

**TACKLING THE LANGUAGE BARRIERS IN
ISLAMIC STUDIES -AN ANALYTICAL STUDY
OF THE PREVAILING CURRICULUM FOR
DĪNI MADĀRIS IN PAKISTAN**

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ABSTRACT

It is argued generally that education plays a vital role in the development and sustainability of a country. The curriculum of any education system expresses its purposes and objectives on the similar axis. Learning process is facilitated through medium of instruction which is a direct agent enabling the better communication between the teachers and students. *Dīni madāris* (religious institutions) are contributing to provide the learned human resource in the field of Islamic education since hundreds of years in the Subcontinent. These institutes are providing Islamic education by following the curriculum of “*Dars-e-Nizāmi*” which is communicated through various languages as medium of instructions. This difference of multi-lingual syllabus and medium of instructions for teaching Islamic education may create several barriers to understand the fundamental concepts. This issue leads a critical analysis to find out solutions; to cope up with such problems and clarify the minds of students in line of the original concepts of religion for the betterment of humanity at large. The purpose of this paper is to articulate about the language barriers in the religious institutes especially in the perspective of *wifāqāt* (Islamic educational boards) of Pakistan. The research explores the problem and difficulties faced by the students regarding the use of multi-lingual media in the learning process. For this preliminary work, the qualitative approach is adopted to collect data through informal round

table talks with the students of almost fifteen *Madāris* located in the vicinity of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The findings of the study highlight the advantages and disadvantages of prevailing multi-lingual system of education in *madāris* of the country. In finding multilingual nature and medium of instruction in *madāris* have been explored. The multilingual nature of the curricula of “*Dars-e-Nizāmi*” and of medium of instruction remained a great challenge which causes comprehension problems along with many advantages.

The work suggests replacing the multi-lingual medium of instruction with native language (Urdu or any other) on the initial stages; and second language (Arabic and English) on the advanced level of Islamic education.

Keywords: *Madāris* Curriculum, *Wifāqāt*, Lingua Language, Barriers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education in a country is a key factor to strengthen its economy by uplifting the values of human lives to an asset¹ in general and it is assumed as a backbone of a developing country like Pakistan² in particular. More specifically, the educational streaming brings harmony and integrity within the society³ and its adhesion with international arena.⁴ *Madāris* are the center of religious education. People are enrolled in such institution to enhance their religious knowledge and to develop better understanding about worldly affairs. Therefore, the religious concepts should be clear and conveyed in well-known language to the learners. As, the knowledge transmission to the students or learners of a particular course of study would only be effective through the familiar languages.⁵ Observing the diversity in languages and cultures of the Pakistani society, a student of an Islamic Institute (*Madrasah*) may face many problems to understand multi-lingual curriculum. The textbooks are written in different languages, while the languages used for the medium of instructions in the classrooms are also diverse which can be one of the hurdles to achieve clarity of the concepts of the students. In a case where a learner belongs to different language background and the medium of instructions is a different language, he may not comprehend easily due to difference of vocabulary. For example, a *Pashtu* speaker studying in a *Madrasah* may face different language of the textbooks and different language of teaching on the same time. Similarly, when a teacher of Islamic education tries to convey a religious concept to the learners of different areas and cultures, he may also face language problems or barriers to communicate with the students of such diverse lingual background. In this context, the study analyzes the lingual

problems and barriers in the teaching and learning of Islamic education at *madāris* (Islamic institutes) or *wifāqāt* (Islamic educational boards) of Pakistan. Furthermore, the possible solutions are provided to cope up with these barriers. The research addresses the fundamental questions specifically: how multilingualism can be a barrier and what are the causes, problems and possible solutions of lingual barriers in the learning of Islamic education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section a brief history of Islamic education in general and *Dars-e-Nizāmi* and Madrassa education in particular is being provided as well as the literary work on the subject.

2.1. Historical Background of Islamic Education

Islamic education started soon after the Arabs started embracing Islam and the first Islamic Educational Institute was the house of Arqam known as '*Dār e Arqam*' where Holy Prophet (*Ṣal Allāh-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) used to educate the new Muslims about Islamic teachings.⁶ Those days, in *Makkah*⁷ the Muslims were not allowed to get education openly because of the sanctions posed by different tribes. After the migration of Muslims to *Madinah al Munawwarah*,⁸ they got freedom to get education. The first formal institute for Muslims in *Madinah* was *Suffah* education center and the students of this center were known as *Ashāb-e-Ṣuffah*. Other than *Ṣuffah* the Mosques at that time were the major institutes for Islamic education.⁹

The learning of Islamic knowledge continued and Muslims built proper *Madāris* i.e. 'Islamic Schools' for religious education. But earlier time there was not a specific curriculum for Islamic education, later on particular curriculums were separately introduced likewise the curriculum of *Al Jamīah al Azam*,¹⁰ the curriculum of *AL Azhar University*,¹¹ the curriculum of *Al Nizāmiah*,¹² and the curriculum of *Jami'ah Al Zaitunah*.¹³

On the other hand, if we come toward the Islamic education in Sub-Continent the curriculum followed in *Madāris* was replica of Arab countries but not in organized manner up to the mark. Later on the first comprehensive curriculum of "*Dars-e-Nizāmi*" introduced in 18th and 19th century.¹⁴

2.1.1. *Dars-e-Nizāmi*

Dars-e-Nizāmi was known as thorough curriculum of Islamic education

in Sub-continent which was prepared by the great scholar Mulla Nizām-ud-dīn Sehaalvi.¹⁵ It contains the various branches of Islamic education including the major subjects of Islamic learning in following table.

