

Exploring a Multifaceted Syllabus Design for Teaching Short Surahs of Qur'an to Novice-Non-Arabic-Speaking Muslims

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Abstract

The paper's aim is to propose a design a syllabus for the new Muslims who have recently converted to Islam. The syllabus is multifaceted, addressing the basic linguistic, stylistic, and lexical features of 3 surahs (chapters) in the holy book in addition to highlighting the most basic information a new Muslim has to know about the sacred book. These features have been presented and graded according to the needs of the students (new Muslims). Three Surahs¹ (Al Fatihah), (Al Ikhlas), and (Al Nasr) will be presented in their translated and transliterated forms in relation to their original Arabic texts, so as to understand these Arabic words when students listen or try to practice them in their daily five prayers. In addition, a practicum session will be given to students in which they apply what they have learned through the first Surah (Al Fatihah). The practicum session includes the analysis of this Surah using the main seven features presented in the theoretical section. Versions of pre and post questionnaires will be administered with the syllabus to the students to test how far they have benefited from this course.

Keywords: ESP for Teaching Qur'an- Linguistic Analysis of Surahs- Stylistic Analysis of Surahs-Lexical Analysis of Surahs- Syllabus Format- Analysis of Surah (Al Fatihah), Non-Native Arabic-Speaking-Muslims-NNASM

1. Introduction

The non-native-Arabic-Muslim-speakers-NNASM¹ population is about 80 % of Muslims' population ("Arab people", 2012). Since it is obligatory for each Muslim to recite the Qur'an in Arabic during their daily prayers, several researchers dedicated their projects to teach the phonological rules of the Arabic language in the context of the Qur'an (Elhadj, Aoun-Allah et al. 2012, Alduais 2013). Not only that, but they have also tried to simplify the meaning of the Qur'anic Surahs through translating them either in English, which is an international language, or in the mother tongue of the learners, as well as breaking them down into phrases rather than full sentences, so that they could be easily studied. This effort gave rise to a demographic segment of adult students who are interested in a language for specific purposes programs that would help them learn a closed set of vocabularies and syntactic rules in the context of the Qur'an, so that they would be able to recall the idiomatic translation in English or in their native language while they read or listen to the Qur'an. However, few researches have been conducted to design a whole syllabus which is based on the basic Qur'anic knowledge that new Muslims need to understand their new life as novice students and which is ordered from the most needed to the list. Worst ever, most researchers and websites that include Qur'an's basic knowledge seem to be scattered and not unified in one syllabus or program; some of them are dedicated to translated versions and semantic meanings of the holy book, while others are dedicated to stylistics and grammatical features. Hence, using a critical approach to syllabus design, this paper attempts to design a syllabus that combines basic grammatical/ stylistic features and translated version of some Surahs. In so doing, the study first introduces an overview of ESP and the characteristics of ESP courses. Then, it introduces ESP for specific aim syllabus design and draws the attention on ESP for teaching Qur'an as an example of it. After presenting the main general features of ESP and ESP for teaching Qur'an with its positive pedagogical effects, the paper moves to describe in more details the main body of the suggested syllabus which includes: linguistic features of Qur'an Surahs, the stylistic features of these Surahs, and finally the lexical features of them. In the last section of the paper, the suggested syllabus format is presented using Munby's needs analysis approach. After the syllabus theoretical section, a practicum section is introduced which includes teaching Surah (Al Fatihah) as a model that could be followed in teaching other short Surahs.

¹A Surah (also spelled Sura in Arabic) is a "chapter of the Qur'an, traditionally arranged roughly in order of decreasing length. Each Surah is named for a word or name mentioned in one of its ayat (sections)." (Urban Dictionary, n.d. para. 1)

Finally, the paper concludes with an overall conclusion that summarizes the main parts of the suggested syllabus with a pre and post questionnaire that could be used by teachers all over the world.

2. Literature Review

2.1 An Overview of ESP

2.1.1 Conceptualization of Learning in ESP: Historical Roots

Marshall (1992) and Mayer (1996) conducted a study in which they traced how the perception of learning in ESP has developed throughout time. They started with ESP learning as related to work oriented classrooms. This idea was derived from behaviourists since learning was restricted to acquisition of facts, and concepts through drills. ESP has started in the 60s, when learning began to be perceived as a learning oriented process. Learning involves constructing three types of schemas (memory objects, mental models, and cognitive fields (Power, Nuzzi *et al.* 2007) that interact during the learning process. Then in 80s, language learning has changed into reconstructing old knowledge with new one under the cognitive constructivist perspective initiated by Piaget. Then between 80s and 90s, learning became more related to combining lesson, knowledge, role, and communication in the classroom context (cited in Wang, 2008).

2.1.1.1 Characteristics of ESP Courses

The notion of a language with specific characteristics began in the sixties and the early seventies, associated with the research of Halliday, Macintosh and Strevens (1964) (as cited in (Hyland, 2007). Then, many distinguished linguists started to conduct studies related to this field such as Widdowson who stated that “ESP is simply a matter of describing a particular area of language and then using this description as a course specification to impart to students the necessary restricted competence with this particular area” (1983: 10).

