

Portrayal of Islamic Culture: A Study of Pedagogic Discourse for Language Teaching in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate how religion, Islam is represented in the English textbooks taught at Secondary School Certificate (henceforth SSC) level in Pakistan. However, the research has just been delimited to the government schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (henceforth KPK).

Moreover, the study has also been delimited to reading passages and pictures/illustrations. There are two textbooks taught at secondary level: one each at Grade 9 and 10. The study was purely a qualitative study and the specific method employed was content analysis. In this connection, the linear content that is narrative text and non-linear that is pictures/illustrations of the selected textbooks were investigated. Firstly, the reading passages of the two textbooks were explored to know about the representation of Islam and what aspects of it are portrayed in the prescribed textbooks. Secondly, the pictures/illustrations of both the textbooks were also analyzed to know about their possible connection with Islam. The results of the study reveal that Islam being the state religion and an important component of Pakistani culture has been given sufficient coverage in both the textbooks. As far as the different aspects of the religion Islam are concerned, the textbooks provide information about Islam and its teachings, Holy Prophet (ﷺ), Caliphs, and notable Personalities of Islam. Nevertheless, the textbooks do not provide adequate information regarding other religions and groups which is important for interfaith harmony. Therefore, it is recommended that other religions of the world should also be given space in the textbooks.

Key Words: *Religion, Islam, Culture, English Language Teaching*

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Introduction

According to Kramsch culture is membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings. Even when they have left that community, its members may retain, wherever they are, a common system of standards of perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting. These standards are what is generally called their ‘culture’.⁽¹⁾

Language and culture have close connection,

“Language and culture are not separate, but are acquired together, with each providing support for the development of the other”.⁽²⁾

Religion is one of the important components of culture. Religion and education have also close relationship. Cheng and Beigi are of the view that

“Religion and education go hand in hand”.⁽³⁾

They differentiate between two types of countries: secular and theocratic states. In secular states, there is officially no state sponsored religion; therefore, religious ideology does not affect education. On the other hand, in theocratic states religion and the laws of country are in harmony. However, there is tension between the two,

“the need to guard freedom of religion while on the other hand to use religion in education to indoctrinate”.⁽⁴⁾

There is paucity of research on the relationship between Islam and education. Behnam and Mozaheb⁽⁵⁾ cite a number of researchers who investigated the connection between religion and education like Canagarajah, Cheng and Beigi, Edge, Kubota, Kubota and Lin, and Wong and Canagarajah. Nonetheless, they view that most of these studies are related to Christianity and other religions have not been explored sufficiently.

In the same way, several studies have been conducted to explore the overall representation of various cultures in textbooks, such as, Habib⁽⁶⁾,

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- (1) Claire J. Kramsch, *Language and culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1998AD), 10.
 - (2) Rosamond Mitchell, Florence Myles, *Second language learning theories* (London: Arnold, 2004AD), 235.
 - (3) Karen Kow Yip Cheng and Amir Biglar Beigi, “Education and religion in Iran: The inclusiveness of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) textbooks,” *International Journal of Educational Development* 32, no. 2 (2012AD), 311.
 - (4) Ibid, 311
 - (5) Biok Behnam and Mohammad Amin Mozaheb, "Identity, religion and new definition of inclusiveness in Iranian high school EFL textbooks," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 70 (2013AD), 1099-1108.
 - (6) Azhar Habib “An Analysis of Cultural Load in English Textbooks Taught in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan,” *Journal of Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (2014AD), 72-88.

Mimoun and Youcef⁽¹⁾, Iriskulova⁽²⁾, Lappalainen⁽³⁾, Mahmood, Asghar and Hussain⁽⁴⁾ etc. In addition, some studies have also been conducted to investigate the important components of culture like Sherman investigated speaker bias that is bias against non-native speakers in the dialogues of textbooks,⁽⁵⁾ Ndura explored gender bias,⁽⁶⁾ Matsuda explored users and uses of English in EFL textbooks⁽⁷⁾ and Kim investigated cultural and social biases in textbooks etc.⁽⁸⁾ Nevertheless, religion as an important component of culture has not been sufficiently explored all over the world and more specifically in Pakistan. Thus, the present study intends to investigate the presence of religion, Islam in the English textbooks of Pakistan.

Research Question

How is religion Islam represented in the English textbooks taught at SSC level in the government schools of KPK, Pakistan?

