## De Motivation and Failure in English Language of Technical Students in Punjab

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***Abstract:*** *This article investigates the reasons behind students' failure in English at DAE level. DAE stand for Diploma of Associate Engineering which is three years diploma in any technology (Civil, mechanical, Chemical, Electrical). Learning English is required in the technical college curriculum and English is taught as compulsory subject in 1st year. The study was conducted in the Govt. colleges of Technology in Sargodha Division. A total of 80 participants were asked to fill the questionnaire. The present study analyses the problems which are caused in failure of technical students in English subject. The findings of the study show that the students are not given such activities which facilitate them in learning English language. They feel hesitation to use English language in the classroom.*

***Keywords:*** *languge learning, motivation, DAE*

### 1.Introduction:

TEVTA is an autonomous body which is responsible for technical and vocational training in Punjab. The problem is DAE (Diploma of Associate Engineering) students who fail badly in English every year. Higher authority desires to make improvement in the results of the students but it is not possible until the root causes and problems are not identified which are being faced by the students while learning English. Students of DAE have very low motivation in English class and they get very low grades in English because they cannot get through English. This situation is serious concern for everyone because these young people will be the workforce in this country someday in the future. In order to increase global competition, having a proficient English ability is important. Therefore, it is worth considering how to promote college students' English abilities. Many researchers find that most of their students have had few successful English learning experiences or they had an English-phobia when they were in school. Those students lost confidence in learning English, so they are afraid of learning English.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out the causes of the students' failure and demotivation in English language learning.
2. To analyse the teaching methods which are being used by the teachers.
3. To achieve better results in English subject at DAE level

**1.2 Research Questions:**

1. What are the main causes of students' failure in English?

2. Identify the factors causing de-motivation in English class?

3. What measures can be taken to improve the situation?

**2. Literature Review**

**2.1 Motivation:**

Without a doubt, pursuing success is the goal for most people in the process of learning. English is a required course in Pakistan; therefore, it is one of the indicators for successful academic performance. Gardner (1990) showed that the key factor of successful language learning is motivation. Many researchers also found that there was a significant correlation between learning motivation and academic performance (Chuang & Huang, 1981; Kuo, 1983; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Wang, 1991; Wu, 1998; Y u, 1987). As Dornyei and Otto (1998), "In a general sense, motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and/or desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out"(p.65).

**2.2 Learning:**

Learning itself is not an independent course of action; it is an action of training by learners. Learners are not able to do it alone. It includes the whole teaching system, the students, the teacher, the textbook, the syllabus, the learners, the learning environment, and the course objective. In fact, learning is a very difficult term to define. Therefore, the causes of failure or success of learning, especially in English language necessarily depends on the close relationship of these factors which are mentioned above. Ordinary people understand the term 'learning' differently. Bigge (1976: 1) differentiates learning from maturation saying,

*"Maturation or learning, or combination of the two, is the means by which lasting changes in persons occur. Maturation is a developmental process within which a person from time to time manifests different traits, the 'blueprints' for which have been carried in his cells from the time of his conception."*

Krashen (1985), differentiates learning from 'acquisition', "Learning is the conscious approach towards a language when 'acquisition' takes place unconsciously in a natural order for enabling people to use the language"

**2.3 Teaching and Teacher:**

Learning is not an automatic process. It depends on teaching. Nevertheless, teaching is not controlled by only the teacher. She or he has to keep in mind the aims and objectives of the syllabus, education policy and textbook.  Also a teacher is not a preprogrammed, but a human being with his own personal characteristics. Teaching is an arts that is also affected by the philosophy of the teacher who is not a born teacher but who is taught by his or her teachers. So, the teacher has an existing idea of teaching from the experience as he was taught.

Therefore, a clash of ideology between the teacher and the factors concerned with language teaching may occur. In fact, "... the way in which an educator builds his curriculum, selects his materials, and chooses his instructional technique depends, to a large degree, upon how he (she) defines 'learning' (Bigge 1976: 4)".