English for Specific Purposes (ESPs) is a learner-centred approach to teaching English as a foreign or second language. Kennedy and Bolitho (1984: 3) stated that ESP is “based on an investigation of the purposes of the learner and the set of communicative needs arising from these purposes”. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) consider ESP an approach not a product. They state that ESP is an approach which is based on what the learner needs. The learner wishes to learn English of a particular field, because of some needs. These needs are diverse depending on the purpose of the learner. The main requirement of an ESP approach is to have Needs Analysis (NA), because it involves the awareness of a target situation. However, it is not enough to consider NA as an only parameter to be considered by the ESP teacher when evaluating an ESP course. There are other major factors that have to be taken into consideration, such as construction of goals and objectives, beside content selection, and expansion of ESP materials. “The dominant assumption in the field of ESP has been that if the needs of a group of English language students can be accurately specified, then this identification can be used to establish the content of a language syllabus that will meet these needs” (Bedjaou and Allal, 2012: 1).

There are three types of ESP courses according to Carver (1983) and they are: English as a restricted language, English for Academic Purposes, and English with specific topics. The first type is a language shared between a group of people in the work place or for a particular purpose. The second type is divided into three main sections: English for Science and Technology, English for Business and Economics, and English for social studies. Each section is divided into two subsections: English for Academic Purposes, and English for Occupational Purposes. The last type is English with specific topic; it happens when the focus shifts from purpose to the topic. This study, which is ESP for Teaching Short Surahs of Qur’an might be an example of English as a restricted language since it analyses the main features of Qur’anic language which is shared among Muslims only.

2.1.1.2 Three Main Features of ESP Courses

There are three main components that should be taken into account in any ESP course. These are authentic material, purpose related orientation, and self-direction (Carver, 1983). In addition, purpose related orientation means that the ESP course has to include certain communicative tasks that serve the target; for example, students should practice listening and speaking in certain ways that fulfil the purpose of learning. Finally, self-direction which means that ESP courses aim to transform students into users; in order for that to happen, students must have the freedom to decide when, how, and what they will study. This study highly emphasizes these previous features since it is authentic as it represents some short Surahs as examples through which the course aims are achieved, and it is assumed that learner’s English language proficiency is between medium to high. In addition, as an added value to the course, the aims go beyond the ESP parameter to include further purposes such as reciting short Surahs and understanding them at the same time, and as thus, teaching strategy should emphasize on both reading and listening skills both in English (i.e. for the ESP) and in Arabic (as an added value to the course) more than the other two skills.

2.1.1.3 The Major Differences between ESP and EGP

Whenever English language is used as a second language for the purpose of enabling students to under certain subjects or disciplines which the students might be using in the future, the term used is EGP or in an English-speaking country, it is typically called ESL or in a non- speaking country as EFL (English as a Foreign Language). On the other hand, if the language is used to meet the needs of particular people who want to use the language to reach particular vocational and educational goals, then we are talking about ESP, in which students need to use the language outside the classroom in order to fulfil certain demands (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). In addition, what differentiates ESP from General English is not the concept of having a need that has to be met but *an awareness of that need* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The two last statements of Hutchinson and Waters suggests that in an ESP situation, the awareness of learner

needs is of great importance. It is at a much higher level than in EGP. In essence, ESP is clearly distinguished from general English in that it is based on a close analysis of the learners' communicative needs for a specific occupation or academic purpose, as well as a detailed analysis of the language of that occupation or activity (Strevens, 1980). Unlike the situation with general English courses, in an ESP course, English is taught "not as an end in itself but as an essential means to a clearly definable goal" (Mackay and Mountford, 1978, p.28), and it is rather taught "for a clearly utilitarian purpose of which there is not doubt" (Mackay, cited in Robinson, 1980, p.6).

2.1.1.4 The Meaning of the Term (Specific) in ESP

It should be noted that the word (specific) in ESP could be used in two different terms (specific language) and (specified aim). Mackay and Mountford (1978) explain the idea of a special language in the following definition:

"The only practical way in which we can understand the notion of special language is as a restricted repertoire of words and expressions selected from the whole language because that restricted repertoire covers every requirement within a well-defined context, task, or vocation (p: 4)."

While if we consider the term (specific aim), we will notice that scholars tend to associate the word aim with (specific) or (special) to show that the aim is not to qualify or study the language but to highlight the purpose of studying it. "It specifies the focus on certain features of the language that are immediately associated with the restricted use of the target language which is required by the learner in order to achieve a particular purpose" (Munby, 1978, p: 2). "Consequently, the focus of the word special in ESP in this case ought to be for the purpose for which students learn and not on the specific jargon or registers they learn." (Gatehouse, 1999, para. 25).

This study is mainly ESP for specific aim since it focuses on specific features of Qur'anic language that new Muslims need to use in their daily prayers and daily lives; not the whole Qur'anic language which could be quite difficult for them to learn due to the complexity and high level processing required in terms of both language proficiency and meaning comprehension. In general, they learn some parts of the language to reach a goal, and not to be fully aware of the language itself.

2.1.1.5 ESP for (Specific Aim) Syllabus Design

There have been so many studies with several ESP approaches that suggest using certain types of needs analysis criteria that should be done before designing the syllabus as a prerequisite stage; one of them is Munby's Model (1978) in which initial needs analysis is based on learner's real world communicative requirements, thus, prepare them to use the language for certain intended purposes. It consists of nine main components and they are: participants, purposive domain, setting, interaction, instrumentality, dialect, target level, communicative event, and communicative key (Munby, 1978).