Literature Review

Turkan and Celik have discussed controversies over the content of curriculum for EFL/ESL.⁽⁹⁾ Behnam and Mozaheb are of the view that as Western culture is embedded in the textbooks, different countries particularly Islamic countries do not approve the content of EFL textbooks.⁽¹⁰⁾ In order to cope with it, non-English countries have localized English by incorporating

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- (1) SEHIBI Mimoun and MELLOUK Youcef, *Investigating The Culture Component in EFL Textbooks: Case of 1st Year secondary school, Tlemcen* (PhD diss., University of Tlemcen, 2015AD).
 - (2) Alena Iriskulova, *The Investigation Of The Cultural Presence In Spot On 8 Elt Textbook Published In Turkey: Teachers' And Students' Expectations Versus Real Cultural Load Of The Textbook* (PhD diss., Middle East Technical University, 2012AD).
 - (3) Tiina Lappalainen, *Presentation of the American culture in EFL textbooks: An analysis of the cultural content of Finnish EFL textbooks for secondary and upper secondary education* (PhD diss., University of Jyväskylä, 2011 AD).
 - (4) Muhammad Asim Mahmood, Zobina Muhammad Asghar, and Zahida Hussain, "Cultural representation in ESL textbooks in Pakistan: A case study of "Step Ahead 1", *Journal of Education and Practice* 3, no. 9 (2012 AD), 35-42.
 - (5) John Eric Sherman, "Uncovering cultural bias in EFL textbooks," *Issues in Applied Linguistics* 18, no. 1 (2010 AD), 27-53.
 - (6) Elavie Ndura, "ESL and cultural bias: An analysis of elementary through high school textbooks in the western United States of America," *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 17, no. 2 (2004 AD), 143-153.
 - (7) Aya Matsuda, "Representation of users and uses of English in beginning Japanese EFL textbooks," *JALT journal* 24, no. 2 (2002 AD), 182-200.
 - (8) Hyorim Kim, "Social and cultural issues in some EFL textbooks in Korea," *Hawaii Pacific University TESOL Working Paper Series* 10, (2012 AD), 30-39.
 - (9) Sultan Turkan, Servet Çelik, "Integrating culture into EFL texts and classrooms: Suggested lesson plans," *Novitas ROYAL* 1, no.1 (2007 AD), 18-33.
 - (10) Behnam and Mozaheb, "Identity, religion and new definition of inclusiveness in Iranian high school EFL textbooks," 1099-1108.

material related to their culture to safeguard the identity of their learners. According to Sharifian,

“In its journey across the globe, English has become increasingly localised by many communities of speakers around the world, adopting it to encode and express their cultural conceptualizations, a process which may be called glocalization of the language”.⁽¹⁾

The Context of Study, Pakistan

According to the Constitution of Pakistan (1973), the official name of the country is the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.⁽²⁾ It is due to this fact that Article 2 of the Constitution says that

“Islam shall be the State religion of Pakistan”.⁽³⁾

The population of Pakistan according to the latest census of 2017 is 207774520 in which the percentage of Muslim population is 96.28%.⁽⁴⁾ It means that Pakistan is a homogeneous country with Islam as the dominant religion. The percentage of non-Muslim population is also given below:⁽⁵⁾

Christian 1.59%

Hindu (Jati) 1.60

Qadiani (Ahmadi) 0.22

Scheduled Castes 0.25

Others 0.07

The history of the country shows that it got independence on the base of two important factors that is religion and language; both are the important components of culture. It is due to this fact that religion, Islam has strong impact on Pakistani culture. Mansoor has discussed the influence of religion on the culture of Pakistan that though the different regions of Pakistan have their own local culture and regional languages, what unites us is a set of shared beliefs or values regarding standards of behaviour, qualities of character, human relations and life styles that are admired by all Pakistanis whether they are Punjabis, Pathans, Sindhis or Baluchis. Our religious values imbibed through the teachings of Islam affect every aspect of our cultural life.⁽⁶⁾

(1) Farzad Sharifian, “Globalisation and developing metacultural competence in learning English as an International Language,” *Multilingual Education* (2013), 3/7.

(2) The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, art.1.

(3) The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, art.2.

(4) Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

(5) Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

(6) Sabiha Mansoor, *Culture and teaching of English as a second language for Pakistani students*, (2002AD).

Textbook/Course book

According to Tomlinson a course book is

“a book that provides the basic materials for a course and it serves as the only book used by the learners during a course. It usually covers work on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions and the four skills”.⁽¹⁾

Cortazzi and Jin have enumerated seven functions of textbooks: a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skinner and an ideology.⁽²⁾ There are two types of textbooks: global and local textbooks. Global textbooks are published in Western countries and marketed throughout the world⁽³⁾. On the other hand, local textbooks are developed and published locally.

