

# English Language Competency of Qawmi Madrasa Students of Bangladesh



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English Language Competency of Qawmi Madrasa Students of Bangladesh

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## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature is stylized, with a large 'M' and 'R' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.



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Ismat Murshid Khan

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### **Dedication**

To those boys who lost their childhood

### **Acknowledgement**

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## **List of Acronyms**

|                            |                                                    |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>PSC</b>                 | <b>Primary School Certificate</b>                  |
| <b>JSC</b>                 | <b>Junior School Certificate</b>                   |
| <b>SSC</b>                 | <b>Secondary School Certificate</b>                |
| <b>HSC</b>                 | <b>Higher Secondary School Certificate</b>         |
| <b>FLCAS</b>               | <b>Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale</b>    |
| <b>BMEB</b>                | <b>Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board</b>          |
| <b>ACTFL<br/>Languages</b> | <b>American Council on the Teaching of Foreign</b> |
| <b>MOE</b>                 | <b>Ministry of Education</b>                       |
| <b>MPO</b>                 | <b>Monthly Pay Order</b>                           |
| <b>GTM</b>                 | <b>Grammar Translation Method</b>                  |
| <b>CLT</b>                 | <b>Communicative Language Teaching</b>             |
| <b>NCTB</b>                | <b>National Curriculum and Textbook Board</b>      |

## **Abstract**

The focus of this research work is a comparison of the linguistic competency of the Qawmi Students in accordance with their counterparts, the Alia Madrasa students and the students from Public and Private Schools. In this piece of research, the researcher has attempted to identify whether the English language competency of the students of Qawmi Madrasas are equal to their counterparts from Alia Madrasa and General Schools, if not what is or are the reasons behind and what could be the probable solution to that incompetency. In a mixed approach, including both Qualitative and Quantitative Data, the researcher has tried to find out the probable causes of the English Language incompetency of Qawmi students. The settings of this work are very specific and the sphere is also limited, which is the Qawmi Madrasa scenario. As participants the researcher has picked up a Government funded Alia Madrasa, two Qawmi Madrasa and a Madrasa for females only and two public schools. Apparent impressions from this research work include, firstly; Government, Civil Society and Elite Class should change their point of view towards Qawmi Education, secondly, there should be leniency in secularization of Madrasa Education and finally, prioritizing a certain degree as Master's equivalent won't be sufficient but there are other scopes for development of Qawmi Madrasa sector.

**Keywords: English Language Competency, Qawmi Madrasa, Alia Madrasa, Government, Curriculum, Method, Competency, Proficiency**

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1: Background of the Study**

The focus of this study is to find out the English Language competency of the Qawmi Madrasa Students of Bangladesh. The term ‘Madrasa’ directly refers The Government of Bangladesh very recently has given positive recognition to Madrasa studies, by accepting its ‘Dawra e Hadith’ degree as a Master’s Degree equivalent. This recognition by the Government of Bangladesh took place in 2017, which means, only 5 years have passed. In order to see the actual impact of this Government decision, we need more time to see whether this decision becomes fruitful or not. So in order to find the efficacy of this decision, a long way has yet to be passed. The most striking point coming up from this research study is that, Qawmi Madrasa Students of Bangladesh study English till class 8 only, although the curriculum remains same till that level with their Alia Madrasa & rest of the School of General Education counterparts. But the efficacy of a Qawmi Student remains that of a Class 8 level when he is going to compete in the Job Sector with his competitors from Alia Madrasa or Vocational School or Public School Background. After class 8, up to the Master’s equivalent level, named Dawra-e-Hadith, Qawmi Madrasas only teach the religious subjects, for example, the Holy Quran, Arabic grammar and syntax, the Hadith, Quran commentary, rhetoric, Urdu, Farsi, and Islamic law and jurisprudence. Their primary and a substantial focus is on studying the life of the Prophet (pbuh), also they discuss the history of Islamic life, and Islamic rules and advice. The tendency of the overall madrasa education system is conservative. In the due process, rote learning plays an important part, and there is a normative tendency in the transmission of knowledge. After passing class 8, Qawmi madrasas do not teach secular subjects like English, but in Alia madrasa and public school, students get to learn English up to their graduation till class 12.

Qawmi madrasas teach their students mainly focusing on conventional grammar through the Grammar Translation method, while communicative grammar and literature are taught in public schools. In order to ensure language competency of the Qawmi students, the Qawmi madrasas need to follow the same courses and syllabus at least up to class 12. Since the colonial period, Madrasas have been the primary sources of knowledge, religious studies, political movements, social reform since the Muslim invasion of this subcontinent. Bangladesh, not being different from the rest of the subcontinent, has always been flooded with Madrasas and the culture has enriched the country itself. Initially, the madrasas of Bangladesh can be classified into 2 categories;

- Alia Madrasas

- Qawmi Madrasas (Barkat et al., 2011, p.36; Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2016, p.57)

In 1780, The then British Government established the Alia Madrasa Education Board and from then, Madrasa Education started formally. The concept of Alia Madrasa by the Britishers was the implementation of their colonial ruling over a major theological powerhouse. On that dawn, Qawmi Madrasa came into the scene. Qawmi Madrasas were enacted based on the strict adherence of Darul Uloom Deoband Model in the 19th century. So the history of Qawmi Madrasas is more ancient than that of Bangladesh herself. Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board does not monitor or supervise all these Qawmi Madrasas. Qawmi madrasas in Bangladesh are supported almost exclusively by donations, mostly from abroad by rich Arabian countries and by the sympathy of fellow Muslims as private charitable organizations. In the past, unlike the official degrees conferred by Alia Madrasas, the Qawmi madrasa degrees used to lack official recognition by the state or government. In recent times, starting in 2006, the Bangladeshi

government started to recognize some Qawmi degrees, two years after the founding of the privately run 'Befaul Mudarressin' or 'Wafaq Ul Mudarressin' education board for Qawmi madrasas. The biggest achievement in regard to recognition is, accepting 'Dawra e Hadith' as Master's equivalent.

## **1.2: Classification of the sectors of education in Bangladesh**

Apparently, Government of Bangladesh is operating the system of Education through two ministries, firstly, under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education the affairs of educational institutions up to class 5 or grade 5; secondly, Ministry of Education which controls all other affairs of education which is related to the fifth grade and above till Higher Secondary Level. Both these ministries however operate through three streams, which are; Bengali Medium, English Medium and Madrasa Stream or Arabic dominated stream of Education. Among these three streams, Bengali Medium being the most traditional and most widespread medium, follows the curriculum assigned by the Ministry of Education and for certification, requires its students to sit for examinations like, PSC, JSC, SSC and HSC. English medium institutions on the other hand mostly follow the curriculum assigned by Cambridge or Oxford and for certification require their students to sit for O-Levels and A-Levels examinations. Now there are arguments regarding the discrimination of the degrees provided by these two streams. Even though, O and A levels are equivalent to the SSC and HSC certificates, many job requirements consider A levels equivalent to 3 or 4 years Bachelor degree in Bangladesh. However, this research concerns the third stream, Madrasa, which literally means 'School for Islamic Studies'. According to Emad (2009), in 10th Century, the first ever Madrasa were built in Iran under the Sallarid Dynasty and soon the concept was traveled to West Africa and Spain and soon spread throughout

the rest of the Muslim world. In the subcontinent, till the British Era, Madrasa have been the center for Islamic thoughts, ideas, lifestyle and political movements.

In the chart provided by Haolader(2011) given below, there is a demonstration of the current streams of Bangladesh education specifying the degrees provided by the Madrasa along with their equivalence of their counterparts.

| THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BANGLADESH |       |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------|-----------|
| Age                                             | Grade |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 26+                                             |       |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 25+                                             | XX    |                         |                            |       |                 | Ph. D(Engr) |                                    | Ph.D(Medical) |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 24+                                             | XIX   |                         |                            | Ph. D | PostMBBS Dipl   |             |                                    |               |                                   |                | Ph. D (Education)             |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 23+                                             | XVIII |                         | M.Phil                     |       | M.Phil(Medical) |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 22+                                             | XVII  | MA/ MSc/ MCom/ MSS/ MBA |                            |       | LLM             | M B B S BDS | MSc(Engr)                          | MSc.(Agr)     |                                   |                | MBA                           | M.Ed & M A(Edn)     | MFA                | MA(LSc)         |       |           |
| 21+                                             | XVI   | Bachelor (Hons)         | Masters (Prel)             |       | LLB(Hons)       |             | BSc.Eng BSc.Agr BSc.Text BSc.Leath |               | BSc.Eng                           | BSc (Tech.Edn) | BBA                           | B.Ed Dip.Ed & BP ED |                    | Dip.(LSc)       | Kami  |           |
| 20+                                             | XV    |                         | Bachelor                   |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 19+                                             | XIV   |                         | ( Pass)                    |       |                 |             |                                    |               | Diploma (Engineering).            |                |                               |                     |                    |                 | Fazil |           |
| 18+                                             | XIII  |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     | Diploma in Nursing |                 |       |           |
| 17+                                             | XII   | Secondary               | Examination                |       |                 |             | HSC                                |               |                                   |                | HSC Voc, C in Ag              | C in Edu.           | Pre-Degree BFA     | Diploma in Comm | Alim  |           |
| 16+                                             | XI    |                         | HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| e15+                                            | X     |                         | Examination                |       |                 |             | SSC                                |               | TRADE Certificate/ SSC Vocational |                | ARTI SAN COURSE e.g. CERAMICS |                     |                    |                 |       | Dakhil    |
| 14+                                             | IX    |                         | SECONDARY EDUCATION        |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 13+                                             | VIII  |                         | JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 12+                                             | VII   |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 11+                                             | VI    |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 10+                                             | V     |                         | PRIMARY EDUCATION          |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       | Ebtedayee |
| 9+                                              | IV    |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 8+                                              | III   |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 7+                                              | II    |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 6+                                              | I     |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 5+                                              |       | PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION   |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 4+                                              |       |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |
| 3+                                              |       |                         |                            |       |                 |             |                                    |               |                                   |                |                               |                     |                    |                 |       |           |

**Table 1: Equivalence of Madrasa and General stream of Education. (Haolader,2011)**

### **1.3: Classification of Qawmi Madrasa**

There are two major streams of Qawmi educational systems. They too have been classified according to their acceptance and implementation of modern subjects into their curriculum. Firstly, the Dars-i-Nizami, which is the Traditional and orthodox school among the Qawmis. Secondly, the Nizami school, which has accepted and included 'English Language and Mathematics' to some extent into their curriculum. The Dars-i-Nizami system originated from the Naqshbandiya, Deoband School of Thoughts in the early eighteenth century, in Deoband, India. There are some controversies regarding movements of the Nizami or "Reformed System". The Nizami system with some calling this movement an 'anti-Islamic' conspiracy, accusing that these is a means to secularize madrasas and rob them of their Islamic identity". Though the followers of the Nizami School claim that they are not conspiring by secularization. In fact, they claim that they do not want secularization at all even though they are operating under a secular government which is in conflict with their political identity according to Sharia Law. Usually without differentiating students by progressive grade levels, Qawmi Primary levels last for six years. Imposing class graduated terminology on the Qawmi system might not make sense since there is no specific order or time sequence in the Qawmi system by which subjects are taught unlike the grade based systems. The Madrasa system, just like any other institution in Bangladesh, is influenced by its cultural and socio-political dynamics interactively and also controls the factors by which it is influenced. This influence of Madrasa system by the introduction of Islam on the Indian Sub-continent during the British colonization and its developments significantly shaped aspects of Bengali identity, with its Islamic, as well as Hindu, Bengali, and Western elements. The Madrasa system has always been connected to the Islamic aspects of the Bangladeshi identity. But the problem arose, since this connection became

synonymous with anti-westernization, and later that turned to pro-Pakistani tendencies. This sector of the madrasa system has always been neglected by the government and the elite class of the society which led to its backwardness in accordance with the modern education system leading to a strong influence on the negative views of the educated middle class and elites of Bangladesh. Educated middle and Elite class society adopted that view, and they still believe that the Qawmi Madrasa system is a comparatively backward one, and that it must be replaced by the modern educational system (Abdalla et al., 2004). The main concern of this research is the Qawmi Madrasa, which is a non-governmental educational institution and private system of madrasa education. The Qawmi madrasas provide religious education and the study of languages mainly Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi, in addition to some limited study of arithmetic and social science and very limited Bangla grammar and selected Bangla literature. These types of religious institutions under the banner of the Qawmi Madrasa are growing continuously under community patronage, mainly. Currently they are estimated to be about 8000 in number. These mushroom institutions have little or no connection with the government and they usually follow the guidelines of independent Islamic educational institutions in Bangladesh and in other Muslim countries (Abdalla et al., 2004). There are two types of pre-primary Madrasa education: the Furkania(Hafizia) and the Nourani(Maktab). The Furqania(Hafizia)Madrasa focuses on pre-primary education where students learn the basic knowledge of Islam and memorize the holy Quran. Students start their studies, and also usually reside, inside these institutions. Students tend to complete their studies within three to five years, after which they may proceed to Ibtidai or primary general education (Abdalla et al., 2004). Maktab(Nourani) Madrasas also focus on pre-primary to primary level education where students learn the basic knowledge of Islam and the Holy Quran. This type of madrasa is usually attached to a mosque; it teaches the students basic

knowledge of religion at free of cost, for most of the part. Usually this type of pre-primary Madrasas is not residential; it is a before- and after-school program. Students come to the Maktab(Nourani) two times every day; once from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., and again for two more hours in the afternoon (Abdalla et al., 2004,). Qawmi educational practices originate from the traditional Muslim educational system of Bangladesh (Hasan, 2009,) During the British Colonial Period, Qawmi madrasas were called "Khariji," or outside of the government. (Abdalla et al., 2004,) (Must not be confused with the 'Khaareji's or the 'Outcasts' of Islam). Later, the term "Qawmi" emerged from the word "qom" (meaning "the public")—originating from the fact that Qawmi madrasas reject state funding and instead rely on donations from the public (Bano, 2007,). In 1978, a government body called the "Non-government Education Board" was established in an attempt to coordinate these madrasas, of which 2,043 registered with that board by 1998 (Siddiqi et al., 2021). By the later part of the 20th century there was a major largely unregulated growth in the whole madrasa sector, which expanded from roughly 4,100 schools in 1986 to potentially as many as 64,000 schools by 2005 (Ahmed, 2011,) In 2004, many Qawmi madrasas began organizing together under an umbrella organization called the Befaql Mudarressin (Wafaq ul Madaris) of Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasah Education Board, Dhaka, including seven smaller private Madrasa education boards. The movement was an extension of the process which formed the Wafaq ul Madaris Al-Arabia, Pakistan in 1957. The board was founded to assure a standardized curriculum and to provide centralized examination. Membership with the board was voluntary, though required for degree accreditation by the Befaql Mudarressin. The board organized under a three-tiered representative system led by an executive body. The second tier committee comprises senior madrasas, followed by a third tier consisting of ordinary member schools.

#### 1.4: Alia Madrasa

Alia Madrasas are the Government funded and monitored version of Madrasa education system. Starting from the British Era, these madrasas have been serving the purpose of Islamic studies as well as fulfilling the requirements of modern education. According to Al Hasani et al (2017), Alia Madrasas in Bangladesh are controlled through BMEB (Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board) by the MOE (Ministry of Education). An apparent number of the Alia madrasa in Bangladesh is shown below by a list of classification provided by Amin (2013);

| Level        | Analogue/Equivalence | Number of Schools |
|--------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Kamil        | Master's             | 200               |
| Fazil        | Bachelors            | 1256              |
| Alim         | Higher Secondary     | 2799              |
| Dakhil       | Secondary            | 9322              |
| Ibtedai      | Primary              | 6869              |
| <b>Total</b> |                      | 20446             |

**Table 2: Number of Alia Madrasa in Bangladesh (Amin,2013)**

Now a glimpse of the approximate number of Qawmi Madrasas in Bangladesh in the below

Table; which has been classified according to their level:

| Level            | Analogue/Equivalence        | Number of Schools |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Takmil           | Master's                    | 300               |
| Fazilat          | Bachelors                   | 200               |
| Sanaria Ammah    | Secondary                   | 1000              |
| Mutawassitah     | Lower Secondary             | 2000              |
| Ibtedai          | Primary                     | 3000              |
| Tahfeez Ul Quran | Preprimary & Quran Learning | 2000              |

**Table 3: Number of Qawmi Madrasa in Bangladesh**

Though the exact number is unknown, since Qawmi Madrasas aren't in the government radar

And they too don't keep any track record of their own, these are the approximate numbers

Provided by BEFAQ or Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasa Education Board. As from the above tables, it can be seen that there are similarities between the levels of Qawmi and Alia madrasa in Bangladesh. The main difference here is, most of the Alia Madrasas are government owned and also under MPO (Monthly Pay Order). So the government has access to their curriculum and administration. So, just like general education based public schools, Alia Madrasa Primary and Pre Primary levels are governed by the Primary Education Board and the rest of their levels are governed by BMEB (Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board). According to Riaz (2010), the Madrasa, as an educational institution and also as a concept, has crossed a long way; so its outlines and subjects have gone through many changes; but, it has remained embedded within society as a whole as an institute mostly. Until the late 80's, mosques and Madrasas used to be the primary sources of employment for students graduating from madrasa and other forms of

religious schools. Varieties of secular subjects, such as English, Bangla, Science, and Mathematics, alongside topics related to religion and languages in the syllabus of religious schools, were gradually introduced by the Modernization Scheme of 1980 particularly in the Alia Madrasas. According to Asadullah & Chowdhury(2010), by introducing the English language in 2012 in their curriculum, Qawmi Madrasas began the process of secularization. Then again, particularly in the Bangladesh scenario; according to M. M. Rahman & Pandian (2018); there was no specific and defined language policy and this vagueness adversely affected overall English Language Learning and Teaching. Azam and Kusakabe identified the problem as, during the post liberation decades, there was neglect of English teaching which ultimately led to a severe shortage of English teachers across the country, and this has been the chief and most crucial obstacle for the overall improvement of the English teaching situation (Azam & Kusakabe, 2018). M. Obaidul Hamid identified another problem which is related to resources and stated that, Bangladesh has been one of the lowest in the world, according to the allocation of the resources (Hamid et al., 2009).To specify the very reason of this research that would be; whether there is any linguistic competency of the Qawmi Madrasa Students of Bangladesh? If there is any, what is their competency level? In the later part of this work, the researcher tried to find the answers to these questions.