After gathering these main needs through a questionnaire or an interview or any other data collection procedure, teachers have to start setting the basis of their ESP syllabuses. Prabhu defines syllabus as: "specification of what is to be learnt" (1987, p: 89). Another definition is "a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level." (cited in Wang, 2008). However, due to the different definitions associated with the syllabus, it can be said that the syllabus has to be representative of the originator's ideas and notions about language learning in a particular context.

If one considers designing an ESP course, he/she should follow a certain criteria to design the syllabus of the course. Such criteria should include the following: general aims and specific objectives, rationale, an inventory of language items, an indication to entry and mastery level, and a description of teaching methodology. Furthermore, it should include explanations for students and teachers, indication of the time distribution, assessment procedures, indication of non-linguistic content, and variation requirements. Selection of syllabus sections depends on the goal of teaching, the needs of learners, and time through which this study should be done. In general, syllabus design should cover the three factors of: i) language description, ii) learning theories, and iii) needs analysis (Tahir, n.d.).

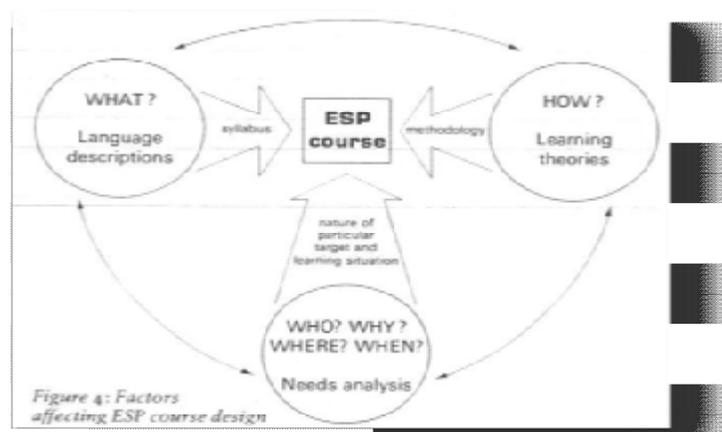


Figure 1 (Tahir,n.d.,p:125)

As it is shown in the previous figure, any ESP course is highly affected by three main elements: syllabus which includes language descriptions, a methodology which is all about learning theories, and finally the nature of particular target and learning situation. The last element which is the nature of particular target and learning situation is concerned with the people to whom the course is given (who?), the reason behind giving such courses (Why?), the location where the course is taking place (Where?) plus the time in which such course is given.

Few ESP courses have been done to address the needs of those who want to understand and read Qur'an which is the holy book of Muslims. There is a vast majority of people who have just converted to Islam and they need to understand the meaning, grammar, and style of Qur'an since they will recite a few of these surahs in their daily prayers. Various computer softwares and books are quite helpful in addressing the needs of these people, but few or rarely one can find a particular syllabus that is designed to meet their demands as new Muslims. Therefore, some English for specific purposes researches have gathered the needs of these people and listed them in a syllabus to be given in particular courses.

2.1.1.7 Some Previous Studies done in Understanding Qur'anic Form

According to Islam, it is an essential duty for every man, woman, and child to read and, at the same time, understand the Qur'an according to his or her own capability. Muslims consider Qur'an as a sacred book and an open book which challenges all humanity; "they see Qur'an as an invitation from God to all human beings to use their intellect, to reason out this truth, having been created and endowed with adequate intellectual faculties to do this." (Al Menor, n.d., p: 3). Thus, the Qur'an is considered a miracle in Islamic concepts, because no human being can compose something similar to it "as it lies outside the productive capacity of the Arabic language." (Tzortiz, n.d., para 12). The Arabic language with all its grammatical, lexical, and semantic nature failed to produce something similar to this holy book. Forster Fitzgerald Arbuthnot, who was a British Orientalist and translator said:

"... and that though several attempts have been made to produce a work equal to it as far as elegant writing is concerned, none has as yet succeeded." (Arbuthnot, 1885, p: 5).

Reza Adel (2011) in his article "The Qur'an as Intertext: A Critical Reflection" unfolds the idea that this text is unlike any similar writing; indeed not even one that unbelievers couldn't make any similar writing to it. It is a book that is handed down by the same prophet, so it has a logical unity. As what Kramani (1999) stated "a one book; it is not a collection of very different writings." (p :45). It has a unique form that Western scholars classify it as "Saj" such as Nicholson (1930, p. 159) who stated that "the style of the Koran is modeled upon *saj* or rhymed prose.... but with such freedom that it may freely be described as original." While Arab scholars and linguists such as Abd al- Jabbar (1960), al-Rummani (1956), al- Khatibi (1953) and al-Baqillani (1968) stated that the Qur'an does not contain *saj* and is different from any type of *saj*. Their reason is that Qur'an uses literary and linguistic devices in such a unique way that has never been applied before; it is neither a prose nor poetry (Reza Adel and Massoum, 2011).

In his analysis of "Al-Fatihah," Reza Adel states that the first Surah of the Qur'an, (Al-Fatihah) is 'the opening', which also regularly begins Muslim prayer. Some Muslim authors see in it the foundation, the sum and the embodiment of the Qur'an. According to them, it consists of all the essential principles laid down in the Qur'an such as:

"the principle of God's oneness and uniqueness, of His being the originator and fosterer of the universe, the fount of all life-giving grace; the One to whom man is ultimately responsible, the only power that can really guide and help; the call to righteous action in the life of this world; the principle of life after death and of the organic consequences of man's actions and behaviour; the principle of guidance through God's message-bearers and, flowing from it, the principle of the continuity of all true religions; and, finally the need for voluntary self-surrender to the will of the Supreme Being and, thus, for worshipping him alone." (Asad, n.d., para.1).

