Education of Arabic Language in Sindh:
Evaluating Curriculum, Resources and Outcomes

Nasurullah Qureshi[*1], Altaf Ahmed[2], Muzaffar Ali[3], Abdul Samee Jesser[4], Nazir Ahmed[5]

[1]Department of Islamic Studies, Bahira University Karachi Campus, Pakistan, [2]Department of Islamic Thought and Culture, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan, [3]Department of Islamic Thought and Culture, National University of Modern Languages, Karachi Campus, Pakistan

nasurullahqureshi.bukc@bahria.edu.pk[*1], altaf.ahmad@numl.edu.pk[2], muzaffarali.bukc@bahria.edu.pk[3], abdul.samee@numl.edu.pk[4], soomronazir3@gmail.com[5]

Abstract

The education of Arabic in government institutions in Sindh remains a concern due to limited curricular innovation, inadequate resources, and unsatisfactory learning outcomes. This study seeks to evaluate the existing Arabic curriculum, the availability and quality of teaching resources, and the actual outcomes achieved by teachers. The research begins with a discussion on the significance of Arabic language learning in religious, social, and educational contexts. Moreover, it examines the role of government institutions in providing effective Arabic education and in shaping learners' character. A review of the curriculum and teaching practices has been conducted alongside field surveys of selected schools and colleges. The findings highlight both strengths and weaknesses in the current system, including outdated syllabus content, a lack of modern teaching resources, and low proficiency levels. Based on these insights, the study proposes practical reforms to improve the curriculum, strengthen resource allocation, and enhance students' learning outcomes. The study concludes that comprehensive reforms are essential to make Arabic education more relevant, engaging, and effective for future generations in Sindh.

Keywords: Arabic Language; Arabic Teaching; Sindh's Govt Institutions; Arabic Syllabus.

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that Arabic Language holds a significant place in Muslim societies. It has deep religious, social, industrial and professional significance for Pakistani Society as well. Religiously, it is the language of the Qur'an, Hadith, and the foundational sources of Islamic law, theology, and spirituality.(Masood, 2014) As mentioned in the Holy Quran: "Indeed, We have revealed (sent it down) as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand" إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ (Al-Quran, n.d., Chapter 11:2). Direct understanding of Arabic helps students to access the Holy Book directly. (Jayadi & Aziz, 2025)It reduces dependency on translations and also enhances the understanding of Islamic ways of life. It also eases and enriches the life of an

individual spiritually, as daily prayers and core rituals are performed in Arabic, it also aligns the connection between language, faith, and worship with the behavior of an individual.

In Pakistani Society, the Arabic Language serves as a factor of unity and connectivity with Muslim ummah. By learning Arabic, Pakistani students can achieve access to a rich and more authentic Islamic sources and also can strengthen their sense of belonging to a worldwide religious community. (Anas, 2012)Arabic education also contributes to moral and cultural development by making learners attached to the ethical teachings and historical traditions preserved in classical and modern Arabic literature. From the perspective of Professional importance, Arabic Language skills open opportunities in multiple fields and industries. Pakistan has strong ties with the Arab world, and skilled graduates in Arabic can pursue careers in medical services, diplomacy, translation, religious education, journalism, Islamic banking, and international trade. (Bloch, 1995) In addition, the demand for qualified Arabic teachers and researchers is growing within Pakistan itself after Higher Education Commission of Pakistan's initiative for Understanding Quran Courses at University level (Ahmed, 2025). Keeping in view the multifaceted asset in the shape of Arabic Language that supports spiritual growth, social cohesion, and professional advancement, it highlights the need to improve existing Arabic curricula and teaching practices to meet the diverse needs of Pakistani students.

Due to the importance of the topic and direct relation with individuals, the researchers have conducted various researches on the topic. (Masood, 2014) In his work titled Arabic in Pakistan: Problems and Solutions in the Field of Teaching and Testing has focused on Lahore and Multan regions of Pakistan. Whereas work of (Rahman, 2000). The Teaching of Arabic to the Muslims of South Asia is largely focused on tracing of teaching Arabic language in historical perspective. It lacks curriculum of Sindh's public sector institutions. (Abbas et al., 2010)'s work is Not directly related to the teaching and learning analysis, rather it is more about Natural Language Processing (NLP). Study of (Rana & Khalil, 2021) is focused on influence of philosophies on the learning process. Work of (Khan et al., 2021) remains limited to e-learning of the language. A new dimension related to digital sources during the learning process is the central point of (Khan, 2020)'s work. (Qureshi & Chhijan, 2020)is an attempt to explore issues and challenges in teaching of Quran and its teaching in the public institutions of Sindh. Where as (Ghulam Sham ur Rehman, 2016) is specified to the religious institutions in the region of Sindh.