Contents of English Textbooks Based on Students' Culture

Research shows that contents of English textbooks based on students' culture have multifarious benefits. Some of them are discussed below:

Identity Construction

A number of researchers have discussed the role of religion/culture in the construction of national identity and unity. Turkan and Celik are of the view that English textbooks produced at local/national level show students' culture rather than culture(s) of English speaking countries.⁽⁴⁾ Cortazzi and Jin opine that the aim of having such contents in textbook is to make learners aware of their own cultural identity. They say,

“that until learners' first cultural identity is established, it may be harmful to learn about other cultures”.⁽⁵⁾

Cheng and Beigi also posit that the depiction of culture in textbooks is not neutral, it is in the control of administrative powers and they use it for building “the sense of nationhood”.⁽⁶⁾ As to Pakistani English textbooks,

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- (1) Brian Tomlinson, *Materials development in language teaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 AD), 9.
 - (2) Martin Cortazzi and Lixian Jin, “Cultural mirrors: materials and methods in EFL classroom” *Culture in second language teaching* ed. Eli Hinkel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999 AD), 196-219.
 - (3) Nigel Harwood, “Content, Consumption, and Production: Three Levels of Textbook Research” *English language teaching textbooks* ed. Nigel Harwood (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014 AD), 1-41.
 - (4) Turkan and Çelik, “Integrating culture into EFL texts and classrooms: Suggested lesson plans,” 18-33.
 - (5) Cortazzi and Jin, “Cultural mirrors: materials and methods in EFL classroom”, 206.
 - (6) Cheng and Beigi, “Education and religion in Iran: The inclusiveness of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) textbooks,” 312.

Habib opines that the contents have been employed for the construction of national and Muslim identity of Pakistani learners.⁽¹⁾

Facilitation in English Language Learning

Apart from the construction of identity, the representation of students' culture facilitates in learning English language. It is a general fact that learning becomes optimum when one moves from known to unknown. Thus, if learners are taught English using contents of their own culture(s) and then embark upon new, it will definitely facilitate learning. Cortazzi and Jin are of the view that the contents of textbooks based on students' culture equip them (learners) with necessary vocabulary which the learners need to communicate with foreigners who pay a visit to their countries in order to tell them (foreigners) about their own culture.⁽²⁾ Likewise, Alptekin has enumerated various studies that demonstrate that known cultural schemas are helpful in acquiring foreign language more specifically comprehension. He argues:

“Instead of diving simplistically into the narrow confines of a given target language culture, in a manner devoid of comparative insight and critical perspective, EFL writers should try to build conceptual bridges between the culturally familiar and the unfamiliar in order not to give rise to conflicts in the learner's 'fit' as he or she acquires English”.⁽³⁾

Inculcation of Ethical Values in the Learners

Textbooks are also used to inculcate ethical values in the learners. Cobussen posits that some of the themes in the textbook published in Punjab, Pakistan such as, Participatory Citizenship, Patriotism/National Pride, Gender Equality show that English is not only taught in Pakistan as a foreign language but it is also used as a tool for teaching Pakistani morality.⁽⁴⁾ Similarly, Cheng and Beigi opine that keeping in view the part education plays in making a moral and ethical society has directed to include religious values both overtly and covertly in textbooks ranging from language to history.⁽⁵⁾

Methodology

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- (1) Azhar Habib and Muhammad Saleem, “The Construction of National and Muslim Identities through Academic Discourse,” *Tahdhib al Afkār* 3, no. 2 (2016 AD).
 - (2) Cortazzi and Jin, “Cultural mirrors: materials and methods in EFL classroom”, 196-219.
 - (3) Cem Alptekin, “Target-language culture in EFL materials,” *ELT journal* 47, no. 2 (1993 AD),141.
 - (4) Tamara Cobussen, “*English Education in Pakistan A study of Pakistani English and Culture in English Education*” (MA diss., 2008 AD).
 - (5) Cheng and Beigi, “Education and religion in Iran: The inclusiveness of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) textbooks,” 310-315.

The aim of the study was to explore representation of religion, Islam in the English textbooks taught at secondary level in KPK, Pakistan. It was a qualitative study and the method employed was qualitative content analysis. Zhang and Wildemuth view that

“ qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text”.⁽¹⁾

Cheng and Beigi⁽²⁾ (2012), and Behnam and Mozaheb⁽³⁾ (2013) have analyzed religious content of textbooks using categories of linear and non-linear contents. According to Kress, (as cited by Behnam & Mozaheb)

“linear content refers to the narrative text of EFL/ESL textbooks and non-linear refers to the non-linear representation, i.e., pictures and illustrations.”⁽⁴⁾

The selected textbooks were analyzed at two levels. Firstly, the content of reading passages (Linear content) has been explored to sift material related to religion. Secondly, pictures/illustrations (Non-linear content) have been scrutinized to know which aspects of the religion are depicted in them.

