
Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies

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Abstract: This study aimed at investigating the reasons for the English low achievement level among the second secondary students in Qabaty district schools, and suggested remedies tackling this weakness.

The questions of the research were:

- Who stood behind the low achievement in English language that faces Tawjihi students as perceived by English teachers and students in Qabaty district (teacher or student)?
- Were there any significant differences in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students as perceived by the teachers due to (gender, qualification and experience)?
- Were there any significant differences in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students as perceived by the students due to (gender and stream)?

In order to fulfill the objectives of this study; the researcher used a cross-sectional design based on questionnaires distributed. 63 questionnaire items were set to identify the reasons for the low English achievement level among the secondary school students in Qabaty district. This study targeted English language teachers and Tawjihi students in Qabaty district to measure Reasons behind low achievement in English language scores for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies.

The results of the questionnaire showed that:

- Teachers thought that the main reason for low achievement in English language according to the items in the teacher questionnaire are related to "Students not well constructed in English language from the beginning". This item received an 89.33% of the English language teachers' agreement. In addition, teachers considered English language classes' quantity is not enough as a second main reason for low achievement for Tawjihi students. This statement received 89.63%.

Other important factors for low achievement which also received a high degree of agreement include "Students only care to pass the Tawjihi English exam" and "Students dislike English language".

On the other hand, Tawjihi students that their low achievement in English is because their Parents ignore their low grades in English, the teachers lack proficiency and Teachers mostly use mother tongue in the class. These Were the most important reasons for their low achievement.

There were no statistically significant differences in means that at (p value = 0.05) in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students due to academic qualification for the teachers, experience and gender.

There were no statistically significant differences in means that at (p value = 0.05) in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from Tawjihi students perceptive due to stream and gender.

The researcher suggested an instructional program for tackling this weakness and gives relevant recommendations.

The most significant were:

- English language teachers should attend training courses before entering the class for the first time.
- It is strongly recommended that low achieving students should attend classes away from others with different content material.
- Schools should be fixed to suit the curriculum demands and the students' age challenges.???
- It is necessary to add two more English periods to the weekly English periods.

Keywords: Achievement, disability, constructing meaning, interrelated sources, coherence, retention, lower achievers

INTRODUCTION

Achievement in English language is an activity that involves greater levels of concentration and adds to the conversational skills of the student. It is an extension that enhances the knowledge acquired, consistently. The habit of achievement in English language also helps student to recognize new words and phrases that they come across in everyday conversations. (Van, M. 2009).

Of all the skills students learn, achievement in English language is arguably the most important issue because it helps us to understand what the students know and if they mastered the skills we teach. It is a mean of gaining knowledge about many different subjects and of understanding the world. Today, especially in the developed world, it is considered a fundamental and required for success and progress in the real world. Unfortunately, for many students with low achievement in English language, it impacts their psychology and their parents and teachers, it makes learning new skills to as of the most frustrating activities they will ever face. All too often, the barriers they face shade their desire to learn English and, without proper guidance, they never overcome them (Smith, F. p.125 1994).

In fact, low achievement in English language in schools, constitute a serious problem at all levels of the academic hierarchy. Perhaps the need for remedial work, once it is present, constitute such a pressing problem, it usually tends to receive more attention than preventing measures. It is not uncommon to find school administrators pointing with pride to their remedial programs while at the same time little emphasis is placed upon presentation of achievement in English language difficulty before it occurs (Alkilani &Maqutash, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Many students who learn English find low achievement in English language English appropriately difficult and a complicated skill. This is because of the problems associated with learning a foreign language such as, misuse of tone, punctuation marks and other achievement in English language difficulties (Wimmer, H.2010). According to these problems the researcher will focus on some Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggest some remedies and recommendations

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to locate the difficulties face EFL “Qabatya District Tawjihi” students. To accomplish this aim, the researcher conducted this study and will apply it on the English teachers of English and Tawjihi students.

Research Questions

This study will respond to these questions:

- What are the reasons behind low achievement in English language that faces Tawjihi students as perceived by both English teachers and students in Qabatya district: (teacher or student)?
- Are there any significant differences in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students as perceived by the teachers due to gender?
- Are there any significant differences in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students as perceived by the teachers due to teacher’s qualification?
- Are there any significant differences in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students as perceived by the teachers’ due teacher’s experience?
- Are there any significant differences in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students as perceived by the students due to gender?
- Are there any significant differences in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students as perceived by the students due to educational stream?