### 2.4 Curriculum:

The syllabus or curriculum is another factor that influences the teaching and learning.  Krashen (1985) says, "... the L2 learner may well have a 'built-in syllabus'; i. e. an internally programmed sequence for learning various aspects of the target grammar which may or may not coincide with the syllabus imposed on him or her by the teacher. Hence, learners will follow a sequence of development (the in-built syllabus) because of or in spite of, the sequence imposed on them from outside." However in every class a preprogrammed curriculum and syllabus is followed by teachers which is assigned to them by the authority and they have no choice to change or replace it.

### 2.5 Classroom and Learning Environment:

The classroom is also important factor for learning a language.  Lier (1988:47) says, the classroom is "the gathering, for a given period of time, of two or more persons (one of whom generally assumes the role of instructor) for the purposes of language learning". Allwright and Bailey (1991: 19) talk about the classroom atmosphere and emphasize it more than syllabus and method. They say, "... most teachers have a good idea of the sort of 'atmosphere' they would like to have in their classrooms, and do their best to plan to set up such an atmosphere (whether they want it to be relaxed and friendly, or brisk and business-like, or whatever".

Quader (1995: 3) says. "To bring about better and faster language learning, the classroom can give rise to interaction, particularly with qualified interlocutors who can give learners good quality input as well as accurate feedback for improvement." She further adds." In the classroom, the input by the teacher should be as short as possible, allowing more time for students' interaction. Teaching should be devised around tasks where group work should be used extensively.

So, we have tried to discuss and link the previous studies related to the topic and most of the works cited are done by the foreign linguists and researchers. The above discussion tried to make

an account of the second language learning theoretical base for further study. The following discussion aims to reveal how the researchers and teachers approach the situation and deals with the English learning problems related to the topic.

## 3.Research Methodology:

### 3.1 Population of the Study:

Population is the large group of people of same interest used in the study. Gay (2005) defined as "the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the results of the study to be generalizable" (p.112). All the student studying in the technology colleges of Sargodha Division have been considered population.

### 3.2    Sample of the Study:

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the large group from which they were selected (Gay, 2005:111). There were 80 students who participated in the study. Student studying in $2^{nd}$ year were taken from three technologies (civil, Mechanical and Electrical)

**Table: 3.1 Colleges from where the Subjects were chosen for the Study**

| Sr. No | Name of Institution | No. of Participant |
|--------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Government college of Technology Mianwali | 40 |
| 2 | Government college of Technology Sargodha | 40 |

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### 3.3. Research Instrument:

### 3.3.1 Questionnaire:

Questionnaire is a relatively proper mean of collecting data. According to (Nunan, 1992) it enables the researcher to collect data in field settings, and the data themselves are more amenable to quantification than discursive data (p.143). The questionnaire consisted of 10 items to measure the desired variables. It was based on items in the form of  5 point Likert scale which range from strongly agree to strongly disagree and the respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement by ticking one of five response categories.

**4.Data Collection:**

Data was collected from a sample of 80 students, from the above mentioned colleges. The instrument described above (questionnaire) was used. The data was collected in a quite informal way and in quite a frank atmosphere to facilitate the participants and reduce their anxiety.

**5.Finding and Discussion**

To find out the root causes of de-motivation at DAE level, the researcher took into account all the components of English class. These include students, teachers, text books, the syllabus, teaching method and evaluation. Following is the analysis of Questionnaire responses of the students.

**English is very tough subject**

| | | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 30.0 | 30.0 |
| Agree | 20.0 | 50.0 |
| Neutral | 17.5 | 67.5 |
| Disagree | 20.0 | 87.5 |
| Strogly Disagree | 12.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | |
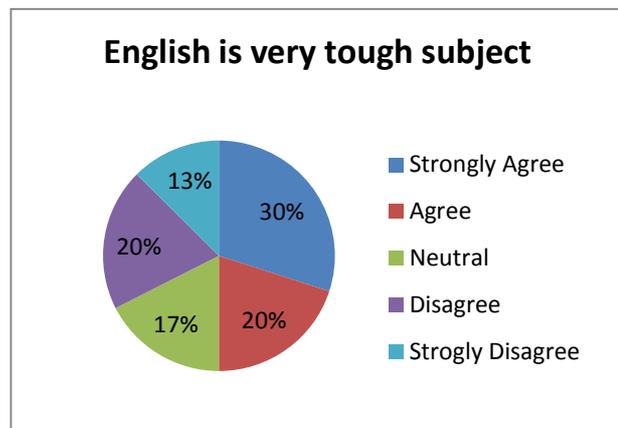