### **1.5: Problem Statement**

As of the reports of 2006, there were approximately 15,000 registered Qawmi madrasas in Bangladesh. These madrasas had 200,000 faculties teaching around 4 million students. Since Qawmi madrasas do not keep enrollment records, actual figures cannot be accurately counted. Scholars have argued that if all the unregistered Qawmi madrasas were counted then it could show a total number of Bangladeshi madrasa combined as high as 64,000, which means that

Qawmi madrasas easily outnumber their official counterparts Alia Madrasa. After 1971, some Qawmi madrasas started to modernize their teaching. They switched the language of instruction from Urdu to Bengali and added some lessons of Mathematics and English Language. In 1978, a government body was established in an attempt to monitor these madrasahs, named 'Non-Government Education Board'. By 1998, in 20 years only 2043 Madrasas registered with that board. The Befaul Mudarressin of Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasah Education Board was formed in 2004. Due to socio-political reasons, very soon after the enactment, from August 2006, Government of Bangladesh started supporting Qawmi stream of Education through recognizing the 'Dawra Degree' of Qawmi stream in equivalence to a Master's degree in Arabic Literature or Islamic Studies.

The term 'method' has been playing an important role in this research. Mainly, the difference between the Qawmi education system and the rest of the systems are the certain 'methods' adopted by the systems. Richards and Rodgers (1982), have stated the term 'method' as a cover term for all types of language teaching from theoretical implication to practical scenario. So that means, every method has articulated theoretical orientations, collection strategies and learning activities which help to reach goals and achieve learning outcomes. In Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasas, the traditional Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is followed just like traditional Bengali medium schools where the students are expected to memorize grammatical rules and translations of selected texts and rewrite them in the examination (Ruman and Bhuiyan, 2015). Richard and Schimdt (2002,p.231) further explains that," Grammar Translation Method is a method of foreign language teaching which makes use of translation and grammar study as the main teaching and learning activities." Since Qawmi Madrasas along with other institutes of Alia Madrasa and most of the public Bangla medium schools follow this method through translation

into and from the target language, they use the mother tongue as medium of instruction. Richards and Rodgers (2001) say that, in the Grammar Translation Method, speaking and listening skills are mostly ignored since reading and writing skills are the main focus. On that note, it is very possible that Qawmi students lack major skills in English proficiency since they don't get the opportunity to learn and hone those skills in their institutions. According to Anzar (2003), Bangladeshi Madrasas have been operating on their own even before and after the liberation, without any government monitoring. Even there was no central body for controlling and taking care of these institutions. After the classification of Madrasa into Qawmi and Alia, and after forming BMEB, Alia madrasa started serving their purpose of Islamic education and modern education, in a parallel way. But, Qawmi madrasas, according to Al-Hasani et al. (2017); provide poor quality of education since they are not well organized and they are mostly focused on their religious beliefs and ideologies. This education system isn't compatible with the needs of the modern world. There was constant pressure on the Qawmi system to change their education system according to the needs of the modern world or at least adopt some of the proposed government curriculum. Due to political reasons, Qawmi Madrasas of Bangladesh which came under their umbrella organization, Befaul Mudarresin, started to provide English in their curriculum, but that too only till class 8 or Mutawassitah level (Begum, 2017). Problems arise when these Qawmi students go for higher education. They have to compete not only with Alia students but also with Bangla Medium and English Medium students as well. So Qawmi students lack their skills in English, since they do not learn it after class 8 or Mutawassitah Level. Not only do they lack the necessary English language skill, but at the cost of unemployment. A large number of Madrasa students, specifically Qawmi students remaining unemployed after graduation is often blamed on their poor English Language skills (Three of Four madrasa

students remain jobless, 2018). Hence, this research topic, ‘English language competency of Qawmi Madrasa students of Bangladesh’ was perceived to find out the factors behind English language incompetency of the Qawmi students and to suggest probable solutions.

To perform this research work, the researcher has gone through a certain number of scholarly articles from respective journals and books, but unfortunately, there was no article and research work found specifically on Qawmi madrasa students and their English Language competency.

The researcher has observed theoretical debates and conflicts regarding linguistic inefficacy of the madrasa students as a whole, but not specifically Qawmi madrasa students. The researcher here tried first to show a comparison between the English Language proficiency of the Qawmi Madrasa students in accordance with Alia Madrasa Students and Public School students.

Secondly, the researcher tried to identify the reasons behind inefficiency of Qawmi students than their Alia and Public school counterparts. This research work addresses certain aspects. Firstly, the problem regarding the inefficiency of Qawmi students in English language, secondly, this very issue which was not addressed by any researchers before. There are certain research works on English Language Proficiency of Madrasa students, even the Alia students; but specifically Qawmi students were not focused or addressed before. The researcher has addressed this issue specifically in this research work and also tried to bring out probable solutions through this research.

## **1.6: Purpose of the Study**

This research work attempts to find out the English proficiency of the Qawmi Madrasa students of Bangladesh. The researcher has tried to find out the answer to the research questions in a mixed approach, which included both Qualitative Question and Answer Sessions, Group Discussions and Quantitative questionnaires. All these questionnaires were performed in a friendly and approachable way so that subjects including both teachers and students feel comfortable to share their thoughts and experiences through attending question-answer sessions and students' group discussion (SGD). The purposes of this study on English Language Competency of the Qawmi Madrasa students are;

- To find out the linguistic proficiency of the Qawmi students
- To identify factors that impeded the students from being proficient in English language in accordance to their Alia and Public school counterparts
- To suggest probable solutions to the impediments which obstruct the Qawmi students from achieving proficiency in English language
- To identify the factors that impeded the Qawmi students to go for higher studies
- To discuss, whether giving Dawra e Hadith degree the equivalence of a Master's degree is the probable solution to the impediments Qawmi students face in approaching higher studies

### **1.7: Research Questions**

The researcher has prepared some questions based on which the research was performed.

According to the subject, the research questions have also been classified. The research questions are;

- What do you think about your students' English Language proficiency?
- Do you think, Qawmi students' English language proficiency is equal to Alia Madrasa students and Public School students? If not, what are the obstacles that impeded their proficiency?
- What could be the solution to the impediments Qawmi Madrasas face in Bangladesh?

These above mentioned research questions were an attempt to find out the purpose of the study of this very research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research has been extracted from Noam Chomsky's 'Aspects of the theory of Syntax (1965)' where he fundamentally distinguished between competence and performance. Here, competence means; the speaker hearer's knowledge of the language, and performance means, the speaker hearer's use of that linguistic knowledge in a concrete situation. Here in this research, the researcher has tried to find out the English Language competency of the Qawmi students. Even though Chomsky (1965) has distinguished the terms competence and performance, Chomsky's view is not supported by many scholars. According to Chomsky's theory, only in idealized conditions 'linguistic competence' functions properly denoting that native speakers of any particular language would not be able to notice grammatical mistakes irrespective of obstacles of memory, emotion, distraction and probable other factors. William Labov criticized this Chomskian point of view in an article;" *It is now evident to many linguists that the primary purpose of the performance or competence distinction is there to help the linguist to exclude data he finds inconvenient to handle.*" Labov further adds that, "*If performance involves limitation of memory, articulation and attention, then entire English Grammar would be considered a matter of performance.*" This theoretical framework will introduce probable other theories explaining the existence of this research problem.

## 2.2: Definition of Competency

As already mentioned above, many critics have argued that Chomsky's distinction of Performance and Competence is itself a linguistic tautology which actually makes this linguistic concept difficult to explain since these two terms are inextricably linked to each other.

According to Eva M. Fernandez and Helen Smith Cairns in 'Fundamentals of Psycholinguistics (Willey-Blackwell,2011)', "*Linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of language which is tacit and implicit meaning that people do not have conscious access to the rules and principles governing the combination of sounds, words and sentences.*" They further added, "*For example, when a person judges that the sentence 'John said that Jane helped himself' is ungrammatical, it is because the person has tacit knowledge of grammatical principle which states that reflexive pronouns must refer to a Noun Phrase in the same clause.*" According to Kristin Denham and Anne Lobeck in 'Linguistics for Everyone (Wadsworth, 2010)', "In Chomsky's theory, our unconscious knowledge of language is similar to that of Ferdinand De Saussure's concept of language, the organizing principles of language. Saussure's 'Parole' is similar to our production of utterances which can be defined as 'Linguistic Performance'. The difference between linguistic competence and linguistic performance can be illustrated by slips of the tongue, such as 'Noble tons of soil' for 'noble sons of toil'. Uttering such a slip does not mean that we don't know English rather that we have simply made a mistake because we were tired, distracted or whatever. Such errors also are not evidence that you are a poor English speaker or that you do not know English as someone else does. It means that linguistic performance is different from linguistic competence. When we say that someone is a better speaker than someone else, that judgment tells about performance not competence. For example, Martin Luther King junior was a terrific orator. Native speakers of a language, whether they are famous public speakers or not,

do not know the language any better than any other speaker in terms of linguistic competence.”

According to Michael B. Kac in ‘Grammars and Grammaticality(John Benjamins,1992)’,*”Two language users may have the same program for carrying out specific tasks of production and recognition but that might differ in their ability to apply it because of exogenous factors such as short term memory capacity. The two are accordingly equally language competent but not necessarily equally adept at making their use of their competence.”* Michael B. Kac further

stated in ‘Grammars and Grammaticality (John Benjamins, 1992)’,*”The linguistic competence of a human being should accordingly be identified with that individual’s internalized program for production and recognition. While many linguists would identify the study of this program with the study of performance rather than competence, it should be noted that this identification is mistaken since we have deliberately abstracted away from any consideration of what happens when a language user actually attempts to put the program to use. A major goal of the psychology of language is to construct a viable hypothesis as to the structure of the program.”*Nordquist, Richard. (2020, August 26). Linguistic Competence: Definition and Examples. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-linguistic-competence-1691123>

Jack S. Damico however gave a different point of view about Linguistic Competence. He purposely avoided the Chomsky’s terminology of Competence Versus Performance as it was intended for a not for real speaker but for an intended one. According to Jack S. Damico,” The measurement of one’s linguistic proficiency is not an easy task. Given the influence of context and intentions on the actual manifested proficiency of a speaker, one set of tests or observations does not effectively provide data to make such claims. It was Jim Cummins among others who made this point when he was trying to discuss why one could not use a specific test instrument or a focus on a particular task or context to make a blanket statement about one’s proficiency. This

is where his BICS Vs. CALP distinction was first employed. Unfortunately, too many people picked up on this dichotomous distinction and not on the main point which was that if you want to see how effective one is in a particular situation, you have to look at their performance in that setting or context. There are simply too many variables that impact proficiency to be able to make a blanket statement (for example, context, intention, affect, experience etc.). That said, I look at one's proficiency in a real task by looking at actual performance in that context and asking questions which interest me (social, epistemological, academic). If I want to look at overall meaning making in the classroom, I look at how language is used in the context. For example; comprehending lectures, taking notes, entering into discussions, asking for clarification. I let the context and the needs of the setting dictate what one is looking for. If I want to look at grammatical proficiency in conversation then I look at the effectiveness of the grammatical components the person uses during conversation and ask whether those were sufficient to accomplish the tasks at hand and communicate for a particular purpose. In these situations, I use authentic data via observation or via transcribed oral text. I wish it was easier but it is not. "According to Reza Biria of Shahid Ashrafi Esfahani University of Isfahan, Iran, "Collecting data on linguistic competence requires several considerations. Firstly, identification of the learners' characteristics, name, age, background. Secondly, deciding on the type of approach to identify linguistic competence either by norm referenced or criterion referenced testing method. And finally, increasing the validity of measurement by integrating both testing methods. In point of fact, one can initially administer a proficiency test and then engage the targeted participants in performing a mastery or non-mastery task such as an interview or composition writing."

All these definitions of different terms like ‘Method’, ‘Competency’, the difference between ‘competency’ and ‘proficiency’ have helped the researcher to classify and organize his contents and make questions according to the relatedness of the topic. Since the research topic is about finding the English language competency of the Qawmi madrasa students in accordance with Alia and Public school students, knowing and implementing these definitions have helped the researcher to find exactly what has been addressed in the research questions.

### **2.3: English Teaching in Madrasa**

Madrasas in Bangladesh traditionally do not focus on other subjects except Arabic, Farsi and Urdu. Hence, the linguistic proficiency in English is comparatively lesser than their Public School counterparts and that too is evident. However, it has to be expected that Alia Madrasa would show comparatively better proficiency in English practice. But Haque (2019) states that, “In Alia Madrasa, English Language education briefly focuses on English grammar and rote memorization for examination. This simultaneous process has made students of Alia Madrasa to just familiarize with English language education rather than actually learning it.”(Haque, 2019, p-09). The research question here can be easily raised as an argument, since Alia Madrasas are government controlled and also on MPO, if their situation is like this, then Qawmi’s scenario of English teaching is also presumable. Even when I went to visit the four madrasas of various schools, including orphanage, women only madrasa, qawmi and alia madrasa, I too saw in every class, students were busy in rote learning; irrespective of the subjects they were being taught.

Educational qualification of the faculties teaching in the madrasas is an alarming concern.

According to Golam and Kusakabe(2018), only 4% madrasa faculties have an M. Ed degree and 76% madrasa faculties never get any training in teaching English.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) published a report in 2018 stating that madrasa teachers are poorly trained in teaching English, irrespective of being Alia or Qawmi Faculty. The ADB (2018) report also suggests strict reforming in teaching policy of these madrasas as a solution. ADB (2018)'s report is based on another empirical study made by Hasan (2005) where he stated that madrasa teachers fail to make lessons interesting and for that reason, 59% madrasa students do not find any interest in learning English and also, 68% madrasa faculties themselves have admitted that they do not or cannot focus on all four skills of English teaching in the classroom. Moreover, 82% students from both urban and rural madrasas have complained that they do not get taught English properly in their classes (Hasan, 2005, as cited in Ruman and Bhuiyan, 2015). Beside all of these, a report shows that an alarming rate of madrasa students drop out every year, highest from the Dakhil level, mainly because of socio-economic reasons (People's Republic of Bangladesh: Capacity Development for Madrasa Education, 2018). As the research topic is about the English Language Proficiency of Qawmi Madrasa Students of Bangladesh, through proficiency, scholars especially mean the oral skill. But according to Islam and Shuchi (2012, p-35); "since the examination policy never asks the teacher to test learner's oral linguistic competence in public or terminal exams, they simply choose not to do it all. This practice leads the students to not being assessed properly, so when actual assessment occurs during any job interview, they tremble in fear. Hence this affects their self-confidence and motivation." Salma and Nehal (2017) stated that the education setup of Madrasas do not allow their students to speak at all during class lectures. Hence the classes are faculty oriented. Finally Islam and Shuchi (2012) states that, "*poor performance of madrasa students in English occurs because of speaking English is widely ignored in the classrooms beside poorly planned syllabus and poorly trained teachers and resource constraints.*" According to Al-Hasani, Ismail, Kazeem Kayode and Elegba

(2017) in their research, Qawmi Madrasa authorities do not want the Government to monitor their curriculum and also not to reform their curriculum system which could make the Qawmi graduates prepare according to the needs of global demand. The study of Al-hasani, Ismail, Kazeem Kayode and Elegu (2017) also shows that, Qawmi graduates are not allowed to join in the government or private job sectors because of their lack of skills in modern subjects and curriculum and also for absence of their current market based skills. In fact, the Qawmi Education system and curriculum is not suitable for admission tests in public universities of Bangladesh. Not only the deviance from English and modern curriculum, because of the Qawmi curriculum, which is not officially recognized; Qawmi students are disadvantaged in getting admission to public universities and also in securing jobs in the civil service. Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggested that, Foreign Language (FL) or Second Language (SL) is better learned through the target language itself. According to their suggestion, avoiding mother tongue might increase the effectiveness of learning the target language (TL) because of its maximum exposure. This view was supported by Stephen Krashen (1981) and Cook (2001), as they too suggested that use of Mother tongue actually obstructs the target language learning procedure. But in this scenario, Ruman and Bhuiyan (2015) discovered that Qawmi madrasa textbooks are designed on GT method and the faculties of these institutions teach their class in their mother tongue, not in the target language. Azam and Tatsuya (2020)'s investigation dug out a few improvement suggestions for Qawmi students to successfully apply for job after graduation, including; implementation of new technology for the students, teacher training program by establishing qawmi madrasa teaching college, development of classroom resources, implementation of authentic teaching materials into the qawmi classrooms and finally, extension of English language education up to graduation in Qawmi madrasas. Though the exact number is

unknown, since Qawmi Madrasas aren't in the government radar and they too don't keep any track record of their own, these are the approximate numbers provided by BEFAQ or Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasa Education Board. From this scenario it is evident that, Qawmi Madrasa sector in Bangladesh mostly focuses on primary education, maybe that's why the number of Ibtidai Schools is bigger than the rest of its counterparts? However this assumption can be varied because of the infrastructural and economical lacking they have. Now I would like to focus on the competency level of the Qawmi Madrasa students. As I've said earlier that, English; both as a subject and language is taught in Qawmi Madrasas till Class 8 only; so it is very much evident that in higher study scenario or in real life scenario, a student from Qawmi background is appearing with the competency level of a class 8 student, when his counterparts from Alia Madrasas or Public Schools have much more advanced knowledge and skill. Moreover, this 'class 8 level' competency is not actually a 'Typical class 8 level competency according to this table below, provided by Golam, Azam Md; Kusakabe, Tatsuya (2020) which is known as; 'English Curricula of Qawmi Madrasas, Alia Madrasas and Public School';

| <b>Qawmi Madrasa</b>             | <b>Alia Madrasa</b>                    | <b>Public School</b>                    |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Word Meaning                     | Comprehension                          | Comprehension                           |
| Sentence Making                  | Filling the gaps with meaningful words | Filling the gaps with appropriate words |
| Filling the gaps using the words | Completing the table with W/H question | Completing the table                    |
| Comprehension                    | Answering True/False statements        | Answering True/False statements         |

|                                         |                                                                    |                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Poetry                                  | Filling the gaps using clues                                       | Filling the gaps using clues                                       |
| Paragraph Writing                       | Matching                                                           | Matching                                                           |
| Filling the gaps with appropriate words | Filling the gaps with relevant articles                            | Filling the gaps with appropriate articles                         |
| Letter Writing                          | Adding suitable suffix, prefix or both by following the root words | Adding suitable suffix, prefix or both by following the root words |
| Comprehension                           | Changing sentences as directed                                     | Changing sentences in direct speech                                |
|                                         | Using punctuation marks and capital letters                        | Using punctuation marks and capital letters                        |
|                                         | Writing a dialogue                                                 | Writing a dialogue                                                 |
|                                         | Writing an email                                                   | Writing an email                                                   |
|                                         | Writing a paragraph and addressing the questions                   | Writing a paragraph and addressing the questions                   |