At the end of his article, Reza Adel listed the main differences between the Quran and *saj* according to Stewart (2008) and they are: greater tendency to mono rhyme, inexact rhyme, and higher frequency of rhetorical features (Reza Adel and Maasoum, 2011, p: 49).

2.1.1.8 The Application of Qur'anic Forms for Pedagogical Purposes

Dr. Al Menoar has conducted a research called "Qur'anic Verses in English for Academic Purposes", in which she tested the effectiveness of using Quran's figurative language in ESL classrooms. In her study, she stated that Qur'an is rich with imagery which is a term that stands for the use of language to represent thoughts, ideas, feelings, objects, and actions. "Qur'anic images could be visual (related to the eye), tactile (touch), olfactory (smell), and auditory (hearing). Some of these images could be conveyed through using metaphors, symbols, and similes." (Al Menor, 2009, p: 3).

According to Al Menor (2009), she argues that any Muslim has to understand figurative language in order to realize the deeper meaning of the message of Qur'an. She briefly listed the main advantages of understanding the figurative language of the Qur'an. First, it helps students to imagine what is mentioned in the Qur'an so that they would be encouraged to do good manners and disdain sinful ones. Second, it offers a suitable teaching plan, such as comparing and contrasting Qur'anic images. Third, it combines both the necessity to understand the Qur'an and the pleasure of

discovering the figurative language through translating it into L1 or English. Finally, it attracts students' attention since it is related to a very sacred book that they are all eager to understand. She concluded her study with a recommendation to use English language translations of the meaning of the Qur'an, which is a sample of a rich literary text, for teaching figurative language, specifically imagery, to ESL students at the undergraduate level (Al Menor, 2009).

There is also a study called "Qur'anic Images in English and the Senses", in which Al Menor stated that there are two major benefits of applying Qur'anic images in English classrooms and they are: teaching literature through the stylistic method of analysing the literary and linguistic features of Qur'anic verses, and the teaching of imagery using Qur'anic images (Al Menor, n.d.).

Throughout Al Menor's previous study, the teacher is introduced to several teaching strategies and techniques that would enable him or her to teach "senses" through Qur'anic verses. Such strategies could be forcing the students to find the simile, metaphor and other imaginary forms, and then decide whether it is descriptive or figurative (related to the senses). In this way, students will be exposed to wide varieties of images that would both improve their lexical level and figurative style. Lesson plans are provided along with certain teaching materials that could be quite helpful to teachers (Al Menor, n.d.). However, such courses should be given to those who are quite fluent in English as the challenges to understand translated words could be highly demanding.

2.1.1.9 Beneficial Techniques of Teaching Qur'an in ESP Courses

2.1.1.9.1 The Effectiveness of Using Translated Qur'an in ESP Courses

Several general benefits could be gained from using translated materials. According to Alan Duff (1996), using translated materials, mainly develop three qualities in students and they are: flexibility which trains the students to choose, search and explore the words, accuracy which is related to the search for the most suitable words, and finally clarity which is shown when the learner tries to convey what is meant. In addition, the choice of words, tone and word order along with pronunciation are influenced by one language on the other. When this sort of influence is known among learners, the teacher can correct errors that usually occur suddenly and unintentionally. In addition, the students can also be connected with the whole knowledge (Duff, 1989).

Many scholars' contributions in English for specific Islamic purposes have dedicated their researches to translate the Surahs of the holy book to thousands of languages around the world. The use of translated materials can be introduced to reach a particular purpose, such as: reciting Arabic Surah and understanding them at the same time. In addition, using these translated materials can assist the teacher to achieve best results if they are applied to suitable approaches, exercises, and activities. There are so many researches that have been dedicated to translating this sacred book into English so that NNASM would be able to understand its meaning, such as Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English language translation of the meaning of the Quran (The Holy Quran, n.d.).

According to Al Menor, English translated version of the Qur'an consists of a rich variety of linguistic features. Using the English language for the purpose of reading Qur'an as literary text for the teaching of literature in English language, especially at Islamic organizations, plus using the stylistic approach of these texts in classrooms are new and inventive contributions to the pedagogy of English language teaching (Al Menor, 2010). Thus, the use of translated materials can be provided purposefully and imaginatively into the language of the classrooms. Furthermore, applying translated materials can "invite speculation and discussion, because there is rarely a right answer", thus the atmosphere of the classrooms can be less tensed and more relaxed (Al Menor, 2010, p: 72). If the text that the teacher provides to the learner can be very short and at the same time can be used to serve both discussion and reading throughout the class period of time, it would lead to various beneficial learning outcomes (Al Menor, 2010).

3. Linguistic Analysis of Qur'an's Surahs

3.1 A Brief Introduction into the Notion of (Iqraa)

Before going in depth with the major linguistic features of the Qur'an, it is very important to introduce the students to the notion of *Iqraa* which is a major concept in Islamic culture. *Iqraa* is the first word that was revealed to the Prophet Mohamed Peace be Upon Him, and it means to order someone to read. It is a word that came in the verses of Surah "Iqraa" that were revealed to the prophet over fourteen hundred years ago. The prophet Mohamed was meditating in a cave when suddenly Gabriel came and revealed these verses to him. Not being able to read or write, the prophet was really scared to receive the beginning of a book that would deal with difficult concepts of life, such as law, economics, spirituality, belief and almost every aspect related to the human beings. He went scared to his wife Khadija, his wife, asking her to help him to overcome this sudden overwhelming experience (Ali, n.d.). Introducing this concept to novice Muslims should be a priority to any instructor who wishes to teach this course.