Table of Major Subjects of *Dars-e-Nizāmi*¹⁶

Original Name		English Translation
Arabic Linguistics (عربی زبان)	<i>Sarf</i> (صرف)	Morphology
	<i>Nahv</i> (نحو)	Syntax & Grammar
	<i>Balāgaht</i> (بلاغت)	Rhetoric
Farsi (فارسی)		Persian
<i>Fiqh</i> (فقه)		Islamic Law
Hadith (حدیث)		Narrations and Practices of Prophet SWS
<i>Hikmat</i> (حکمت)		Wisdom/ Reasoning
<i>‘Ilm-e-Kalām</i> (علم کلام)		Islamic Scholastic Theology
<i>Manṭiq</i> (منطق)		Logic
<i>Munāẓarah</i> (مناظرہ)		Pleading/ Convincing Argumentation
<i>Riyāḍi & Falkiāt</i> (ریاضی و فلکیات)		Mathematics and Astronomy
<i>Tafsīr</i> (تفسیر)		Exegeses/ Interpretation
<i>Uṣūl-e-Fiqh</i> (اصول فقہ)		Jurisprudence

In the above mentioned list of different subjects most of the books are in Arabic language and some of the books are in Persian. The mentioned syllabus was recognized by the *Mughlia* Empire and was implemented by the empire in all institutes of that time to educate the students under this curriculum, so the Mughal prince, ministers, judges, advocates, *imām*, *khaṭīb*, business men, even poor and reaches all of them were graduates of the “*Dars-e-Nizāmi*” curriculum. With the passage of time when the Islamic educational institutes were established, especially after the partition of subcontinent, the Pakistani Religious Boards “*wifāqāt*” have chosen this curriculum for the teaching of Islamic education in modern ages because of its comprehensiveness, although there is need to change it, but its positive effects are more than negatives.¹⁷

2.2. Boards of Islamic Education in Pakistan

After the advent of Islam the *Masjid* (mosque) had diverse objectives including offering prayer, delivering education and settlement of disputes etc. So it can be noticed that the mosque was not only a place of prayer rather it was utilized for many purposes like teaching Muslims. With the passage of time the Muslim empires built the particular institutes to facilitate the students of different regions. So when Muslims started to learn the Islamic education from all over the world, the directions of Caliphs (*Khulafā*) to build the “*Jāmi‘āt*” (universities) as “*Jāmi‘ah Qurtoba*, *Jāmi‘ah –ul-Azhar*, *Jāmi‘ah Nizāmiah*”. On the other hand, there was no satisfactory progress in the Islamic learning in the Subcontinent. However, there were few Ancestries (*Khaniqah*) in the region which disseminated the Islamic teachings by narrations (*Qāl*) and practices (*Hāl*).¹⁸ People of this region were mostly unaware of formal education, who accepted Islam because of mystic teachings by *Sufīs* like, *Ḥaḍrat ‘Ali Hijwairi*, *Mu‘inudin Chishti Ajmeri*, *Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi*, *Syed Amir Ali Hamdāni*, *Ḥaḍrat Bahā uddīn Zakariyya*, *Syed Yusuf Shah Gardezi* (*Raḥmat Allah ‘alaihim*) and many more.¹⁹ Later on a well-known institute of Islamic education was formed by *Ḥaḍrat Shah Abdur Rahim* the father of *Shah Wali Ullah Muḥadith Dehlvi* named as *Madrasah Rahīmiah*.²⁰

Moreover, the Mughal dynasty was the first empire who took interest into the formal structure of Islamic education. Hence, they were the pioneer rulers of the Subcontinent who institutionalized this education through the pattern of initiating *Madrasah* or School system.²¹

The term “*Madrasah*”²² usually refers to specifically the Islamic institutions in the Subcontinent. Mostly, there are two courses of study: “*Ḥifẓ*” and “*Shahadatul ‘Ālimiyah*” in *Madāris* of Pakistan to impart Islamic education among the students. As the purpose of this education is not only fixed to produce the preachers of Islam, for its methods of worship, but also it has historical evidences which show its clear objectives to produce diverse human resource, adjustable in all walks of life, in a modern civic society.²³ There were many “*Madāris*” in Indo Pak Subcontinent, renowned among them were; “*Dār-ul-‘Uloom Deo Band*, *Braili*, and *Nādwah-tul-‘Ulama*”. After the independence of Pakistan there were different educational institutes serving with various curricula under the auspices of different *Madrasah* titles.

Although there are hundreds of Islamic institutes in Pakistan introduced by different schools of thoughts, but Government of Pakistan has authorized them by the recognition of HEC, in term of “*مذاهب*”. The term ‘*Wifaqat*’ means the group of Islamic/religious boards of five

different schools of thoughts namely, 1) *Wifāq-ul-Madāris* (Deoband), 2) *Tanzīm-ul-Madāris* (Barelvi), 3) *Wifāq-ul-Madāris* (Shi'ah), 4) *Wifāq-ul-Madāris salafiyah* (Ahl-e-Ḥadīth), 5) *Rābitah-ul-Madāris* (Jamāt-e-Islami).²⁴ These are the authorized boards by Government of Pakistan which are providing different levels of certificates and degrees to the students. The brief introduction of these boards is as following:

2.2.1. *Wifāq-ul-Madāris al Arabiah* (Deoband)

This board is under the Ahl e Sunnat scholars of Deobandi school of thought. Deobandi scholars are linked with Jami'ah Dar ul Uloom Deoband. The secretariat of this board was initiated in *Madrasah Khairul Madāris* Multan.²⁵ That has become a prominent Islamic educational authority in the country. It has been working as a private religious authority since 1957. All over Pakistan Thousands of religious schools and madrasahs have been working under the supervision of the *Wifāqul Madāris al Arabiah* Multan.²⁶

2.2.2. *Tanzīm-ul-Madāris al Arabiah* (Barelvi)