In spite of these academic works, previous research has not addressed the specific context of Sindh's public-sector institutions that is the central focus of our study. Especially, the analysis of curriculum design, availability of resources for teaching the curriculum, and the evaluation of the outcomes remain underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by systematically examining Arabic language education in Sindh province of Pakistan, with a focus on curriculum, resources, and outcomes. This research in the above-mentioned area is aimed to analyze curriculum being used to teach Arabic Language in Govt-sector institutions of Sindh, explore and evaluate the qualification criteria, ability and availability of teaching resources. Also assess learning outcomes at a school level, identifying the challenges faced by the teachers and learners in the process of gaining Arabic language Skills, and propose practical recommendations for the betterment of curriculum resources for the Arabic Language Learning in Sindh.

METHOD

To address the above research questions, the mix-method approach has been utilized, where textual analysis of the curriculum has been analyzed through qualitative analysis, whereas quantitative analysis was adopted to understand the issues and challenges to the learners and teachers through interviews and surveys. The survey was conducted to explore the factual status of Arabic language education in Sindh. A five-section based structured questionnaire was prepared to collect the data in qualitative and quantitative form. The data has been collected from the teachers. Both closed-ended items (multiple choice and Likert scale) and open-ended items were included to ensure a balance of measurable trends and in-depth insights. Both the closed-ended questions with multiple choice and Likert scale) questions added in the questionnaire and open-ended points included to measure the trends in balanced ways and to explore in-depth issues.

The participants of the survey consisted of the teachers at various schools of Sindh as per its Rural and Urban division. The participants were invited voluntarily. The data from a reliable number of respondents has been collected through online google form questionnaires and print forms where digital facilities were not available. The responses were organized for the analysis after the proper codification.

The study adhered to research ethics with high strictness. All participants were voluntary, with their right to be apart from the survey at any stage without any penalty. The survey tried to avoid any biased questions, particularly assuring neutrality in data collection. And the data and the findings will be used for academic and educational purposes only. To identify major trends within the data collected the descriptive statistics have been processed and analyzed. To highlight the major findings, few charts and graphs have been used. Whereas the responses which were Open-ended in its nature were analyzed thematically to understand the suggestions of the participants and highlight the real-time issues. The mixed approach helped the researchers in a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the strengths, challenges, and outcomes of Teaching Arabic Language in Sindh.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Arabic Language Teaching in Sindh: Resources and Opportunities

A large number of government institutions under the supervision of the Sindh government are fulfilling their responsibilities for the teaching of the Arabic Language and the promotion of the teachings Islamic Teachings through Language Skill. These educational institutions are present in every town and village of Sindh and even are working on union council level. These institutes are providing completely free of cost basic education in these institutions and about 55 percent of the students of Sindh dream of achieving their future destination through these institutions. According to government statistics for 2023-2024, the number of government educational institutions in Sindh provide education from primary to middle. According to educational census conducted in 2023-2024, a high number of Sindh's learners is attached with public sector institutions: 5,219,784 through 40978 schools. Previous data shows the variation that the ratio of admission is increasing due to a range of factors and pupils are switching to govt. schools. As per Annual School Census reports, there is 6.9% increase in number of students as compared to previous year 2022-2023.