**Table 4: English Curricula of Qawmi Madrasas, Alia Madrasas and Public School at Grade 8**

If we take a closer look at the table above, we'll be able to see that, after stage 9; which is in the Comprehension stage, Qawmi Madrasa students don't get to learn further items which are the use of punctuation marks, writing email, paragraph addressing questions etc. Moreover, a comparison on the same stage among Qawmi, Alia & public School students shows that, while Qawmi madrasa students start learning Comprehensive question types in 4th stage, their counterparts Alia & Public School students start learning them in stage 1. Another striking difference is in between the contents. When Alia and Public School Students are learning

communicative English, Qawmi students are relying on the ancient Grammar Translation Method and specifically, the Rote Learning Study method. Although, the Rote learning method is effective and essential for Madrasa students as a whole, since they are accustomed to memorize Quranic verses, hadith, Sihah sittah and Shariah Legal terminologies. But whether this Rote Learning Method is effective for them while learning English? Linguistically, the answer is, No. Rote learning has already been thrown away in the Wastebasket long ago. As the researcher has picked up the huge difference between Qawmi Madrasa education of English with its Alia and Public School counterparts, let's take a look at the slightly huge differences between the two counterparts as well. Although the differences are not that much noticeable, and those differences don't actually create any long term impact in the overall scenario of the students of these two absolutely different types of learning. From the table 'English Curricula of Qawmi Madrasas, Alia Madrasas and Public School', it can be seen that almost all the stages have similarities. However, the differences are actually in the teaching, in the case of Bangladesh. English has been studied as in all the schools of Bangladesh since the preliminary stage without being announced as the second state language. Except the provided guidelines by NCTB till the Higher Secondary level, there is no hard and fast set of rules and regulation of teaching and learning English as a language as well as a subject. So, there is a massive level of discrimination in teaching and learning English.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The settings of this work are very specific and the sphere is also limited, which is the Qawmi Madrasa Scenario. Methodologically, the researcher has adopted a mixed approach here in this work; which can be termed as a mixed method where both Qualitative and Quantitative data are present. In this chapter, the researcher would describe the methodologies used in conducting this research. So this chapter showcases the theoretical framework for conducting research, research design, settings used for interviews and observations and the instruments used for data collection. In this chapter, the researcher has tried to portray the procedure of taking interviews, classroom observations as well as mentions about the constraint he faced during data collection and processing the acquired data.

### **3.1 Instrument**

Apart from the research questions, there were a few issues addressed which helped the teachers interviewed to open up and give their wise opinions properly;

- If Qawmi students' English language competency is lesser than their Alia and Public School counterparts, what are the reasons behind this problem?
- What is the highest level a Qawmi Graduate can achieve in his professional career?
- Why is the Qawmi education system not willing to modernize their curriculum according to the Government policy?

Beside these questions for the teachers, there are questions set for students to find out their English language Proficiency, according to the standard of Grade 8 of Bangladesh Education System, which includes;

- What do you know about the Padma Bridge? Say 5 sentences.
- Change the speech of the given sentence: “Majid said Sajid, “where are you going tonight?” (narration)
- Transform the given sentence from Compound to Complex; “Kill by the Gun or die by the Gun”
- Make a sentence with the given Preposition; “Merge with”
- Translate this sentence; “The baby is laughing”
- Voice change; “Never tell a lie”

### **3.2: Research Design**

The researcher has collected data aiming for both Qualitative and Quantitative purposes of this research. These qualitative data were collected asking separate questions to the faculties and students. In the interview section, the researcher asked questions to the faculties of the English Department of respective institutes. However, during the question answer session and SGD (Student Group Discussion), a certain madrasa authority handpicked the top five students of class 8 who participated. The participating students and faculties were provided sufficient time to think before answering so there was no time limitation. As participants, the researcher has picked up:

- Government Madrasa e Alia, situated in the Orphanage Road, Bakshi Bazar, Chalk Bazar, Dhaka-1211.

- Jamia Rahmania Arabia, Bashbari, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207
- Madrasa e Fatima Tuz Zahra (Ra.), Chandrima Uddyan, Dhaka-1207
- Jamia Islamia Muhammadi Ashraful Madaris and Orphanage, Dhaka-1207
- Rajuk Uttara Model College, Sector 6, Uttara,Dhaka-1230
- Dhaka Residential Model College, College Gate, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207

Notably, the first participant is a Government operated Alia Madrasa, the rest two are Qawmi

Madrasas. However, there is a classification in between. Jamia Rahmania Arabia is a pure

Example of orthodox Qawmi Madrasa also one of the biggest Madrasas in Bangladesh, being the center of political activities several times in the near past. Jamia Islamia Muhammadi Ashraful Madaris is an orphanage, where most of the teachers were alumni of that institute. Madrasa e Fatima Tuz Zahra (RA) is a Madrasa for females only and claims to adopt the ‘cadet college’ system. Rajuk Uttara Model College is a renowned educational institution with excellent track records. Dhaka Residential Model College is one of the oldest and top level educational institutes.

### **3.3: Data Collection Sites**

In the interview session, a total of 167 students were interviewed, 5 students from Jamia Islamia Muhammadi Ashraful Madaris, 27 students from Madrasa e Fatima Tuz Zahra (RA), 30 students from Jamia Rahmania Arabia and 25 students from Government Madrasa e Alia, 37 students from Rajuk Uttara Model College and 43 students from Dhaka Residential Model College. 6 teachers were interviewed, each representing their institution. Teachers who participated in the interview were; Sabera Sultana (pseudonym), Associate Professor and Head of the Department,

Department of English, Dhaka Residential Model College. Md. Rafiqueel Islam(Pseudonym), Assistant Professor, Department of English, Rajuk Uttara Model College. Maulana Mohammad Saiful Islam Chandpuri(Pseudonym), Principal, Madrasa e Fatima Tuz Zahra (RA), Rabiul Alam Bhuiyan(Pseudonym), Teacher, Government Madrasa e Alia. Sheikh Waqeel Ahmed(Pseudonym), Teacher, Jamia Rahmania Arabia. Mohammad Nurul Amin(pseudonym), Teacher, Jamia Islamia Muhammadi Ashraful Madaris.

As the students' numbers are comparatively more than the teachers' number, so their names will come in the research wherever required. Since the focus of this study is to identify English language proficiency of the Qawmi madrasa students in accordance with Alia and Public schools, the researcher has tried to pick up participants representing each type of the institution. To bring diversity in the research, rather than interviewing certain types of Qawmi schools, the researcher has interviewed traditional Alia School, Qawmi school and orphanage and female only Qawmi institute. In this manner, this research tried not to focus only in the centralized Qawmi madrasas, but also into the other periphery as well.

### **3.4: Settings**

The interviews followed a certain pattern. Same questions were asked to the participants, although questions were different for the teachers and the students. The questions which were asked to the teachers were semi-structured in nature, but these questions were elaborative, broad and opinion based; where the point of view of the participating faculties came out as accurate as could be. On the other hand, questions which were asked to the students were mostly from their textbook based. The researcher designed these questions according to the knowledge level of a grade 8 student. Besides setting interview questions, the second instrument was a questionnaire

consisting of 33 questions in total to test the participating students' level of knowledge as well as to identify their confidence and anxiety level in the target language class. This set of questionnaires is famously known as FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) which was developed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) (as cited by Matsuda and Gobel, 2004). This particular five point likert chart based questionnaire was made considering German as the target language, but here the researcher has replaced German with English. Although this particular set of questionnaires is mostly used to test the participants' anxiety level. (Matsuda and Gobel, 2004). But according to Zaman (2017), this set of questionnaires also tests the participants' fear for negative feedback. Out of the total 33 questions, 8 questions (consisting, number 1,9,14,18,24,27,29,32) identify if the participant is suffering from communication anxiety; 9 questions (consisting, number 3,7,13,15,20,23,25,31,33) identify students fear of negative feedback from teachers and other students and 5 questions (consisting, number 2,8,10,19,21) identify students' exam anxiety. For this particular work, the researcher has set up and used 23 questions from the FLCAS questionnaires, which were modified according to the necessity of the context.

### **3.5: Data Collection**

The data collection procedure followed both Qualitative and Quantitative methods of data collection. These Qualitative and Quantitative data came from the interviews, student group discussions and conversations regarding the topic and its surrounding that the researcher had with the students and the faculties. The researcher initially planned on collecting data through survey questionnaires and hence, deciding the fate of this research through a quantitative analysis. But the researcher did not get sufficient institutions to run the survey. Initially, the researcher sent out questionnaires to a sample group of students from Madrasa, to run a Pilot

Survey. That questionnaire was created being influenced by the FLCAS questionnaire. After collecting the data from that survey, the researcher predicted the probable response patterns of the future participants and made some changes in his questionnaire. The FLCAS questionnaire contains a few complex questions and ideas with which our madrasa students were not familiar with. So, the researcher had to alter the questionnaire. The researcher translated the questionnaire in the students' mother tongue, Bangla, so that they can properly understand what they have to respond to. The researcher then ensured that the questionnaire had all the validities required to be implemented to the next test. So in this Pre Test stage, the researcher ensured that the questionnaire had;

- Face validity: The content of the questionnaire seemed suitable for the aim of the research.
- Content validity: The questionnaire was fully representing the aim it was going to measure.
- Criterion validity: The outcomes of the questionnaire are so concrete that they would succeed in the aim of the research.

The very title of this research was, English Language Competency of Qawmi Madrasa Students of Bangladesh. So in order to identify the content validity of the questionnaire set by the researcher, it is needed to refer back to the criteria which define the certain terms of the topic, of course those which are definable. Moreover, these three criteria validities are also valid for the interview questions as well. In order to identify the three criteria of pre testing, the researcher had to identify the possible variables, their dimensions and their scopes. The researcher phrased the questions in a way, which made them relevant to find out the out comings of the research questions. Instead of questions, which can be answered in a one or two words, the researcher

crafted the questions thoughtfully, which required the participants to think and give their thoughtful responses. However, the interview questions were direct questions so that the participants can give proper answers to the questions rather than bringing irrelevant information.

In the next stage, which was the Pilot Testing procedure, the researcher only could go through the Descriptive Statistics phase. Firstly, the researcher gathered a limited collection of data from the subject participants. On the prepared question set, the researcher identified the characteristics of the question variables, overall; the researcher has found out question features by generating summaries. But in the reliability stage, and also in the CFA and EFA stage, the researcher could not measure the questionnaire; because of time constraints and also for little knowledge about statistics and SPSS software. However, since the researcher could complete the first stage of validation of his questionnaire, he proceeded to the Pilot Testing. During the Pilot Testing, the researcher had to take care of Descriptive Statistics. Since, the researcher could not complete the reliability test through Cronbach Alpha and SPSS, still the researcher ensured that the questionnaire fulfills the measures on which that could be judged. So, this research questionnaire and the interview questions have been scrutinized by three criteria;

- **Sample Size:** Though Cronbach alpha is insensitive to sample size, the reliability of a questionnaire depends on the CFA and EFA testing. To ensure an accurate result in both EFA and CFA test, the sample size has to be bigger than the number of questions in the questionnaire. According to this rule, the questionnaire influenced by the FLCAS has 33 questions. But in Jamia Islamia Ashraful Madaris, the Madrasa authority sent out the top 5 students of class 8 to participate in the questionnaire and also for student group discussion. However, since the questionnaire and the interview questions were same for all the participants irrespective of their institutional background, if the total number of

students is considered then not only the interview questions but also the FLCAS questionnaire would qualify both the 'Reliability' and 'Validity' test for Pilot Testing.

- **Data Type:** Type of data gathered limits the scope of research by specifying the sphere. Although the nature of Likert Scale is nominal, here the researcher has utilized Likert scale for his questionnaire as an Interval Scale. In the FLCAS questionnaire, the researcher put options according to Likert Scale 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 naming them as; Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.
- **Statistics:** Since the sample size for this research is low, the researcher went for descriptive and reliability analysis. According to the nature of this research questionnaire and interview questions, the researcher could only receive nominal and interval data.

As for the interview session with the teachers, they were in absolute liberty as to whether to talk to the researcher or not. The researcher approached them first by phone call, asked their permission to visit them in their spare time and talked about related issues concerning the research topic. The participants both students and teachers, were not asked any close ended questions, rather they were asked semi structured questions. Beside this, teachers were asked some open-ended questions seeking their opinions regarding the research topic as well as about teaching English in their institutions. All the participants were notified about the researcher's visit beforehand. All the interviewees were approached formally prior to and also at the time of the interviews.

### **3.6: Data Analysis Procedure**

Since the data sources of this research are both Qualitative and Quantitative, this makes this research mixed in nature. The one and only survey questionnaire, which was on FLCAS, helped the researcher to connect the missing links between the Qawmi students' classroom anxiety and their English language proficiency. The researcher then finally used the qualitative data to come to a conclusion. Therefore, exploring the phenomenon of questions backed up by qualitative research and quantitative data, this research analysis has followed qualitative data analysis methods.

## Chapter 4: Analysis

### 4.1: Mixed Method Data Analysis

As the interview reveals, Public School 1 has a Language Club, where students have to spend a class hour every week till class 9. Public School Teacher 1 stated that, from class 9, students start preparing for board exam. Both Public School 1 and Public School 2 put special emphasis on teaching English according to NCTB guidelines. Public School Teacher 2 expressed that, *“since our college is a ‘model’ institution, any type of experiment or any type of implementation in the curriculum begins with us. After validating only then it becomes official for the rest of the educational institutions”*.

### 4.2: Research Question 1

In response to the researcher’s first question; “what do you think about your students’ English Language Proficiency?” both faculties from Public School 1 and Public School 2 praised their students. Public School Teacher 1, confidently responded to this question saying, *“Our rank says it all, this institution has always been in the top 10 ranking.”* Public School Teacher 2 from Public School 2 responded, *“I would not consider the recent ranking trend as a sign of excellent proficiency. Students from this institute, in rare cases; either due to sickness or for unavoidable circumstances might fail or stay absent in certain examinations. But since 1999, I’ve not found any record of any of our students failing in English.”* Girls’ Madrasa Teacher, expressed differently, *“I must not compare my students English proficiency with public school students, but at least I am sure of their proficiency among the rest of the madrasas.”* He further added that, *“Beside our English Language*

*Curriculum prescribed by BMEB, we have kept another subject named 'Special English', where the students have to read English Poetry."*

#### **4.3: Research Question 2**

Maulana Wazeel went critical about the subject, as he said, " *I do not force my students to speak English in the class. Mostly they are not comfortable with the subject and also not with the subject matter.*" All four madrasa faculties agreed on the second research question, which was, "Do you think, Qawmi students' English language proficiency is equal to Alia Madrasa students and Public School students?" Maulana Saiful Hujur added on this point, " *Even if Qawmi students English Language proficiency is somehow equal or better than their counterparts, there is no way to measure that.*" He further added that, " *Alia Madrasas are mostly government funded, so funding is an issue here. But as a Maulana with Qawmi background I would not compromise with my religious morality. The curriculum and the subject taught in general or public schools include topics which might misguide our students. In fact, since the British Era, Alia madrasa were getting funded and also were being used as a mouthpiece of the then government.*" Nurul Amin supported the claim claimed by Maulana Saiful, saying that, " *I would not go to the past, if you observe the current incidents, you will understand why Qawmi madrasas are not interested to take alms from the Government nor in implementing their curriculum. I have put my own daughter in a nursery school till class 2 and I still regret that decision.*" He further added, " *accepting a secular point of view by acknowledging Government funding and Government implemented curriculum would actually mean compromising our religious values with societal non-religious principles.*"

#### 4.4: Research Question 3

In the response to the third research question,” What could be the solution to the impediments Qawmi Madrasas face in Bangladesh?” Rabiul Bhuiyan explained that,” *Changing point of view. I think people outside Madrasa consider us someone distant. But these orphans studying here, they too are an integral part of this society.*” Rabiul Bhuiyan further proposed a few suggestions, ”*I think, the government should abolish this distinction between alia and qawmi madrasa, only then the government would be able to monitor, guide the institutions and provide them monthly pay orders.*”

Maulana Waqeel proposed that, ” *if the government can establish a separate Qawmi Teachers’ Training institute, then the whole Qawmi system will be benefited. Also, while providing curriculum, the government should be aware of the inclusion of secularization in the curriculum. Government should realize, if a separate curriculum can be implemented and accepted for English Medium students, why not for Qawmi students?*”

In a supplementary question,” What is the highest level a Qawmi Graduate can achieve in his professional career?” Maulana Saiful Hujur responded, “*Everything. But the process is complicated and not all Qawmi students can bear that patience and expenses. As you can see, a maximum of Qawmi students are orphans or from ill earning family background. First, a Qawmi student has to complete Tahfeez Ul Quran from a Qawmi Madrasa, then he or she can get into Ibtedai level at any Alia madrasa. Since the government does not monitor the levels of Qawmi education, they too do not recognize them. So a Qawmi student is actually leaving the Qawmi background in the primary level of education, if he or she can afford the cost. Unfortunately, most people cannot.*”

Rabiul Bhuiyan disagreed on that point saying, *” Even though Alia madrasa education follows government prescribed curriculum, and almost as secular as the public schools; as I was saying earlier, the ‘point of view’, for that, Alia students are neglected in higher education as well.”* Rabiul Bhuiyan brought out his mobile phone and started playing a video on YouTube where Professor Mesbah Kamal from Dhaka University was talking about the incapability of madrasa students in English by saying that their proficiency level is that of the children of grade 4.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCXBaUr11M8>

In the students’ group discussions, students were found really aware of the importance of the English Language learning and how that would unlock future career opportunities. But also they were reluctant to learn mainly because of the methodological implementation of the Grammar Translation method in the class. Jannatut Tabassum (Pseudonym), a student of class 8 stated that, *” I really have hard times in memorizing all these grammatical rules, but if they are presented to me like mathematical equations; I can solve any grammar problem using those rules.”* Her classmate Nipa (Pseudonym) explained further that, *” There are marks in our exams if we can memorize grammatical rules and can write those rules accurately in our exam script. But in mathematics, we do not memorize rules of algebra or trigonometry; we just know their implication and imply them when solving mathematical problems. If mathematics can be taught that way, English too can be taught in the same manner.”* Madrasa students on the other hand gave a completely different opinion. They are reluctant to learn English, as that would not help them much in their Dakhil or Alim examinations. Fazle Rabbi (pseudonym), a madrasa student stated that, *” Our English syllabus is limited and very specific. Moreover, our sir will give us suggestions before the*

*examination. Those will be sufficient to get A+.*” Khayer (pseudonym) stated that,” *English speaking would not help much in getting a good result, so why would we learn that unnecessarily?*” Madrasa students have to learn Arabic, English and at an advanced level, for subjects like Fiqh, Hadith Qudsi etc. they have to learn Urdu and Farsi. Madrasa students, for their ethno-educational background, prefer to learn Arabic, even Urdu and Farsi over English. Reason behind ignoring English learning, which is a major cause of Madrasa students’ English language incompetency, the participant students mostly named their reluctance in learning English, though a few argued that, their teachers do not teach them properly. Although it is a fact that the teachers are also bound to follow the curriculum provided by their institutions and most of the teachers do not have necessary training to teach English. As the researcher has mentioned above, only a few teachers in madrasa have an M. Ed degree in teaching. Surprisingly, the two model institution the researcher has interviewed, in one of the institutes, a faculty of home economics, was teaching English in a section of class 8.