Results of Statement1 of the questionnaire show students general behavior towards English subject. Figure shows that 30% students strongly agree with taking English as tough subject and 20% students agree with the statement. Whereas 17.5 % are neutral. It shows almost 50% students inherently believe that English is tough subject and that we cannot study it.

### Text book of Punjab text book board is very interesting

|  |  | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 25.0 | 25.0 |
| Agree | 16.3 | 41.3 |
| Neutral | 8.8 | 50.0 |
| Disagree | 41.3 | 91.3 |
| Strogly Disagree | 8.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | |
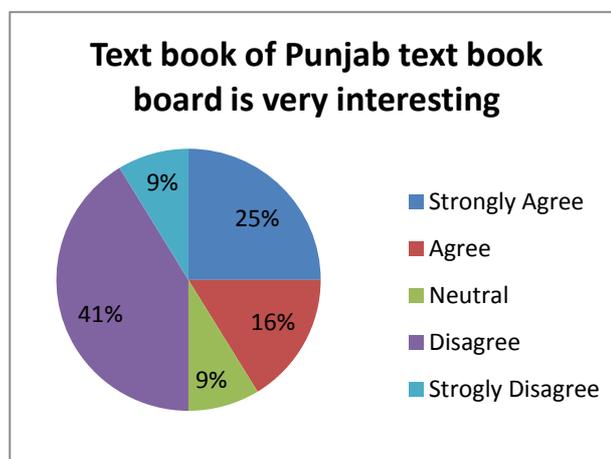


Statement 2 regarding text book of English shows 25% strongly agree, 16% agree whereas 41% disagree and 8.8% strongly disagree. Accumulatively it shows text book doesn't interest all the students.

### Books present real world situations and daily routines.

|  |  | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 7.5 | 7.5 |
| Agree | 6.3 | 45.0 |
| Neutral | 8.8 | 53.8 |
| Disagree | 40.0 | 93.8 |
| Strogly Disagree | 37.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | |
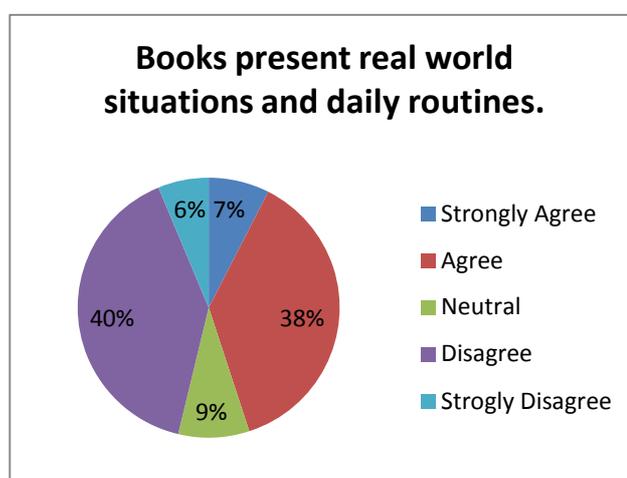


Statement 3 regarding material in the text book shows 7.5% strongly agree, 6.3% agree, 40 % disagree and 37.5 strongly disagree. This shows almost 80% students disagree that the material in the books is related to the real world in which they live.

