**Teaching Arabic**

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On **May 21, 2022**

Questions like how much Arabic is imperative for a person to become a perfect Muslim or how much it has to be taught to our school kids to mould them into ideal Muslims, despite being immensely crucial for the learners and planners, still remain quite cantankerous and unsettled in Pakistan. The problem rather than being solved on realistic or actual needs and relevance for the kids in the twenty first century class rooms, unfortunately has been mostly viewed with mere passions, love and reverence for the Arabic language as a medium of revelation and repository of the sources of the Islamic scriptures and traditions. The thrust on Arabic to be taught in public schools, to a large extent, is also mostly influenced by its swell and supremacy long established in the Islamic madrasas meant to groom the scholars sworn to a life-long learning, exposition and teaching of the sources, scriptures and the related theological nuances and problems.
Our multilingual culture, despite its mesmerising beauty, bounty and blessings also creates some further constraints and compulsions for these younger learners. They inevitably have to cope with their mother tongues together with the languages of the region where their institutions are located. A student from Punjab studying at an institution in KP, for instance, must also manage some smattering Pushto skill and it applies to every student learning in a locale with a different language. In view of these constraints and compliance of Quranic commandments to comprehend religion in one’s mother tongues, the Arabic contents for kids must be kept to the minimum. The Islamic message must be mediated mostly in their mother tongue or the prescribed languages. Arabic contents up to the primary stage, for instance, may be the first three Kalimas. The secondary stage can cover the prayer texts plus 3-5 small Quranic surahs sine-qua- non to supplement the Fateha in some parts of the prayers.
The style of teaching religion in the selected native or official languages, however, must be quite eclectic to inspire the learner’s curiosity to sift and search further information from the libraries, digital sources and discussion with their teachers and mates. The emerging digital technologies have now evidently revolutionized the access and acquisition of knowledge and rendered the centuries old traditions of cramming and memory work almost utterly irrelevant. Web surfing can now instantly proffer the tomes of Arabic texts and translations, commentaries and information from almost any source or language in the language, form and format preferred by the learners.
This policy is also essential because Arabic is a highly technical language with quite complex genders, nouns, verbs, pronunciation and grammatical perplexities. No student with an average IQ, motivation, aptitude and the allied scroll of courses, can garner the competence to translate the Arabic texts during the given higher secondary spans. Yet some of them would indeed be infatuated with Arabic and motivated to seek excellence and advancement in it. This is because Arabic, besides being the language of Quranic revelation, is the sixth largest spoken language of the world. It is spoken by about 277 million people and is also slated to be the official language of 26 countries. The ascent of some Arab nations in business, trade, tourism and employment avenues, is imparting yet another lure to it. Facilities to learn it accordingly are also quite commonly available in Pakistan and throughout the world.
Despite its widespread access to learning, growing significance in several parts of the world and its rare eminence enshrined in our hearts, enforcing Arabic as an instrument to illumine Islam to secondary school kids, can neither be effective nor justified by the pedagogical norms and niceties. A comparative glance at Christianity also reveals that all its psalms and prayers have been long recited in the native languages but it still remains the largest world religion.