#### **4.5: Classroom Observation**

As David Nunan stated, ”As language classrooms are specifically designed to bring about learning, it is not unreasonable to collect data about what goes on there as a means of adding to our knowledge of language learning and use.”(Nunan, 1992:91) so it is understandable that a good language classroom is essential for the development of language skills of the students. The researcher has observed the classrooms of the institutes he went to for an interview. Through the observation it was found that Madrasa classrooms did not have any audio visual equipment for teaching and learning. A glimpse from one of the madrasa is given below;

<https://youtube.com/shorts/f4809nHvUac?feature=share>

However, the model institutes have separate language laboratories, where students are provided with audio visual equipment like, pc, headphones, microphones and television. These model institutes provide microphone and audio speakers in their classrooms as well as multimedia projectors. Absence of audio visual equipment led to madrasa students' reluctance in learning and practicing English.

A massive amount of negligence was found in teaching English in both types of madrasa. Teachers confined the speaking practice in question and answer. The researcher also noticed that teachers were sometimes asking English questions in Bangla, and interrupting during reading text was very common. Teachers were mostly focusing on explaining grammar rules, that too in first language. The researcher found a pattern of teaching in both types of madrasas. The way madrasa students recite and learn Quran verses, during English classes, they were doing the same. In a Qawmi madrasa, the researcher observed that, Teacher was reading a text from the textbook in English and students were repeating the same after him. The teacher was repeating the same line three times and the students too were repeating the same. This made the researcher conclude that English teaching in madrasas are text book based and strictly follows the rote memorization and grammar translation method. This rote learning method was applied in writing courses as well. Students were found copying whatever the teachers were writing on the blackboard. Teachers were found giving homework from the textbook selecting a certain passage, or poem or a few texts. Most of the teachers were found starting their classes by checking homework and giving instant feedback. Mostly, the feedback was given in Bangla, instead of English. In two model colleges, teachers were found emphasizing on accurate spelling.

#### **4.6: Obstacles during Data Collection**

The researcher faced a number of challenges while collecting the data. Firstly, the selection of the institutions was problematic. The researcher wished to have data from all over the country, but for time limitation and budget, the researcher had to confine his area of interview to some certain locations in Dhaka city. Secondly; the researcher found difficulties in gaining access to some institutions. Initially the researcher planned to keep an equal number between Qawmi Madrasa, Alia Madrasa and public schools. Unfortunately, the researcher could only gain access to the Government Alia Madrasa in Bakshibazar, Chawkbazar. Thirdly; the researcher faced difficulties in conversation because of the probable cultural differences with the Madrasa students. Although every participant was cordial, a few students did not fill up the questionnaires properly. They either filled ‘strongly disagree’ to all the options, or ‘strongly agree’ to the rest. However, that tendency was found in the students of the two model colleges as well.

#### **4.7: Findings**

In the Students’ interview session, among 37 students of Public School 1, 35 students answered all the six questions correctly. From Public School 2, among 43 students, 40 students answered all the questions correctly. From Government Alia Madrasa, among 25 students, 17 students answered all the questions correctly. From Jamia Rahmania Arabia, among 30 students, 12 students answered all the questions correctly. From Girls’ Madrasa, among 27 students, 18 students answered all the questions correctly. Finally, from Jamia Ashraful Madaris, only 1 student answered all the questions correctly from 5 students.

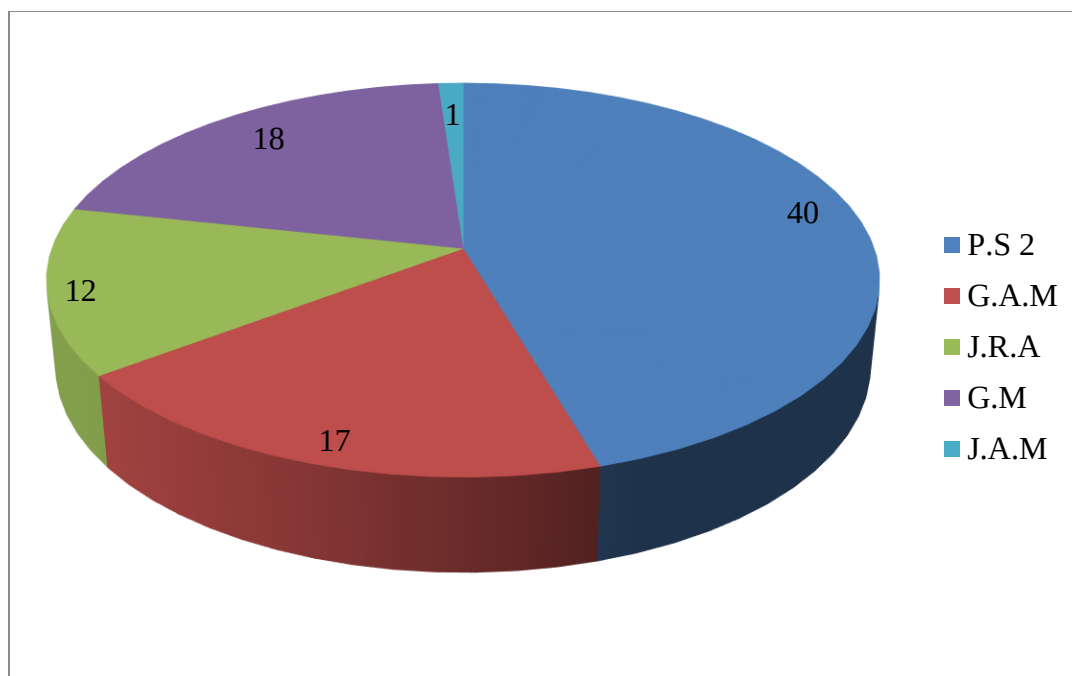


**Figure 1: Students' Interview**

#### **4.8: Findings of the Survey Questionnaire**

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), proposed by Horwitz, E.K., Horwitz, M.B., Cope, J., (1986) was implemented in the survey phase of this research work. This set of questionnaires includes 33 sets of questions. However, depending on the country's perspective and language practice, student's background, teaching culture and environment; the researcher found out of 33 questions only 23 questions are suitable for questionnaires. The researcher also found repetition of statements in the questionnaire and also, the second language related questions were about German, when in Bangladesh perspective, those were replaced by English. The corresponding answers by the students have been shown below through pie chart.

**Survey 1: I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class**

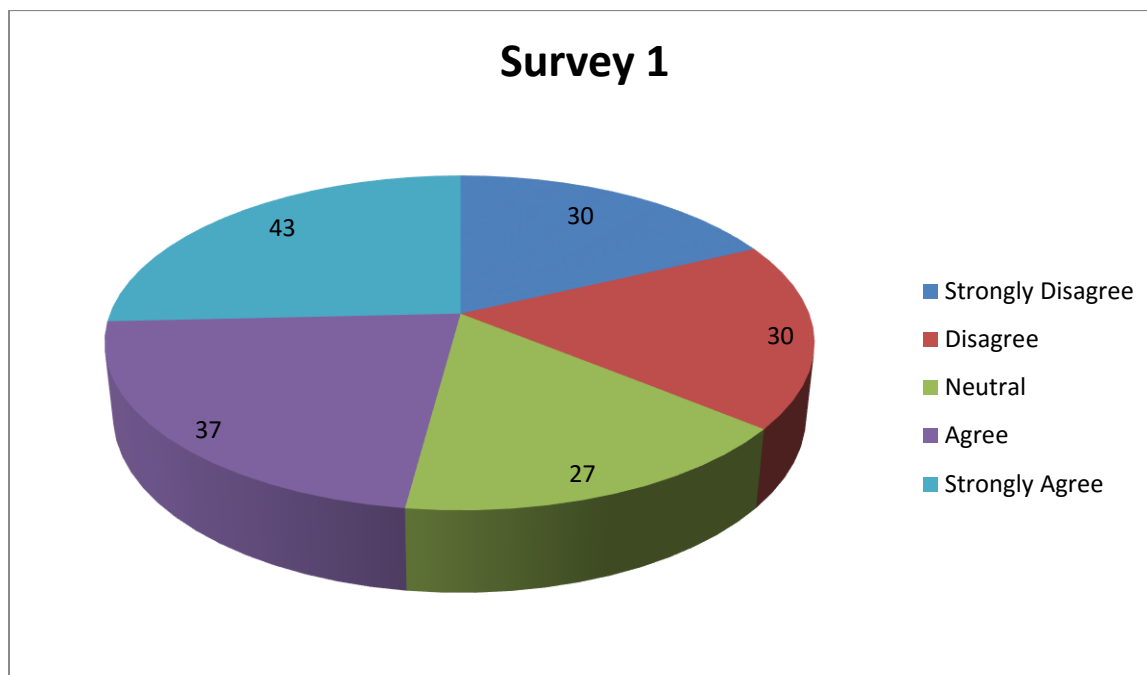


**Figure 2: I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class**

In response to this statement, out of a total 167 students 27 students remained neutral, 43 students strongly agreed to the statement and 37 students agreed.

**Survey 2: I do not worry about making mistakes in language class**

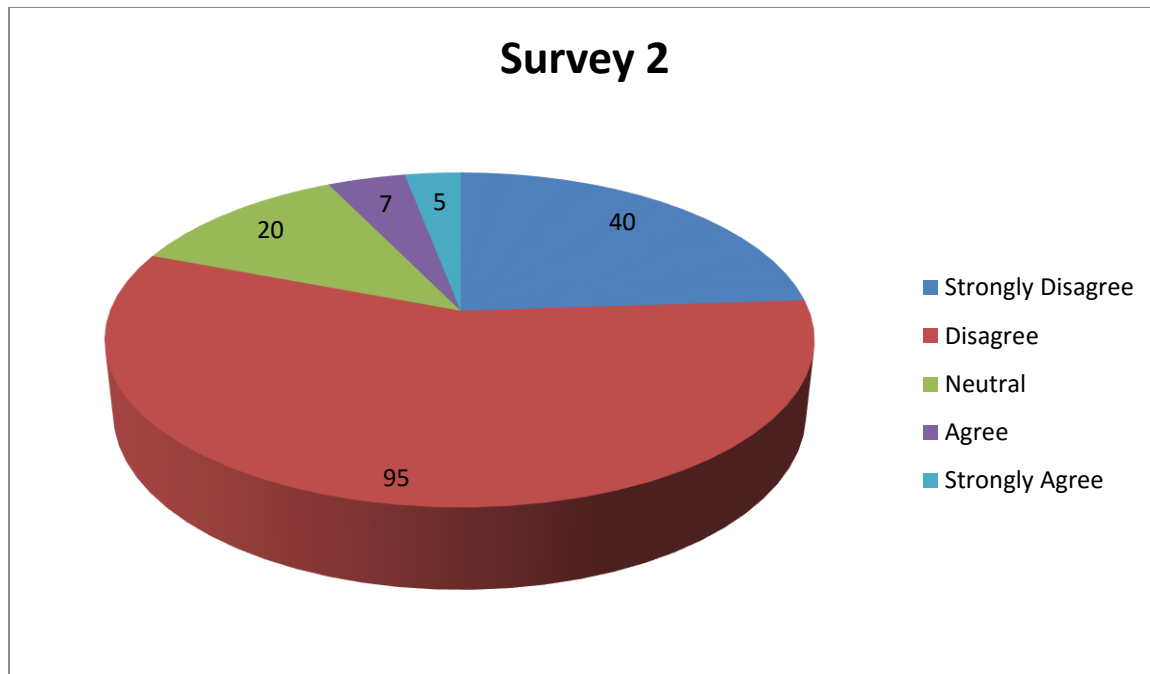


**Figure 3: I do not worry about making mistakes in language class**

In response to this statement, 95 students disagreed, when 40 of them strongly disagreed. 20 students remained neutral and only 7 of them agreed, when only 5 students strongly agreed.

**Survey 3: I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class**

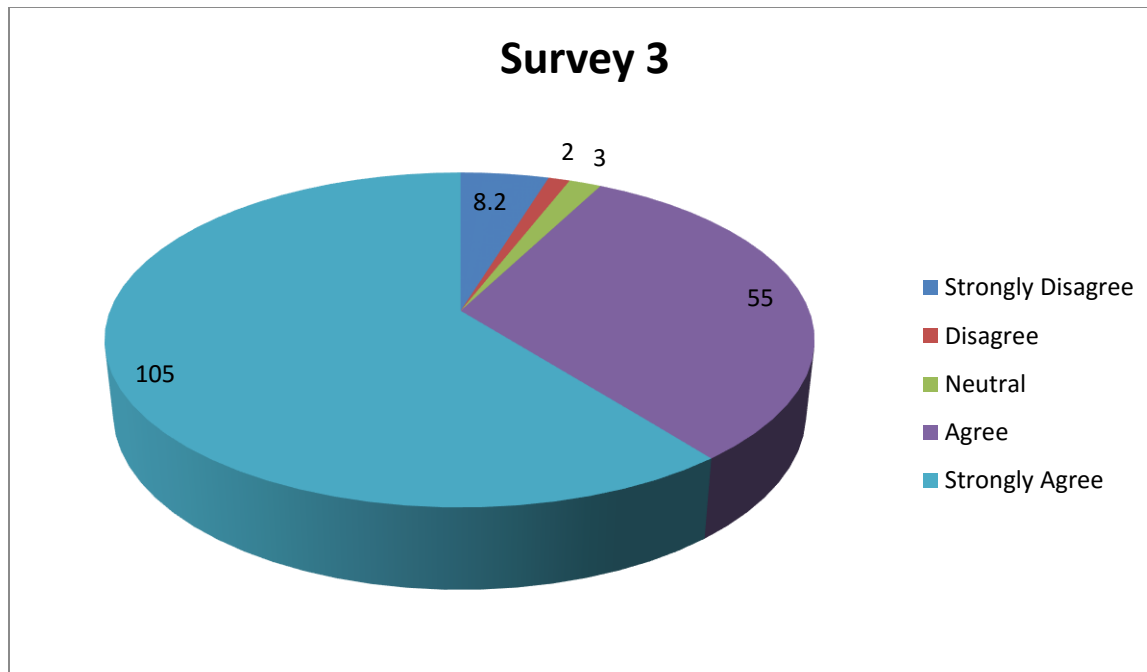


**Figure 4: I tremble when I know that I’m going to be called on in language class**

The response from this set shows that almost every student has fear of getting called in the class. 105 students strongly agreed on that point.