This Wifaq is under the supervision of the Ahl e Sunnat scholars of Barelvi school of thought. Barelvi school of thought referrers its leader and founder Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan Barelvi. This board was initiated in 1940 in "Jamiah Na'imiah" Lahore, but now this board has its independent head office: *Tanzīm-ul-madāris* Ahl-e-sunnat Pakistan Ravipark, near Minar-e-Pakistan Lahore.²⁷ The thousands of Islamic scholars are getting the Islamic education in different levels in braches of this board in the provinces of Pakistan as below: *Jamiah Mujaadiah Na'imiah* in Sindh. *Jamiah Islamiah Nooriah* trust in Baluchistan. *Dārul Uloom Saif-ul-Islam* in AJK Muzaffarabad. *Jamiah Muhammadiyah Ghosiah Zia-ul-Ulūm* in Punjab. *Jamiah Islamiah Hanafiah* KPK.²⁸

2.2.3. *Wifāq-ul-Madāris* (shiah)

Wifāq-ul-Madāris al Shiah supervises the Shiah group of *Madāris* in Pakistan. This *wifaq* was initiated in 1958 and it started properly working in 1981 under the supervision of Allamah Safdar Hussain Najafi.²⁹ The Head office of this board is in the "Jamiat-ul-muntazir" model town Lahore. Braches of this board are working in the Pakistan under this Jāmiyah.³⁰

2.2.4. *Wifāq-ul-Madāris Salafiyyah (Ahl-e-Ḥadīth)*

Wifāq-ul-Madāris salafiyyah (Ahl-e-Ḥadīth) was founded by *Ahl e Ḥadīth s Salafi* scholars. This *Wifaq* was founded in 1978.³¹ The head office of the board is in Faisalabad. Hundreds of students are studying here according to the *Salafi* school of thought.³²

2.2.5. *Rābitah-ul- Madāris* (Jamat-e-Islami)

Rābitah –ul- Madāris is under the supervision of an organization ‘Jamat- e-Islami’. This *wifaq* follows the ideology of Syed Abul A’la Modudi, the founder of Jamat-e-Islami. Its secretariat was initiated in 1984 in Mansoorah, Lahore.³³ While there are other branches working all over the country, like: *Jamiah Islamiyah Tafhīmul Qur’ān* in KPK and *Jamiat-ul-Ikhwān* in Karachi Sindh. The thousands of students are studying the Islamic studies here in these *Madāris*.³⁴

A few individual *Madāris* are also recognized by Higher Education Commission and Intermediate Boards Committee of Chairman as per record published on the websites of both the organizations.

2.3. Literature Review on *Madāris* Education and Lingual Obstacles

The curriculum of Islamic education in *Madrasah* is very important topic now a days, so many writers have worked on the *Madrasah* education, its importance and deferent aspects. In following is a brief review of some works done in this regard.

Saleem Mansoor Khalid³⁵ (2002) explores the religious institutes of subcontinent, especially the *Dars-e-Nizāmi* and the detailed content of the syllabi in approximately all systems of *Madāris* in Pakistan to the extent of their sustainability in current era. He suggested that old books may be redesigned as precised text books for students to provide ease to grasp the content and concepts.

Muhammad Ameen³⁶ (2004) criticized the teaching methodology of Islamic education in *Madāris*. He argued that in *Madāris* we are just producing *Hafiz-e-Qur’ān* through cramming rote learning; hence the students with conventional wisdom and rigid mind set are unable to understand the dynamic nature of Islamic values.

Khalid Rehman³⁷ (2008) suggests the improvement of curriculum of *Madāris*, the writer suggests the many changings and improvements related to different subjects and teaching methodology.

Zahid Shahab Ahmed³⁸ (2009) addressed some challenges faced by *Madāris* and suggested some possible reforms for the betterment of the Islamic education system. He conducted interviews of the teacher and

focused group discussion to get the real picture of the issue. Teachers expressed that people of *Madāris* are usually considered backward so the low prestige attached with these institution is a major hurdle. On the other hand, the students' level of commitment to learning and untrained teachers is another obstacle. A teacher from Balochistan mentioned that one of the biggest challenges he faces as an English teacher is to convince his students for learning English. Most of his students believe that by learning Islam, they will go to heaven but a similar motive for learning English is absent as they don't consider that learning English is important. The study highlighted that *Madrasah* reforms will require an equal focus on teachers' training along with curricular reforms.

Ghulam Shabbir and others³⁹ (2012) discussed brief history of Islamic education and identified sectarian violence and less competent '*ulama* (religious scholars) to guide modern Islamic state as the major problems of *Madāris*. They suggest that government should take in confidence the Islamic Seminaries for employing mutual strategy to enhance the education system in *Madāris*.

Fatima Sajjad⁴⁰ (2013) argues that the leading '*ulama* in Pakistan are open to the idea of *Madrasah* reform but they prefer to do it internally as an ongoing process and not due to outside pressure. So, it is crucial to take into account the ideas and concerns of '*ulama* running these institutions.

Lid King⁴¹ (2017) describes various factors on multilingualism however the relevant feature to our study depicts that the role of compulsory education is critical and we need a language education policy which both respects mother tongue heritage and also prepares young people for a globalised world with English as a lingua franca. The paper gives an idea about language facilitation which builds the foundational perceptions of this study.

Mudaly and Singh⁴² (2018) highlight the issue of medium of instruction has become a severe challenge for Pakistan that needs to be addressed on emergency basis to put the country on trek of development. Serious steps are required in status planning of all the languages to be selected for Pakistan.

Rehman and others⁴³ (2021) reveal that *madrasah* students realized English language as a source of preaching Islam worldwide and they demand it in their curriculum as a compulsory subject. Moreover, this study finds that most of the '*ulama* have soft corners in their hearts regarding teaching and learning modern subjects, including English.

