be in practice outside the class as well. They say that people make fun of those who speak English in daily routine. Majority of the students responded that their first priority is getting Islamic education. They do have liking for English language but they don't have ample time to learn English. Maximum of them responded that they will learn English language after getting Islamic education.

Table 3

Teachers' response

Kindly put "yes" or "no" against each item

S. No	Statement	Yes	No	Percentage in "Yes"	Percentage in "No"	Total %
1.	Do you like to teach English Language?	08	Nil	100%	0%	100
2.	Do you prefer to teach English than other languages?	05	03	62.5%	37.5%	100
3.	Do you find your English text book that u teach interesting?	08	Nil	100%	0%	100
4.	Do you find English language attractive?	05	03	62.5%	37.5%	100
5.	Do you think English learning is necessary for every one?	05	03	62.5%	37.5%	100



6.	Do you have library in your Madrassa?	Nil	08	0%	100%	100
7.	Do you feel comfortable in the class while teaching English?	05	03	62.5%	37.5%	100
8.	Do you give students home assignment?	08	Nil	100%	0%	100
9.	Are you satisfied from your students' performance to which you teach English?	08	Nil	100%	0%	100
10.	Do you have internet access for teaching English language?	Nil	08	0%	100%	100

Table 3 indicates that majority of teachers like to teach English language, they find the English text book interesting, they assign home work to their students and they are satisfied from the students' performance in English language. All the teachers @ 100% responded "yes" to items number 1, 3, 8 and 9. The second maximum response was that teachers prefer to teach English than other languages, they find English language attractive and they feel comfortable while teaching English. 5 teachers @62.5% responded to each item number 2,4 and 7. There is no library or internet access at madrassa where they teach English language. All teachers @100% responded "No" to items number 6and 10. Very less number of teachers prefers other language than English, they do not find English language attractive and they do not feel comfortable while teaching English language. 3 teachers @37.5% each responded to items number 2, 5 and 7.

Table 4

Teachers' response to the open ended item:

- 1. Kindly put forward your suggestions to overcome the problems and challenges you face while teaching English Language.**

S. No	
1.	Lack of reading skill.



2.	Students are weak in reading
3.	Students are weak in writing
4.	Do not have good monitoring system in home work
5.	Environment problem
6.	Students of urban areas are not up to that standard to learn English
7.	A lot of students belong to rural areas
8.	Students cannot take interest in English class
9.	We must prepare our own syllabus
10.	We should not import our syllabus from other countries, such as; USA, UK etc.
11.	We need a syllabus which is according to the education system of Pakistan.
12.	English is one of the most spoken languages.
13.	We should keep our education system and environment in mind before making a syllabus.
14.	People send their children to madrassas who are nil among all of their children.
15.	Teaching to nil students is difficult
16.	Need English teachers
17.	Facilities are required
18.	Teachers want improvement in teaching of English language
19.	English is a part of syllabus/ curricula
20.	There is no proper mechanism in English teaching
21.	Govt. to facilitate these madrassas
22.	Teachers are already overburden due too many subjects, so cannot teach English
23.	Teachers are already overburden due too many subjects, so cannot teach English
24.	Teachers are interested to teach English

The responses of the teachers to open ended item has been organized. The teachers' responses show that students are weak in reading and writing skills. Students have no proper



environment; their homework is not being monitored at home. Students are not up to the standard to understand the English language properly. Lack of interest in learning of English language of students is a problem. Teachers are of the opinion that there should be a proper syllabus; the curricula should not be taken from other countries rather it should be according to the level and environment of our country. Their responses show that parents send those students to madrasa who are weak in all respect. According to teachers, there is shortage of English teachers. Teachers in madrassas are overburden they do not have resources and enough teachers to teach English language. According to them there is no proper mechanism. Govt. must take interest to improve madrasa education and facilitate these madrassas. Teachers take interest in teaching English language but they do not have facilities as well as they are overburden.

Findings

On the basis of data collected from madrasa students' and teachers' responses it was found that:

- That majority of the students at madrasa consider English language attractive.
- The students consider English language necessary for everyone.
- The students get home assignment on daily basis.
- Maximum students like to learn English language.
- The students find their English book interesting.
- There is no library in madrassas.
- The students have no internet access in any of the target madrasa.
- Students are unaware of the basics of English language.
- The students have no proper environment where they can learn English language easily.
- It was found that English language is only confine to classes. There is no such practice in their daily life.
- Maximum of the students are interested in Madrassa education. They do have liking for English language but their curriculum has been designed in such a way that they do not have time to learn English. The students gave maximum time to madrasa education (Elem).
- The teachers responded that:



- Majority of teachers like to teach English language.
- They teachers find the English text book interesting.
- The teachers assign home work to their students.
- Teachers are satisfied from the students' performance in English language.
- Maximum response was that teachers prefer to teach English than other languages.
- The teachers find English language attractive.
- The teachers feel comfortable while teaching English.
- Students are weak in reading and writing skills.
- There is problem in syllabus. The syllabus should be designed according to the environment and standard of students.
- Teachers at madrassas are overburden.
- There is less number of teachers.
- The Govt. to facilitate the madrassas.

Conclusion

Based on the data collected from the target population and analysis it is concluded that students at madrassa wish to learn English language. There is no problem with the text book, however there is no library facilities in madrassas. The students have no access to internet and other modern electronic devices. Madrassa students prefer madrassa education than learning other languages. Students at madrassa do have liking for learning English language but due to lack of facilities and shortage of time, they cannot learn the target language. English teachers like to teach English language. They gave homework also to their students. Teachers are of the opinion that students are weak in reading and writing skills. It is also concluded that the curriculum needs to be designed according to the environment and requirement of the students as stated by their teachers. There is a shortage of teaching staff at madrassas. Therefore, this is the responsibilities of the Govt. to facilitate madrassas in all respect.

Recommendation

On the basis of findings it is recommended that:



1. Keeping in view advancement in technology and importance of English language, madrassas may be given proper guidance in learning of English language.
2. Guidance and counseling is required for improvement in English language at madrassas.
3. Madrassas may be provided all the facilities which are necessary for learning of English language.
4. The Govt. to take serious step and devise a mechanism for smooth learning environment.
5. The curriculum may be devised according to the students' level and surroundings.
6. Library, internet access and other modern tools may be installed in madrassas to overcome the problems and challenges they face in learning of English language.

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