**Teachers' behavior in English class is very encouraging.**

| | | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 27.5 | 27.5 |
| Agree | 3.8 | 31.3 |
| Neutral | 6.3 | 37.5 |
| Disagree | 50.0 | 87.5 |
| Strogly Disagree | 12.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | |

**Teachers' behavior in English class is very encouraging.**

- Strongly Agree 27%
- Agree 4%
- Neutral 6%
- Disagree 50%
- Strogly Disagree 13%
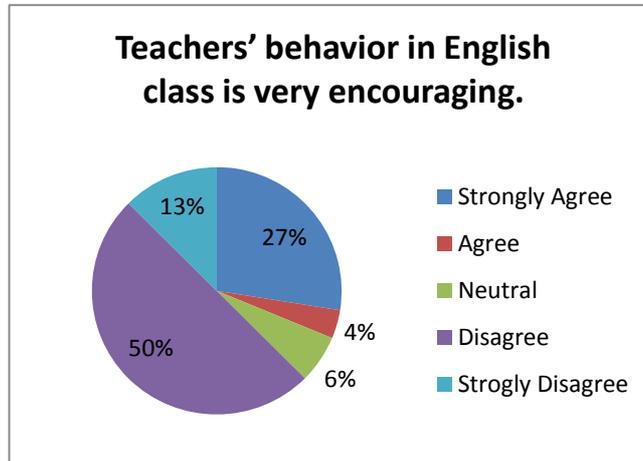
Statement 4 reveals 27.5% strongly disagree, 3.8 agree, 50% disagree and 12.5 strongly disagree. This shows almost 70% students don't find teachers' behavior as inspiring and encouraging one.

**Teachers teach the way in which students want to learn.**

| | | | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Agree | 55.7 | 55.7 |
| | Agree | 40.5 | 96.2 |
| | Neutral | 1.3 | 97.5 |
| | Disagree | 2.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | | |
| Total | | | |

**Teachers teach the way in which students want to learn.**

- Strongly Agree 56%
- Agree 40%
- Neutral 1%
- Disagree 3%
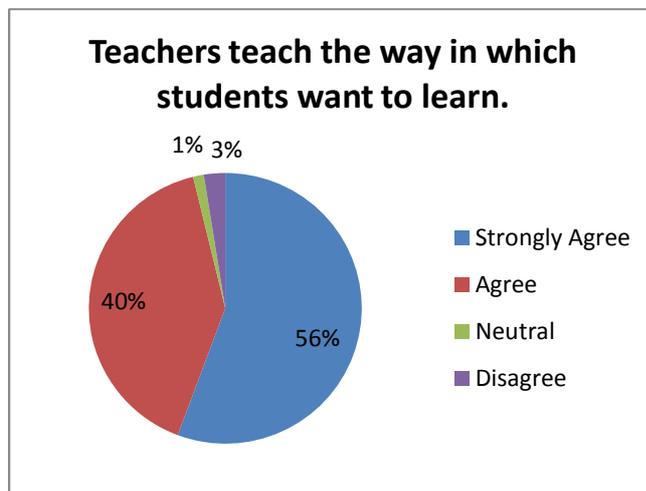
Statement 5 regarding compatibility of students needs with the way teachers teach shows 55.7% strongly agree, 40% agree, 2.5 disagree which shows students satisfaction to the way they are taught.

**Students who are below average are given extra attention by the teachers.**

|  |  | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| Agree | 25.0 | 35.0 |
| Neutral | 20.0 | 55.0 |
| Disagree | 17.5 | 72.5 |
| Strogly Disagree | 27.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |  |



Students who are below average are given extra attention by the teachers.
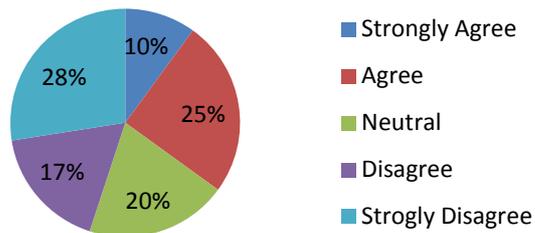
Statement 6 regarding behavior of teacher with below average students show 10% strongly agree, 25% agree whereas 17.5% disagree and 27.5% strongly disagree which shows almost 45% students who are below average bear discouraging behavior of the tacher. 205 students remained neutral.