Significance of the study

Lots of the students and English teachers complain from low students’ achievement in English language. Difficulties in comprehension, reading, writing and listening; one, many or all of these skills. Because of this the researcher hopes to find the causes and suggest remedies of these difficulties and the barriers that prevent students from achievement in English language especially in the twelfth “Tawjihi” class.

Limitations of the study

The researcher classifies the limitations of the study into four: location, time, human and topical limitations

1. location: The study covers 3 governmental secondary schools in Qabatya district.
2. Time limitation: The researcher carried out this study in the second semester 2013/2014
3. Human limitation: The sample consisted of 30 males and females of English teachers and 30 Tawjihi students, who will be randomly chosen from the 3 sample schools.
4. Topical limitation: The study was conducted to examine the achievement in English language difficulties as perceived by the English teachers of English and their Tawjihi students in Qabatya district.

Summery

The ability to read is vital to functioning effectively into a literate society. However, students who do not understand the importance of learning to read will not be motivated to learn. Learning to read takes effort, and

students who see the value of achievement in English language in their personal activities will be more likely to work hard than those who fail to see the benefits.

Moreover, there are types of learning difficulties in achievement in English language. Basic achievement in English language difficulties occur when there is difficulty in understanding the relationship between sounds, letters, and words. Achievement in English language comprehension problems occur when there is an inability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases, and paragraphs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of low student achievement has been the center focus point of many researchers around the world. Most studies are related to a main question of “why some students have low achievements, and what is the reason behind this phenomenon”. Most studies relate the reason on the students and his family and peers as the main reason behind low achievements, other studies focus on the teacher and the school environment which lacks the necessary motivation. Other studies focus on students social and economic factors as a reason behind low achievement.

In their study Keith, Reimers, Fehrmann, Pottebaum, & Aubey, (1986) Examined the direct and indirect effects of TV time, homework, and parental involvement on high school seniors' achievement using 28,051 high school seniors selected from the dataset of the High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (1980). Data indicate that homework had an important, positive effect on student achievement, and TV time had a smaller, negative effect. Parental involvement had no direct effect on seniors' achievement scores but did positively influence the amount of time that seniors spent on homework. Further analysis suggested the possibilities of low homework demands and of excessive weekday TV viewing. Given the time spent on TV and homework and their influence on achievement, it is suggested that these variables be considered in the push for educational improvement.

Halle, Kurtz-Costes, & Mahoney, (1997) examined the achievement-related beliefs and behaviors of parents of economically disadvantaged African American youth, and the relations among parental factors and children's academic self-concept and achievement. Forty-one children and their primary caregivers were interviewed. Parents reported on their academic-related beliefs and behaviors. Children completed measures of academic self-concept and 2 standardized achievement tests: 1 during the summer and 1 at the end of the following school year. Significant and positive relations were found between parental belief and behavior measures within the domains of reading and math; however, parental beliefs were more strongly linked with child outcomes than were parents' achievement-oriented behaviors. The relation between parental beliefs and child outcomes was not mediated by children's academic self-concept. Results are discussed in light of models of family influences on achievement.

Brookover et al., (1978) investigates the relationships among a variety of school-level climate variables and mean school achievement in a random, sample of Michigan elementary schools. School-level SES, racial composition and climate were each highly related to mean school achievement; only a small proportion of the between-school variance in achievement is explained by SES and racial composition after the effect of school climate is removed. The climate variable we have called Student Sense of Academic Futility had the largest correlation with achievement. An observational study of four schools with similar SES and racial composition but different achievement tended to support the more analytical findings and suggest the processes by which climate affects achievement.

Callahan (2005) discussed the issue of Programs and policies related to the education of English learners are often based on the belief that fluency in English is the primary, if not sole, requirement for academic success. While English is in fact necessary for academic success in U.S. schools, so is a strong base in content-area academics. This study investigated the effects of track placement and English proficiency on secondary English learners' academic achievement while taking students' previous schooling and length of time enrolled in U.S. schools into account. In the case of a variety of outcomes, track placement was a better predictor of achievement than proficiency in English. Results indicate that track placement is a better predictor of English learners' academic performance than proficiency in English, highlighting the importance of quality instruction for English learners

Carbonaro & Gamoran (2002) wondered “Does unequal access to high quality English instruction lead to unequal achievement outcomes for students?” Four key aspects of high-quality instructions of assignments, coherence of instruction, student voice in curricular and pedagogical issues, and the content of instruction—are examined to see whether each aspect affects growth in reading achievement from grades 8 to 12. Analyses indicate that some aspects of student voice enhance achievement growth, but quantity and coherence do not. Content has the most substantial impact on achievement growth: greater emphasis on analytical writing is associated with greater growth in reading scores. Overall, these measures of instructional practices partially explain why students' track position and reading achievement are related.

