Chapter 9
Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

There are some works on Madrasa education and modernization of Madrasas, but no specific work, related to the status of English language teaching and learning programs at Madrasas has been carried out. English is the only modern subject which significantly got a place in the curriculum of many Madrasas in India, which is to be studied in detail. The present study seeks to evaluate the status of the English language teaching and learning programs, including students' target needs of learning English, their proficiency level in English and their learning strategies, syllabus and material, teachers' and students' perception of English language teaching, teaching methodologies, and need for teachers' training programs. The study was carried out at seven Madrasas of India, where English has been a part of the curriculum, which are as follows:

1. Jamea tul Hidaya, Jaipur, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh
2. Jamia tul Ashrafiya, Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh
3. Jamia tul Falah, Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh
4. Madrasa tul Islah, Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh
5. Nadwataul Ulama, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
6. Ma’ahad, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
7. Jamia Ahsanul Banat (only for girls), Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh

The study did not include the oldest Madrasas, Darul Uloom, Deoband and Mazahirul Uloom, Saharanpur because they do not include English in their curriculum.

The key aims of this study are:

1. To examine the status of the English language teaching and learning programs at Madrasas
2. To determine what type of study material is suitable for the Madrasa learners in terms of their Islamic cultural background
3. To suggest a number of lessons on poetry, prose, and short stories considering students' age, level of proficiency and Islamic background
4. To offer the training content for Madrasa English teachers
In order to achieve the above aims the researcher set out these objectives:

1. To assess testing and evaluation system.
2. To ascertain students’ proficiency level in English
3. To examine whether the syllabi and textbooks prescribed at Madrasas are grammar- dominated, function/form-oriented or reading/writing-centered or situation based.
4. To evaluate whether the contents of the textbooks are socio-culturally appropriate for Madrasa students
5. To spell out teaching methodologies, which the Madrasa English teachers use in the classroom.
6. To identify students’ target needs of learning English
7. To examine the teaching and learning resources and facilities at Madrasas for teaching and learning English
8. To devise Madrasa teachers’ training needs

The study sought to answer the following research questions premised on the above objectives:

1. What is the nature of testing and evaluation system of English at Madrasas?
2. What is the proficiency level of Madrasa students in English?
3. Are the English syllabuses and the textbooks prescribed at Madrasas grammar-dominated, function/form-oriented or reading/writing-centered or situation based?
4. Is the prescribed study material in accordance with the socio-cultural content and context of Madrasa learners?
5. What are the target needs of learning English for Madrasa students?
6. Do the prescribed English syllabuses and textbooks meet the learners’ needs?
7. What is the perception of Madrasa English teachers and learners about the existing syllabus and material?
8. What is the perception of teachers and learners towards English language teaching and learning?
9. What problems do learners face regarding needs, time, resources, and materials?
10. Is there a need for an alternative syllabus for Madrasa learners?
9.2 Empirical findings

The findings of the study are on the basis of the analysis of the sample English test papers at the Intermediate level designed by the Madrasa English teachers for students’ half yearly and annual examinations, the evaluation of a diagnostic English test papers at the High level designed and conducted by the researcher in order to assess students’ proficiency level, the evaluation of the presentation and the exercises in all the four English textbooks (prose, short stories, poetry, and drama) at the Intermediate level prescribed by the Senior Secondary Board, Uttar Pradesh in order to determine the language skills which they cover and focus on, the analysis of the textbooks in terms of their socio-cultural content and context in order to determine whether these texts are suitable for Madrasa, and the analysis of the data collected through two questionnaires for teachers, and students, observation, and interaction with teachers and students.

9.2.1 Findings about the analysis of the sample English test papers at the Intermediate level designed by the Madrasa English teachers (Chapter 4)

The analysis of the test papers designed for the students of the Intermediate level at the select Madrasas of India indicates that the papers focus on reading comprehension (34%), vocabulary (28%), grammar rules (20%), and translation (8%), with little attention to writing skill (10%). In addition, the instructions given in the papers, these have grammatical errors and some of them are incomplete. Questions in the tests are too easy to be answered. The tests have low standard comparatively with any standard test at the Intermediate level. There is no oral test to check students’ listening and speaking skills.

9.2.2 Evaluation of a diagnostic English test paper designed and conducted by the researcher (Chapter 4)

The evaluation of the diagnostic English test papers of almost three hundred students indicates that that the majority of them are weak in English. The most frequent errors are related to punctuation, capitalization, grammar, verb forms, articles, preposition, singular/plural, subject and verb agreement, using right words, phrases and expressions, using gerund/infinitive, forming and ordering the words in a sentence, and organizing their thoughts into a coherent paragraph, which can be remedied if the teachers take them seriously.
9.2.3 Evaluation of the presentation and the exercises in the Intermediate English textbooks (Chapter 5)

The evaluation of the presentation along with the exercises of all the chapter of every textbook, including ‘Intermediate English Prose’, ‘Intermediate Short Stories’, ‘Intermediate Poetry’ and drama ‘The Merchant of Venice’ confirms that the main emphasis is on improving reading ability of the learners, with little attention to writing skill and with no focus on listening and speaking skills and pronunciation. No authentic supplement any material is used which could cover all the four language skills, especially listening and speaking which are almost neglected in the syllabus.