Khan and others⁴⁴ (2021) have concluded that Islamic Seminaries (*Madāris*) in Pakistan are contributing in theology beyond doubts yet their curriculum lacks the defined objectives of the disseminated education. The study further stresses that the modern scientific techniques

of education are not utilized in these seminaries and the main sources of education are books and texts-orientation. The behaviour of many teachers is unpredictable towards students between the two extremes of harshness and softness on different occasions. Therefore, the students are facing physiological and linguistic problems. The syllabi are insufficiently satisfying the basic foundations of primary sources (the *Holy Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*) among the students along with weakness in other contemporary studies. It further elaborates that the old canvas is still operative to handle the sectarianism, modern philosophical and scientific challenges and the research activities.

It can be seen through the above described works in this context that the researches didn't raise any point about the language problems especially in the religious *Madāris* and *Dars-e-Nizāmi* curriculum. This vacuum motivated the current outcome as a piece of preliminary study on the language barriers caused by the curricula.

2.4. The Role of Language in Curriculum

In the above mentioned works mostly the authors dealt with different aspects of *Madarsah* curriculum but they couldn't focus on the role of language in getting Islamic education in Pakistani *Madāris*. The use of language plays role of facilitator while sometimes it becomes barrier as well. If language is used without knowing its proper and suitable use, it can be a barrier. However, language can be utilized as a facilitator by knowing its appropriate use and the needs of addressees.

2.4.1. Language as facilitator

There are different means of communications utilized by human beings like, 1) Showing the thing, which is being discussed, 2) To explain a thing through gestures, 3) To show a symbol or picture of the thing, 4) To elaborate anything or any concept through spoken words, 5) To describe a thing or a concept through words in written form. Through spoken words or language, the people are able to communicate complex idea and feelings in faster way. Therefore, language facilitates the human beings a lot in sharing information, feelings and ideas.⁴⁵

Language facilitates more effectively in the following dimensions;

1. Same language of speaker and listener.

If a speaker and listener have same language and medium of communication they can converse with each other without barriers.

2. Same culture.

Culture is a crucial part of human relation and interaction. If two persons have same cultural background they can communicate with each other easily.

3. Same field of knowledge.

If speaker and listener have same interest and field of knowledge the language will play the role of facilitator for their communication.

4. Use of nonverbal communication.

Effective use of nonverbal skills or body language becomes very helpful and supportive communication through language.

2.4.2. Language as barrier

In the above mentioned description it is mentioned that language is a big facilitator for human communication. But it can be a barrier as well if it is not used according to its requirements and needs. This is because of diversity in the human languages, cultural background and level of knowledge. In the beginning the human beings used to speak common language but with the passage of time when human population increased they started traveling to remote area and consequently they developed new languages, which became barriers for the communication among different cultures. In this way, the language, which was a major facilitator for communication, became obstacle.

Following are the aspects and factors, which turn a language into communication barrier;

1. The listener does not know the speaker's language. People of different lingual backgrounds not having commonly understandable language would face a lot of difficulties in their communication.

2. The reader does not know the language of a written text. Students not familiar with or not native users of the written text feel problem to understand the concepts delivered in the text.

3. Difference of culture.

The difference of culture between the teacher and student or the reader of the text would cause hurdle in the way of understanding and communication. Moreover it will cause problems in understanding the pragmatic meaning of the text.

4. Technical Terminologies.

Background knowledge of the terminologies or expressions of a topic or subject plays important role in communication. If an addressee does not have the proper understanding of the terminologies of a specific field of knowledge he would face problems in understanding and sharing ideas and concepts.

It can be seen through the above mentioned factors that normally the language plays a role of facilitator. On the other hand, it is also expressed that the language can be a barrier or hurdle in the way of communication. This hurdle would be more problematic in case of education and learning of some technical fields of knowledge. Thus language matters a lot for Islamic education too, as it plays vital role for the clarification of thoughts and effective communication. Therefore, this article is going to explore the crucial role of language on education specifically multilingual problems in the curriculum of “*Dars-e-Nizāmi*” in the Islamic institutes under various “*wifāqāt*” of Pakistan. Moreover, the research is discussing the positive and negative effects of multi-lingual curricula on the leaning of students. In regard to, the study opens avenues for the importance of language in transferring concepts of the Islamic teachings through education in a country like Pakistan having diversity in languages, cultures and schools of thought.

The literature shows that a multilingual curricula comprising of various course books in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and English languages, which are second languages for a Pakistani student, may result in few lingual barriers during education:

1. Teaching students in a language they do not use in daily life has been demonstrated to have a poor success rate in terms of students’ literacy and fluency in that language.⁴⁶
2. Language barrier and gap of communication between Teacher and student can be caused by:
 - a. Difference in social or cultural backgrounds,
 - b. Difference in language backgrounds.

The causes of language barriers lead to decrease motivation and slower down the learning ability of students. For instance, if school assessments are conducted in a language that a student does not understand well, it will be impossible to get a picture of their real capacities and to judge school quality.⁴⁷

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research work follows the descriptive analysis of curriculum of Islamic education “*Dars-e-Nizāmi*” prevailing in *Wifāqāt* of Pakistan. The researchers (first and second) had got their early education in *Madāris*, hence they were aware of the multi-lingual syllabus and the medium of instruction used in these institutions. But, to present more authentic analysis, they visited 15 *Madāris* situated in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. During the visit, they enquired about the syllabus from the teachers and also had informal round table talks with few randomly selected students of different age groups. The purpose was to

explore the problems and challenges faced by these *Madrasah* students regarding multi-lingual nature of the syllabus and of medium of instruction. At each visit, almost 10 to 15 students participated actively in the discussion. The face-to-face discussion comprised of questions, such as; what is the most frequent language of instruction in your institution? Do you want to get instruction in your local language or in any other language? What is the most difficult/problematic aspect of your syllabus? The researchers took notes of the answers and presented in unified form as findings of the present study.