Another study conducted by Saville-Troike (1984) with a retrospective analysis seeks to explain why a group of children who had been matched for English proficiency and socioeconomic status (SES) when they started a

school year, and who were subsequently taught and tested through the medium of English, differed in their school achievement at the end of that year. Factors considered include relative productive competence in English morphology, syntax, and vocabulary; verbosity; patterns of social interaction; first language performance; and personality factors. Extensive intra-group variability is reported, but several generalizations are drawn which have relevance for ESL curriculum organization and instructional practice: vocabulary knowledge is the single most important area of second language (L2) competence when learning content through that language is the dependent variable; grammatical accuracy is of little importance to students' immediate academic needs; communicative competence in social interaction does not guarantee communicative competence in academic situations; and the use of the first language (L1) enhances conceptual development, even when it is tested through the medium of the L2.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to specifying the steps and the methodology used in carrying out the research endeavor. This chapter discusses research design, study population and sample, instrument and its validity and reliability, data collection procedures, and the statistical analysis.

Study Design

This study uses a cross-sectional design, based on questionnaires. The study design involves observation of a representative sample of English language teachers and Tawjihi students. It employs descriptive and inferential design. The primary goal is to try to provide as comprehensive description as possible, whereas the cross sectional is focused on individuals at fixed events during life.

Population & Sample of The Study

This study was conducted on English language teachers and Tawjihi students in Qabatya district to measure Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies. The study population included 60 English language teachers and Tawjihi students in Qabatya. The following table shows the numbers and distribution of the study sample. A representative stratified sample of (n=48) was selected.

Table (1) shows the distribution of the study population according to the study variables (gender, experience, qualification for teachers) (gender and the branch for the students)

Table 1: distribution of the study sample according to the study variables

Respondents	Variable	lever	Frequency	%
Teachers	Gender	Male	13	43.3
		Female	17	56.7
	Experience	Less than5 years	14	46.7
		5-10years	10	33.3
		More than 10 years	6	20.0
	qualification	B.A	23	76.7
M.A		7	23.3	
		Total	30	100
Tawjihi students	Gender	Male	15	50.0
		Female	15	50.0
	Branch	Literary stream	18	60.0
		Scientific stream	12	40.0
		Total	30	100.0

Instrumentation

After conducting an extensive literature review on Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies, data was collected via a two structured questionnaire s developed in English language which consisted of (21) and (15) items in three parts, organized to measure Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies

A- First: it informed the respondent of the objectives and the importance of the study, and assured them that the data collected was for scientific purposes only.

B- The Second: it collected demographic information.

C- The third: this was devised to collect information on Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies.

Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of three sub-questionnaires, alpha formula was used as in table (2).

Table 2: alpha formula of instrument reliability

Domain	Reliability
Total Scorchers e for English language teachers	0.72
Total Score Tawjihi students	0.70

The results of table (2) show that the ranges of reliability w (0.83), this value is suitable for conducting such a study.

Statistical Analysis

The Statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 17 was used for data analysis. Various statistical tests and procedures were used including (means, frequencies, standard deviation, cross-tabulation, t-test for independent samples, ANOVA, post hoc Scheffe's test). P-value of less than or equal to 0.05 was used to test the significance in testing the study hypothesis.

Ethical Issues

This study is conducted on human subjects, and to assure that the ethical issues are taken into consideration, permission to conduct this study was obtained In addition, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study before the interview and were told that their participation was voluntary, and any information obtained would be confidential and would be used for scientific research purposes only.

RESULTS

Introduction

The Results will be presented in two parts. The first part dealt with the descriptive analysis of Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies. The second part is dedicated to test the validity of the study hypothesis, and discussed the role of the variables in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies.

Results related to the first part

The first question was:

What are the Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from English language teacher’s perspective?