**Survey 4: It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in foreign language**

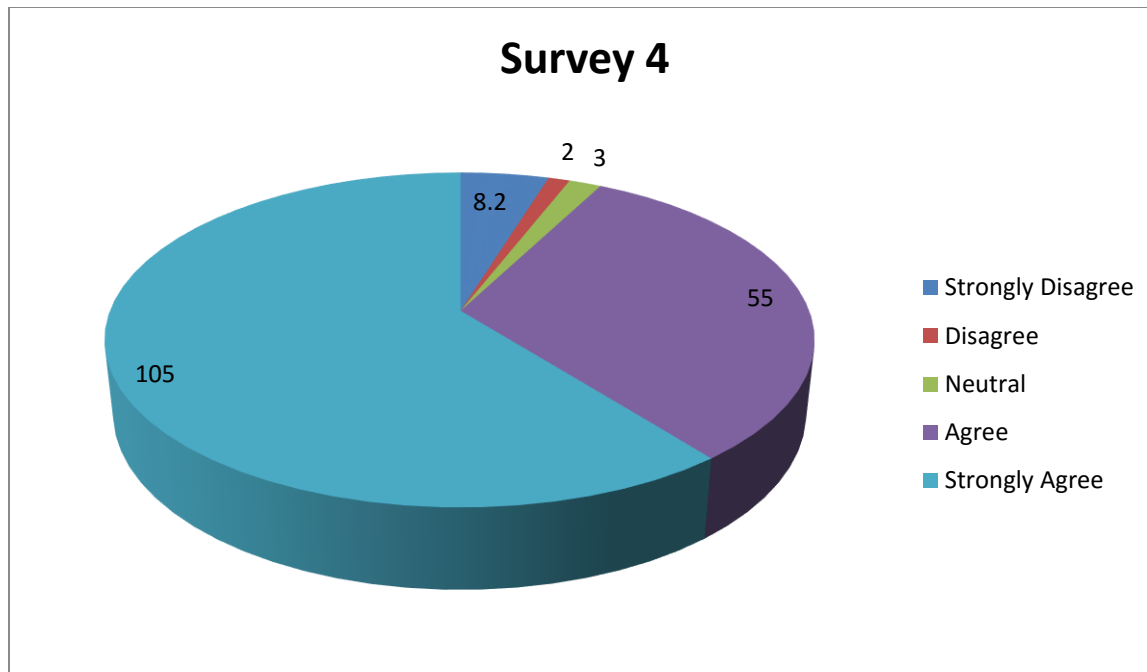


**Figure 5: It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in foreign language**

This set's response is identical to the previous set. Almost every student has a fear of not understanding the teacher's lecture in foreign language.

**Survey 5: It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes**

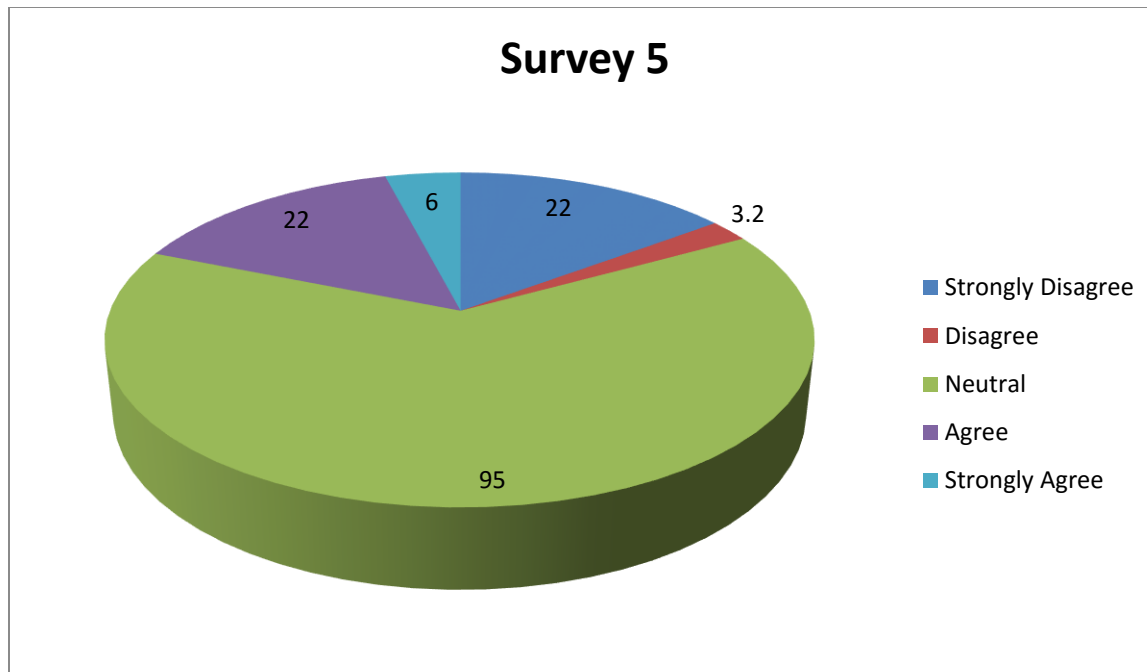


**Figure 6: It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes**

Students were mostly confused with this question. Some of them stated that, if necessary teaching materials are provided and teachers are friendly, they have no problem in taking more foreign language classes. Around 95 students were neutral in this question set.

**Survey 6: During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.**

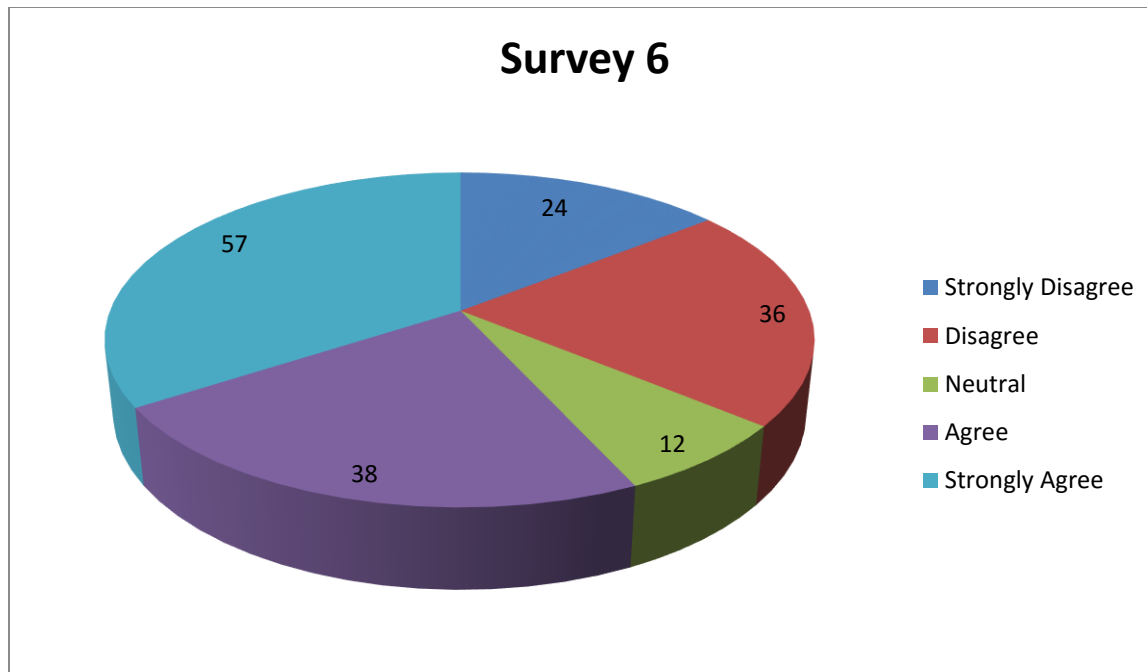


**Figure 7: During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.**

Surprisingly, a lot of students think about other things in a language class. As from this question set, 57 students strongly agreed with the statement. 38 students agreed with the statement.

**Survey 7: I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am**

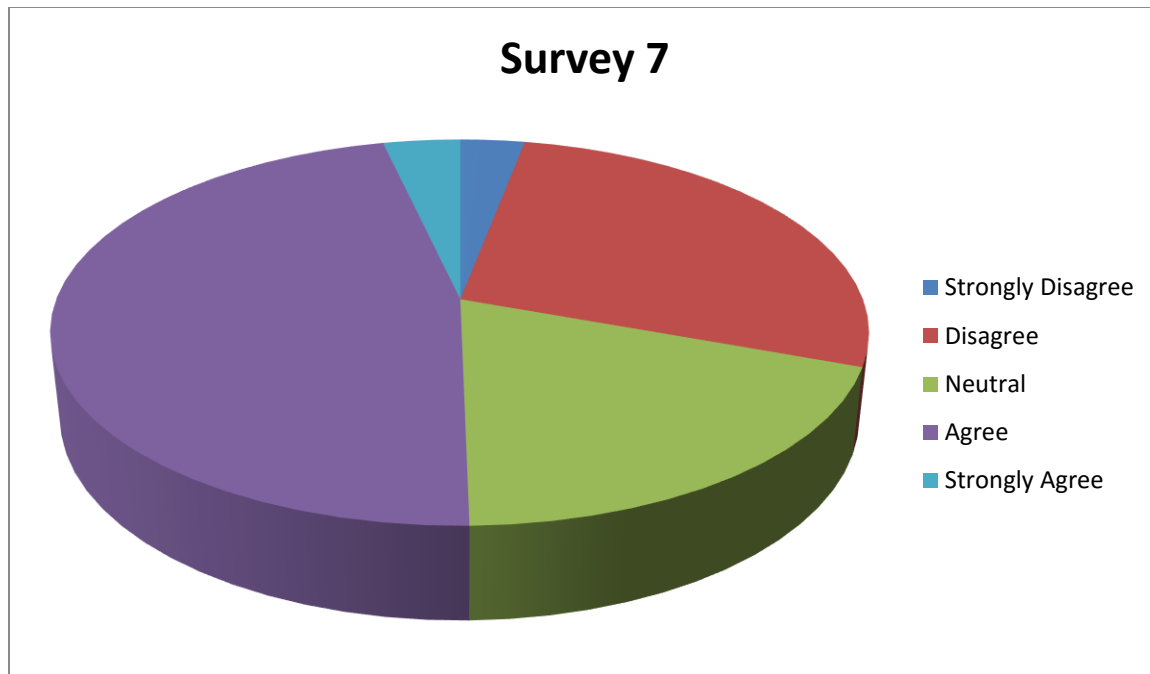


**Figure 8: I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am**

A lot of students consider their proficiency level weaker than others. 78 students agreed on this statement. 46 students disagreed on the statement.

**Survey 8: I am usually at ease during my tests in my language class**

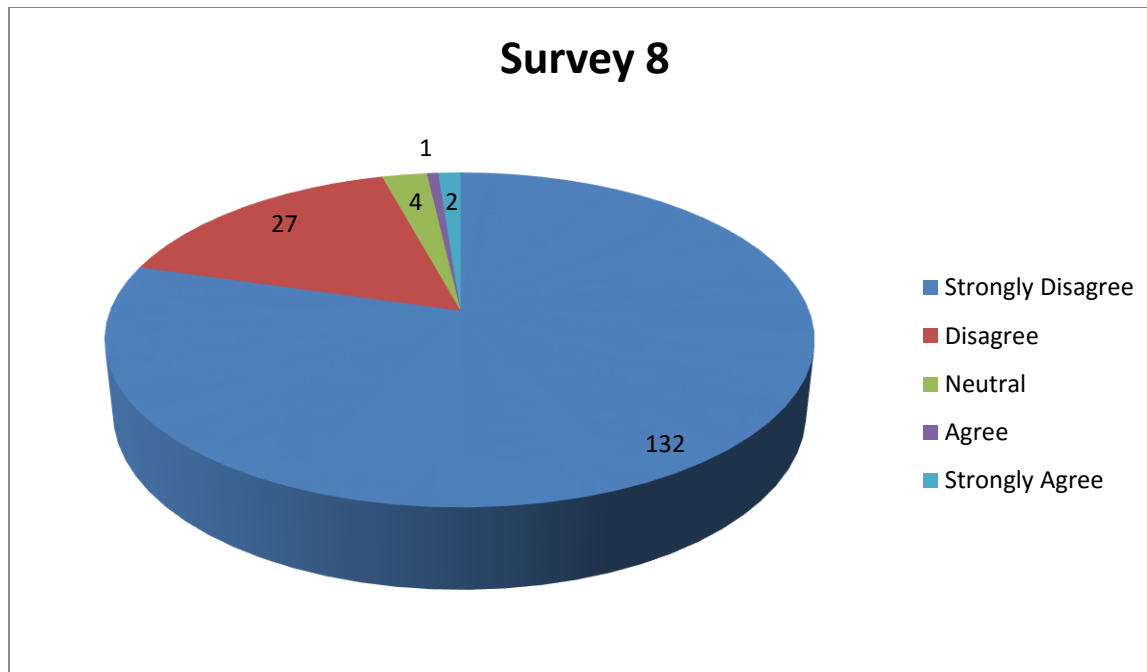


**Figure 9: I am usually at ease during my tests in my language class**

More than 80% of students feel uneasy during language tests in their class, the number of students was 132. Rest of the students also mentioned that they feel uncomfortable in language tests in their class.

**Survey 9: I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.**

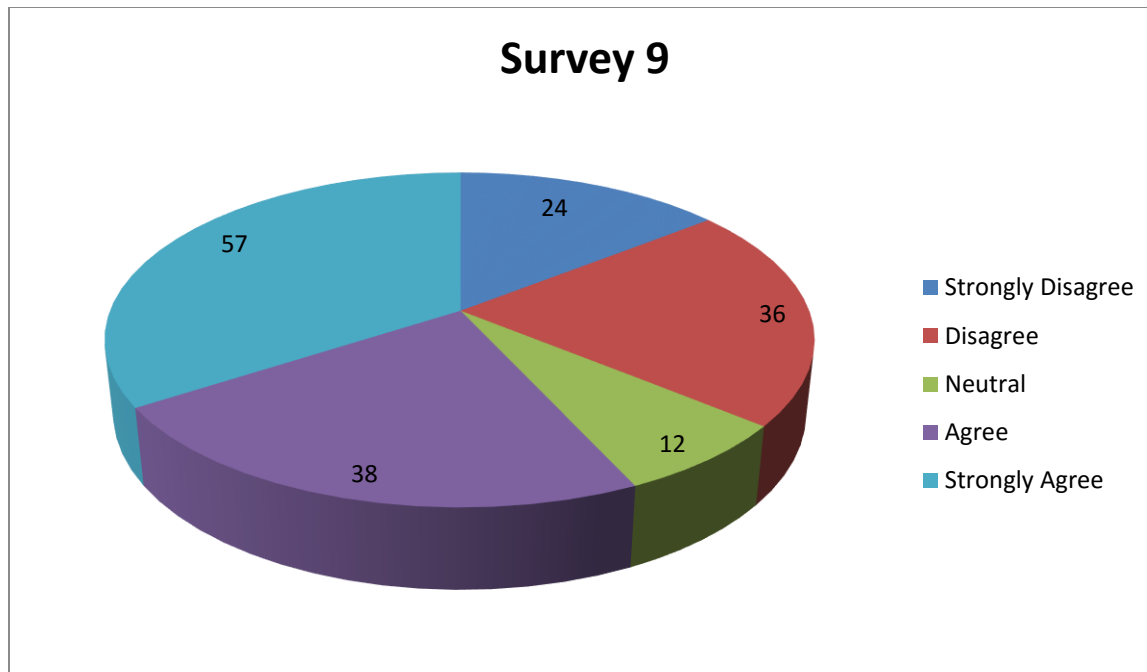


**Figure 10: I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class**

34.1% students strongly agreed on the point that they have fear of speaking in the class, which can be considered as performance anxiety. The second highest percentage is also 22.8% which means; above 50% students have performance anxiety.

**Survey 10: I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class**

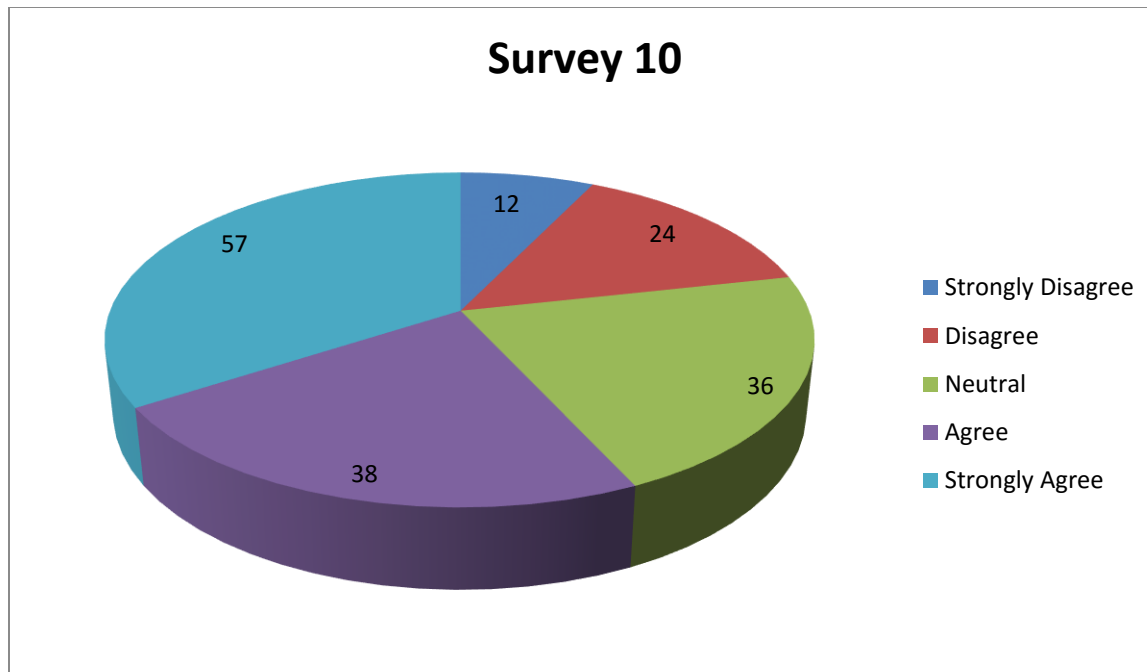


**Figure 11: I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class**

Response to this question is similar to the previous question. Around 57 students are very worried about failing in English class. Second highest percentage is 22.8% of students, 38 students are worried about failing in English.