Data Analysis

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan students study two textbooks at Secondary Level. The textbooks are developed and published by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board, Peshawar keeping in view the guidelines given by National Curriculum Wing, Pakistan. The selected textbooks are written by Ruhi Zaka Malik. The name of textbook for grade 9 is *Text Book of English*.⁽⁵⁾ It contains fifteen units. Similarly, the name of textbook for grade 10 is *English Reading Book* which consists of thirteen units.⁽⁶⁾ The units of the textbooks have three categories: Reading and Thinking, Writing and Speaking, and Formal and Lexical aspects.

The analysis of different reading passages indicates that the textbook for class 9 has three passages that are wholly solely related to Islam. They

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- (1) Yan Zhang and Barbara M. Wildemuth, "Qualitative analysis of content, Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science, (2009 AD), 308-19.
 - (2) Cheng and Beigi, "Education and religion in Iran: The inclusiveness of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) textbooks," 310-315.
 - (3) Behnam and Mozaheb, "Identity, religion and new definition of inclusiveness in Iranian high school EFL textbooks," 1099-1108.
 - (4) Ibid, 1100
 - (5) Ruhi Zaka Malik, *Textbook of English grade-9* (Peshawar: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, textbook board, n.d).
 - (6) Ruhi Zaka Malik, *English reading book grade-10* (Peshawar: Leading Books Publisher, n.d).

are “The Holy Prophet Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (ﷺ)”, “The Medina Charter” and “The Two Bargains”. Moreover, two passages have a number of references to Islam. They are “Allama Muḥammad Iqbal” and “Quaid- a Great Leader”. As for the textbook for class 10, the analysis shows that three passages are purely related to Islam. They are “The Last Address of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)”, “The Caliph and the Gardener” and “Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar Farooq (RA)”. Likewise, two reading passages are not directly connected with Islam; however, they contain various references to Islam. They are “Begum Rana Liaquat ‘Alī Khan” and “Muslims of China”. The sections below present linear and non-linear contents of the passages.

Linear Content of the Textbooks

The selected textbooks underscore the following aspects of religion Islam:

Islam and Its Teaching

There are a number of references to Islam and its teaching in both the textbooks. There is a reference to the first Kalima of Islam in the very first reading passage of the textbook for grade 10,

“All glory be to Allah. There is no god but Allah and Muḥammad (ﷺ) is the prophet of Allah”.⁽¹⁾

A person becomes Muslim when s/he utters this Kalima. Islam is also defined in the passage,

“Islam the belief in the total submission to One, True and the Only Allah, the most Merciful and Mighty”.⁽²⁾

There are references to offering of prayers to One Allah, keeping of fast during the holy month of Ramadan. It is also informed that Muslims are brothers and therefore, it is forbidden to kill one another. In addition, it is also mentioned that drinking of wine and gambling are forbidden in Islam.

Islam from the Perspectives of Pakistani Leaders

In the passage “Begum Rana Liaquat ‘Alī Khan”, it is written that when in 1942 there were rumours of Japanese invasion, Quaid-e-Azam said to Begum Rana Liaquat ‘Alī Khan,

“Be prepared to train the women. Islam doesn’t want women to be shut up and never see fresh air”.⁽³⁾

Likewise, in the reading passage “Quaid_ A Great Leader”, it is informed that in August 1947, he said to his people in Karachi,

“You are free to go to your temples; you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of

(1) Ruhi Zaka Malik, *English reading book grade-10*, 2.

(2) Ibid, 2

(3) Ibid, 54

Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed. We are all equal citizens of one state”.⁽¹⁾

It is written in the passage that he was reminding the people the teaching of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) that in the eyes of Allah all are equal.

In the textbook for class 9, the reading passage “Allama Muḥammad Iqbal” contains several references to Islam. Iqbal stressed that Muslims can have achievements if they become good Muslims. They have to understand teaching of Islam given in the Holy Quran. He said,

“No philosophy, no religion, other than Islam, can discipline us as a nation”.⁽²⁾

He was greatly upset that Muslims had forgotten the teaching of Islam and did not realize it. Moreover, it is written that he was of the view that Allah does not change the condition of people if they do not change it by dint of hard work. In Islam both individual and the community have great importance, it was termed as “Millat-e-Islamia” by Allama Iqbal. He was of the view that Islam offers different way of life as compared to the life of West. Islam orders to give away our superfluous things in way of Allah. Private ownership is a trust from Allah and we are just guardian of it. The desire to have more and more has been the cause of the down fall of many nations, therefore, Islam stops to follow them.