9.2.4 Analysis of the Intermediate English textbooks prescribed by the Uttar Pradesh Board of High school and Intermediate Education in terms of their socio-cultural content and context (Chapter 5)

The analysis of the lessons of the textbooks shows that their content has socio-cultural values. However, some chapters are culturally and religiously unsuitable for Madrasa students because of their Islamic background such as “The Horse” by Rabindaranath Tagore from “Intermediate Prose”, which has representational problems. This lesson is based on the concept of anthropomorphism, according to which Almighty God is represented in the form of a man, and thus, acts accordingly. Similarly, “Pen Pal” by G. Srinivas Rao and ‘The Merchant of Venice’ by W. Shakespeare, focusing on love stories are other examples of inappropriate material for Madrasa learners because love/romance before marriage is prohibited in Islam. To overcome this problem, a possible solution is to produce new textbooks for Madrasa learners that should be based on 50% Islamic culture and 50% global culture.

9.3 Findings of the analysis of the data with special reference to teaching methodologies

Findings of the analysis of the data with special reference to teaching methodologies through questionnaires and interaction with students and teachers are presented below on the basis of the set hypotheses (Chapter 6)

9.3.1 English as a foreign language (EFL) programs at Madrasas under study do not focus on all four language skills and pronunciation rather they focus on improving reading comprehension and teaching vocabulary and grammar without any context.
The majority (62%) of the students think that the bilingual vocabulary exercises without any context do not help them very much. There is a dire need to include some more vocabulary exercises in context. The majority of the teachers (77%) demand an alternative syllabus based on communicative approach, as the present syllabus does not fulfill the needs of the students.

9.3.2 Students are weak in English

Teachers believe that their students are good in listening and writing skills and are weak in reading and speaking. However, the analysis of the diagnostic English test papers designed and conducted by the researcher indicates that students are weak in all four language skills.

Students are weak in English because they use traditional strategies of learning such as learning sounds by imitation and repetition, vocabulary by memorization, and texts by translation into their mother tongue. Another reason why students are weak in English is the lack of exposure to English.

9.3.3 Resources for teaching and learning at Madrasas are insufficient

The third reason why Madrasa students are weak in English is the lack of resources. 62% of the students are not satisfied with the available resources, which are insufficient and not easily available; resulting in students’ poor performance in English. The only resources Madrasa teachers use, are classroom, lecture, and blackboard. Jamea tul Hidayah and Jamia tul Falah have computer labs but these labs are used to teach computer application courses, not English language. Lack of time is also another factor which affects students’ performance in English. Students are assigned only one period daily for teaching English, and rest of the time is used to teach them Islamic subjects such as commentary of Hadith (sayings of the Prophet) and Holy Quran, Islamic jurisprudence, and Arabic language and literature.

9.3.4 Madrasa English teachers use out of date teaching methods to teach English

The fourth reason why Madrasa students are weak in English is the use of outdated teaching methodologies such as the translation of texts by the teachers into the students’ mother tongue and asking them to memorize lists of bilingual vocabulary and rules of grammar without using them in any context. Memorizing answers of the questions in the textbooks’ exercises solved by the teachers is another example of teaching and guiding students traditionally. No social conversations are taught. The
teaching is teacher-centered with reference to texts, grammar, and vocabulary without any context.

9.3.5 Madrasa teachers have almost no specialization in English language teaching course, and are untrained

Madrasa English teachers use traditional methods because most of them do not have any certificate or degree in English. 84% of the teachers did not receive any training in ELT. Lack of knowledge of English and ELT principles calls for some training programs on a regular basis for Madrasa English teachers according to their need.

According to the data analysis, the content of the training which Madrasa English teachers want are, 40% in language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), 9% in pronunciation, 7% in vocabulary, and 6% in grammar. More importantly, they also want to receive training in classroom management and activities, strategies of delivering lectures, and skills for interacting with students (39% in total).

9.3.6 Madrasa students want to learn English for fulfilling their social needs and for getting admission to a university for further qualification.

The responses of the majority of the students indicate that their target needs of learning English are not restricted only to spreading Islamic teaching and its values. Rather, majority of them also want to make use of the English language in getting a better job, understanding material in English, entering a university of their choice, reading books and magazines with ease, and making friends across the globe through letters, emails, and some other social networking sites.