3.2 The Grammatical Structure of Quran's Surahs

3.2.1 The Concept of Grammatical Shifts for Rhetorical Purposes

This feature is an essential characteristic that improves the expressions of literary texts and achieves the communicative goals. These shifts include changes in number, in person, in tense, in addressee and case marker; for example using a noun in a place of a pronoun (Tzortzis, n.d.). This following verse clearly shows this distinctive grammatical feature:

“There is no good in most of their secret talk, only in commanding charity, or good, or reconciliation between people. To anyone who does these things, seeking to please God, We shall give a rich reward.” Surah Al Nisa (The women, 4): 114.

In the previous verse, this complex rhetorical feature is shown; it changes from talking about Allah in the third person to Allah himself speaking in the first plural of majesty. These shifts are generated from the dynamic style of Qur’an as stated in Neal Robinson’s statement mentioned in his book “Discovering the Qur’an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text” which says that these grammatical shifts used in the Qur’an are a very effective rhetorical device. The Qur’an is the only form of Arabic prose that used this device in a complex manner” (Robinson, 2004, p: 37,38).

3.2.2 Derivation of Words and Verbs

In the Qur’an, verbs and other words are taken from original words through a system called derivation. They are mainly parts of infinitive verbs that are not more than three to four letters. The basic rule in Qur’an is that the majority of words are taken from three roots or four root letters. The Arabic letters (Fa), (Ayn), (lam) are used in different combinations to make several verb forms such as (Fa-Aa-la) which means “to do”. Arabic roots convey a basic meaning which is flexible enough to add more complex semantic concepts which could be verbs or nouns. Such roots are similar to the following:

A. F-a-3-a-l-a **فعل**

It is a form (1) root verb which is in a transitive form which needs an object. For example: Kataba (means wrote). He wrote something.

B. F-a-3-3-a-l-a

It is a form (2) root verb which means “make do” something like “to teach.” For example: Darrasa which means to teach

C. F-aa-3-a-L-a

It is a form (3) root verb and means causative (to be) or mutual action (he made him do the same) example like shahada (Qur’anic Arabic Corpus, n.d.).

3.2.3 Singular and Plural Words

It is mainly concerned with the fact that Allah is the Creator who knows the nature of human beings, so how we think or feel is highly shown in His choice of plural and singular forms.

If we consider the following verse (7) from Surah (Al Baqarah):

“Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, (i.e. they are closed from accepting Allah’s Guidance, and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be a great torment.”

We notice that whenever God uses the word “Samaa” which means hears, He uses it in the singular form, whereas (hearts) and (eyes) are used in the plural. That is because hearts and eyes can be influenced by the social external factors, whereas the hearing is a personal choice that affects both how we feel and see things around us (Tzortzis, n.d.).

3.2.4 The Stylistic Features of Surahs

3.2.5 The Construction of the Holy Book

The Qur’an is a single book, and it has a logical unity as it is passed by one and the same prophet within twenty-two years despite differences in period and style. It was organized in order according to length in 114 sections represented by the Arabic term *Surah*, and its plural form is *Suwar*. These Surahs consist of verses, the smallest textual units are “ayah”: and the plural form of “ayah” is “ayat”(Tzortzis, n.d.).

The Qur’an is truly unique in composition, because it is neither prose nor poetry. One of the main reasons for having this unique form is because of mixing metrical and non-metrical composition (Tzortzis, n.d.). This view is also supported by the famous Arabic Literary scholar Arthur J. Arberry “For the Koran is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both” (1998, p: 16). Regarding the frequency of rhetorical features, “the Qur’an exhibits an unparalleled frequency of rhetorical features, surpassing any other Arabic text, classical or modern. The use of rhetoric in the Qur’an stands out from any type of discourse (Abdul-Raof, 2000, p. 95-137; 2003, p. 265-398). What we can conclude from that is that the nature of this holy book, both in terms of meaning and form cannot be subject to textual analysis, because if textual analysis is going to take every text back to an earlier point in history, the history itself is a proof to the ever innovation, individuality, and miraculousness of this book. That also proves that it has come from God and the carrier of this holy message is without any hesitation, Mohammad, peace be upon him (Reza Adel, 2011).

3.2.6 Qur'anic Precision

This is one of the most unique stylistic features of the Qur'an, since we can see that this book is very accurate in the way that the order of the words themselves are not a matter of luck, but they are put in a particular order to serve a particular purpose. For example, if we look at the following verse:

“He knows that which goes into the earth and that which comes forth from it, and that which descends from the heaven and that which ascends to it. And He is the Most Merciful, the Oft-Forgiving.” Surah Saba 34:1-2.

We find two adjectives “the Most Merciful” and the “Oft-Forgiving”. We would notice that (Al Raheem) which means Most Merciful is mentioned before (Al- Ghafoor) which means oft forgiving; so why do you think that this happens? The answer is that when Allah almighty says “He knows that which goes into earth”, He meant the seeds, insects, human dead bodies, and everything that goes inside the earth. Those buried creatures, humans or animals, need Allah's Mercy. Then when Allah mentions “and that which comes forth from it”, He means everything that comes out of the earth, such as humans' souls after death; those souls or anything that comes out of the earth need Allah's forgiveness. That's why Al Raheem was mentioned before Al Ghafoor in this verse. (Tzortzis, n.d.).