4. ANALYSIS

This section first presents the analysis of Multi Lingual Curricula in *Madāris* of Pakistan and then reflects the effects of language barriers in Islamic education in the light of discussion carried out with the students.

4.1. Multi Lingual Curricula in *Madāris* of Pakistan

The textbooks taught in religious *Madāris* of Pakistan are mostly in four languages; Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English. Some of books are mentioned below:

4.1.1. Books in Arabic

1) *Miah tul 'Aamil*, 2) *Alkafiah fin Nahv*, 3) *Al Shafiah fis Sharf*, 4) *Mukhtasarul Ma'āni*, 5) *Jawahirul Balaghah*, 6) *Saba' Muallaqat*, 7) *Al Fauzul Kabīr*, 8) *Al Hidayah fil Fiqh*, 9) *Al Lum'ah Ad Damashqiah*, 10) *Nukhbatul Fikr*, 11) *Siḥāḥ Sittah*, 12) *Kutub al Arba'ah*. Etc.

Above mentioned books contain the different fields and Arts of Arabic language, like phonetic and phonology, morphology, Syntax, rhetoric, semantics, Arabic poetry, Islamic jurisprudence, authentic books of Hadith and Quranic explanatory books of Arabic are included. These are some of those books which are the part of Curriculum of Islamic education in *Madrasah*.

4.1.2. Books in Persian

1) *Farsi Qa'idah*, 2) *Pand Nama*, 3) *Karīma*, 4) *Nā m e Haq*, 5) *Gulistān*, 6) *Bostān*, 7) *Ilm Us Šīghah*, 8) *Nahv Meer*, 9) *Sharf Meer*, etc.

These are the important books in Persian language which deal with poetry, morphology, syntax, etiquettes and advices regarding wisdom.

These books are of great importance but are in foreign language for majority of Pakistani community therefore a beginner student of Islamic education through second language faces the lingual barriers in comprehension.

4.1.3. Books in Urdu

1) *Ḍiā Al Nabī*, 2) *Ta'lim Al Islam*, 3) *Bahashti Gohar*, 4) *Aqīdah Al Islam*, 5) *Hamāra Islam*, 6) Urdu, 7) Civics, 8) *Islamiyat*, 9) Pak Study (*Muṭāl'ah Pakistan*). 10) Politics (*Siāsiyat*), 11) *Tarīkh e Islam*, 12) *Jamal Al Qur'ān*, 13) *Sīrat*, 14) Math, 15) Social Science, 16) *Aqīdah Tul Islam* etc.

The above mentioned books are in Urdu language which deal with *Sīrah*, Islamic history, faith, ethics and Quranic sciences. As Urdu is our lingua franca so these books are comparatively easy to understand for Pakistani students.

4.1.4. Books in English

1) English, 2) Computer Science, 3) Economics, etc.

In *Madrasah* system the teaching English and its learning is a challenge, mostly the students who enter in the *Madrasah* system of education have little background of English language.⁴⁸ Therefore, it is very difficult for them to understand the books written in English language. Alongside, they have to study other languages as well, like Arabic, Persian, and Urdu which are not the mother tongues of most the students in Pakistan. As a result of the mixture of languages, the learners face the multilingual barriers in comprehension of basic concepts of the Islamic teachings.

4.2. Students' Views on Effects of Language Barriers in Education

The discussion of the researchers with the students of various *Madāris* resulted in the following views:

1. Some students hesitate to describe their concepts and ideas orally because of language barriers;
2. Many students spend their time in *Madrasah* struggling to understand languages instead of building new knowledge. Many fail to learn the foreign language, which causes large numbers of drop out.

3. The content of Islamic studies in various languages sometimes becomes barrier because the focus of education diverts from the content to language learning.
4. In *Madāris*, the removal of language barrier is not a priority because the languages are taught as subjects not as a language. Here, the language learning lacks practice of four skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing.
5. Cultural barriers between the language of students and the language of text or instruction have bad impact on the students' ability to develop their language skills and their school or *Madrasah* performance.
6. In advance settings of learning, some students perform weakly across the curriculum due to the absence of first language in teaching.
7. The struggle of the students with language learning in the initial stages if not succeeded well, they sometime remain less interested for further studies of Islam.
8. The student who has read the text in foreign language and is describing it in his first language he will not feel easy to describe his concepts efficiently because of the difference of the languages, which may affect his performance in examination.

4.3. Challenges and their Solutions to Introduce Mother Tongue or Lingua Franca in Educational Material

To bring a workable model one may face the following problems:

1. Changing from one language to another in a system requires commitment and continuous effort.
2. In the beginning there would be a need of phased transition strategy through which initially limited learning materials would be produced in local languages as a pilot project.
3. Changing language of textbooks may need convincing the donors and organizational authorities.

There are many solutions provided by different researchers, some of inclusive and relevant solutions are as under.

1. Design the teaching devices in a way that make available language switching and translation of keywords.
2. Collaborate over the tasks that were given by the teacher. In so doing, the learners may come to understand the social background of one another.
3. Let the learners map out their thoughts.

4. These problems can be addressed successfully by providing at least six years of mother tongue education, with gradual introduction of other languages from an early stage.
5. There is strong support in the literature for mother-tongue instruction in the early years so that a firm foundation can be provided for further education.
6. An approach termed 'Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education' (MTBMLE) is seen as one of the most practical approaches to dealing with the need for multiple languages in education. MTBMLE makes the learner's language, culture and context the foundation of learning. It starts by using the learner's language throughout school, and gradually introduces a second or even a third language as the child progresses through education. The learner's first language remains the key language of education throughout. The second language does not become the main language of teaching and learning for at least six years. It is possible to introduce a third language at a slightly later stage, enabling children to develop linguistically and cognitively through their mother tongue, become competent in national language and then learn to use an international language effectively. Mother tongue based multilingual education programs and bilingual programs around the world have resulted in dramatically increased academic achievement.