Fig 1. The Increase In Yearly Admission

NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS

2023-24: 5,219,784
2022-23: 4,883,722
2021-22: 4,444,801
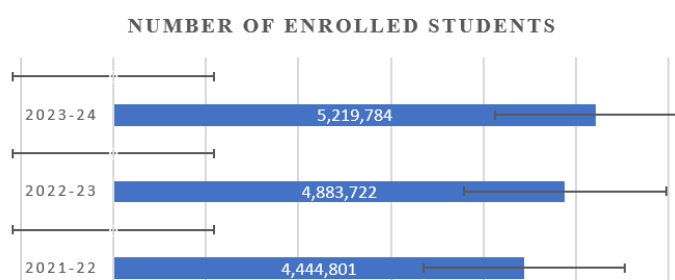
Having infrastructure of 40,968 schools is a major source for an education system with enrollment of 5,219,784 students. (Sindh Bureau of Statistics, 2022)Another strength, which can highlight number of teachers having various expertise; a total of 168,628 teachers is there to facilitate the learning process. Here, this number reveals the potential of the system. These schools participate in various subjects and language teaching. Whereas the special category has been introduced for the Arabic Language Teaching and Orient Studies, which is named "Oriental Teacher" (OT), who are performing their duties beside Junior School Teacher and High School Teachers who are performing their duties to teach *Islamiat* Subjects. The Oriental Teaching have to pass a special course as basic qualification for their appointment along with Religious Degrees (*Shahadat ul Alamia*) from any recognized *Madarsa* Board in Pakistan. After appointment the OTs have to go through mandatory training conducted by Sindh Govt's recognized institutions i.e. Provencial Institute for Teachers Education (PITE) Nawabshah. (*PITE Sindh*, n.d.)

Teaching Arabic Language in Sindh's Schools

Arabic language is being taught at primary and secondary school levels ranging from (Grade 3-8) for various purposes. One portion is directly related to Quranic recitation while the second which is core curriculum for Arabic is concerned with Learning a new language. Here major discussion remains in the second part, while the first part is discussed thoroughly.

1. Arabic at Primary Level

   There are at least three languages are being taught at the primary level: Sindhi, Urdu, and English. Also, these languages are medium of instruction in schools. After in-depth analysis of Curriculums of Sindh's government sector institutions from grade 1 to 12, it can conclude that; at primary level (Grade 1-5) there is not any specified subject that relates to Arabic language. Due to this there is not any OT in primary level schools. Whereas at grade 6-8 there is a specified subject named "*Al Lughah Al Arabia*". Whereas in upper grades, i.e., 9-12, there is no specified subject related to Arabic Language. In grade three there is basic alphabet of Arabic Language. This is part of Quran Learning and Recitation. It is not related to learning Arabic language. Lesson outcomes are also relating to its core focus, reciting the Holy Quran properly without any mistake in *Tilawat*.

   Details of this portion further divide into the following parts:

Unit 1: consists of special focus on recognition of Arabic letters properly with detailed practice of separate letters, connected letters, different shapes of Arabic letters and difference among alike letters. Here, lot of examples and exercises are provided for the learners. These exercises are supposed to be practiced under the supervision of the teacher. There is focus on following skills: Reading and Writing whereas listening part is not major focus point in the unit. Unit 2: this is consistent with memorization of few short surah's of the Holy Quran and basics of Faith in Arabic. This can help the learners in future readings in upper classes.(Nasrullah Qureshi & Hadi Bux Chhijan, n.d.)

Arabic Reading Practice through recitation of the Holy Quran as per *Qur'anic Tajweed* rules is part of the syllabus. It is divided according to *Juz (Para)* of the Holy Quran as follows:

Grade 4   *Juz* 1-2 (Sindh Textbook Board, 2016)
Grade 5   *Juz* 3-6 (Dr. Mukhtiar Ahmed Kandhro, 2016)
Grade 6   *Juz* 7-12 (Dr Sanaullah Bhutto, 2016)
Grade 7   *Juz* 13-20 (Dr Mukhtiar Ahmed Kandhro, 2016)
Grade 8   *Juz* 21-30 (Dr Bashir Ahmed Rind, 2016)

2. Core Curriculum for Arabic Language and Teaching Methodologies

There are three books for these grades, a separate book at each grade. After an in-depth analysis of the Books prepared and published by the Sindh Textbook Board, it can be concluded that the books have following major objectives:

a. Develop foundation and strengthen relationships with Arabic Language beyond *Tajwid*.

b. Build Arabic vocabulary through discussion on different topics: family, school, daily routines, time, numbers, directions, food, classroom language. The vocabulary is usually formal and daily usable in its nature. As per Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR),(Jones & Saville, 2009) it can be distributed under A-1 to A-2, Emphasizing on expressions, classroom phrases, greetings, asking/answering simple questions, and short roles. It also covers nominal sentences, gender/number agreement, demonstratives, simple verb forms in the past and present, common prepositions divided in each Grade.

c. Besides Vocabulary, the books focus on simple writing practices with a controlled sentence-building, guided paragraph completion, and short personal statements using sentence frames and word banks. Although there are 400+ vocabulary, highlighted at the end of each book are of -B-1 to B-2 level vocabulary. For classroom assessment there are various exercises available in the textbook which are technically involving the learners by themselves to attain the learning objectives through various and diverse exercises. This is basic characteristic of the textbook developed for this stage.