**Homework given by the teachers groom students' English learning abilities rather than rote learning abilities.**

|  |  | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 15.0 | 15.0 |
| Agree | 27.5 | 42.5 |
| Neutral | 2.5 | 45.0 |
| Disagree | 40.0 | 85.0 |
| Strogly Disagree | 15.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |  |



Homework given by the teachers groom students' English learning abilities rather than rote learning abilities.
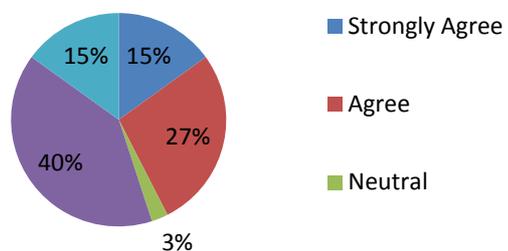
Results of statement 7 related to homework shows 15% strongly agree ,27% agree whereas 40%disagree and 15% strongly disagree that homework grooms their English leaning ability. 2.5 remained neutral.

**Teaching method adopted by the English teacher is very good.**

|  |  | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| Agree | 2.5 | 5.0 |
| Neutral | 10.0 | 15.0 |
| Disagree | 65.0 | 80.0 |
| Strogly Disagree | 20.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | |



Teaching method adopted by the English teacher is very good.
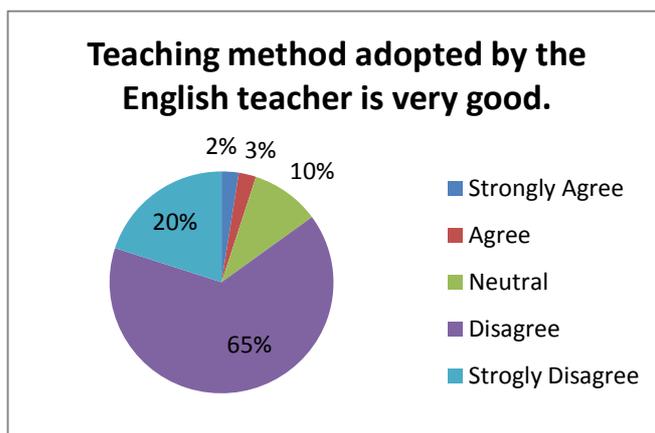
Result of statement 8 about teaching method shows 2.5% strongly agree, 2.5% agree whereas 65% disagree and 20% strongly disagree with teaching method of English teacher as good one. 10% remained neutral.

**Students who came from private schools have very sound base of English and they can do better in English class as compared to those who come from government schools..**

|  |  | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 42.5 | 42.5 |
| Agree | 32.5 | 75.0 |
| Neutral | 7.5 | 82.5 |
| Disagree | 7.5 | 90.0 |
| Strogly Disagree | 10.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | |



Students who came from private schools have very sound base of English and they can do better in English class as compared to those who come from government schools..
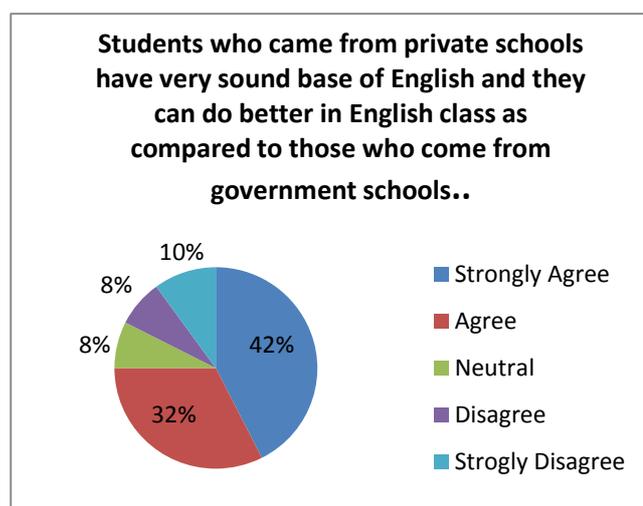
Results of statement 9 shows 42.5% strongly

agree, 32.5% agree whereas 7.5% disagree and 10% strongly disagree. About 75% students believe that students who come from private school have sound base of English and their understanding is better than those who come from government schools.