Holy Prophet (ﷺ)

According to the religion Islam Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (ﷺ) is the last prophet of Allah (God). It is due to this fact that both the textbooks explicitly portray different facets of his life in great detail. In the textbook of class 9 the very first reading passage tells about his birth and early life. The first line is

“Our Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was born in Makkah in 571 A.D”.⁽³⁾

Likewise, the first reading passage of the textbook for class 10 is also about Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). The word “Our” is significant in the sense that it has been generalized that everyone in the county is Muslim. It is informed that he was from the noble family of Quraysh and the family is traced back to noble prophets, Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm (AS) and Ḥaḍrat Ismā‘īl (AS). It is also informed that he was brought up by his grandfather Abdul Muṭṭalib and later on by his uncle Abū Ṭālib as his parents passed away when he was six years of age.

Qualities of his character

(1) Ruhi Zaka Malik, *Textbook of English grade-9*, 28.

(2) Ibid, 12

(3) Ibid, 2

The passage on Holy Prophet (ﷺ) informs that he was different in boyhood than other boys of his age. He was kind and merciful to everybody. He was honest and truthful; therefore, people called him “Ṣādiq” and “Amīn”.

Life of People before Islam

The passage on Holy Prophet (ﷺ) informs that many people of Arab were not spending a good life before Islam. Instead of worshipping One Allah, they worshipped various gods and goddesses. They offered prayers to idols of stone instead of Allah. They would gamble and drink wine. They were quarrelsome and would kill one another.

Revelation

The passage on Holy Prophet (ﷺ) also refers to the first revelation. It is informed that when he was forty years of age Allah chose him to show people the right path. He was given the first message and after that he preached people to leave worshipping stone idols and worship One Allah.

Difficulties Faced by Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)

The passage also points towards the difficulties faced by Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) when he started preaching people of Arabia. They turned against him and compelled him and his family to live in a narrow valley in Makkah; however he came back and started preaching again. The textbook refers to the migration of Prophet (ﷺ) to Madina. The people of Makkah became his bitter enemies and decided to kill him. Nevertheless, he left the place leaving Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (RA) behind. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakar (RA) covered the journey of 300 miles on camels. It was a dangerous journey as the enemies were in search of them.

Life at Madina

It is informed that the people of Madina had already gotten the news of the visit of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and they welcomed him warm heartedly and were good Muslims. Muslims from Makkah also joined them. Many tribes became Muslims and the number of Muslims increased in Arabia. Now they started offering prayers to one Allah, keeping fast in the holy month of Ramadan, stopped drinking wine, gambling and fighting with one another.

Conquest of Makkah

There are references in the textbook to the conquest of Makkah, the destruction of idols in Ka‘bah and that Muslims started worshipping Holy house of Allah at Makkah.

Peace in Arabia

The textbook also informs that all the people of Arabia became good Muslims. They became honest and truthful. A saying of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is also given in this connection,

“One day a woman will travel by herself, with many gold ornaments, from Hira to Makkah and nobody will hurt her”.⁽¹⁾

It is written that the words of Prophet (ﷺ) came true when a woman travelled from Hira to Makkah and back all alone for Hajj.

Groups in Medina

It is informed that when Holy Prophet (ﷺ) migrated to Medina there were different sections in the city. Immigrants/Refugees, the faithful followers of Prophet (ﷺ) who had left their kith and kin and followed him, Anṣār/Helpers, the newly converted Muslims of Medina who helped Prophet (ﷺ) through thick and thin, the idol worshipers, and the Jews.

Bi'r Roma

The textbook for class 9 refers to the well of sweet water owned by a Jew who sold its water at high price called Bi'r Roma. As Muslims were poor and there was scarcity of water Holy Prophet said,

“Is there anyone here who would like to purchase paradise for himself in return for Bi'r Roma?”⁽²⁾

Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān stood and bought that well and announced that anyone could carry its water free of cost. This well is now called Bi'r ‘Uthmān and still exists in Medina.

Medina Charter

It is written in the textbook for class 9 that as there were different sections/groups in Medina, Prophet (ﷺ) realized that for building an Islamic Empire harmony and tolerance were very important among different groups, therefore, a charter was formulated known as Medina Charter. Some of its main points are also given in the passage. They are as under:

- All the groups/communities would form the common nationality. In case of attack on anyone the other would defend it.
- All the communities having different religions would be free to perform their respective religious rituals.
- Individual minor crimes by any non-Muslim would be treated individually with no liability on the community to which the perpetrator belongs to.
- Protection would be given to the oppressed.
- Bloodshed, violence and murder should be abominable in Medina.
- All disputes should be referred to Holy Prophet (ﷺ) for decision.