4.4. Thematic Analysis of Multi-Lingual Education and its Resultant Factors to Launch a Workable Model

As the study mentioned above that the education in the earlier stages should be in mother or lingua franca, but it doesn't mean that the learning of second/foreign languages is useless, while the Holy Prophet (*Ṣal Allahu-ʿalaihe wa sallam*) used to motivate His companions to learn foreign languages to deliver the message of Islam in the language of people.⁴⁹ For example, Haḍrat Zaid bin Thābit *Radi Allah ʿanhu* learnt different languages like Persian, Hebrew and Qibti.⁵⁰ So, in this way, the early Muslims used language as facilitator and minimized the language barrier to spread the message of Islam.

The general rule for teaching any subject is to explain a topic from simple to complex and from easy to difficult. *Ibn-e-Khaldūn* mentioned that in teaching gradual development of students should be kept in mind. Any subject should be divided into small parts and should be inculcated in students' mind step by step. The teaching methodology should be from simple to complex and easy to difficult so that a beginner student could become able to understand and develop his interest in that particular subject.⁵¹

Islamic education is compulsory for all Muslims which is provided through Islamic books and *the Holy Qur'ān*. *The Holy Qur'ān* is in Arabic language likewise many other books of Hadith, History *Sīrah* and Islamic ethics are mostly written in Arabic language. Therefore, in religious *Madāris* Arabic language is focused and is taught the new comers in this field to make them able to understand Islamic teachings. But for non-Arab Muslims it becomes difficult to learn Arabic language prior to getting Islamic education. This process may take a long duration to learn through foreign language as it is difficult and time taking.

In the Subcontinent when a student enters in *Madrasah* he is bound to learn *Ṣarf*, *Naḥv* and some other linguistic subjects. So beginner students, who came to learn Islamic teachings, may face challenges to learn advanced language on the initial stage. In majority of the *Madāris*, Arabic is taught as subject instead of language that is why the language skills of learners do not develop, and even spending a lot of time to learn Arabic they are in need of translation of Arabic books. So there is a need of developing a curriculum for such learners to get Islamic education in their mother tongues or lingua franca. The course should be framed in lingua franca for beginner students who want to get education in *Madrasah*. Because, they need to clarify their ideas for practice the obligatory tasks in daily life and to develop Islamic ethical values in their personalities. The beginner students are enthusiastic to develop Islamic etiquettes in them but mostly such necessary teachings are not focused in the beginning rather there are few linguistic subjects which possibly lead them to losing interest in higher Islamic education.

Foreign language may be taught parallel to other important Islamic studies. Therefore, it must be focused that the language should not only be taught as a subject but as a language. Because, the perceived objective of Islam are to prepare well educated Muslims on themes of religion and not only the language learners. In *Madrasah* education, there should be two levels of Islamic education; i) the beginners who should be taught in their native language or lingua franca; and; ii) the students want to proceed for higher Islamic studies may be educated through the books written in Arabic, Persian or English according to the need of curriculum. Hence, the language may be used as facilitator instead of barrier.

4.5. Division of Medium of Instructions According to Fluency of Mother Tongue and Lingua Franca

In Pakistani scenario *Madrasah* education can be divided into the following two stages.

4.5.1. Initial stage

There are approximately 70 languages or accents spoken in Pakistan, yet Urdu, the national language and the medium of instruction in the majority of state schools is spoken by just 7% of the population. Children learning in Urdu as a second language face major obstacles, particularly in their early years. Therefore the literature recommends that the medium of instruction may at least include the seven major regional languages, including Urdu, which would extend the delivery of first-language teaching to up to 85% of the population.⁵²

At early stage, the students usually are not familiar with lingua franca or national language 'Urdu'; rather they speak and communicate in mother tongue. Therefore, if a student is supposed to get Islamic education at this stage he should be educated in his mother tongue. And if books are not available in his mother tongue for the students, these may be available in lingua franca so they can get knowledge smoothly.

4.5.2. Advanced stage

In advance stage usually a Pakistani child becomes familiar with lingua franca 'Urdu', if he is provided with appropriate environment for the development of Urdu language. Mostly Pakistanis are fluent in Urdu speaking at this stage. So in this stage student should be educated in 'Urdu' language. In case if a student cannot communicate in Urdu language he should be taught Urdu language in a way he may develop four skills of language, listening, speaking, reading and writing. This is because books for Islamic studies have been written in Urdu language not in local languages. And the other important factor is that Urdu is lingua franca for Pakistani citizen. One other important reason is the unity of Pakistani nation as one national language speaker, which can be developed through teaching in Urdu language.

4.6. Division According to Language of Books and the Language Spoken by Teacher for Instructions

The teachers in the *madāris* have diverse regional and ethnic backgrounds as well. Therefore, they used to speak frankly to their local students within local languages and in lingua franca with other students of the country during class activities. However, the content of the teaching subjects may carry different languages as designed in syllabus.

4.6.1. Difference between the language of book and the language of teaching

Difference of book language and teaching language, mostly occurs when students language differ from lingua franca. In Pakistan this case is more frequent because of diversity of local languages. So difference in language is preferably allowed for beginner students. And teacher can teach in first language of students to explain the subject matter in Urdu language.

