

**A Study of English Language Teaching and Learning Program at
Markazul Ma'arif Education and Research Centre (MMERC),
Mumbai (India): A Case Study**

Basheek Beg

basheekbeg@gmail.com

Abstract

English is widely taught in every institute where education is imparted. It has become a global language because of a very large number of people making use of it. Even many Madrasas have been teaching English to their students because it is the need of the hour. But in spite of many efforts made by religious scholars, there are hundreds of Madrasas where English is still not included as a subject in their curriculum. Students of such Madrasas do not learn English language. In such cases, students after spending 8 to 10 years have difficulties in getting jobs anywhere because English language skills have become mandatory for most of the jobs nowadays. So, to remove this problem of Madrasa students, Maulana Badruddin Ajmal Qasmi started a two-year diploma course in English language and literature (DELL) at an Islamic seminary, Markazul Ma'arif, New Delhi in 1994. The basic objective of this DELL is to introduce Madrasa students to modern subjects such as English.

Key words: Madrasa, English language teaching (ELT), Diploma in English language and literature (DELL), Curriculum and Education.

Introduction

The researcher went to Mumbai and collected data from Markazul Ma'arif Education and Research Centre (MMERC), India. The researcher prepared two questionnaires for students and teachers separately. The purpose of this study was to find out the condition of English teaching at MMERC. The researcher had a face to face interaction with teachers and students to analyze learning and teaching situation of English. The questionnaires were designed to evaluate the objectives behind learning English and to analyze learning strategies, testing and evaluation, English learning and teaching situation, syllabus and materials and problems related to both students' and teachers' needs.

Research methodologies and framework

The researcher made a survey at MMERC to evaluate the learning and teaching situation of English. The aim of the study is to find out the objectives behind learning English, to analyze learning strategies, teaching methodologies, testing and evaluation, syllabus and materials and to find out the strength and weakness of ELTs program at MMERC.

Research questions

- To assess students' objectives behind learning English.
- To find out the aims and objectives of MMERC.
- To identify teaching methodologies.
- To evaluate testing and evaluation.
- To find out teachers' training needs.
- Perception of teachers and students about the ELT program.

Methods of Study

The study was carried out among 2 teachers and 26 students of MMERC, Mumbai. Two sets of questionnaires were given to teachers and students separately. A detailed interaction was also conducted by the researcher about the learning and teaching situation of English. What more can be done to improve the education level of society was also discussed at MMERC.

Samples and population

The data was collected from 26 students and 2 teachers of MMERC, Mumbai in December 2017.

Significance of the study

The significance of the study is to find out the condition of English teaching at MMERC and to help scholars in improving the level of English for Madrasa graduates.

Statement of the problem

There are many research works done in the field of education and for the development of English teaching in schools and colleges. But in the field

of Madrasa education, for the development of English, very few works have been done. Therefore, to study the objectives behind learning English, learning strategies, testing and evaluation, teaching methodologies, syllabus and materials is the need of the hour in order to improve learning and teaching of English at MMERC.

Aims and objectives of Markazul Ma'arif Education and Research Centre (MMERC)

- To train Madrasa graduates in modern subject such as English.
- To train Madrasa graduates in promoting Islam across the world with the knowledge of English.
- To train Madrasa graduates to be proficient and confident in getting jobs anywhere.
- To improve socially, economically and educationally the underprivileged sections of society.

Background of the students at MMERC

Madrasa students at MMERC come from socially, economically and educationally underprivileged sections of the Indian Muslims community. They got admission in DELL course after spending 10 -12 years in their previous Madrasas. They hardly have any knowledge of English because they did not study English in their previous Madrasas. They were only taught Urdu, Arabic and Persian.

Background of the teachers at MMERC and their qualifications

The researcher conducted this study with two teachers of MMERC. Like students, they also come from Madrasa background where they have studied for 10-12 years to become Aalim (Islamic scholar). After that they did the DELL course at MMERC.

Accommodation at MMERC

The MMERC has separate rooms for both teachers and students. Food and lodging are free for students. The students bear only their personal expenses otherwise the MMERC provides everything free of cost to the students. As on the basis of interaction with teachers and students, the

researcher came to know that the MMERC takes full responsibility of those students who cannot afford their books and personal expenses.

DELL course

Maulana Badruddin Ajmal Qasmi started this two-year diploma in 1994 in New Delhi. "Under this program, graduates from different Madrasas are selected after a written and oral test. Priority is given to those graduates who have aptitude and also willingness to master English language and work for Dawah (preaching Islam) in the future."

