
AN EVALUATION OF THE CAUSES OF LOW ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN DISTRICT VEHARI.

Prof. Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Awan,

Dean, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences,
Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan-Pakistan

Ayesha Khaliq

M.Phil Scholar, English Linguistics,
Department of English Linguistics,
Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan-Pakistan

ABSTRACT

The present research study aimed at to investigate the causes of low achievement in English at elementary level in District Vehari, Pakistan. In this study effort was made to collect information about the causes which effect the students' achievement and provide the guide line for the educationists to improve the educational system. The study was a survey type of study. The data was collected from urban and rural, government and private elementary school students through personal visit. Total number of schools was 10 and total number of students was 200. 20 students were selected from each school. To identify the causes' data was collected by random sampling techniques by using questionnaire as data collection tool. The questionnaire contains 20 items. The questions were asked about the causes of low achievement in English language learning. The collected data was tabulated and analyzed with the help of percentage formula.

KEYWORDS: Achievement, factors causing low achievement in learning English.

1.INTRODUCTION

Education is considered as an investment in human beings in terms of development of human resources skills, motivation and knowledge. In this age of globalization and technological development, education is counted as a first step for every human activity. It plays an important and crucial role in the progress and success of human beings and gives opportunities to humans for better living. The use of English has become a sign of esteem in our society. Everyone seems fond of using English to get high status in society. In Pakistan, English has become a compulsory subject in educational institutions. English is considered as L2 or second language in Pakistan. It is the official language of Pakistan. It is necessary for teachers to access the achievements of

students. The achievements of the students can be assessed through achievement test. Achievement test is an important tool in school evaluation and has great significance in measuring instructional progress and progress of the students in the subject area. Achievement test is an instrument designed to measure the achievements of the students.

All over the world every country has some problems in educational system. And because of these educational problems students could not achieve education. These problems become more complex in poor and developing countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia, etc. In Pakistan in which education is in crises there are too many problems of administration, problems of good teachers, lack of financial resources, harsh classroom environment, overcrowded classrooms, faulty teaching methods, poor socio-economic background and many more. Low achievement is also one of them. In English language, low achievement is a big problem in Pakistan which is an international language.

1.1 Main Research Questions

This study had two main research questions.

What are the causes of low achievement of the students in the subject of English at elementary level?

How we can improve the achievement of the students in the subject of English at elementary level?

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study had been designed to evaluate the causes of low achievement in the subject of English at elementary level in District Vehari.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

- To investigate the causes of low achievement in the subject of English at elementary level.
- To explore the factors that affect students' achievements in the subject of English at elementary level.
- To observe the difficulties faced by the learners during the period of English at elementary level.
- To improve the achievement of the students in the subject of English at elementary level.

1.3 Significance of the Study

After completing this research work the following will be benefited:

Teachers can make better step for teaching English language at elementary level. This study will be helpful in providing the base data for further researchers who research in this field. This study will help in correlation studies of other subjects and in content areas.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Siegel (1993), In Pakistan with the 54 year's history of English has a controversial role. English is a second language in Pakistan but it is most important than National language. Sharif (2002) has stated that in Pakistan English occupies a very important place. Our curriculum is incomplete without English language. British rulers introduced this language. In sub-continent, English became the language of rulers, official and courts. English is a compulsory subject in the public examinations up to degree level, a very high percentage of students fail in this subject has led to frequent protest from the public against the teaching of English as a compulsory subject.

2.1 Causes of Low Achievement in English Language Learning

There are many issues that effect to the students' learning English language as a foreign or second language in a non-native speaking country like Pakistan. Those elements may derive from many components including social economic issues, the difference of culture, poor family backgrounds, unsuitable curriculum and textbook design, lack of good, qualified and trained English teachers, lack of students' learning motivation, carelessness of students, etc. These factors cause students to have low and poor performance in English language learning, especially in the countries like Pakistan, Laos, Bangladesh, Cambodia, etc.

Agyeman (1993) reported that a teacher who does not have both the academic and professional teacher qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject. However, he further stated that a teacher who is academically and professionally qualified, but works under unfavorable conditions of service would be less dedicated to his work and thus be less productive than a teacher who is unqualified but works under favorable conditions of service.

Krashen (2005) concluded that students whose parents are educated score higher on standardized tests than those whose parents were not educated. Educated parents can better communicate with their children regarding the school work, activities and the information being taught at school. They can better assist their children in their work and participate at school (Fantuzzo & Tighe, 2000; Trusty, 1999).