4.6.2. Similarity between the language of book and the language of teaching

When the language of teacher during teaching is the class is same as the language used in the textbooks, it can be categorized as same language category. This category is preferred for the students who are familiar enough with the textbooks language. In Pakistani *Madāris* the course material is mostly in Urdu language which is lingua franca of Pakistanis therefore it would be preferably suggested that to use the same language specially to teach advance learners.

4.7. Categorization of *Madarsah* Education

General level is for beginners who want to get Islamic education to understand Islamic teaching and to become good and practical Muslim by following Islamic values and teachings. For these students the textbooks should be in first language or lingua franca.

The Specialization level is for the students want to go ahead for Further and Higher Islamic studies. In this level the text books in foreign language would be included. The foreign language mostly for Islamic studies is Arabic and in some cases it is Persian. It will develop the understanding of a student and he would be able to conduct research on the topics written or available in foreign language. But it is recommended that the medium of instruction should be Lingua franca so that the language may be used as facilitator.

4.8. Language Division on the Base of Subjects

The other dimension of the subjects of Islamic studies is the diversity in the field of language. In the above mentioned some samples of courses it can be seen that there is a lot of diversity in the subjects of curriculum. Some subjects are language based and others are concept based.

Moral, Ideological and rational subjects like Logic, *Sīrah*, and ethical teachings which deal with concepts, ideas, behavioural and practical part of Muslims' life should be taught in first language or Lingua franca using the books written in mother tongue or Lingua Franca. Language based subjects which deal with linguistic aspects like *Şarf*, *Naḥv* etc. or the subjects in which the text is in foreign language like the *Holy Qur'ān* or Traditions of the Holy Prophet (*Ṣal Allahu 'alaihe wa sallam*) should be taught in the beginning in first language and later on can be in target language Arabic.

4.9. Using Language as Facilitator and Minimizing its Barriers

Although the solutions and remedial techniques have been discussed in the above mentioned categories and divisions, there are some general solutions as follows.

1. First Language of the students, a possible solution (use of mother tongue in lessons). In this situation students of low abilities should be taught using the mother tongue to at least remove one barrier of learning.
 1. There is need of proper training of teachers of Islamic studies how to utilize instructional language effectively.
 2. Lingua franca as a medium of instructions especially for advance learners can develop positive impact on the Islamic education in Pakistan. It can help in developing; Unity in text books, which may facilitate students to focus on the subject matter not only learning different languages, which will consequently lead to unity among the Pakistani citizens.
 3. Use of modern methodologies in Islamic education is very much supportive for developing the interest of students and enhancing successful communication.
 4. Use languages according to the need of current or modern era, instead of sticking to specific languages and following old methodology.
 5. Audio/Visual aids are helpful in minimizing language barrier because a student can utilize them as an alternate mean of clarifying his concepts.
 6. There is dire need of establishing translation centres which would organize system for translation of *Madrasah* books causing language barrier' into Urdu language.
 7. Research institutes should be established which would provide a platform for researchers to carry out research and write books for curriculum in Lingua Franca.

5. Conclusion

The study has provided background information about education systems in *Madāris*. A special focus has been given to curricula used in *Madāris* to explore its multilingual nature and medium of instruction. The paper concludes that the multilingual nature of the curricula of “*Dars-e-Nizāmi*” and of medium of instruction remained a great challenge which could not be investigated and surmounted yet. The study explored that the some learners face comprehension problems caused by language barriers. According to this work, these problems can be tackled by using mother tongue, lingua franca as language of curriculum in *Madrasah* education of Pakistan. Islamic education is necessary for all Muslims therefore it should be taught in familiar language so that they can understand the real message of Islam and deliver it to other people. Furthermore, the paper recommends that a student getting higher Islamic education should be skilled in Arabic language to understand the message from original texts and become able to carry out research.

6. Suggestions

Following suggestions are recommended through this research paper after carrying out research;

1. It is suggested that the more the students use mother tongue for Islamic education, the better they will enhance their educational achievement.
2. A country like Pakistan which is linguistically diverse, and has high rural populations, it is necessary to treat *Madrasah* language as one of the most important factors in improving Islamic education.
3. The areas where there are a large variety of local languages, a common language/lingua franca which is mostly Urdu in Pakistani context, may be used as medium of instruction.
4. The ‘*Dars-e-Nizāmi*’ curriculum may be organized according to the need of language facilitator by providing early education in mother tongue or lingua franca and the higher education through Arabic or foreign language books using lingua franca as language of teaching.
5. Arabic language should be taught as a language not only as a subject, by focusing on the four skills of the language. Modern methodologies of language learning can be utilized for better results.

APPENDIX-A

Table of Key Terms Used in the Paper

Glossary	Meaning
Language/ medium of instructions/ teaching	The main language used to teach students the subject matter of text books is the language of teaching, for example in Punjabi area the education would be delivered in Punjabi language.
Language of text books	The language used in the text books for example the language of the <i>Holy Qur'ān</i> is Arabic.
Levels of Education	There are multiple grades in <i>Madrasah</i> education which are; <i>Hifẓ</i> ⁵³ , <i>Tajwīd</i> , ⁵⁴ <i>Sania 'Āmmah</i> , ⁵⁵ <i>Sania Khassah</i> , ⁵⁶ <i>Shahada-tul-'Aalia</i> ⁵⁷ and <i>Shahada-tul-'Ālimiya</i> . ⁵⁸ While in this study the <i>Madrasah</i> education is categorized as, general or basic education and specialized or advanced education.
Lingua Franca	A language that is as a national or common language adopted for communication among speakers whose native languages are different for example in Pakistan the lingua franca is Urdu language.
<i>Madrasah</i> Education	In Pakistan the Islamic education is provided in <i>Madrasah</i> supervised by religious scholars. These institutes are responsible for organizing Islamic education through long term courses.
Mother tongue	It can be defined as the main language used by a child constantly from birth to interact and communicate with his/her family members, friends and community.
Multilingual Education System	This System starts in the mother tongue and gradually introduces one or more other languages in a structured manner.
<i>Masjid</i> and <i>Masājid</i>	It is a place of ritual prostration or place of worship for Muslims.
<i>Khalifah/Khulafa</i>	Caliphs , successor. Originally someone who succeeded the Holy Prophet (<i>Ṣal Allahu- 'alaihe wa sallam</i>). Later, it came