English language at MMERC

Madrasa students got admission to the MMERC for doing DELL course. After being enrolled, no further admission is done because the same batch is taught for two years. Just after two years a new batch is started to teach English. Teachers and students both actively take part in activities which help them in learning of English at MMERC.

Testing and evaluation

Students are often assessed by their teachers at MMERC. Tests and sessional are conducted quarterly to measure the students' performance. Teachers give their best to teach English to the students who had not studied in their previous Madrasas. Simultaneously, by taking tests, teachers come to know about students' weaknesses and help them in improving.

Obstruction from government

MMERC has never faced any obstruction from government since it was started. The Centre has been running smoothly, without any problem. MMERC is a non-government social welfare organization which seeks to help the underprivileged segments of society.

Job and placement at MMERC

After completing the course, students mostly got the job in any branch of MMERC. They become so confident and gain such good knowledge of English that many of them got jobs in Arab Embassy and the Middle East as translators, interpreters and teachers. Many of the students who have passed out from Markazul Maarif, are working as Ulama in many Gulf countries.

Achievement of MMERC

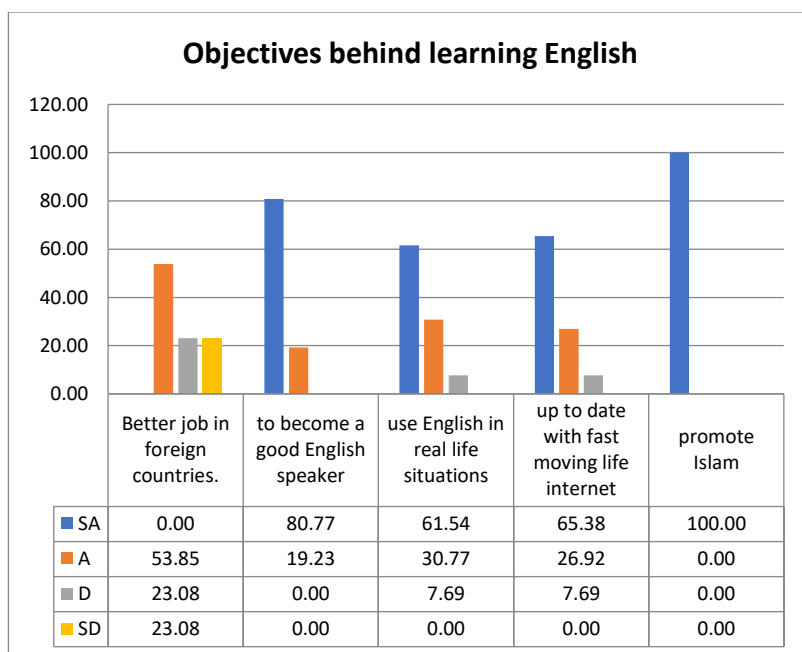
After completing the DELL course, students who had never studied English in their previous Madrasas become confident and proficient in English. Now, students of MMERC can be seen in many parts of the world pursuing their professional career.

Final goal of MMERC

The ultimate goal of MMERC is to make their students socially, educationally and economically strong and well developed. MMERC was established basically to improve that section of society which lagged behind in education, proper nutrition, health and hygiene and was totally unaware of proper guidance and motivation.