3. Teaching Methods Recommended in Textbooks

Keeping the text and its division in the book in front, the books are heavily focused on text-oriented, lacking poems; this, considered as easy and interesting mode to learn any language or basic vocabulary of the language. Text-oriented mode is making the books and alternatively the methodology monotonous which leads to lack of interest

in the learner besides instructor. Here in Grade 6 there are only two poems (Dr Sanaullah Bhutto, 2016), while in grade 7 and 8 there is one poem each.(Dr Sanaullah Bhutto, 2016) & (Dr Bashir Ahmed Rind, 2016). Consequently, students are left with a rigid, text-heavy learning experience that promotes rote memorization rather than active engagement of learners with the language.

The most recommended approach in the curriculum is blended approach. The lessons depict the combination of grammar teaching (i.e., rules, examples) and application activities (writing tasks). Each lesson contains text on a selected topic, after that the comprehension of lessons, assessed through exercises. (Skehan, 1998)Thirdly, the grammar rules mentioned in the lesson with proper application and examples and practice exercises. This method is also recommended in teaching of different languages to non-native speakers.(Tawil, 2018). Due to involvement of vocabulary memorization and its use in daily life, the rote memorization method is also highlighted by the course developers and suggested to the teachers at large. As per the research, this method is very useful for the purpose mentioned above. (Yang & Dai, 2011). Also, grammar-based exercises, switching to translation of words, paragraphs and the application for grammar principles are indications toward the Grammer-translation method. Which is considered as the most suitable method for the Language teachers. It is easily applicable for situations where sources are very limited, while it is suitable for the students because it helps the students comprehend the text, whereas cognitive domain , application and oral interaction tasks are encouraged to be taught through grammar-translation method.(Elmayantie, 2015)

4. Discussions on Curriculum and Adopted Teaching Methods
The course for Grade 1-5 is missing Arabic as a Formal Subject and also its limitation with its core objective which is recitation of Holy Quran following Tajweed Rules. It is basic targeted outcome of the curriculum. This is aligned with the life of learner so he/ she can understand what he is worshiping in his daily life. This is also expected to build an emotional and spiritual connection with the Quran, developing passion for understanding besides basic comprehension of translation and meaning of selected *Ayat* and *Surah's*.

As per the proposed teaching approach, which is primarily based on repetitive recitation and memorization under teacher guidance, with an emphasis on *tajweed* rules and oral correction. Students progress gradually through different *Juz (paras)*, and both *nazra* and *hifz* are examined regularly throughout the academic year. Evaluation is heavily oral, with 40 out of 100 marks in the *Islamiyat* subject allocated to *Quran* recitation, making it a compulsory component for passing.(Dr. Mukhtiar Ahmed Kandhro, 2016) This indicates a methodology focused on rote learning, oral performance, and continuous assessment through recitation tests.

Lack of Arabic Subject as formal subject impacts on the students' future learning from Grade 6-8 and makes them underprepared. Reliance on rote learning is also impacting on the learners; they cannot be able to develop their vocabulary and grammar. This issue makes Arabic in middle school difficult and weakens motivation while weak

tajwid practice further issues in accurate pronunciation and future learning. Besides the qualities and characteristics of Grade 6-8 Classs textbooks, there are few proposed lesson outcomes, require alignment with the Course objectives, for instance:

At the start of Lesson one in Grade – 6, mentioned that the students will be able to:

1. Be aware about oneness/ *Toheed* of Allah and His Attributes/ Characteristics
2. Learning New Vocabulary and Sentence of Arabic Language
3. Word and Its types in Arabic Language