According to Haycraft (1993) harsh classroom environment, overcrowded classrooms and ineffective teaching methodology are also one of the major causes of low achievement in learning English language. Kwesiga (2002) approved that performance of the students is also influenced by the school in which they studied but he also said that number of facilities a school offers usually determine the quality of the school, which in turn affect the performance and accomplishment of its students.

Fareeda (2003) has stated that some traditional A.V. Aids such as BB, charts, pictures flash cards are available in our school but tape recorder lingua phone and film strips are not available. The non availability of A.V. Aids can make the teaching of English ineffective in Pakistan. Haycraft (1993) says that the Asian people are facing problem in teaching and learning of English while those problems include lack of effective audio-visual aids.

Mansoor (1993) analyzed that the students even after years of learning English as a compulsory subject, lacked fluency and faced difficulties in English language usage. A critical look at the English learning situation displayed out dated and in-efficient course and teaching methods. The teachers were not properly trained and there was hardly any interaction between students and the teachers. The spoken skill was completely ignored. It was not a part of the English examination.

According to Murray & Christison (2010), many students think that English is only a school subject and they don't see its significance for their prospective employment to work with multinational or national companies where English is employed.

Susanna (2007) claimed that weak students usually have poor strategies and give up easily when they find struggle. When students or language learners find difficulty in textbooks, they easily give up. Most of the textbooks are not suitable and attractive. Students read them only to pass the examination. Dembo (2004) specifies that time management is involved in students' educational achievement; for instance, students with better time management skills tend to have higher grade point average (GPA) than students with poorer time management skills.

A study has been conducted by Muhammad (2007) on the investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language found difficulties of language learning, differences in learners' and target language cultures, the difference in social status of the speakers are the factors that affect to the students' weakness of language learning.

Nile (2006) pointed that there is a weakness among the students of the main stages in language skills, and confirms the reality of this weakness of students in key stages of the delay in the mastery of reading and writing skills as well as weakness in the skills of writing the alphabet and calligraphy. Souvannasy, Masashi, & Yukiko (2008) identify that teaching and learning English implementation still has unqualified English teachers, shortages of textbooks and also unstandardized curriculum. In our examination system only memory of students is checked. The basic four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) are totally neglected.

Graetz (1995) conducted a study on socio-economic status of the parents of students and concluded that the socio economic background has a great impact on student's academic performance, main source of educational imbalance among students and student's academic success contingent very strongly on parent's socio economic standard. Considine and Zappala (2002) also having the same views as Graetz (1995), in their study on the influence of social and economic disadvantage in the academic performance of school students noticed, where the parents or guardians have social, educational and economical advantage definitely strengthen the higher level success in future.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This descriptive study was conducted by using a survey method. The population of this study was consisted on the students studying at the elementary level in District Vehari (Pakistan). The population of this study was the students of 10 elementary (girls/ boys, urban/ rural, government/ private) schools of District Vehari. A sample of 200 students was selected randomly from 10 schools. 20 students from each selected school were included in sample of this study. Data was collected from students with the help of one instrument i.e. questionnaire. The questionnaire was included the items that measure the causes of low achievement in English language. This instrument was designed on 5-point liker scale. The study was delimited to the elementary schools of district Vehari only due to time and financial constraints. The focus of this study is limited to elementary level. The results of this research cannot be applied to the whole country, but applied to the whole District where the research was conducted.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