**Survey 11: In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know**

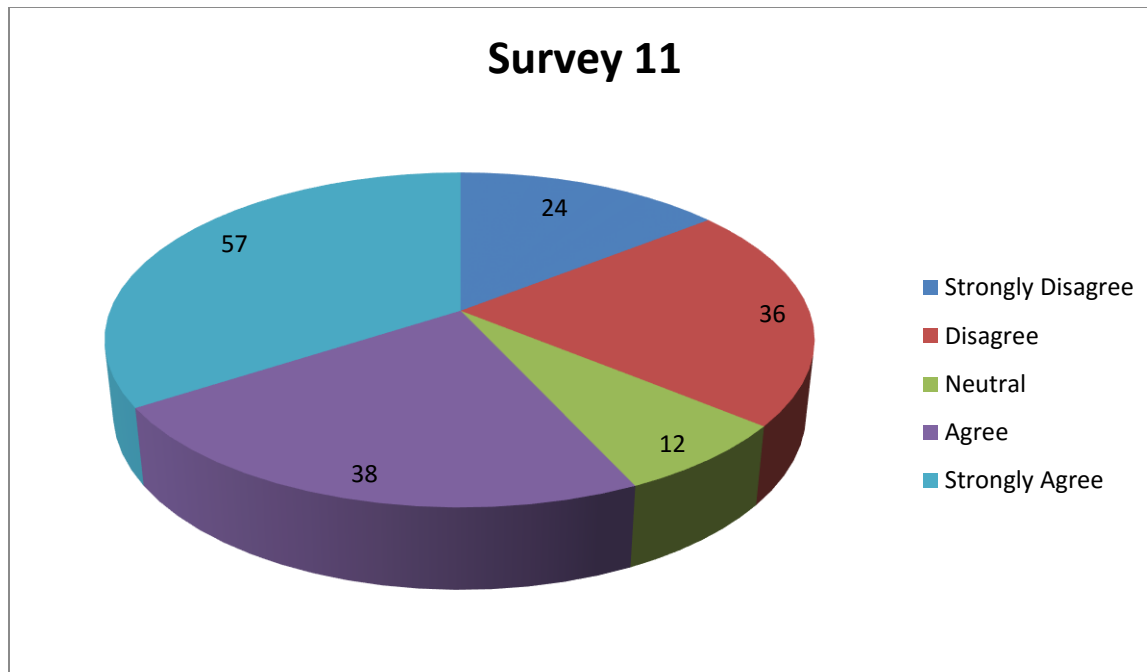


**Figure 12: In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know**

Similar to the previous question's response, maximum students strongly agreed that they forget known things in the class because of anxiety and nervousness.

**Survey 12: It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class**

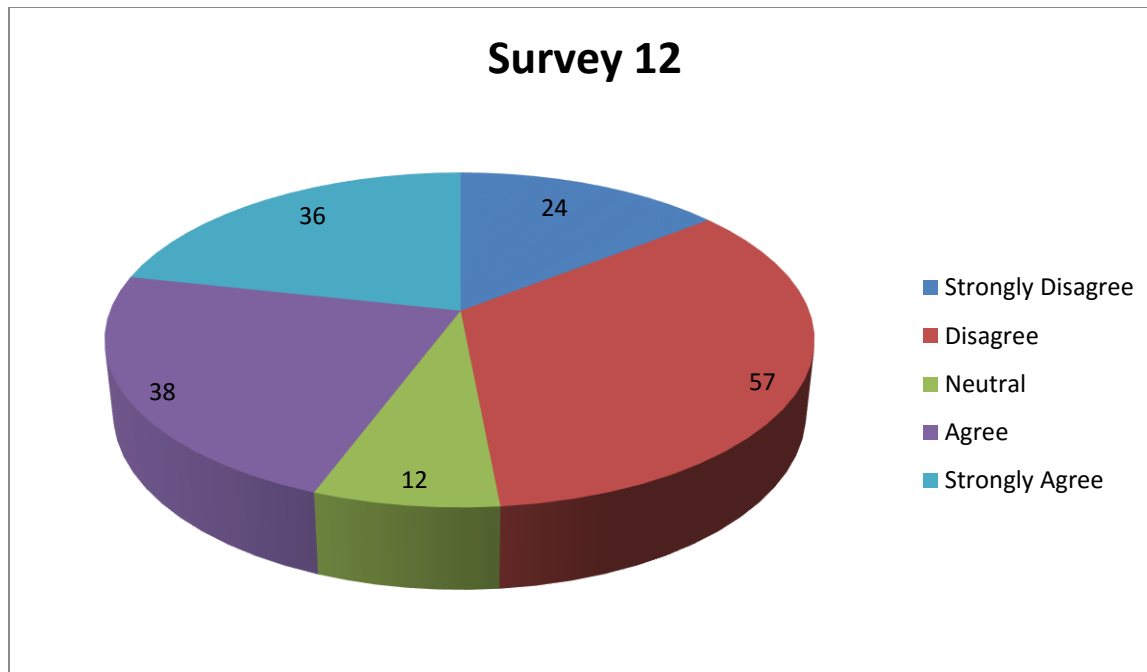


**Figure 13: It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class**

A decent number of students are not afraid to speak in the class, 57 responded disagreeing with this statement. However, this also shows that, if the necessary environment and proper teaching materials and methods are provided, students can overcome their performance anxiety.

**Survey 13: I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.**

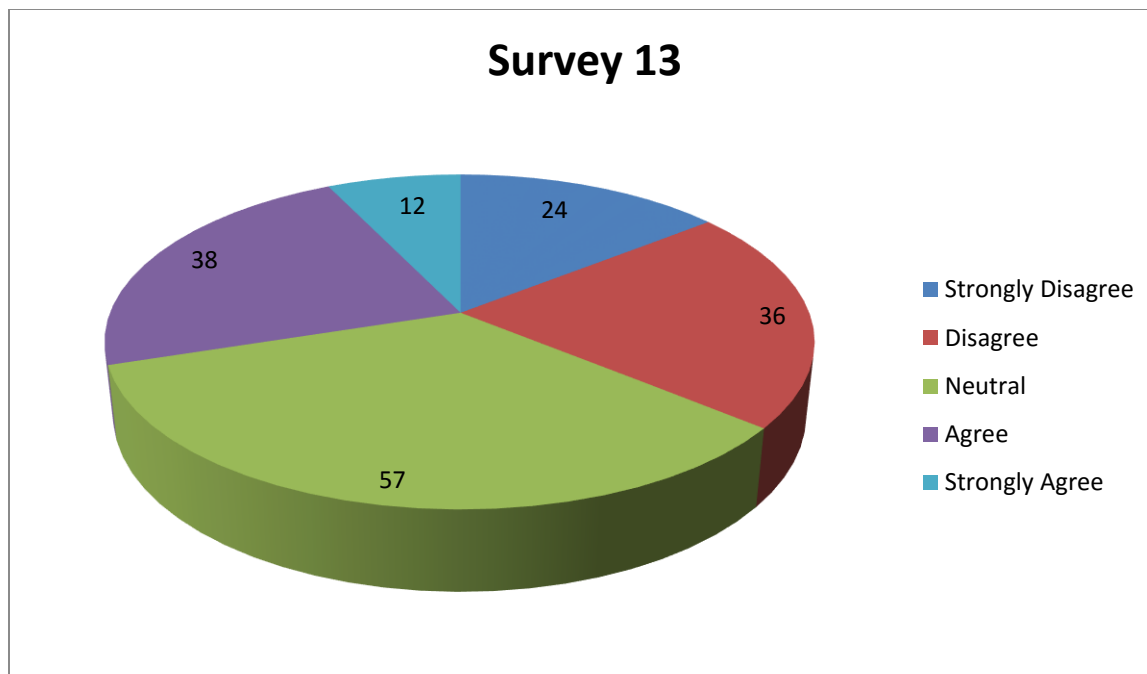


**Figure 14: I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.**

Most of the students in this query stated ‘neutral’ because they were not certain of the scenario.

57 students mentioned that they were not sure whether they would feel nervous speaking in foreign language with native speakers.

**Survey 14: I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting**

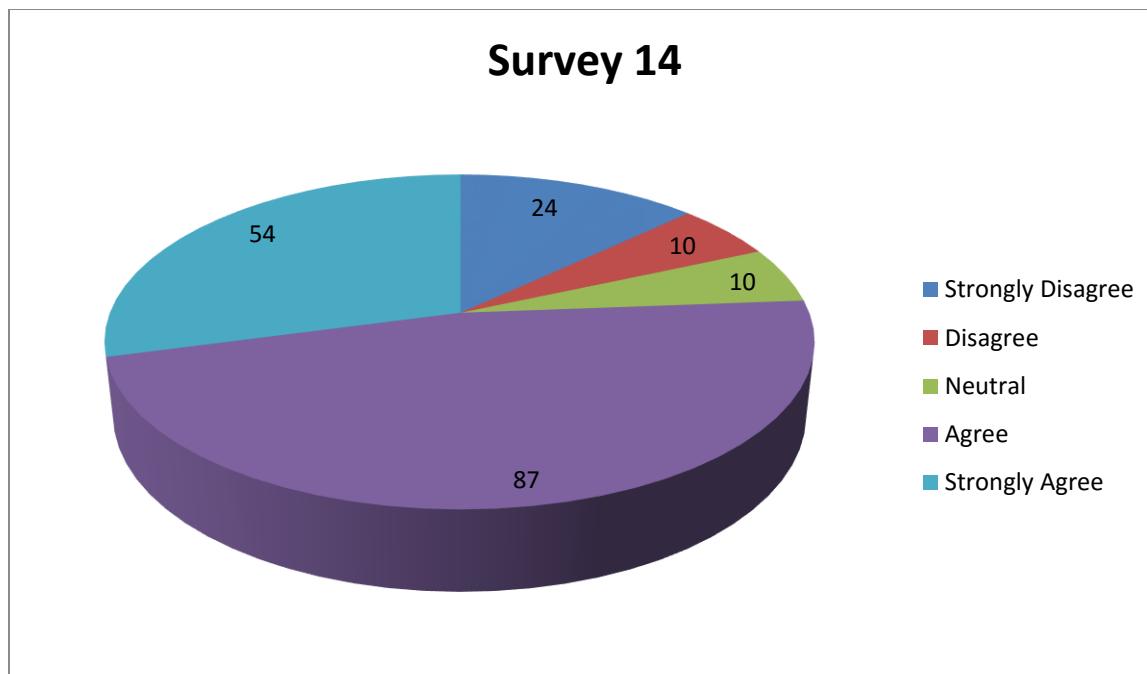


**Figure 15: I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting**

According to this questionnaire, most students get upset when they do not understand their teacher's feedback. 87 students agreed to that statement while 54 students strongly agreed to the statement.

**Survey 15: Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it**

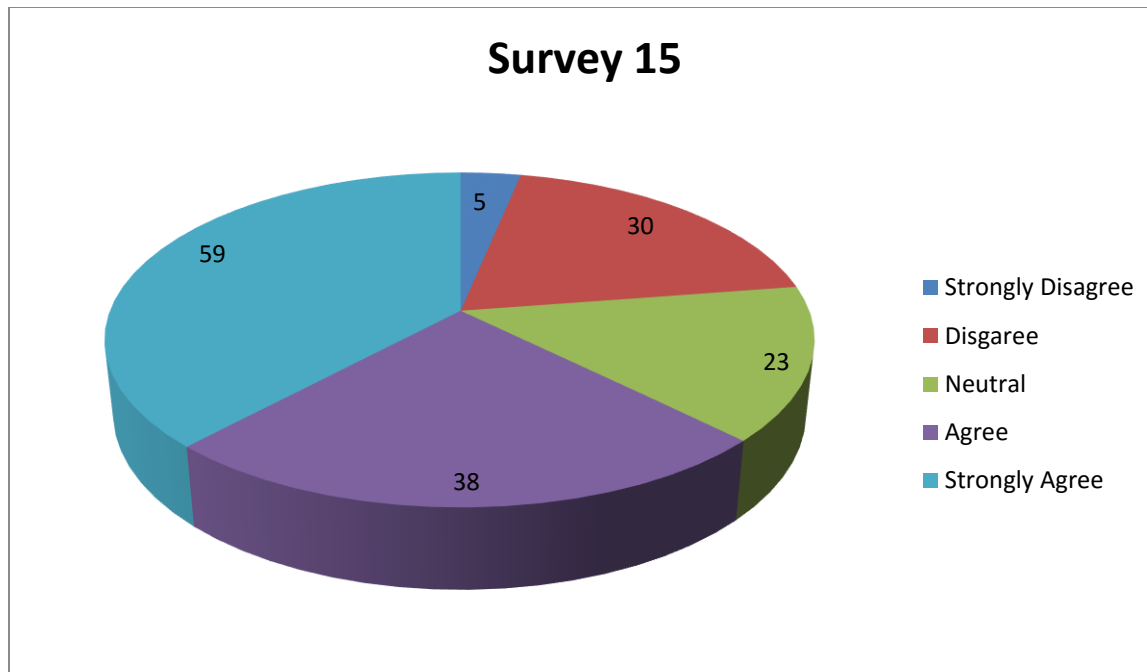


**Figure 16: Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it**

A large number of students feel anxious about performing in the class and examination, even if they are prepared enough for their assignments. 59 students strongly agreed to the statement while 50 students agreed. This leads to the students exam and performance anxiety overall, irrespective of their institute and background.

**Survey 16: I often feel like not going to my language class**

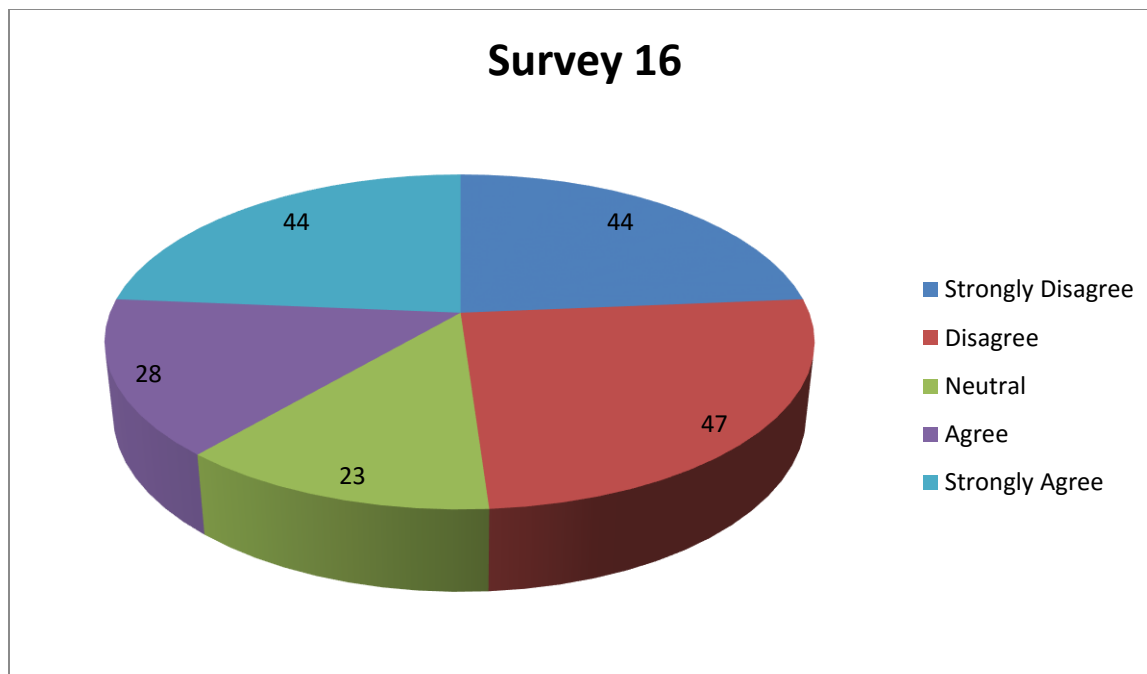


**Figure 17: I often feel like not going to my language class**

47 students, which measures 26.5% students strongly agreed to the statement, when 44 students, 28.3% agreed. The reason behind this avoiding language class is mostly among the madrasa students. Madrasa students are less motivated than school students in attending language classes.

**Survey 17: I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class**

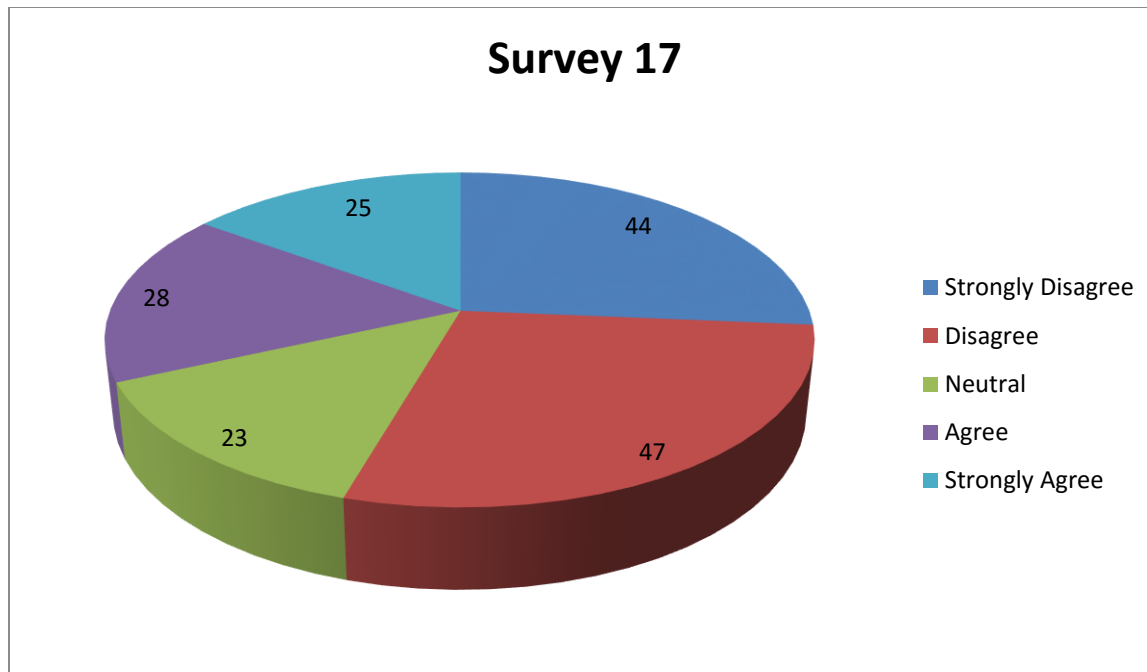


**Figure 18: I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class**

Contrary to the previous statement, maximum students disagreed with the statement, which means they do not feel confident to speak in foreign language class. In total, around 45% of students are uncomfortable speaking in foreign language classes for probable language barriers and other factors.