To answer the study questions; mean, standard deviation, and percentage of each item, domain and total score of Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies is computed. The study adopted a five-point scale in which the length of cells was determined through calculating the range of the scale (5-1=4) and divided on the highest value of the scale to determine the cell length, (5\4=0.8) then added to the lowest value in the scale to determine the lowest value of scale (1+0.8=1.8):

Table 3: the scale scoring of Likert Scale

1-1.8	very low
1.81-2.60	Low
2.61-3.40	Moderate
3.41-4.20	High
4.21-5	very high

for data analysis, the researcher used the following percentage :

(80 %) and more is very high degree of self-learning effect.

(70-79.9%) is a high degree.

(60 - 69.9 %) is a moderate degree.

(50 - 59.9 %) is a low degree.

(less than 50 %) is a very low degree.

The following tables (7), (8), (9), (10), (11) and (12) shows the results of the study question:

What are the Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from the teachers’ perspective?

Table 4: mean, standard deviation, and percentage of each item, and total score of what is Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from English language teachers' perspective.

No	order	Items	M	SD	Percent
1.	5	Students are not well constructed in English language from the beginning.	4.47	.73	89.33
2.	14	English language classes' numbers are not enough.	4.47	5.58	89.63
3.	2	Students only care to pass the Tawjihi English exam.	4.33	.48	86.67
4.	1	Students dislike English language.	4.13	.57	82.67
5.	10	Students find some Difficulty of English exams.	4.10	.31	82.00
6.	9	they spend more of their time on the internet and doing other activities	4.03	.61	80.67
7.	15	Schools Lack good teaching materials and English labs.	4.03	.61	80.67
8.	21	English language is dealt in our school as the rest of the material and not as a language comes in a series of continuous education	4.03	.61	80.67
9.	4	Carelessness	3.97	.67	79.33
10.	12	Students don't comprehend what they read in English.	3.90	.61	78.00
11.	17	Cheating on tests	3.87	.63	77.33
12.	7	Students have the view that it is difficult to learn a second language.	3.80	.61	76.00
13.	8	Students lack of motivation.	3.80	.66	76.00
14.	20	Approaches that are constantly changing and their inability to cope with the student's psychology	3.63	.56	72.67
15.	11	Students are bad at memorizing vocabulary.	3.50	.82	70.00
16.	13	Students have many materials and home works other than English.	3.50	.68	70.00
17.	18	Momentum and the difficulty of the curriculum	3.47	.78	69.33
18.	16	Repeated absence and late for school	3.23	.82	64.67
19.	19	The weakness of motivation among teachers for many reasons, including salary and grades	3.20	.66	64.00
20.	3	Students dislike English teachers	2.87	.90	57.33
21.	6	Students feel that English is not important in their future life.	2.87	1.07	57.33
		Total score	3.77	.42	75.43

As the above table shows, the main reason for low achievement in English language according to these items are related to "Students are not well constructed in English language from the beginning" which was the main reason behind students' low achievement from the perception of English language teachers. This item received an 89.33% of the English language agreement.

On the other hand, teachers tend to see the fact that English language classes' numbers are not enough as a second main reason for low achievement for Tawjihi students. This statement received 89.63%.

Other important factors for low achievement which also received a high degree of agreement include Students only care to pass the Tawjihi English exam. Students only care to pass the Tawjihi English exam and the students dislike English language.

What are the Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from the students' perspective?

Table 4: mean, standard deviation, and percentage of each item, and total score of what is Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from English language students' perspective.

No	Order	Items	M	SD	Percent
1.	11	My Parents ignore my low grades in English.	4.23	7.63	84.67

2.	1	teachers lack proficiency	3.87	1.04	77.33
3.	3	Teachers mostly use mother tongue in the class.	3.83	1.21	76.67
4.	4	Teachers concentrate on specific points of the language more than others (grammar, vocabulary).	3.73	1.08	74.67
5.	2	Teachers fail to present the material effectively	3.60	1.10	72.00
6.	6	Teachers Concentrate on accuracy more than fluency, which will cause students anxiety and demotivate them.	3.50	1.17	70.00
7.	5	Teachers don't use authentic materials and technology to attract the students' attention	3.47	1.14	69.33
8.	15	Anxiety and lack of concentration at exams	3.33	1.21	66.67
9.	14	English language classes' contain large number of students.	3.30	1.15	66.00
10.	10	My Parents Don't help me in studying home works	3.13	1.14	62.67
11.	12	My Parents consider English a difficult language.	3.03	1.35	60.67
12.	13	My Parents Low or poor income status can't support me in extra lessons.	3.03	1.19	60.67
13.	9	My parents don't follow up with my progress.	3.00	1.26	60.00
14.	8	parents Don't have background in English language	2.77	1.19	55.33
15.	7	Parents are Uneducated.	2.63	1.30	52.67
		Total score	3.36	.94	67.29

Maximum point of response (5) points.