The passage informs that the charter pronounces principles of civic equality, freedom of worship and racial and religious tolerance. It is

(1) Ruhi Zaka Malik, *English reading book grade-10*, 4.

(2) Ruhi Zaka Malik, *Textbook of English grade-9*, 53.

written that this idea was also behind the creation of Pakistan as Quaid-e-Azam told to people in 1947,

“You are free to go to your temples; you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed. We are all equal citizens of one state”.⁽¹⁾

The passage also informs that the General Assembly of United Nation in 1948 approved Universal Declaration of Human Rights containing some clauses of Medina Charter which shows that Islam is the greatest protector of human rights.

The Last Address of Holy Prophet (ﷺ)

The first reading passage of the textbook for class 10 is about the last address of Holy Prophet (ﷺ). It is informed that on 9th Dhul Hijja he addressed the people. Some of the main points of his address are also given. They are as under:

- Your lives and property are a sacred trust and you will be asked about all your actions on the Day of Judgment by your Lord.
- Both husbands and wives have rights over one another. Wives should be treated with kindness. Both should be loyal with each other and sins should not be committed.
- You are forbidden to take interest on loans.
- Murders committed during days of ignorance should not be avenged.
- Muslims are brothers and all are equal; an Arab has no preference over a non-Arab and vice versa.
- Treat your servants with kindness. Provide them such food and clothes which you yourselves eat and wear. If they do something which you cannot forgive, they should be let free and should not be treated harshly.
- In the last he asked the assembled people if he had fulfilled his duty and they replied that he had fulfilled his duty in the true sense.

Famine in the Time of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar (RA)

The textbook for class 9 refers to the famine in the time of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar (RA). He tried his best to lessen the hardships of people by buying all the food brought to Medina to be distributed among the people. He also offered to buy flour loaded on a thousand camels owned by Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān (RA); however, ‘Uthmān (RA) turned down all his offers and told him to distribute all the flour in the name of Allah.

History of Muslims of China

The reading passage “Muslims of China” in the textbook for class 10 refers to history of Muslims of China. It is informed that in 8th century Muslim armies reached here and the General told Chinese Emperor to

(1) Ruhi Zaka Malik, *Textbook of English grade-9*, 28

embrace Islam. However, in 719 A.D. Caliph Waleed bin Abdul- Malik died and the General was killed. Thus the Muslim army turned back, however, some settlers were left who were allowed by Chinese Emperor to live in peace and build mosques. Afterwards many other Muslim travelers and merchant reached China by sea. The passage also refers to the famous traveler, Ibn-Baṭūṭah who reached China in 14th century and wrote about its fine roads and good government.

The Four Caliphs of Islam

The selected textbooks have references to the four caliphs of Islam: Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (RA), Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar (RA), Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān (RA)) and Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (RA). Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (RA), the first caliph is mentioned in the textbook for class 9. He accompanied Holy Prophet (ﷺ) when he decided to migrate to Madina. Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar (RA), the second caliph is mentioned in the two passages “The Two Bargains” and “Ḥaḍrat Farooq (RA)”. In the first passage, he offered to buy flour loaded on thousand camels from Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān (RA) in order to be distributed in the people. In the second passage, learners are informed about his birth, relation with Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and education. In addition, several incidents are narrated that show that being caliph he led a very simple life and did not like pomp and show, and people had an easy access to him. He was strict in the enforcement of law, was kind and sympathetic, and honesty and integrity were his main qualities.

The third caliph Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān (RA) is mentioned in the passage “The Two Bargains”. The two incidents narrated in the passage show his generosity. In the first incident he bought the well of sweet water from the Jew at the time when there was acute scarcity of water in Madina. On the second occasion when there was severe famine in Arabia at the time of Caliph, ‘Umar (RA) he gave away food loaded on thousand camels in the name of Allah. The fourth caliph, Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (RA) is mentioned in the first passage of the textbook for class 9. When the enemies of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) decided to kill him at night, he decided to leave for Makkah and left Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (RA) at his place.

Geography of Arabia

In both the textbooks there are references to the geography of Arabia. It is written that Arabia is a desert. There was scarcity of water and the available water was also not suitable for drinking purposes therefore, people had to cover long distances for water and sometimes they had to live without it for a day or even more than it.

Sacred /Important Places

The textbooks refer to important places of Arabia. They are discussed below:

Arabia: The land from which Allah chose Holy Prophet (ﷺ) for the guidance of people.

Makkah: The city where Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was born. The great Masjid of Allah is in Makkah.

Madina: The city where Holy Prophet (ﷺ) migrated. The great Masjid of Prophet (ﷺ) is in this city.

Mount Hira: Holy Prophet (ﷺ) used to go to a cave for meditation in this mountain.