**Environment of class is proper for learning English language having attractive visual aids.**

|  |  | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 12.5 | 12.5 |
| Agree | 15.0 | 27.5 |
| Neutral | 7.5 | 35.0 |
| Disagree | 40.0 | 75.0 |
| Strogly Disagree | 25.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |  |

**Environment of class is proper for learning English language having attractive visual aids.**
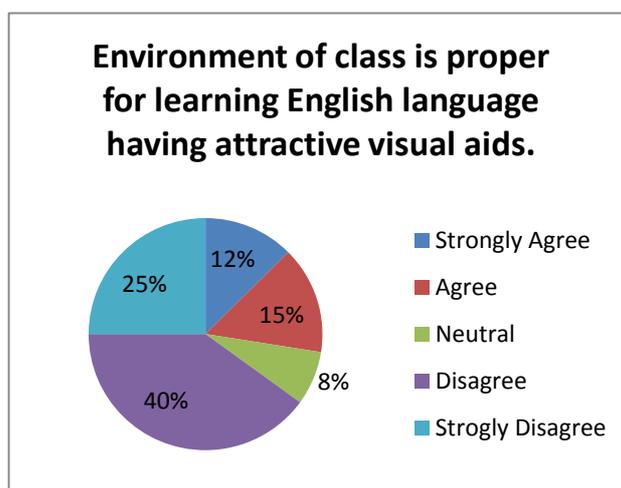


Analysis of the responses of statement 10 shows 12.5% strongly agree, 15% agree whereas 40%disagree and 25% strongly disagree. This shows that 75% students find classroom environment poor with respect to attractive visual aids.

**Classroom activities are based on four basic skills.((i.e. speaking, listening, writing and reading)**

|  |  | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 7.5 | 7.5 |
| Agree | 37.5 | 45.0 |
| Neutral | 15.0 | 60.0 |
| Disagree | 15.0 | 75.0 |
| Strogly Disagree | 25.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 |  |

**Classroom activities are based on four basic skills.((i.e. speaking, listening, writing and reading)**
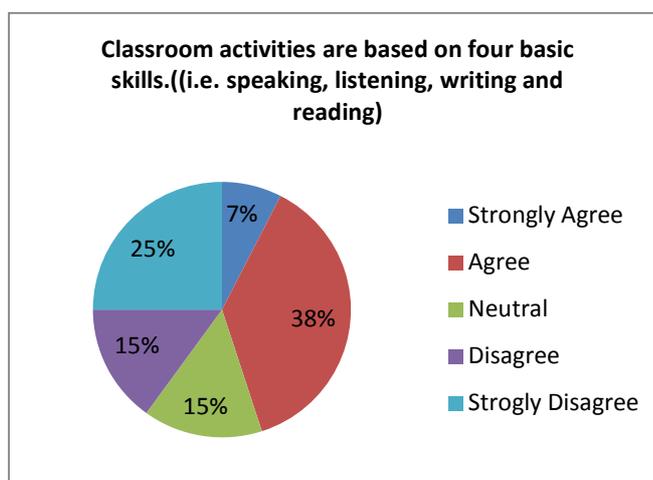
Results of statement 11 regarding activity based English learning show 7.5% students strongly agree, 37.5 agree, 15% disagree and 25% strongly disagree whereas 15% remained neutral. Almost 45% students believe that classroom activities enhance their language skills where as 40% contradict.

**Activities done in classroom are applicable to real life situations.**

| | | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 20.0 | 20.0 |
| Agree | 25.0 | 45.0 |
| Neutral | 12.5 | 57.5 |
| Disagree | 12.5 | 70.0 |
| Strogly Disagree | 30.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | |



Activities done in classroom are applicable to real life situation.
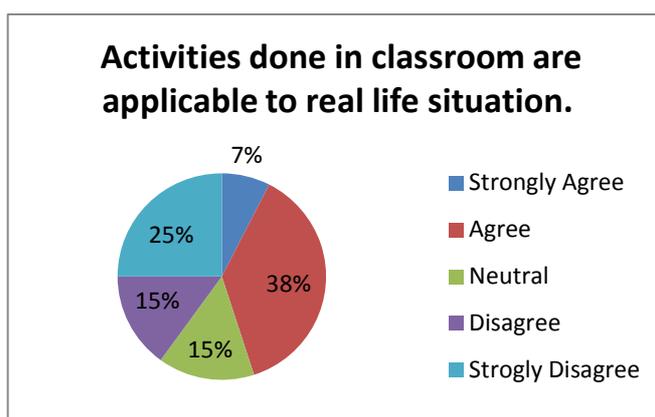
Results of statement 12 show 20% strongly agree, 25% agree whereas 12% disagree and 30% strongly disagree. On the whole 45% find classroom activities applicable to real life situations whereas 42% contradict and 12.5 remained neutral.

**Paper pattern truly measures students learning.**

| | | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 33.8 | 33.8 |
| Agree | 10.0 | 43.8 |
| Neutral | 2.5 | 46.3 |
| Disagree | 7.5 | 53.8 |
| Strogly Disagree | 46.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | |



Paper pattern truly measures students learning.
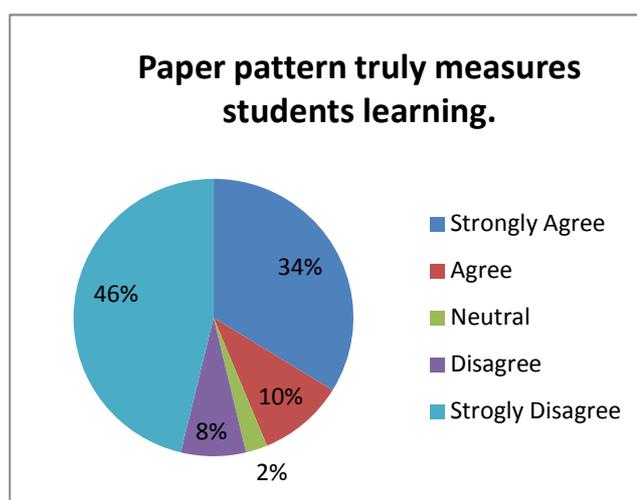
Results of statement 13 show 33.8 strongly agree, 10% agree whereas 7.5 disagree and 46.3 strongly disagree. On the whole according to 46.8% student's paper pattern is all right but 53.8% contradict.

**Two credit hours for students English class are sufficient to overcome English learning difficulties**

| | | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| Agree | 10.0 | 15.0 |
| Neutral | 5.0 | 20.0 |
| Disagree | 7.5 | 27.5 |
| Strogly Disagree | 72.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | |

**Two credit hours for students English class are sufficient to overcome English learning difficulties**
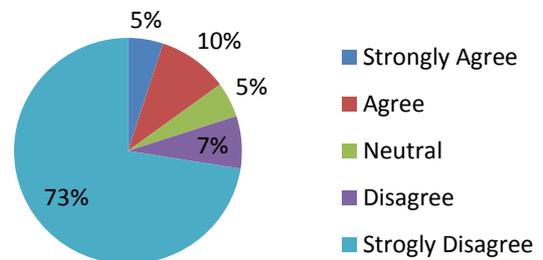


Results of statement 14 show 5% strongly agree, 10% agree, 7.5% disagree and 72.5% strongly disagree and 5% neutral which shows 80% students are of the opinion that two credit hours /week are not sufficient to cope the problem of English of DAE students whereas only 15% students agreed with it.

**6. Discussion:**

To start with students there is a great tendency of parents to send their children in private schools where considerable attention and time is given to all the four skills of language which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In contrast, the students in Govt. Schools have very low exposure to English language. As a result at DAE level, they are not well familiar with English language. They still consider it as a foreign and alien language. Most students coming from rural areas have no motivation for English language. They develop negative attitude towards English and do not want to learn it at all. They start detaching themselves from English subject because they cannot do activities or given tasks which causes losing their self confidence and also self esteemed due to repeatedly negative feedback from the teacher. The students get impression that

only students of upper class (studying in private institutes) can learn English. Average students just take it as a subject which they have to pass in order to get Diploma. So, they start rote learning to get passing scores.