**Survey 18: I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.**

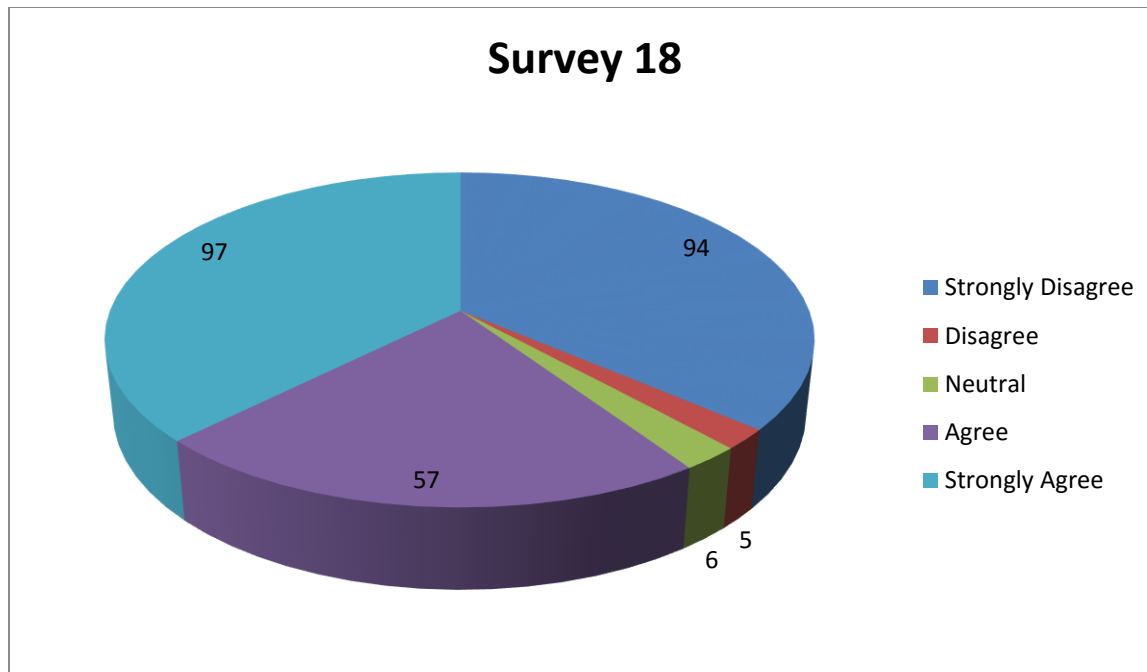


**Figure 19: I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.**

97 students strongly agreed to the given statement, when 57 students also agreed. Which means that students are not only afraid of performing, rather they are afraid of the feedback from the teachers as well. However, the statement does not indicate whether the students are afraid of the positive feedback or negative feedback. Considering this, the scenario is alarming that a good number of students are afraid of receiving feedback.

**Survey 19: The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get**

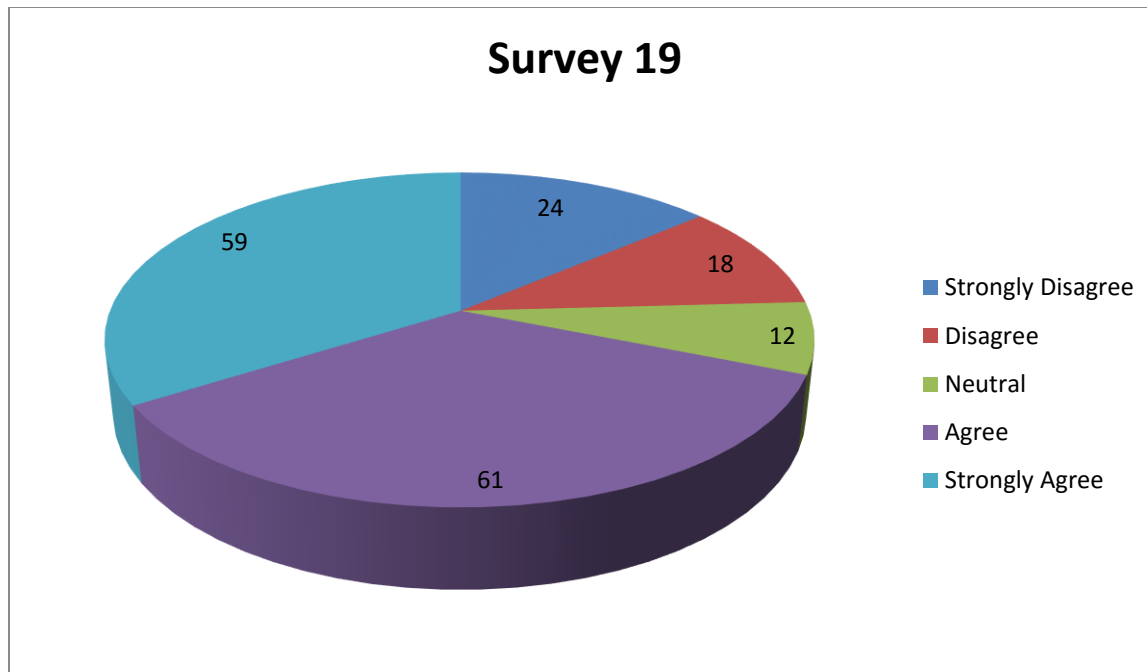


**Figure 20: The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get**

61 students agreed to the statement when 59 students strongly agreed. They get confused during preparation for language tests. However, disagreeing with the statements were all students from public schools.

**Survey 20: I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.**

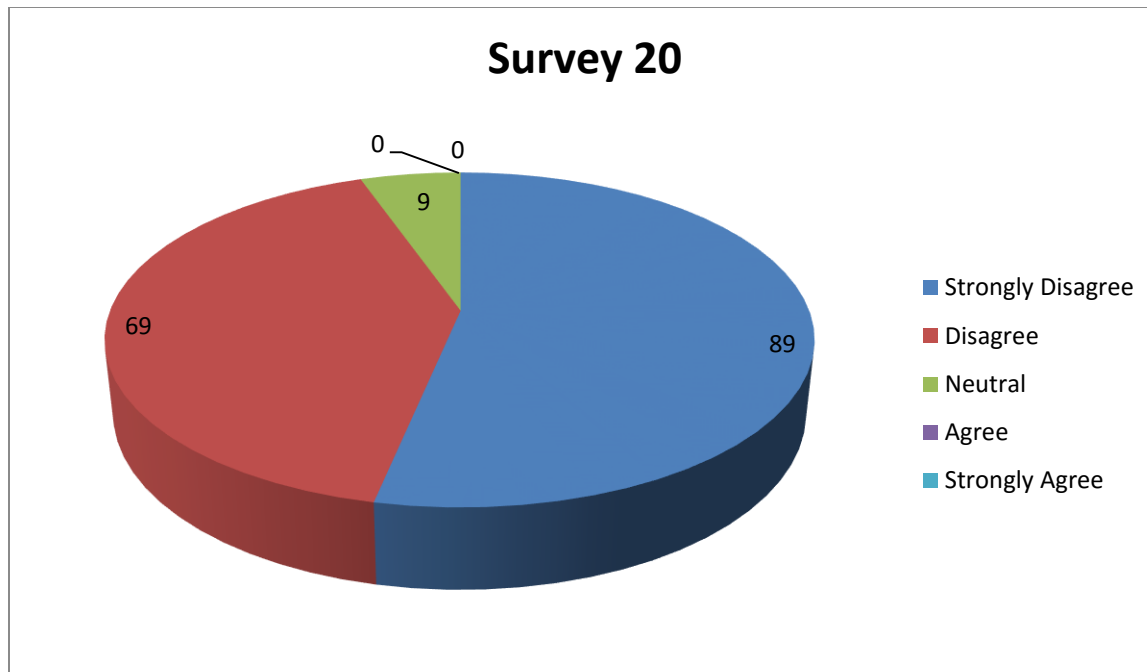


**Figure 21: I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.**

This statement's answer was kind of expected as everyone agreed that they feel pressure to prepare very well for language classes. This pressure also leads to their performance and exam anxiety.

**Survey 21: Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.**

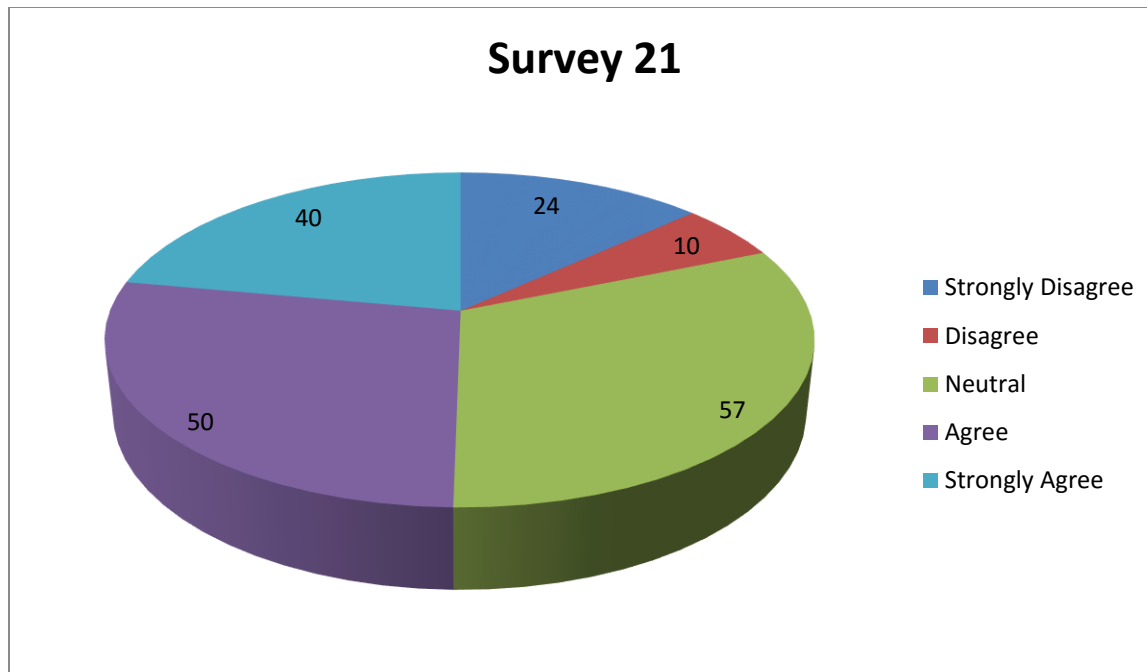


**Figure 22: Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.**

A large number of students went neutral with the statement. Even though the researcher tried to simplify the term to them, they probably did not understand the statement.

**Survey 22: I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes**

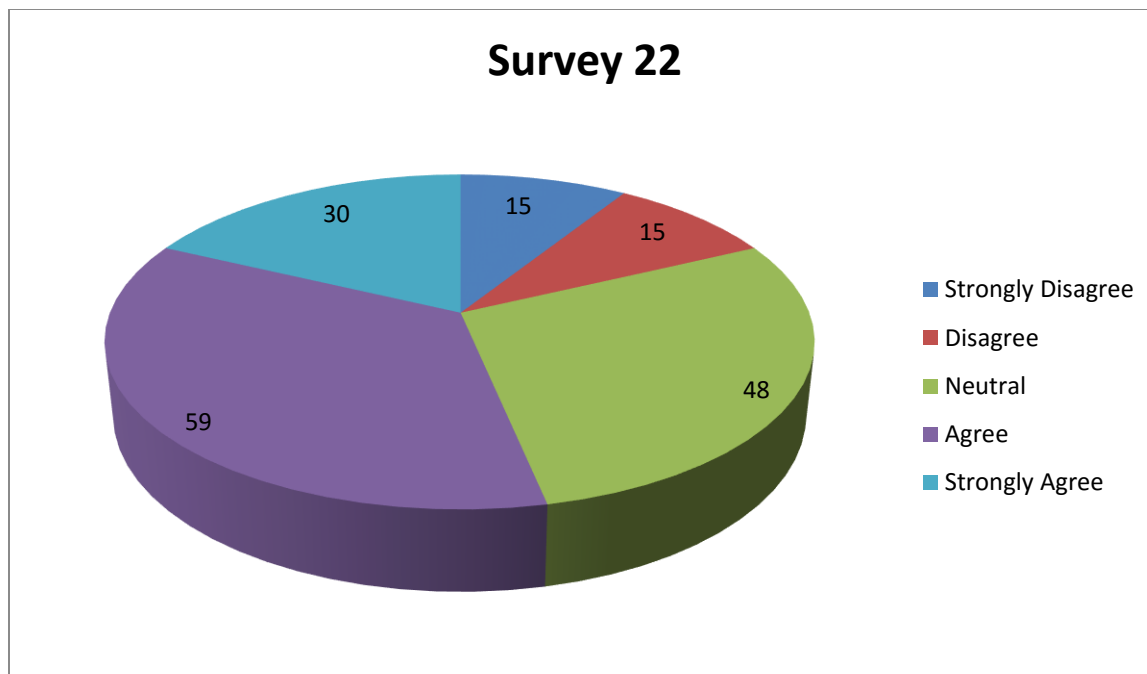


**Figure 23: I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes**

59 students (35.3%) agreed with the statement that they feel comparatively more tense and nervous in English class than other subjects' classes.

**Survey 23: I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.**

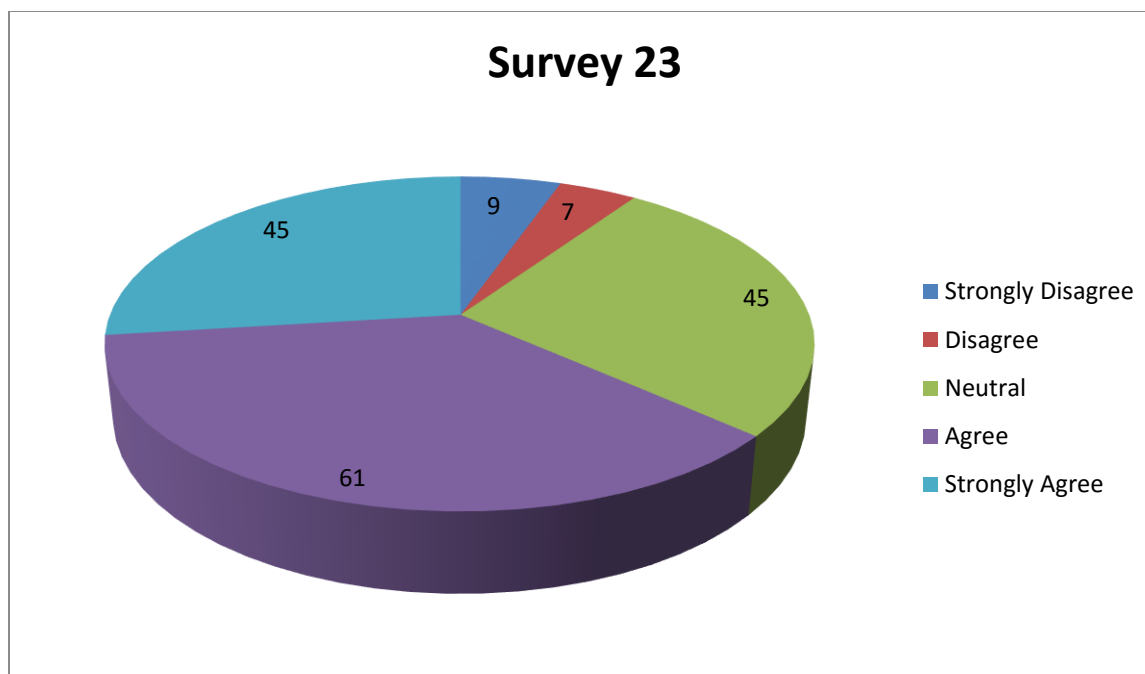


**Figure 24: I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.**

61 students agreed with the statement that they are overwhelmed by the grammatical rules, which indicates that students prefer CLT method in comparison to GT method for appropriate learning of English.

The researcher has summed up overall findings from the survey questionnaire and the question he had set for the students. In the students' interview session, which consisted of six questions from class 8 books prescribed by the NCTB, the students from public schools performed better than the Madrasa students. Also, students from the Government Alia Madrasa also performed better comparatively than the students of the three Qawmi madrasa. Success rate of the alia madrasa students were; 13.8%, when compared to the public school students, they had this rate of 32.5% and 28.5% respectively. This question session clearly indicates that Qawmi madrasa students' are not proficient in English Language skills in accordance with their Alia and Public

school counterparts. However, among them, students from Madrasa e Fatima Tuz Zahra did comparatively well. That madrasa is a female only madrasa and the Principal claims that his madrasa is a ‘Cadet Madrasa’. On the second part of this research procedure, where the researcher ran a questionnaire consisting of 23 questions, most of the students claimed that they are not sure when speaking in foreign language class, they worry about language class and also, they are afraid to be called on in a language class. Most of the participating students also stated that they are afraid of not understanding their teachers’ lectures in language class, followed by 80% students mentioning that they are never at ease in any language test. Maximum agreement to these statements postulates that, students are afraid of English language classes, examinations and also, they are afraid of the consequences of failing in the examinations. The survey questionnaire pointed out that there are different types of anxiety regarding English language. Some students are afraid of performing inside class, some students are afraid to write in the exam hall, some students are absent minded and some students are extra cautious which in turn make them fear the teaching and impediment performing overall.