3.2.7 Maintenance of the Rhythm

The verses in Surahs usually end with similar letters and sounds, such as in the story of Prophet Moses and his brother Aaron. Prophet Moses is mentioned together with his brother prophet Harun in Surah (A'raaf), verses 121 and 122 we read:

“They said: (we believe in the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and the exists). The lord of Moses and Aaron.”

So, we can see the name of Prophet Moses was before Aaron in most of the verses to keep the last letter (noon) as an ending letter in most verses thus preserve the rhythm of the Surah. (Tzortzis, n.d.).

3.2.8 Lexical Features of Surahs

3.2.8.1 Qur'an Imagery and Word Choice

If we look at the following verse, we will understand how beautiful the words in the Quran are presented to capture the attention of the readers. Allah says in Surah Al Hajj, verse 31:

“... and whoever assigns partners to Allah, it is as if he had fallen from the sky and the birds had snatched him or the wind had thrown him to a far off place.”

This passage represents a scene of a person who falls down from the sky coming from a great height and broken into pieces or he may be removed away by the wind or thrown into an endless depth. The choice of words highly depends on the intensity of the images that should be presented through it. (Tzortzis, n.d.).

3.2.8.2 A Specific and a General Glossary list

Here, we would rather divide the glossary that should be presented to students into two main sections (a general glossary and a specific one):

3.2.8.2.1 A General Glossary

1. *In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, The Merciful: (Besme llahi Al Rahman Al Raheem).*

It is a holy phrase mentioned at the beginning of each Surah; except one Surah which is Surah (Al Taubah), which starts without saying this holy phrase (Shaft, 2008).

2. *“Sadaqa Allahu Al-`Azim”* is a common expression said after finishing the Surah. It is not mentioned in the Sunnah, but it is not prohibited. Al-Qurtubi prefaced his *Tafsir* by quoting Al-Hakim At-Tirmidhi as saying that one of the ethics of reciting the Qur'an is for one to say when he/she finishes the recitation, “True are the words of Almighty Allah” or a similar expression of the same meanings, confirming all what Allah says (in the Qur'an), and bearing witness that the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) has carried this message to all people (cited in “Saying Sadaqa Allahu Al-`Azim”, n.d., para.5). An example of this is to say, “Almighty Allah has spoken the truth and His honourable Messenger has conveyed it.” And then to confirm it by saying, “You have spoken the truth, O our Lord; You sent it (i.e., the message) to Your Messengers, and we testify that this is true. O Allah, make us of those who testify to the truth, and then the reciter is supposed to make *du`a`* with whatever he (or she) wishes (cited in “Saying Sadaqa Allahu Al-`Azim”, n.d., para.4.).

3.2.8.2.2 A Specific Glossary

These words are taken from the three short Surahs that I have chosen to be part of the practicum section; and they are “Al Faithah”, “Al Iklhas”, and “Al Nasr”. Any word could be selected and chosen depending on what the students need to understand.

Table 1. A Specific Glossary of Islamic Words

The word	Meaning
A) Al Fatihah	
1./bism-il-lah/	1. It is derived from /sumuww/ with the meaning of (height) and (elevation).
2./Arr-ahman/	2. Which means (The Beneficent)
3./Arr-him/	3. Which means (The Merciful)
4./Al Hamdullellah Rabby Al alameen/	4. which means (All praise is only Allah's)
5./Maleki Yaomi Eldeen/	5. The Lord of the Worlds; "It seems that someone has asked why all praise is (only) <i>Allah's</i> and the response is that it is for the reason that <i>'He is the Lord of the Worlds'</i> ". (Cited in Surah Al Fatihah, Chapter1, n.d., para. 55)
B) Al Nasr (Surah Al Nasr, n.d.)	
1. /Idha ja a nasr Ullahi wa-l-fathu/	1. When Allah's succour and the triumph cometh
2./Wa ra'ait an-nasa yadkhuluna- fi-din-illahi afwaja/	2. And thou seest mankind entering the religion of Allah in troops
3./Fa-sabbih bi-hamdi Rabbi-ka wa-staghfir-hu/	3. Then hymn the praises of thy Lord, and seek forgiveness of Him
4./Inna-hu kana tawwaba/	4. Lo! He is ever ready to show mercy
C) Al Ikhlas (Juma, 2003)	
1. /Qul Hu-walaahu 'Ahad/	1. Say: He is Allah, the Monoreal!
2./Allahus-Samad;/	2. Allah (the Monoreal) is Eternal
3./Lam yalid, wa lam yuulad;/	3. The Monoreal does not take or give birth.
4./Walam yakul-la-Huu kufuwaw 'ahad./	4. And there is none comparable to the Monoreal.

4. Methodology

Under the notion of "Needs Analysis", several approaches could be used such as: target- situation analysis, present-situation analysis, and learning situation analysis. The Target situation approach starts with identifying the target situation and then doing certain tasks that are related to this situation such as tasks related to linguistic features and knowledge requirement of that situation. The best framework that represents this situation is Munby's framework (1978). The present situation approach is the one which focuses on the starting point of learning and the destination between the starting point and the target one. Finally, the last framework is the learning framework which is not only related to target goal, but also needs, potentials, and constraints of the learning (Ahmed, 2012).