1. What is your objective behind learning English?

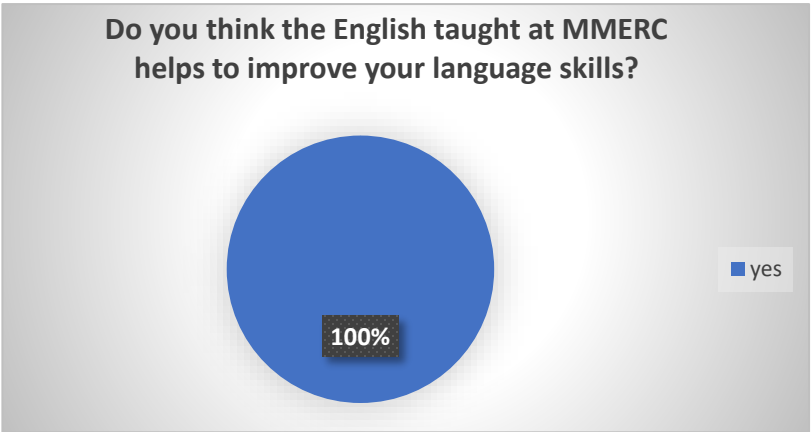
Pie chart-1: shows



2. Do you think the English taught at MMERC helps to improve your language skills?

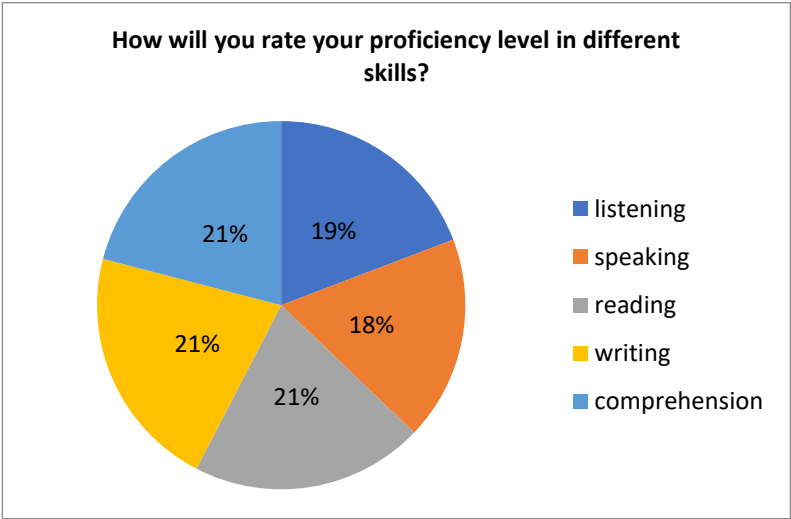
Yes () somewhat () No ()

Pie chart-2 shows



3. How will you rate your proficiency level in different skills?

Pie chart-3 shows



4. Do you think there is a need of professionally trained teachers at your Centre (MMERC)?

Yes ()

No ()

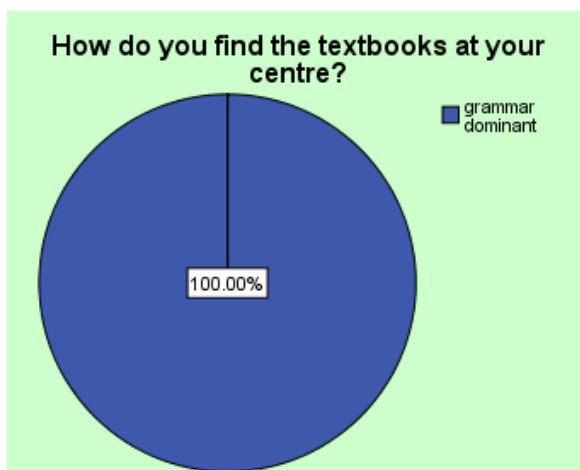
Pie chart-4 shows



5. How do you find the textbooks at your center (MMERC)?

- i. Grammar dominant () ii. Communication based ()

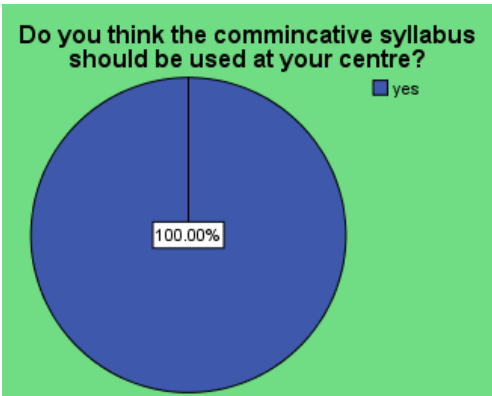
Pie chart-5 shows



6. Do you think the communicative syllabus should be used at your Centre (MMERC)?

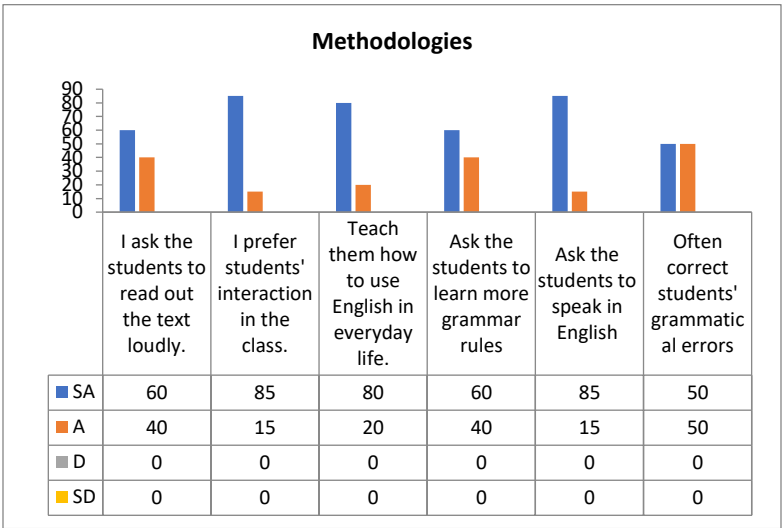
- i. Yes () ii. No ()