#### **4.9: Discussion and Analysis**

Upon discussing the above surveys, if ‘ACTFL Proficiency Guideline 2012’ is implemented on these survey responses, it would show that the student’s proficiency is at Novice level. These surveys were done with participants studying at 6 institutes in Dhaka, 3 Qawmi Madrasa, 1 Alia Madrasa and 2 model colleges. And all these participants were in Grade 8 or Class 8. Now ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines describe what participants can do in terms of reading, writing, speaking and listening in a real world scenario. So, the researcher had to implement this ACTFL Proficiency Guideline 2012. Although this study result might overall clash with the claims of the two model colleges, the proficiency level between Qawmi students and general category public

school students are not much different. But yes, comparatively Qawmi students are getting fewer opportunities, less access to study materials and qualified teachers. However, since the topic of this research is about the Qawmi students' proficiency, these Qawmi students start their next level study in Dakhil level, equivalent to Class 9 with that 'novice' level proficiency. This level however has been proved to be sufficient enough to 'Pass' and get that most desired 'A+' in their board examinations. As the researcher has interviewed a few faculties from Madrasa, they too somehow agreed on that point that, through 'proficiency' they prefer saying 'academic success' which is easier to get for the students through attending board exams with their novice level proficiency. However, further higher studies of these students are not of much concern for their school authorities; because at least they are done with their duties by passing these students. Besides, students of Qawmi madrasa and Alia Madrasa, they are finishing their 'duties' by appropriately repeating after their teacher and appropriately copying class lectures, which are being proved as sufficient to get that desired 'A+' in the board exams. Then what is next? As Waqeel Ahmed stated in the teacher's interview on the researcher's supplementary question, *"Since the Government has recognized 'Dawra e Hadith' as the highest degree, achieving that degree should be the highest future plan a student can think of."* He further added that, "I too am from a Qawmi background and I was raised in an orphanage. But I always wanted to be a doctor. Now I am teaching at this madrasa, to students who are just like me. But yes, by the grace of the Almighty Allah, I have fulfilled my childhood dream. I have a homeopathic chamber just 5 minutes away from this madrasa. In the daytime, I teach here, after Maghreb I practice in my chamber." Maulana Waqeel added, *"since only reading and writing are proving to be sufficient for academic success, students definitely need not to waste their money and energy like the privilege people do after native style English speaking."* so it is easily assumed why Madrasa

students lack listening and speaking skills in comparison to their public school counterparts. Madrasa students' main aim lies in passing the board exams and getting certificates, after that, they get into jobs like Imamate or becoming Muaddhin, Khadim in different Mosques or Madrasas. Those who are passionate about teaching, they become teachers. There is no training institute to train these huge manpower, who are graduating without any guarantee of getting any decent job every year from these madrasas. As the researcher has shown in his interview video from inside a madrasa, English class was being conducted in the mother tongue, Bangla.

<https://youtube.com/shorts/f4809nHvUac>

There is no practice of English, not even between teachers and students. Their syllabus is limited to specific areas, not even covering areas which public school students cover at least. The survey and the question sessions done by the researcher prove that these Madrasa students are not motivated enough to learn English. Even if they were, there is no practice opportunity for them, they have no language lab like those model colleges do, they do not even have proper sitting arrangements, not any IT facilities, no NCTB monitoring hence students lack interests and motivation. As the researcher has gone through his surveys and questionnaires, he has identified anxiety and fear factors in all students from every background. But since the topic is about Qawmi Madrasa students, the researcher found out that these students build up a sense of fear since their early childhood. The culture of Madrasa, which includes practice of physical assault as a punishment method might be a reason behind this. But that includes, fearing English as an Alien subject, although they are learning Semitic language Arabic and other Indo-European languages like Urdu and Farsi. This anxiety and fear of English stops the students even from communicating in English outside or inside of their class, leading to their ignoring the subject as a whole. According to Mandokhail, Khan and Malghani (2018), different factors on individuals

lead to different types of anxiety. The researcher has identified them in his surveys where a certain number of students were anxious about their performance in the classroom or exams, but the same students were not afraid of feedback from their teachers. Also, in his surveys, the researcher has identified a certain number of students who do not prefer giving full attention to their English classes. Although, it is very normal to be anxious about public speaking and to talk or read in front of more than one person. But regarding the attention part in English classes, according to Tridinanti (2018) and cited by Astuti (2018), grammar classes are boring to students because of the procedural implication of Grammar Translation Method which leads students to boredom hence they cannot properly remember words and pronunciation later.

During the interview session with the students of Madrasa, the researcher found an interesting fact regarding speaking English outside the classroom. Speaking in English among students outside the class in front of the teachers, especially the senior teachers, is considered as insolence. Also, the students always doubt their accuracy even if they are talking about a familiar topic or on something they have well prepared for. And all the students, irrespective of their institutions, agreed that they are better in writing rather than speaking and listening in English. These findings can be supported by the scholars. According to Lendecky (2013) drawing reference to Hamouda (2013), students being reluctant to speak in EFL courses occurs all over the world mainly because of the factors like, shyness, fear of speaking target language, fear of being judged by the teachers and fear of being laughed at by the peers.

Mohammad Nurul Amin (Pseudonym), teacher, Jamia Islamia Mohammadia Ashraf Madaris stated that; the primary objective of studying in Madrasa is being educated religiously. He added that, " *There are many concerned guardians who think about the consequences of the afterlife. So they send their children to the Madrasa. I have seen guardians who used to send their kids to*

*school before, but later they shifted them to madrasa.*” The reason behind this institution change can be related with religion, can be related with economic reasons. But that does not change the fact that, for religious education purpose; Qawmi madrasas are doing comparatively better than the Alia madrasa.

Rabiul Bhuiyan states that,” There are new and exciting ways nowadays to earn halal income. Not necessarily one has to become a government employee to earn his bread and butter. Students are now technologically much aware. They get inspired by watching and attending ‘Waz Mehfiles’ and they can become one, right after completing their Ibtidai studies. So, who would go for that complicated path of higher studies, where one has to finish 12 or more years of study?” He further adds,” Remember, almost all the Madrasa students belong to the socio-economically backward class. Mostly they get raised in the orphanages or their parents do not have the necessary money to make them study further. So they would definitely opt for something which they can do easily from their level.”

Being this disinterested about English overall, madrasa students in quite a huge number are getting admitted in higher education. They opt for institutes like Islamic University, Islamic University of Technology (IUT), Hajee Mohammad Danesh University of Science and Technology etc. But then again, students who have graduated from government recognized Alia institutions, they opt for University of Dhaka, Bangladesh University Engineering and Technology (BUET) and medical colleges as well. According to Professor Mesbah Kamal (2018),”The DU is gradually turning into a higher Madrasa with the annual enrollment of 60% students from madrasa background.”

<https://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/284949/Enrollment-of-madrasastudents-high-at-DU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCXBaUr11M8>

Problem lies in the overall English language proficiency of the Madrasa students, irrespective of their Qawmi or Alia background, as Mamun and Shaon (2018) argues about poor English

Proficiency and other required skills which might not create problems during the enrollment process of their higher education but later in the Job field.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion and Implication

‘Dawra e Hadith’ graduates from Qawmi Madrasa can now obviously apply for government and non-government jobs of all types, according to their choice and specification, since Bangladesh government has recognized the highest degree of Qawmi madrasa, ‘Dawra e Hadith’ as equivalent to a Master’s degree of Arabic and Islamic studies. But that does not erase the fact that, Government has yet to recognize and monitor the undergraduate levels of the Qawmi Education system as well. There is a serious and huge gap of administration, distribution and implementation of education materials and curriculum in the Qawmi education system, which needs to be taken care of. The gap between Ibtidai and Kamil is where the Government should look after. But definitely, a change of viewpoint has to be there. As the researcher has identified, the Elite social class possess a negative point of view about the Qawmi peoples, especially after political incidents like one took place in 2013 Shahbag and Motijhil, where there was a clash between Qawmi students and the Police;

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013\\_Shapla\\_Square\\_protests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_Shapla_Square_protests)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22423815>

Although the Government of Bangladesh has already started taking steps to minimize the distance between Qawmi peoples and the rest of the citizens by incorporating ‘Dawra e Hadith’ degree as a Master’s equivalent. But that does not cover the whole sphere of the problem scenario. From the interviews, the researcher has identified that Qawmi madrasas are reluctant to take Government funding and monitoring, as they are afraid of possible secularization of their system, which might ultimately ruin their purpose of leading their lives based on Islamic Shariah Law and Islamic theology. So, the Government and the Elite Social Class of our society must

change their point of view towards the Qawmi System. A lenient, easy going approach might ease the situation on both sides. Only after that, probable solutions can be implemented and suggested. However, from this research, the researcher has identified these problems and their probable solutions to the problem of English Language Incompetency of the Qawmi madrasa students;

- Qawmi Education System has limited textbook content and backdated syllabus design, these need to be corrected.
- Their Grammar Translation Method has to be replaced by modern methods like CLT, where student to teacher interaction will be in 80:20 ratios. This practice will help the students to enhance their English Language proficiency from an early age.
- Qawmi teachers need to be provided with necessary training before they join as faculties in different Qawmi institutes.
- Separate Qawmi Education Board has to be established which will be governed and monitored by the Ministry of Education.
- Separate syllabus and curriculum has to be incorporated for Qawmi Madrasa. If the Government can implicate separate and parallel education system requirements for vocational or technical education, then a separate Qawmi structure can be implemented as well.
- Qawmi syllabus and curriculum has to be provided considering the fact that there must not be any attempt to secularize the Qawmi structure and environment.
- Organizations like Befaul Madarisil Arabia and the rest five organizations, who control the Qawmi Madrasa Education system of Bangladesh, all these institutions have to be accountable for their actions and must be under Government surveillance.

Only after dealing with these procedural issues, the Government can think of necessary feasible solutions to the Qawmi madrasa students' inefficiency. As the researcher has identified, the probable solutions can consist of;

- Giving Qawmi Madrasa degrees as complete equivalence to the degree offered by school and college. Our neighboring country India has given equal equivalence to the Alia Madrasa degree to the degrees offered by their public school. Two exam score sheets of the 'Entrance Exam' are given below,

NO. **H/25321** INDEX NO. **12-04** **14**

# West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education

## Mark Sheet of High Madrasah Examination 2022

ROLL **11711** NO. **0001**

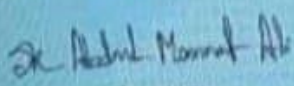
NAME: **MST. SABNAM KHATUN**

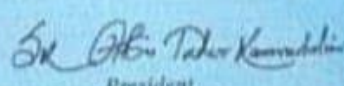
SON / DAUGHTER / WARD OF: **MD SHAH JAMAN**

APPEARING FROM: **DEBKUNDA HIGH MADRASAH**



| SUBJECTS                                      | Full Marks<br>including<br>Oral/Project/<br>Practical | MARKS / GRADES OBTAINED |                                  |       |       |                          |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|-------|--------------------------|
|                                               |                                                       | Written                 | Oral /<br>Project /<br>Practical | Total | Grade | Performance<br>Indicator |
| <b>BENGALI (FL)</b>                           | 100                                                   | 89                      | 10                               | 99    | AA    | OUTSTANDING              |
| <b>ENGLISH (SL)</b>                           | 100                                                   | 84                      | 10                               | 94    | AA    | OUTSTANDING              |
| <b>MATHEMATICS</b>                            | 100                                                   | 87                      | 10                               | 97    | AA    | OUTSTANDING              |
| <b>PHYSICAL SCIENCE &amp;<br/>ENVIRONMENT</b> | 100                                                   | 79                      | 10                               | 89    | A+    | EXCELLENT                |
| <b>LIFE SCIENCE &amp;<br/>ENVIRONMENT</b>     | 100                                                   | 87                      | 10                               | 97    | AA    | OUTSTANDING              |
| <b>HISTORY &amp;<br/>ENVIRONMENT</b>          | 100                                                   | 84                      | 10                               | 94    | AA    | OUTSTANDING              |
| <b>GEOGRAPHY &amp;<br/>ENVIRONMENT</b>        | 100                                                   | 88                      | 10                               | 98    | AA    | OUTSTANDING              |
| <b>ISLAMIC PARICHAY</b>                       | 100                                                   | 88                      | 10                               | 98    | AA    | OUTSTANDING              |
| <b>COMPULSORY OPTIONAL</b>                    |                                                       |                         |                                  |       |       |                          |
| <b>ARABIC</b>                                 | 100                                                   | 83                      | 10                               | 93    | AA    | OUTSTANDING              |
| <b>OPTIONAL ELECTIVE</b>                      |                                                       |                         |                                  |       |       |                          |
| <b>WORK/PHY.EDCN.</b>                         | 100                                                   | 90                      | -                                | 90    | AA    | OUTSTANDING              |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL :</b>                          | <b>766 (SEVEN SIX SIX)</b>                            |                         |                                  |       |       |                          |
| <b>RESULT :</b>                               | <b>Pass</b>                                           |                         |                                  |       |       |                          |
|                                               | <b>OVERALL GRADE :</b>                                |                         |                                  |       |       | <b>AA OUTSTANDING</b>    |

  
 Secretary

  
 President

Picture 1

NO. K/168194

INDEX NO. D1-037

# West Bengal Board Of Secondary Education



MARK SHEET OF MADHYAMIK PARIKSHA  
(SECONDARY EXAMINATION) 2011

ROLL **D42091G**NO. **0349**NAME **KIRAN DUTTA**S ~~XXX~~ OF **KALIPADA DUTTA**APPEARING FROM **DHUBULIA DESHBANDHU HIGH SCHOOL**HIS ~~XXX~~ COMBINATION OF SUBJECTS (IN SYMBOLS) **BFL ESL**

| SUBJECT                      | FULL MARKS |      |       | MARKS OBTAINED |      |       |       |
|------------------------------|------------|------|-------|----------------|------|-------|-------|
|                              | WRITTEN    | ORAL | TOTAL | WRITTEN        | ORAL | TOTAL | GRADE |
| COMPULSORY SUBJECTS          |            |      |       |                |      |       |       |
| FIRST LANGUAGE - (1ST PAPER) | 90         | 20   | 200   | 51             | 20   | 145   | A     |
| FIRST LANGUAGE - (2ND PAPER) | 90         |      |       | 74             |      |       |       |
| SECOND LANGUAGE              | 90         | 10   | 100   | 80             | 10   | 90    | AA    |
| MATHEMATICS                  | 90         | 10   | 100   | 88             | 10   | 98    | AA    |
| PHYSICAL SCIENCE             | 90         | 10   | 100   | 87             | 10   | 97    | AA    |
| LIFE SCIENCE                 | 90         | 10   | 100   | 84             | 10   | 94    | AA    |
| HISTORY                      | 90         | 10   | 100   | 74             | 10   | 84    | A+    |
| GEOGRAPHY                    | 90         | 10   | 100   | 56             | 10   | 66    | A     |
| OPTIONAL ELECTIVE SUBJECT    |            |      | 100   |                |      |       |       |
| RESULT → <b>P</b>            |            |      |       |                |      |       |       |

RESULT :

| Grade Scale                                             | Grade | Performance Indicator |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 90-100                                                  | AA    | Outstanding           |
| 80-89                                                   | A+    | Excellent             |
| 60-79                                                   | A     | Very Good             |
| 45-59                                                   | B+    | Good                  |
| 35-44                                                   | B     | Satisfactory          |
| 25-34                                                   | C     | Marginal              |
| Below 25                                                | D     | Disqualified          |
| Grade in FL is determined on the basis of Total Marks/2 |       |                       |

|       |                             |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| P     | For Successful Candidate    |
| Comp. | For Compartmental Candidate |
| X     | For unsuccessful Candidate  |

*Sengupta*  
Deputy Secretary (Exam.)

*Partha Roy*  
Secretary

## Picture 2

The first result card is of Sabnam Khatun, a student of Alia madrasa of India, West Bengal. She has appeared in Linguistic Subjects like, Bengali, English; then appeared for scientific subjects like Mathematics, Physics and Life Science and also in Geography, where her elective subject was, Arabic. On the other hand, another candidate also from West Bengal, India; Kiran Dutta, appeared in the same subjects. The most striking feature of this comparison is that Sabnam Khatun did comparatively better than Kiran Dutta. So, it is evident that there is zero to no difference between the teaching facilities and equivalence of both Alia and Public Schools in India. But the scenario of Bangladesh is not the same.

- Not only from the madrasa teachers, but also from other streams of education; Grammar Translation Method might not be totally discarded. So the government should combine this traditional and famous method with new methods like CLT.
- The Qawmi Education system has to be upgraded too, with the requirements of time. Qawmi teachers' approaches should be friendly and cooperative to their students so that they can interact without anxiety.
- Finally, the Government of Bangladesh should help this conservative and religious sector of education pedagogically and financially.

Proper utilization of the methods, economy and resources could ensure the problem of inefficiency of the Qawmi students in their learning and utilizing English as a Foreign Language. Abovementioned suggestions can turn out to be helpful if the Government decides to take steps in the development of the Qawmi Education System.

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## Appendices

### Appendix Number 1: FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale)

| Statements | Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|------------|----------------------|----------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| 1          |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 2          |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 3          |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 4          |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 5          |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 6          |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 7          |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 8          |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 9          |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 10         |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 11         |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 12         |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 13         |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 14         |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 15         |                      |          |         |       |                   |
| 16         |                      |          |         |       |                   |

|    |  |  |  |  |  |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|
| 17 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23 |  |  |  |  |  |

## Appendix Number 2: Interview Session Video Links

<https://youtu.be/onJKsF0Agfk>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/f4809nHvUac>

[https://youtube.com/shorts/486G4\\_HlBRQ](https://youtube.com/shorts/486G4_HlBRQ)

<https://youtu.be/KQxczw7fuko>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/ZUz-KT5aXR8>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/kxCMv1lU4cw>

### **Appendix Number 3: Questions for the Teachers**

- **What do you think about your students' English Language proficiency?**
- **Do you think, Qawmi students' English language proficiency is equal to Alia Madrasa students and Public School students?**
- **What could be the solution to the impediments Qawmi Madrasas face in Bangladesh?**

### **Appendix Number 4: Questions for the Students**

- **What do you know about the Padma Bridge? Say 5 sentences.**
- **Change the speech of the given sentence: “Majid said Sajid, “where are you going tonight?” (narration)**
- **Transform the given sentence from Compound to Complex; “Kill by the Gun or die by the Gun”**
- **Make a sentence with the given Preposition; “Merge with”**
- **Translate this sentence; “The baby is laughing”**
- **Voice change; “Never tell a lie”**

### **Appendix Number 5: Pictures**

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