This shows that Madrasa students are highly motivated and aspire to learn English in order to communicate across the globe. This also implies that they do not want to be limited only with the Madrasa fraternity, but they want to be socialized and globalized.

9.4 Empirical findings of ELT in Madrasas: A Case Study of the English Language Teaching and Learning Program at Haque Education and Research Foundation, Kanpur, UP (India)

HERF, one of the branches of Marakazul Ma’arif established for Madrasa graduates, providing them a two-year course, ‘Diploma in English Language and Literature (DELL)’ shares almost the same problems and challenges, which are
discussed above. The main problems of this program are unqualified and untrained teachers, insufficient resources for teaching and learning, and inappropriate teaching and learning material.

9.5 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis based on the four chapters of this study will help researchers, government, Madrasa administration, and practitioners to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and take initiatives to remedy the problems in order to advance the EFL programs at Madrasas.

9.6 Limitations of the study

- Regional demarcation: 300 students were interviewed from seven Madrasas of India: 6 from Uttar Pradesh and one from Rajasthan.
- Limitations associated with simple random sampling technique: Sometimes, some sample sets of population are left out.
- Lack of validity and reliability in case of qualitative studies
- The study is limited to examining the status of the English language teaching and learning programs at the Intermediate level students, particularly in terms of analyzing the syllabus and material. The syllabus and the material of other classes need to be analyzed.

9.7 Possible research areas for future

- A holistic study should be made in terms of developing a number of syllabi for each class at Madrasas
- A study on developing, producing, and suggesting communicative based material for each class should be made.
- A study be carried out for analyzing the testing and evaluation system and offer Madrasa teachers a complete training package for developing test papers for testing reading and writing skills and teaching and testing oral communication
- A detailed study be carried out for developing training packages for Madrasa teachers with regard to the teaching methodologies in order to educate them about the latest teaching methods and skills
- A specific study may be taken up for improving teachers' language skills, especially in speaking skill in order to help them teach only in English at every level
• A separate study may be carried out with the aim of improving students' language skill at the High school or Intermediate level
• A study may be done on the implementation of the necessity of the multimedia language labs at Madrasas

9.8 The implications of the work for future research

This empirical study draws attention of the Madrasa administrators to look into the problems of the English language teaching and learning programs and take some important measures for the betterment of their programs by asking help from the experts in the area. More importantly, this is responsibility of the policy makers, researchers, and ELT practitioners take insights from this study, understanding the poor status of the EFL programs, come forward and take initiatives to upgrade the EFL programs at Madrasas.

The Department of School Education and Literacy under the Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India which has launched the following schemes for the development of Madrasas mentioned on its website:

• To strengthen capacities in Madrasas for teaching of the formal curriculum subjects like Science, Mathematics, Language, Social Studies etc. through enhanced payment of teacher honorarium.
• Training of such teachers every two years in new pedagogical practices.
• Providing Science labs, Computer labs with annual maintenance costs in the secondary and higher secondary stage madrasas.
• Provision of Science/Mathematics kits in primary/upper primary level madrassas.
• Strengthening of libraries/book banks and providing teaching learning materials at all levels of madrasas. (SPQEM: MHRD)\textsuperscript{1}

The SPQEM should sanction special budget for establishing language labs, providing teachers training programs, especially in ELT principles at regular basis,

providing good study material based on communicative approach for every class, and more importantly arranging for some skilled teachers at Madrasas under study along with other Madrasas with regard to its policies.

9.9 Recommending a list of lessons for Madrasa students

A list of lessons on prose, poetry, and short stories in the appendices may be useful for Madrasa learners studying English at High school and Intermediate level between the age group of 16-20. The lessons focus on Islamic culture, universal values and traits, knowledge of science and natural science, which will create an interest in students, helping them improve their understanding in English.

To conclude, the researcher has tried to evaluate unstudied EFL programs at Madrasa in India. Students are very weak in English and cannot fulfill their various target needs of learning English such as getting a good job, entering a university for further education and connecting with the world. The reasons students fail to meet their communication needs are socio-culturally inappropriate material, causing lack of interest in learners, mainly reading skill concentrated syllabus and material, untrained and unqualified teachers, and lack of resources. The positive thing which the researcher noticed and observed through face to face interaction is that they are highly interested in and motivated towards English language learning. Another important observation indicates that they do not have any problem of the content and ideas. They can express themselves fluently through their writing and speeches if any of the topics of their interest is given to them to write or speak on. They fail the same if the same thing is asked to do in English, because of the poor knowledge of English.

One of the important solutions to the problem students are weak in English is to provide them with communicated based material with proper resources, proper infra structure, language lab, and trained teachers, which will help Madrasa students in achieving their target needs.

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