On the other hand, Tawjihi students themselves think that their low achievement in English is because their Parents ignore their low grades in English, the teachers lack proficiency and Teachers mostly use mother tongue in the class. These Were the most important reasons for their low achievement.

Results of the first hypothesis

There are no statistically significant differences in means that at p value = 0.05) in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from the teachers perceptive due to gender.

An independent-samples t-test was computed to compare Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from the students' perceptive in females and male respondents. There was no significant difference in the scores for males and females on respondents' total score.

Table 5: An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from the students' perceptive in female and male respondents.

	gender	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Total Score	Male	13	3.7949	.46632	0.262	28	0.16
	female	17	3.7535	.39635			

Results of The Second Hypothesis

There are no statistically significant differences in means that at (p value=0.05) in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students due to academic qualification for the teachers.

An independent-samples t-test was computed to compare Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies from the teachers' perceptive in B.A and M.A respondents. There was no significant difference in the scores for in B.A and M.A respondents

Table 6: An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies from the teachers' perceptive in B.A and M.A respondents.

	Academic qualifications	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Total Score	B.A	23	3.7681	.46086	-0.076	28	0.93
	MA	7	3.7823	.27747			

Results of The third Hypothesis

H0: There are no statistically significant differences in means that at p value = 0.05) in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from the teachers' perceptive due to experience.

Table (7): ANOVA test was conducted to compare Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies as perceptive by teachers due to experience.

Table 7: ANOVA test to compare Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies from the teachers' perceptive due to experience.

ANOVA						
X						
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Between Groups	.495	2	.248	1.441	.254	
Within Groups	4.640	27	.172			
Total	5.136	29				

Results of the fourth hypothesis

There are no statistically significant differences in means that at (p value = 0.05) in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from Tawjihi students perceptive due to gender.

An independent-samples t-test was computed to compare Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from the students' perceptive in females and male respondents. There was no significant difference in the scores for males and females on respondents' total score.

Table 8: An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from the students' perceptive in regards to gender.

	gender	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Total Score	Male	15	3.5200	1.10301	0.906	28	0.16
	female	15	3.2089	.74231			

Results of the fifth hypothesis

There are no statistically significant differences in means that at (p value = 0.05) in Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students from Tawjihi students perceptive due to stream. An independent-samples t-test was computed to compare Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies from the respondents' perceptions in females and male respondents. There was no significant difference in the scores for literary and scientific stream on respondents' total score.

Table 9: An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare Reasons behind low achievement in English language for Tawjihi students and suggested remedies from Tawjihi students due to branch

	gender	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Total Score	literary	18	3.2296	.85412	-0.963	28	0.343
	scientific	12	3.5667	1.05543			

CONCLUSION

As the above table shows the main reason for low achievement in English language how those items related to "Students not well constructed in English language from the beginning" was the main reason behind low achievement from the perception of English language teachers. This item received a 89.33% of the English language agreement.

On the other hand, teachers tend to see the fact that English language classes' numbers are not enough as a second main reason for low achievement for Tawjihi students. This statement received 89.63%.

Other important factors for low achievement which also received a high degree of agreement include Students only care to pass the Tawjihi English exam. Students only care to pass the Tawjihi English exam and the students dislike English language.

On the other hand, Tawjihi students themselves sought that their Parents ignore their low grades in English and teachers lack proficiency Teachers mostly use mother tongue in the class. Were the most important reasons for their low achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results, one can recommend the following:

1. English language teachers should have training courses before entering the class for the first time.
2. It is strongly recommended that the low achievers should attend the classes away from the others with different content material.
3. Schools should be fixed to suit the curriculum demands and the age challenges.
4. It is necessary to add two English periods to the weekly English periods
5. 5-To conduct the same study in other districts in Palestine.
6. It is useful to combine every two English classes together as the students can practice English language.
7. Teachers should encourage their students to use English language in the daily communication with each others.
8. English language teachers are supposed to cooperate with each others to solve the problem of the low achievers.

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