In most technical institutes, teachers use traditional grammar translation method. There is not variety or change in their teaching strategies. Motivation of teachers is further decreased when there is no innovation in teaching method. Moreover, in technical institutes, only two credit hours are allocated for English subject, which means students take two lectures per week. Their base for English is already poor and spending very little time with English teacher or in English learning environment hinders teachers to facilitate the English learning process of their students. The teacher is constantly in struggled with time. He or she is under pressure to cover the course contents in the given span of time

A lot of formal trainings have been conducted by TEVTA on pedagogy but that remains only formal and are not applied or not applicable in traditional classrooms. The result is that students only cram but are totally handicapped in real life situations because there are no audio visual aids in class and teachers also do nothing to make teaching method interesting.

The syllabus selected for DAE level lays very little emphasis on four language skills e.g. listening, speaking, reading or writing. Text book of English consists of prose only and the essays do not reflect their interest and culture. Course for English grammar is translation from Urdu to English which is taught by GTM. Course contents are not in any way linked with their needs to learn English language. Teachers are just concerned with course coverage and they are justified in doing so, because they have no time to develop students' communication skills and students are also not ready to do activities which are not included in their course.

Method of evaluation and assessment at the end of the year is also not linked with students' abilities. Objective paper in which they have to attempt cloze test, select synonyms of given word, provide word substitution and use correct form of the verb in the blank. Students face great difficulty in attempting cloze test. They are in a fix to use which word in the blank space they haven't enough ability to guess from the context of sentence. For synonyms, they have to select from four options. A word in English has many synonyms, so the students may not learn the provided synonyms in the options. For example, the word "eradicate" has numerous synonyms like "root out", "destroy", "eliminate", uproot". The students are unable to retain so many words for one word.

In writing skill, they are not creative enough to write on unseen topic which they have not crammed. So, they are helpless when writing an essay and so on because the syllabus doesn't develope four basic skills of English.

**Conclusion and Suggestions:**

The researcher came to the conclusion that to achieve good results at DAE level, it is necessary to bring changes in course contents, teaching methods, credit hours and include activities and teach English as a skill not as a subject. The researcher suggest following tips to bring improvement in results:

- Changes should be brought in text book and activities related to real life should be included.
- Paper pattern should be amended particularly objective part should be changed to MCQs instead of cloze test.
- Credit hours for English in DAE should be increased and English should be taught on daily basis.
- Teachers should give frequent, early, positive feedback that supports below average students' beliefs that they can do well.
- Teachers should ensure opportunities for those students' success who came from government institutes by assigning tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult.
- There should be attractive visual aids in the classroom e.g. charts, pictures, models and colorful board markers.

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**APPENDIX**

Questionnaire for the Students

Name: ...........................................................................................................................

Age: .........................................................................................................................

Name of the College...............................................................................................................

Class Status............................................................................................................

❖  Read out each statement and select one option which seems you appropriate.
1.      English is very tough subject.

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

2.      Text book of Punjab text book board is very interesting.
a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree
3.      Books present real world situations and daily routines.

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

4.      Teachers' behavior in English class is very encouraging.

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

5.      Teachers teach the way in which students want to learn.

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

6.      Students who are below average are given extra attention by the teachers.

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

7.      Homework given by the teachers groom students' English learning abilities rather than rote learning abilities.

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

8.      Teaching method adopted by the English teacher is very good.
a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

9.      Students who came from private schools have very sound base of English and they can do better in English class as compared to those who come from government schools..
a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

10.    Environment of class is proper for learning English language having attractive visual aids.

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

11.    Classroom activities are based on four basic skills.((i.e. speaking, listening, writing and reading)

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

12.    Activities done in classroom are applicable to real life situations.

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

13.    Paper pattern truly measures students learning.

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree

14.    Two credit hours for students English class are sufficient to overcome English learning difficulties

a-Strongly agree   b- Agree  c- Neutral  d- Disagree   e- Strongly disagree