4.1 Munby's Needs Analysis

According to Munby's needs analysis, there are nine main components of an adequate needs analysis; they are: participants, purposive domain, setting, interaction, instrumentality, dialect, target level, communicative event, and profile. If we try to relate them to this particular topic which is teaching short Surah's of Qur'an to NNASM, we would find the following:

4.2 Participants

It is preferable to ask the students to identify their identity, age, sex, nationality, place of residence, language, mother tongue, present level/command of the target language, present level of Qur'anic language (ex: zero, false beginner, elementary etc.), and if they know other languages or not.

4.3 Purposive Domain

There are mainly two main purposive domains and they are: occupational and educational. In this paper, the purpose is educational since it aims to teach the students the basic features of the Quran (grammatical, stylistical, and lexical) and it helps them to recite three main Surahs in their daily prayers, and understand them at the same time.

4.5 Settings (time and place)

Specify the time, duration, place, country, and frequency. This topic could be taught at any place and at any time since it is not restricted to a particular workplace or a company.

4.6 Interaction

The roles in which the participants will find themselves in terms of status, social relationship and age group; such as role-set identity which includes the number (whether it is an individual, small group or large group). Also, specify age group, whether they are elderly, adult, adolescence, child and mixed; in addition to sex, nationality, and social relationships. Usually, those who should take this particular course should be adults, because according to Ahmed (2012) these ESP courses are “likely to be designed for adult students either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work institution” (p: 115).

4.7 Instrumentality

There are two types of instrumental mediums; these are medium of communication and channel of communication. The medium of communication should be both written and spoken, while the channel of communication is preferable to be face to face.

4.8 Dialect

Choose the best dialect that would both suit the students and could be easily understood. For example, the standard American dialect could be used to teach the topic. It is better to avoid old English or any other difficult dialects.

4.9 Target Level

The target level that should be achieved through teaching this course is to know the basics of the Qur’anic language as it is expected that those novice students will acquire basic to medium level of Qur’anic language proficiency.

4.10 Communicative Event

Communicative event means the manner through which language has to be carried out; such as: formal, informal, plus a range of attitudes. In this course, as the topic is serious and related to a religious topic, the communicative event should be formal to cope with the topic presented.

4.11 Profile

The profile is concerned with *what the students need to be able to do*. Mainly, in this course, the students need to be able to do three main things: first, recite the three Surahs in Arabic so the emphasis should be on pronunciation. Second, understand the meaning of these Surahs. Third, recognize the main grammatical, stylistic, and lexical features of these Surahs.

4.12 Syllabus Format

4.12.1 General Course Aim

This ESP course is an intermediate/high level course aiming to *build* and further *improve* Qur’anic language among novice NNASM students covering the basic knowledge that new Muslims need to know. It aims to assist novice Muslims to recite short Surah of Qur’an in their daily prayers, and understand them at the same time. It can be presented in a short or a long duration of days (around 1 to 2 hours of instruction) each week depending on the depth of the materials provided.

4.13 Rationale

The necessity of having such course is driven by the fact that not so many teaching materials are available in the field of religion; especially in addressing new NNASM who struggle with understanding the language of the holy book along with the meaning of certain Surahs. Thus, to cover their initial demands, this paper is intended to list the basic needs of these people using a simplified English language in order to reach the largest group of students around the world.

4.14 The Organization of the Syllabus Content

The list is divided according to certain topics that the researcher believes are important for these students to know. The organization of the syllabus contents moves from general to specific; it initially unfolds the general concepts related to this sacred book before it gets deeper into specific linguistic, stylistic, and lexical features of surahs. If these topics are presented in relation to student’s needs analysis results, it would be more adequate. That means that if we ask the students in the pre-syllabus questionnaire, what are the most important topics that they need to learn in relation to the Qur’an, it will give us a clearer vision of what the syllabus should include and in what order.

4.15 Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Know the notion of “Iqra’a” in the Islamic concept
2. Read three short Surahs in Arabic language.
3. Differentiate the special grammatical features of Qur’an from other general grammatical features.
4. Learn some of the stylistic features of the Qur’an.
5. Understand the meaning of the main words and expressions used in three short surahs (Al Fatihah), (Al –Ikhlas), and (Al Nasr).
6. Memorize a glossary of main words and expressions mentioned in the three short Surahs.
7. Practice and apply their understanding of the lesson through analyzing surah (Al Fatihah), which is presented as a model.

4.15 An indication of Entry Level

Students should be quite competent in the English language as the level of English proficiency should range between medium to fluent. Low level English students would struggle with understanding the course, because of the high and quite complex linguistic features of the Qur'an.

4.16 Teaching Methodology

Teachers should be aware that teaching such sensitive topic is not as easy as any other topics, because they have to be adequate and accurate when they explain the meaning of the words, and they have to understand that students would find some difficulties at the beginning. Therefore, the slower the teaching practice, the better so that students would thoroughly grasp each idea in a deep manner. In addition, emphasis should be on teaching all the four skills; but special focus should be dedicated to reading and listening. Finally, teaching an issue which is a part of a Muslim's daily life should be delivered in an interesting, direct, and in the point manner. Having extra activities would be enriching in terms of learning outcomes.

4.16.1 Lessons & Suggested Time Duration

This short course would last for 6 days.