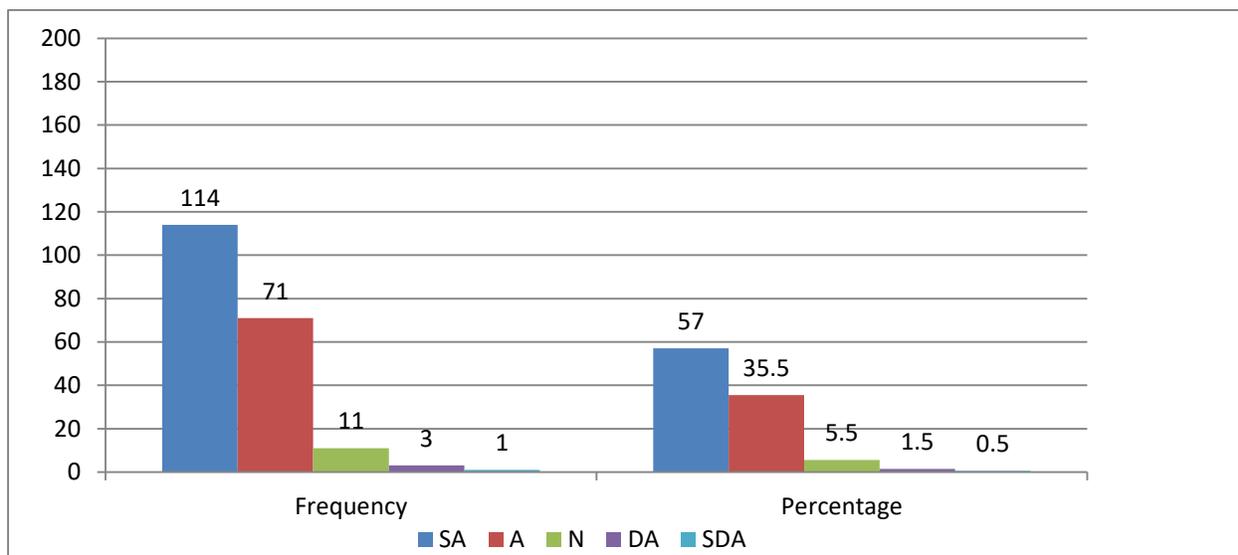
The data was collected through questionnaire from five Government and five Private schools. Out of which five are Rural and five are Urban Schools. There are twenty questions in Questionnaire.

The views of students were analyzed in percentage. We used 5-Point Liker Scale to measure the response of target population.

Table 1: Students feel hesitant

Options	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
Frequency	114	71	11	3	1
Percentage	57	35.5	5.5	1.5	0.5

Figure 1 Percentage of hesitant students



The table # 4.1 shows that 35.5% students agree, 57% students strongly agree with the statement that students feel hesitant to speak English. While 1.5% students disagree, 0.5% students strongly disagree with the statement. Majority of the students agree with the statement that students feel hesitant while speaking.

Table 2: Overcrowded classrooms

Options	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
Frequency	93	69	20	4	14
Percentage	46.5	34.5	10	2	7

Figure 2 Overcrowded class room

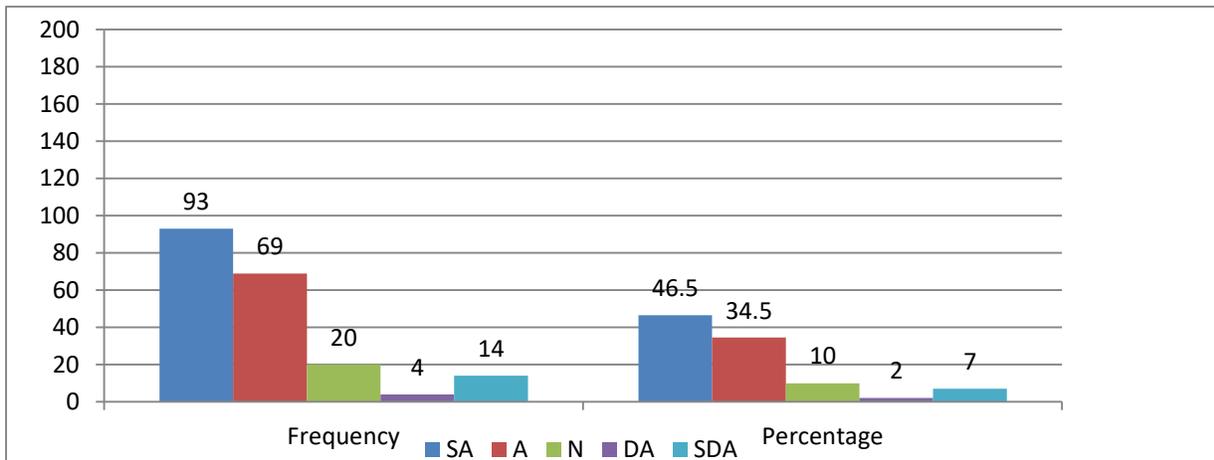


Table # 4.3 shows that 34.5% students agree, 46.5% students strongly agree with the statement that overcrowded classrooms are not fit for effective teaching and learning. While 2% students disagree, 7% students strongly disagree with the statement. Majority of the students agree with the statement that overcrowded classrooms are not fit for the effective teaching and learning English.