It is good to inform about the monotheism or Toheed but as per the course objectives point one is not directly inline. The same issue is observed on different lessons of Grade-6 textbook. (Dr Sanaullah Bhutto, 2016, pp. 1, 9, 61, 67, 71, 76, 79, 85, 89). Whereas Core Arabic Language curriculum in Sindh's public sector institutions is highly text-heavy, with very few poems, making learning monotonous and limiting engagement of students. On the other hand, rote memorization and the grammar-translation method provide some support in vocabulary building and comprehension, they restrict active language use. Therefore, adopting an eclectic approach that blends grammar instruction, application, and interactive activities is essential for meaningful and effective Arabic learning. The result can be improved through addition in methodologies or teaching adds i.e. through adopting audio-lingual method, communicative approach by connecting the listening exercises to real-life dialogues, then practicing responses. (Swan, 1985) where each and every unit can give better results after inclusion of QR-linked audio track or supported with short video accessible online and offline where possible, as it is initiated by the Sindh Textbook Board in English language books. (Sindh Textbook Board, 2025)

The Arabic Language is offered at several types of schools as compulsory subjects, i.e., middle, elementary, and secondary schools in already explained grades. The total number of the Arabic teachers formally known as Oriental Teachers were not confirmed from the available data sources, although a census of Sindh govt is indicating that there are total of 6,214 OTs in the schools. (Government of Sindh, Sindh Education & Literacy Department, 2024). A total sample size of three hundred (300) Arabic teachers adopted as justifiable, as it provides a representative and dependable with a 95% confidence level and where margin of error is set of around 5.5–6%. The three hundred (300) number of the respondents can properly give a reflection grounded in the schools with the diversity of views, experiences, and practices of Arabic teaching across Sindh province of Pakistan.

The data collected from the teachers through a questionnaire consisting of five sections:

1. Basic Information where Relation to Arabic, Years of teaching, and Grade level, etc. were the focused questions.

Fig 2. Educators' Experience and Skills

- 1–3 years
- 10–15 years
- 4–6 years
- 6–10 years
- 16+ years

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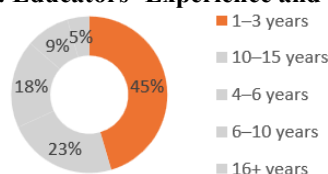
The question about basic information section reveals that majority of the teachers have not enough expertise and experience of teaching. It comes in knowledge from two perspectives; firstly, Across the 330 respondents, about (45.5%) percent of the teacher have only 1–3 years of teaching experience, they are newly appointed, having no background of the teaching field. Secondly, the concern raised by the teachers is refreshing trainings to make them equipped with modern teaching techniques and methods. The concern highlighted when they were asked about What do you think are the three biggest barriers to effective Arabic education in Sindh? The comments of teachers show the unavailability of training to match their skills and abilities to modern instructional methods and digital literacy. This concern can be rectified by the conduct of continuous professional development workshops for the teachers or appointing the teachers having digital teaching skills besides language skills.

2. Curriculum and Textbooks to know the clarity, relevance, sufficiency of practice, and suggestions for improvement of the available textbooks. As per the protocols, the government of Sindh is responsible for the provision of the free textbooks to the learners each year, as per the policy the government distributes free textbooks to public schools. (Education & Literacy Department, 2014, p. 14) Schools principals discussed the issues of late arrival of the textbooks, which is making hurdles in the teaching process of all subjects besides Arabic books. These books are being prepared under the supervision of learned professors and experts of the field under the umbrella of the Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro.

   The Survey's portion related to the curriculum and textbooks explored that the textbooks are very clear and useful for the teaching of Arabic Language at this stage. Around 31.8% of the population indicated their disagreement by indicating few issues can addressed in upcoming editions with focus on specific skills i.e., speaking and listening. While the appropriateness of the provided examples, exercises and activities, the majority of (50%) view that the material is enough to deliver the objectives of the lessons. About the presentation of the topics and their quality to grab the interest of the learners, majority of the teachers (36.36%) agree or strongly agree (18.18) with the stance. Qualitative portion of this section indicates that the books should align with the needs of current era in terms of topics, methods, and techniques. Also, a major concern raised by the teachers is the Arabic books are heavily loaded with difficult Arabic words this can be achieved either by including common words used in three languages; Arabic, Urdu & Sindh, or it can be resolved through adding prerequisites for grade 6 Arabic language and including Arabic language at Grade 4-5. As the grade 6 books do not consider the learners as beginners (see first lessons of Grade 6), but the books seem to be prepared for the intermediate level students who have strong background of Arabic and its basic A1 level vocabulary.