Table 2. List of Short Courses in Isamic Topic

Course part	Topics	Time
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the notion of "Iqraa" Reading the three short Surahs (Al Fatiha), (Al Nasr), and (AL Ikhlas) and understand their meaning. Introducing the general and specific word list glossary. 	1-2 hours depending on the length of the materials presented
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grammatical Shifts for Rhetorical purposes The system of derivation of words and verbs 	1 hour (time varies from one classroom to the other).
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Unique singular and plural forms of Qur'an The Construction of the holy book 	40 minutes (time varies from one classroom to the other).
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Qur'anic Precision Maintenance of the Rhythm 	40 minutes (time varies from one classroom to the other)
5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Qur'anic Imagery and word choice A General and a specific Glossary lists 	40 Minutes (time varies from one classroom to the other)
6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Practicum session: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Surah (Al Fatihah) 	50 minutes (adjustable to change)

It should be noted that timings presented in table (2) could be changed according to pedagogical needs of the teacher and the needs of the students themselves. If they have a basic idea of one of the concepts presented, it is advised to shift to another topic and spend more time on it.

4.16.2 Course Activities and Requirements

Activities could include the following: reading & reciting short Surahs, group discussion, filling pre and post questionnaires, and memorizing certain words in daily bases. Whereas, requirements could include: attendance, participation, along with memorizing the main important lexis. Two versions of pre and post questionnaires will be included in the appendix section.

4.16.3 Teaching Strategies

1. Teaching will focus on two main parts theoretical and practical parts of teaching Surahs of Qur'an.
2. The theoretical parts will be thoroughly based on grammatical, stylistic, and lexical features of the Qur'an.
3. Reading and Listening skills should be highly practiced as they are more important in this course than writing and speaking.
4. In order to emphasize these features, a practical session will be applied. Surah (Al Fatihah) will be analyzed using the main features presented in the theoretical section.
5. Careful selection of suitable activities that suit the level of students and main pedagogical goals should be done in order to enhance the Qur'anic language of learners.

4.16.4 Materials

The materials are open to teachers to choose whatever seems more appealing to use; however, it is recommended not to overload students with lots of materials as they need to focus on this book and not be distracted. Suggestions of certain materials are like: PowerPoint presentation and handouts.

4.16.5 Practicum Session

A model lesson plan is tailored through Surah (Al Fatihah), and could be applied when teaching the other two Surahs. The essence of having this section is very important as it helps students to practice all what they have learned earlier in the theoretical section.

Table 3. A Model Lesson Plan Reading & Meaning in Islamic Topics

Reading	Meaning
1. <i>Bismillah Ar-Rahmaan Ar-Raheem</i>	1. In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.
2. <i>Al-hamdu lillahi Rabb il-'alamin</i>	2. Praise be to Allah, The Lord of the Worlds:
3. <i>Ar-Rahmaan Ar-Raheem</i>	3. The Beneficent, the Merciful:
4. <i>Maliki yawmi-d-Din</i>	4. Owner of the Day of Judgement.
5. <i>Iyyaa-ka na'budu wa iyyaa-ka nasta'in</i>	5. You (alone) we worship; and You (alone) we ask for help.
6. <i>Ihdina-sirat al-mustaqim</i>	6. Guide us to the Straight Path:
7. <i>Siraat al-ladhina an'amta 'alai-him</i>	7. The path of those whom. You have blessed
8. <i>Ghair il-Maghduubi 'alai-him wa la-d-daallin</i>	8. Not (the path) of those who earned Your anger nor of those who went astray

It is important to note that students must read (recite) the Surah several times until they get used to the pronunciation of its words. Knowing how to read this Surah, in particular, is important as they have to read it in daily bases while performing (Salah) which is a worship practice that Muslims must do at *five set* times a day. After reading it several times, they could be introduced to its meaning.

Table 4. Introducing the General and Specific Glossary Word Lists

General Word List	Specific Word List
1. <i>In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, The Merciful: (Besme llahi Al Rahman Al Raheem).</i>	1. /bism-il-lah/ 2. /Arr-ahman/ 3. /Arra-him/
2. <i>"Sadaqa Allahu Al-`Azim"</i>	4. /Al Hamdullellah Rabby Al alameen/ 5. /Arrahman Arrahim/ 6. /Maleki Yaomi Eldeen/ 7. /Eyyaka Na-budu/ 8. /wa-eyaka-nasta-een/ 9. /Ehdena Elsara-ta- Al Mustaqeem/ 10. /Serata Allazeena- an-amta- allayhem/ 11. /Ghair el magdoobi Alayhem/ 12. /wala aldaaleen/

5. Conclusion

Finally, I would say that the suggested syllabus design, if used, adapted and adopted properly, would really be a huge help to all NNASM in expanding their knowledge in learning the basic features of Qur'an, and understanding the main meaning behind certain short Surahs. After they finish this course, they will be able to have a better general idea of this holy Book, and read/ recite Qur'an's Surahs in Arabic. Having a basic knowledge of the sacred book will enable these students to be somehow related to this new religion that they have just converted to, and would allow them to spread its ideas to their family and friends and make them more willing to enjoy the experience of being new Muslims in an optimum level. Designing an ESP syllabus for these students will be highly beneficial as it will set the bases of so many other syllabuses that are divided into both theoretical and practicum sections. In order to be more applicable and valuable, this ESP for religious purposes syllabus has to combine the vision of those who are involved in the teaching/learning process (teachers and new NNASM), and it has to be specific enough to adopt the changes that would occur according to what these students need in a specific place and for a specific purpose. That's exactly what this particular syllabus aims to achieve.

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