Table 3: Teachers are not qualified and trained

Options	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
Frequency	18	81	30	37	34
Percentage	9	40.5	15	18.5	17

Figure 3 Percentage of non-qualified and non-trained teachers

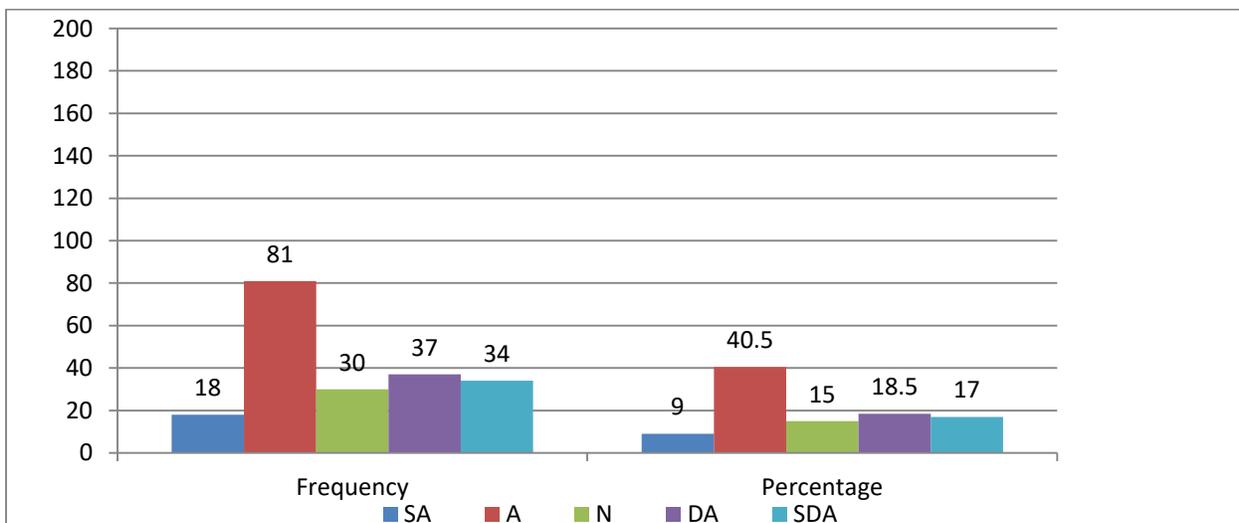


Table # 4.9 shows that 40.5% students agree, 9% students strongly agree with the statement that most of the teachers in English period are not qualified and trained. While 18.5% students disagree, 17% students strongly disagree with the statement. Majority of the students agree with the statement that most of the teachers in English period are not qualified and trained.

Table 4: Ineffective Teaching methodologies

Options	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
Frequency	64	55	32	33	16
Percentage	32	27.5	16	16.5	8