Pie chart-6 shows



7. What are the methodologies which you adopt while teaching English in the class?

Pie chart-7 shows

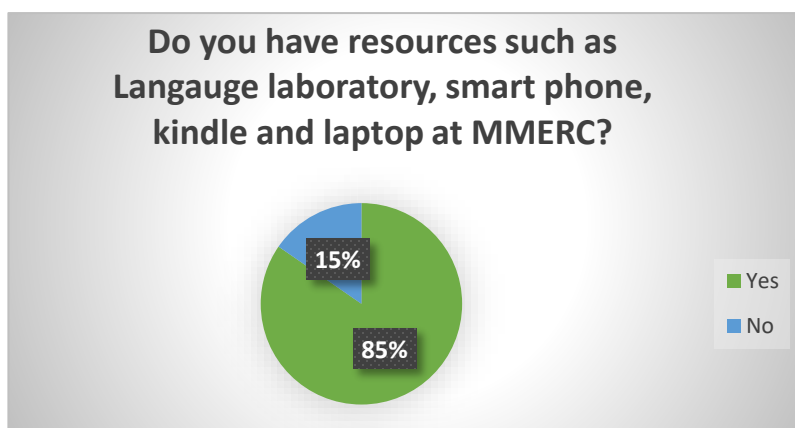


8. Do you have resources such as language laboratory, smart phone, kindle and laptop at MMERC?

i. Yes ()

ii. No ()

Pie chart-8 shows



Conclusion

A thorough study of MMERC was carried out and it was observed that the step taken by Maulana Badruddin Ajmal Qasmi, who laid the foundation of this center, was wonderful. It is one of the best achievements of Madrasa students who after completing their graduation are able to find a good job anywhere. The course at MMERC helps them to develop their English language skills. The students tackle everyday situations, where English is needed, with ease, whether they are at train reservation counter, shopping malls, doing online shopping, and mailing, chatting and reading English books or newspapers. But in spite of overcoming many problems the researcher noted some weakness that can be removed to uplift the standard of MMERC. There are some steps that can be taken to improve learning and teaching of English at MMERC. These are as follows-

1. Proper motivation and guidance.
 2. Availability of trained teachers.
 3. Proper utilization of resources.
 4. Syllabus and materials need to be revised.
- The researcher had a fruitful interaction with both teachers and students, on measures to improve the standard of English at

MMERC. One of these is proper motivation and guidance. Proper guidance at a proper time is very important for everyone. The MMERC needs proper motivation and guidance not only for students but also for their parents about the need of learning English.

- The teachers at MMERC need professional training at regular intervals. There is a need to make them aware about the teaching methodologies, classroom management, and proper utilization of all the resources.
- Resources are the basic materials of learning and teaching. The MMERC has a good amount of resources but their utilization is not efficiently done. They should have a language laboratory with a trained teacher who can teach students pronunciation of English. The MMERC has its own library but materials should be according to the present standard of learning and teaching. In short, such books are needed that create interest in learning and teaching of English to students.
- There is a mismatch between the syllabus and the students' needs. The needs of the students must be taken into consideration before the syllabus is designed for the course.

References

- Ahmed, M. *Islamic Education: Redefinition of Aims & Methodology*. Institute of Objective Studies, 2002.
- Basheer, K. Mohammad. *Quality Enhancement in Madrasa Education*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.
- Chandra, P. *English Language Teaching in Indian Madrasas: Accommodation or Complicity?* In Proceedings of the 7th International Free Linguistics Conference. Department of English, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2013.
- Fahimuddin. *Modernisation of Muslim Education in India*. Adhyayan Publishers, 2004.
- Gupta, N. *Reading with Allah: Madrasas in West Bengal*. Routledge India, 2012.
- Kuldip, K. *Madrasa Education in India: A Study of its Past and Present*. Chandigarh, India: Centre for Research in Rural and

Industrial Development. Kumar, K. *The Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Economic Studies*, Vol.28, no. 3, 1990, pp257-74.

Qasmi, Muhammadullah Khalil. *Madrassa Education: Its Strength and Weakness*. New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2005.

“Scheme to Provide Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM).” Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India: Department of School Education and Literacy: Accessed February 2, 2020https://mhrd.gov.in/edu_madrasas

Sikand, Y. *Issues in Madrasa Education in India*. Penguin India, 2005.

Diploma in English Languages Literature (DELL) http://www.markazulmaarif.org/mmerc_c/mmerc_dell.asp> Retrieved on:24/04/2018.