	to be used to refer to all the head of the Islamic state until the last Ottoman rulers.
<i>Şūfi/Taşawwuf</i>	Originally, a person who lives in ascetic life of devotions, seeking, spiritual purification. But often this refers to a member of a Şūfi order.
<i>Jāmiyah/Madrasah</i>	<i>Madrasah</i> or <i>Jāmiyah</i> is a religious institute of Islamic education in the Sub-continent. In Arabic context the word ' <i>Jāmiyah</i> ' is used for a university.
<i>Ḥifẓ</i>	Memorization the <i>Holy Qur'ān</i> in any religious institute.
<i>Shahādaatul 'Ālimiya</i>	It is the final degree of <i>Madrasah</i> education which is recognized by HEC equal to MA Arabic/Islamic Studies. This degree is issued <i>Wifaqat</i> after 8 years of <i>Madrasah</i> education.

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- ⁶Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahab, *Mukhtasar Sirah*, trans. Muhammad Madani (Lahore: Nomani KutubKhana, 1990), 61.
- ⁷Makkah is the Holy city for Muslims where they perform *Hajj* and where *Ka'bah* is situated.
- ⁸Madinah Al- Munawwarah is the Holy city for Muslims where the Holy Prophet (*Ṣalāllah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) migrated and stayed there until His last days.
- ⁹Saleem Khalid Mansoor, *Dīni Madāris mein Ta'lim*, (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), 2005), 91.

¹⁰ This institute was an educational organization in ‘Baghdad’ where Imam Abu Hanifah (Nu‘man Bin Thābit) used to teach Islamic subjects. It is now known as Imam Azam College.

¹¹ Al Azhar University was inaugurated in 970 where many experts of different fields like, Exegeses, Tradition of the Holy Prophet (*Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) and Jurisprudence graduated. Some of them are Al-Sioti, Ibn Hajar Al ‘Asqalani and ‘Allamah Al Navavi etc.

¹² *Al-Madrasah Al-Nizāmiah* was initiated in Baghdad by Head of the State Nizam Al Malik. Imam Al Ghazali got education in this institute.

¹³ This Institute was inaugurated in Tunisia by wife of Mustansar Billah in the year 1383 H. and it is known as Jamiah Zaitunah and it was first established in 737 and subsequently modernized in 1956. It consists of the Higher Institute of Theology and the Higher Institute of Islamic Civilization in Tunis and a research institution, the Center of Islamic Studies.

¹⁴ Education Ministry Government of Pakistan, *Dīni Madāris ki Jami‘ Report*, 1971, 4-5; Dr Ikram Ullah Jan Qasmi, *Tarikh mein Dīni Madāris ki ibtida aor Irtiqa*, accessed November 25, 2021, http://darululoom-deoband.com/urdu/articles/tmp/1456831679%2004-Tarikh%20Me%20Dini%20Madaris_MDU_04_April_2005.htm.

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¹⁶ Ibnul Hassan Abbasi, *Dīni Madāris*, (Karachi: Maktabah Umar Farooq, 2003), 17; *Ta‘līm Al Lughah Al ‘Arabiyah fī Al Madāris Ad Dīniyah in Pakistan*, (master's thesis: Saiful Islam, 2010), 116.

¹⁷ Sheikh Muhammad Mansoor, *Rood e Kauthar*, (Lahore: Idarah Saqafat Islamiyah, 1979), 604-606; Saleem Khalid Mansoor, *Dīni Madāris mein Ta‘līm*, (Islamabad: IPS, 2002), 95.

¹⁸ *Ḥāl* and *Qāl* are two terms used by Sufis. *Qāl* means ‘*Sharī‘at*’ or to learn theoretical part of Tasawwuf and *Ḥāl* means ‘*Tarīqat*’ or practical part or practices of Tasawwuf.

¹⁹ Dr Nazeer Ahmed, “*The Sufis of India and Pakistan*,” accessed November 25, 2021, <https://historyofislam.com/contents/the-post-mongol-period/the-sufis-of-india-and-pakistan/>.

²⁰ It was founded by Shah Abdur Rahim the father of Shah Waliullah Dehlvi, during 18th century. After the death of Abdur Rahim in 1718 Shah Waliullah started teaching at the *Madrasah*. It became a leading institute of Islamic learning and was acknowledged as the most influential seminary in the Indian Sub-continent. See Joseph Kitagawa, *The Religious Tradition of Asia; Religion, History and Culture*, (England: Routledge, 2013), 146.

²¹ Akhtar Rahi, *Tadhkirah tul Muṣannifīn Dars e Nizāmi*, (Lahore: Maktabah Rahmania, 1978), 18-19.

²² Please see the Table of Key Terms attached herewith the Article as Appendix-A for further detail.

²³ Education Ministry Government of Pakistan, *Dīni Madāris ki Jāmi‘ Report*, 1990, 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

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⁵³ Diploma course of reading and memorizing the *Holy Qur’ān*.

⁵⁴ Diploma course of reciting *Holy Qur’ān* with phonetics and phonology

⁵⁵ Certificate course equivalent to ten years of schooling, Secondary School Certificate (SSC).

⁵⁶ Certificate course equivalent to twelve years of schooling, Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC).

⁵⁷ Associate Degree equivalent to fourteen years of education.

⁵⁸ Degree equivalent to sixteen years of education, with specialized fields.