3. Adopted Methods and Available Resources to describe the applied teaching approaches, class allocation, use of digital aids, and teacher training. As discussed in the analysis of the curriculum that the textbooks are indicating towards the major teaching methods. As per the survey's data (45%) of the teachers at the schools of Sindh commonly teach translation methods while (23%) are using grammar-based instruction. While rote memorization method is being used by (13%) of the teachers at their classrooms. It is reality that the teaching methods can change the learning process but in today's digital world a lot of digital tools and gadgets are available to support the learning process. Research proved that the languages can be learned

through these modern tools more effectively. (Khan et al., 2021) & (Anwar et al., 2025). The survey showed poor use of digital tools as 59.1 of teachers never use any digital tool in their classrooms while 13.6% are using digital aids occasionally or monthly. A low integration of modern resources highlights gaps in training, resources, and accessibility. The traditional teaching resources may easily be converted into technological or communicative input through available sources, i.e. mobile phones of the teachers or their laptops. And by the government of Sindh conducting training of the teacher for using technology in the classroom.

4. Teaching Challenges to explore way forward to counter the difficulties faced by teachers and barriers at different domains. Question no. 14 is related to the challenges faced by the teachers in the teaching process, which is qualitative mode. Here few of them are related to the environment and sources available in the classroom, while others are related to the curriculum, interest of students, nature of the subject (as it is not compulsory at upper grades i.e. 9-10) and its impact on seriousness of the learner. There is a perception in the minds of the learner about the Arabic Language, they consider it as purely religious subject although it is a language of communication. Transforming the learners' mind from this perception is a big challenge for the teachers and the administrators. Besides this, the Arabic classes are being conducted in majority of the schools once a week while other subjects are being taught at least twice or thrice a week. This can be concluded that a learner is spending maximum 42 hours in a year with Arabic at government schools. The time spent with a language is considered as major factor for learning a second language, at least for a Sindhi or Urdu origin there should be 4-5 classes per week ideally. The survey shows that 41% of schools conduct only one class a week, which is less than enough for a teacher to transform and teach the second language at this age level of the learner. This challenge is faced by the schools due to a smaller number of educators of Arabic Language as per demand and requirement of the classroom. Where as the situation is worse in girls schools where the number of female teachers is vere low where 3020 teachers are available for the teaching of this course. (Government of Sindh, Sindh Education & Literacy Department, 2024, pp. 43–193). Shortage of female teachers were highlighted by Institute of Business Administration Sukkur in different reports.(Education & Literacy Department, 2014, pp. 110–111)

5. Outcomes discussed through information collected about motivation, skill difficulties, exam performance, and application of Arabic in daily life. Survey results show continuous outcomes on learning results, from various angles. As per the exam performance, only 18% of teachers rated the students' exam performance as positive, while disagreement was expressed by 50% of the respondents. It indicates low achievement levels in the skills of Arabic Languages and issues at the learning and learners ends. Assessment of outcomes is itself a challenge in the schools as reported by the government documents that: "Assessment of learning is not systematic, and formative assessment needs to be introduced in schools.". (Education & Literacy Department, 2014, pp. 110–111). The teachers are also facing issues in grammar and pronunciation skills while according to the survey students are not properly gaining speaking and listening skills. So, the outcomes are comparatively low in the schools of Sindh in respect of Arabic Language Learning.

CONCUSION

The Arabic Language is not being taught as a formal subject at the primary level, which is providing week foundation for learning in upper Grades 6-8. Textbooks of grades 6–8, are considered as content-heavy and focused on rote memorization whereas focus on the functional comprehension may give better results. A major population of educators (45%) have less than three years of experience and limited exposure to teaching methods of today's world. This situation requires refresher training and workshops. Grammar translation method adopted in 45% of classrooms followed by traditional memorization method. Whereas 60% of teachers are not using any digital aid in the digitalized era. Technology-assisted methods and interactive teaching adoption may increase outcomes. Arabic is allocated minimum class time (once a week). Shortage of qualified teachers—especially female instructors—further restricts access and learning quality. Only 18% of teachers pointed out students' exam performance positively. Learners show weak proficiency in different language skills, i.e., pronunciation, listening, and speaking skills, reflecting a system overly focused on reading and memorization.

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