Jabal ‘Arafāt: A place in Makkah, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) gave his last address to the people.

Holy Book Quran

The holy book, Quran is mentioned in the textbook for class 9. It is informed that Allah showed in Holy Quran how to spend life and Holy Prophet (ﷺ) spent his life according to it, therefore, Muslims go according to the teaching of Quran and the examples of Prophet (ﷺ).

Islamic Months

Several Islamic months are mentioned in the textbooks. They are discussed below:

Ramadan: Prophet hood was bestowed on Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (ﷺ) in the holy month of Ramadan. The holy book, Quran was also sent to earth in this month. According to teaching of Islam, Muslims keep fast during this month.

Rabi‘ Awwal: An Islamic month, Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was born on 12th of Rabi‘ Awwal.

Dhul Hijja: An Islamic month, Holy Prophet (ﷺ) addressed to the assembled people on 9th of Dhul Hijja.

Pillars of Islam

There are five pillars of Islam. The textbooks refer to four of them. They are as under:

Kalima: The first pillar which is a prerequisite for a person to become a Muslim.

Prayer: Muslims offer Prayer five times a day.

Fasting: During holy month of Ramadan Muslims keep fast.

Hajj: It is compulsory for rich Muslims to perform Hajj once in his/her life.

Angel/s

There is a reference to Gabriel (AS), the holy angel who would bring the message of Allah to Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

Prophets

Two prophets apart from Holy Prophet (ﷺ) are mentioned in the textbook for class 10: Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm (AS) and Ḥaḍrat Ismā‘īl (AS). The family of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is traced back to these prophets. Ḥaḍrat Ismā‘īl (AS) was the son of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm (AS).

Important Personalities

Two important Personalities having very close connection with Holy Prophet (ﷺ) are mentioned in the selected textbooks: Abdul Muṭṭalib, the grandfather of Prophet (ﷺ) who took charge of him when his parents passed away and Abū Ṭālib, the uncle of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) who brought him up and who stood by him through thick and thin.

Non-Linear Content, Pictures/Illustrations

In order to reinforce the effect of reading passages, they are accompanied by pictures. There are six pictures which have connection with religion Islam. They are discussed below:

1. There is a picture of the great Holy house of Allah at Makkah on page three of the textbook for class 9. Muslims from all over the world visit it during Hajj days and for ‘Umra. It was made by Prophet Ibrāhīm (AS). There are references to it in the passage “The Holy Prophet Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (ﷺ)”. Ka‘ba the important part of masjid is visible in the picture and people are also visible busy in worshipping. In the passage it is written that after conquest of Makkah, the stone idols were destroyed and Muslims started offering prayers to one Allah.
2. On page four of the textbook for class 9, there is the picture of the mount Hira. The cave where Holy Prophet Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (ﷺ) used to go to for meditation is also visible in it. It is at this cave that he got the first revelation.
3. There are two pictures of the Masjid of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in the prescribed textbooks, one on page 5 of the textbook for class 9 and the other on page 1 of the textbook for class 10. The minarets of Masjid are also visible in the pictures. There are references to it in the selected textbooks. The Muslims have great regard for it and they pay visit to it.
4. There is a picture of desert with the reading passage “The Two Bargains” on page 53 of the textbook for class 9. Camels, the animals of desert are also visible in it. The picture shows the geographical condition of Arabia. There are references to it in the textbooks. The picture is significant as it is with the reading passage in which the story of Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān (RA) is narrated. He bought the well from a Jew as there was scarcity of water in Madina. Secondly, when there was famine in Arabia, Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān (RA) gave away the food loaded on thousands camels in the way of Allah.
5. There is a picture of Holy Quran, the sacred book of Muslims on page 2 of the textbook for class 10. There are references to it in the selected textbooks.

6. There is a picture of a Masjid with reading passage “Muslims of China” on page 121 of the textbook for class 10. Chinese Muslims are visible in the Masjid having white caps on their head. The passage informs about the history of Muslims in China.

Other Religions

The selected textbooks do not provide enough information about the other main religions of the world. There are just passing remarks about some of them while discussing Islam and Muslims. In the passage on Holy Prophet (ﷺ), it is informed that before Islam Arabs worshipped several god and goddesses made of stones and did not pray to One true Allah. Likewise, in the passage on Allama Iqbal Hindus are mentioned and said that they dominated Muslim in social and economic life. Moreover, the point of view of Allama Iqbal that Muslim and Hindus could not live together is also mentioned. There are references to the places of worship of other religious groups in the words of Quaid-e-Azam,

“You are free to go to your temples....mosques...other place of worship. You may belong to any religion or caste”.⁽¹⁾

In the passage “The Medina Charter”, different groups living in Medina are discussed. It is informed that apart from the Muslims the other communities were idol worshippers and Jews. One of the points of Charter was that the Muslims, the Jew and other communities would be free to follow their religions and religious ceremonies. In the passage “The Two Bargains”, the story of the Jew who was the owner of sweet water well has been narrated. In the passage “A Visit to the Swat Valley”, the visitors observed Budhist remains on the top of hills. It is said that the monks who lived in these monasteries spent a simple life and preached Budha’s teaching.