Figure 4 Ineffective teaching methodologies

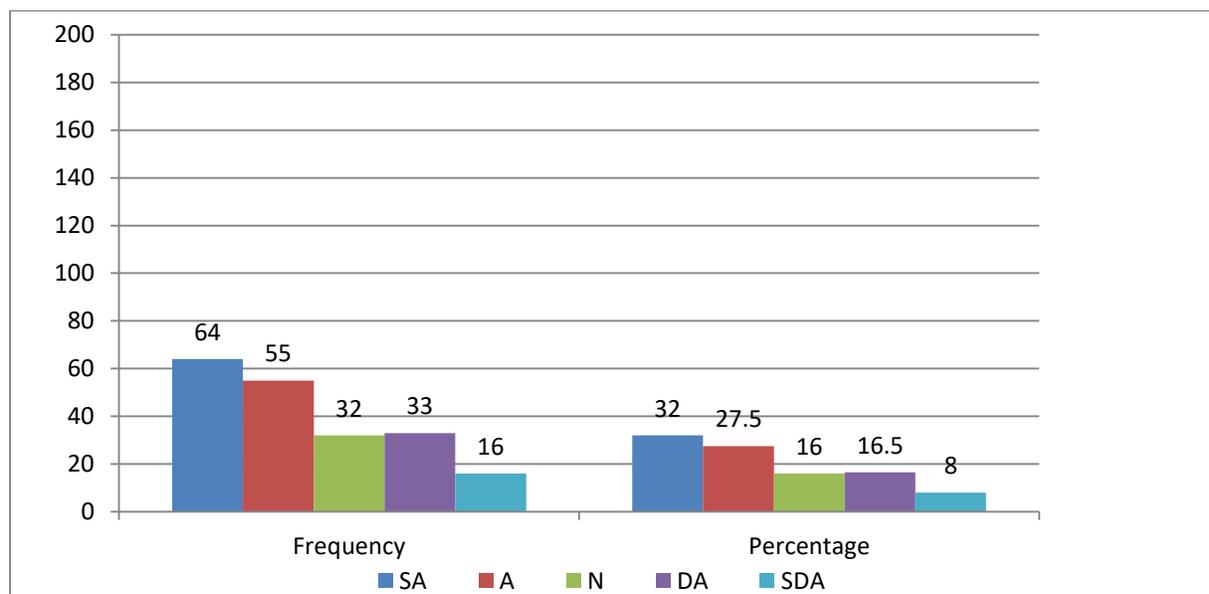


Table # 4.10 shows that 27.5% students agree, 32% students strongly agree with the statement that teaching methodologies that are used in English periods are not effective. While 16.5% students disagree, 8% students strongly disagree with the statement. Majority of the students agree with the statement that teaching methodologies that are used in English periods are not effective.

Table 5: Parents support in speaking English

Options	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
Frequency	66	53	31	23	27
Percentage	33	26.5	15.5	11.5	13.5

Figure 5 percentage of parent support in speaking English

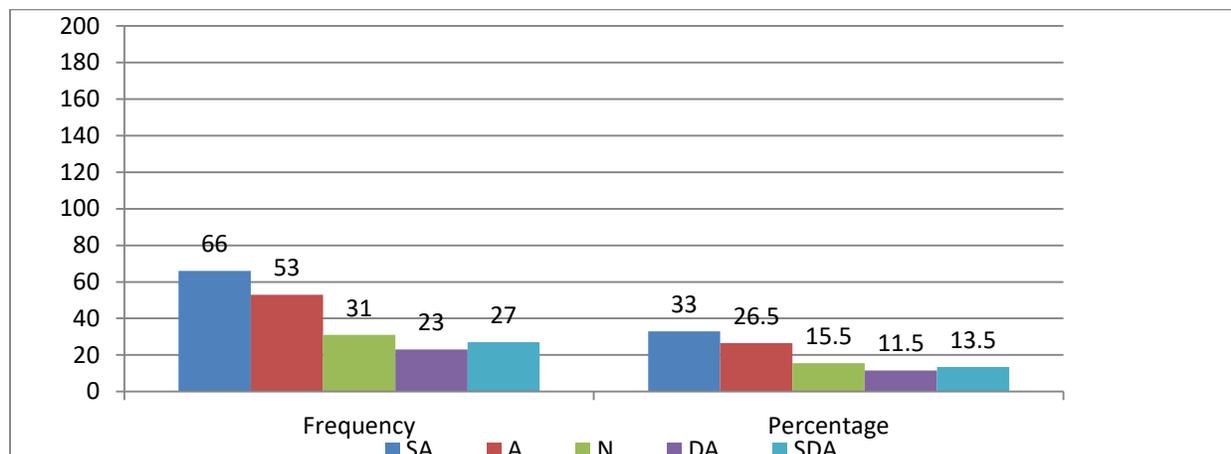


Table # 4.18 shows that 26.5% students agree, 33% students strongly agree with the statement that parents support you in speaking English at home. While 11.5% students disagree, 13.5% students strongly disagree with nt. Majority of the students agree with the statement that parents support you in speaking English at home.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Students feel hesitant to speak English because of the fear that they'll make mistakes while speaking. Overcrowded classrooms are not fit for the effective teaching and learning English language. Most of the teachers in English period are not qualified and trained. Teaching methodologies that are used in English periods are not effective. Parents support students in speaking English at home.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of above discussion, we make the following recommendations: -

- Teacher should create confidence in students to reduce the hesitant to speak English. Teacher should behave friendly with the student so, they'll freely ask anything to the student and don't feel hesitant while speaking.
- The classrooms should not be overcrowded for the effective teaching and learning English. The size of class should be appropriate.

- The Government should train the teachers who are teaching English at elementary level. Training workshops and refresher courses should be arranged for the training of the English teachers at elementary level.
- Teaching facilities should be provided in the schools so, the teachers can use different methods to teach and improve the English language.
- Parents should support their children in speaking English at home. They should give proper time to the students at home for their studies.

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