There are also passing references to church in the passage “A New Microbe”. It is written, “A supper was given at one of the churches” and “on their way to the supper at the church”.⁽²⁾ In the textbook for class 10 there is only one reference to non-Muslims in the passage “Muslims of China”. It is written,

“Ma Chang, however, did not feel cut off from his fellow Muslims, although he lived so far away from Makkah, and among so many non-Muslims”.⁽³⁾

Findings and Discussion

The study aimed to seek about the representation of religion Islam in the English textbooks taught at SSC level in the government schools of

(1) Ruhi Zaka Malik, *Textbook of English grade-9*, 28

(2) Ibid, 96

(3) Ruhi Zaka Malik, *English reading book grade-10*, 107.

KPK. Religion is an important constituent of both culture and education. The results of the study reveal that Islam being the state religion has been given extensive coverage in a number of reading passages of both the textbooks. The number of such passages is ten. Six passages are directly related to Islam and four have various references to it. It has multifarious advantages keeping in view Pakistani learners such as, it helps in the construction of national and Muslim identity,⁽¹⁾ it fosters English language learning in the sense that students already have some know how about their own culture/religion and if the contexts and content are based on students' culture/s, it will be easy for them to learn and more specifically their comprehension level will be increased.⁽²⁾ Moreover, they will get sufficient English vocabulary pertaining to their culture which will enable them to convey information about their culture to those who visit to their country.⁽³⁾ Last but not least, religious content will make them good human beings.

However, there is the other side of picture too. The selected textbooks do not provide enough information about other religions. Resultantly they (textbooks) may deprive the learners from getting information about other possible perspectives. Triyoga suggests that all main religious groups should be incorporated in materials while discussing and illustrating religion or churches. In addition, negative opinions about religion should be avoided.⁽⁴⁾ The researcher is of view that as the world has become a global village interfaith harmony is vital and contents pertaining to all religions and groups can be instrumental for peace and stability in the world. UNESCO in its guidelines regarding textbooks under the program Education 2030 Agenda also emphasizes that the textbooks should demonstrate that different faiths can exist in the same area and should focus on their interactions in which their similarities are highlighted. In addition, they should refrain from ranking religions and passing general judgments about them.⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) Azhar Habib and Saleem, "The Construction of National and Muslim Identities through Academic Discourse,".
 - (2) Cem Alptekin, "Target-language culture in EFL materials," 136-143.
 - (3) Cortazzi and Jin, "Cultural mirrors: materials and methods in EFL classroom", 196-219.
 - (4) Arilia Triyoga, *Cultural bias in textbooks*. Retrieved from <http://ariliablog.blogspot.com/2010/06/cultural-bias-in-textbooks.html>
 - (5) Making textbook content inclusive: A focus on religion, gender and culture (Paris: UNESCO, 2017AD).

Conclusion

Learning of any language becomes easy when the content of materials is based on cultural schemas of learners. The aim of the study was to know about the representation of the religion, Islam which is one the most important components of Pakistani culture in the textbooks employed for teaching English at Secondary level. It was a qualitative study and the data were analyzed thematically. The findings of the study show that sufficient coverage has been given to religion Islam in the prescribed textbooks. The textbook for class 9 has three passages that are purely about Islam. Similarly, two passages that highlight the history of Pakistan are replete with references to Islam. As far as the textbook for class 10 is concerned. Three passages are wholly solely related to Islam and two passages contain several references to it. The passages of both the textbooks contain detailed information about various facets of Islam through linear as well as non-linear content of the selected textbooks. Some of the worth mentioning aspects are as under:

- Holy Prophet (ﷺ), his life, teaching and qualities
- Other prophets, such as, Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm (AS) and Ḥaḍrat Ismā‘īl (AS)
- Pillars of Islam: Kalima, Prayer, Fasting and Ḥajj
- Quran, angel and Islamic months
- Four caliphs: Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakar (RA), Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar (RA), Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān (RA), Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (RA)
- Interpretation of Islam from the perspective of great Pakistani leaders Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal

However, as far as other major religions of the world are concerned adequate space is not given to them keeping in view the fact that people of other religious groups also live in Pakistan. Thus, it is recommended that coverage should also be given to them as well.

