

Analysis of Grade Three Students Performance in the Subject of English in Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper reports on a study that investigated the analysis of grade three students' performance in English at 33 government schools of district Punjab. It is descriptive type of research. To check the weaknesses and strengths of students in English of grade three students. This study is useful for administrators; teachers, researchers and students to improve their knowledge. For this purpose, the test was developed from book published by Punjab textbook board. This test contains questions on four basic concepts of English like Vocabulary, Grammar, Comprehension and Writing. Population of this study was male and female students of grade three government schools. Sample of this study was 798 students randomly selected from 33 government schools. Data was collected from the related students. Data was analyzed by using SPSS and Excel in terms of mean standard Deviation. This shows the strong and weak point of the students. Generally a large number of students were not able to write English. In general, lack of comprehension is demonstrated. After analyzing the results, it is found that those students who are good in comprehension and writing are good in the subject of English. To make the gender competent and efficient it is needed to make them proficient in writing comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and writing, by providing the highly trained staff competent in English language.

Key Words: Analysis, Grade Three, Performance, English, Students' achievement

Introduction

After the 1950s there has been great advancement in communication as a result of which world has become global village. This gave birth to need of common language which was English.

These days English is called language of economic system, international tourism, electronic information and higher education. Over 80 percent international organizations in the field of international relations make official use of English (Mackay, 2002:17). In Asia and the Pacific some 90% of organizations use only English for their official proceedings. Nehru said, "English is our major window of the world." "English is not a subject which can be taught; it is a subject which must be learnt." (Michel West). F. G. French said, "No language ancient and modern can be compared with English in number of its speakers, writers and readers all over the world." English language teaching is regarded as being far from satisfactory in the country, not conducive to learning the language (Warsi, 2004). Realizing the need of the English language many training programs to teach English has started. It has been witnessed that, in recent times government has taken several measures to improve the quality of English language in the country.

History of English language

In the early period of its history, England was divided several political and social units, each of which had a dialect of its own. Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, Sussex, East Angles etc.

English was one of these dialects, the dialect of the southern area round about London.

By a combination of favorable chances it produced literature and found a patron in King Alfred who made English as a medium of education. Thus English gained the position of a national language in England. (Ahmad, Sh. Nazir, 1968, p.1). It is just a coincidence that people started with the study of English in earnest, more than a century ago, when it was not yet recognized, as a major language in the international field.

Still a more notable event in history is the emergence of the British as a supreme power after the downfall of the French in India, Canada, and elsewhere. Their political supremacy led to the rapid spread of English language and its virtual recognition as a world language, more or less.

The purpose of teaching English as a separate course is little different. The chief subject is the language itself. How does the language give meaning? How can a person use the language more effectively to represent his meaning, both in speech and writing? What important expressions have great writers made in English? English as a separate subject answers these questions in detail. (Taner & Shutes, 1968).

Need for English in Pakistan

Pakistan is a multilingual and multicultural society. The linguistic map of Pakistan is quite complex with many languages; each of the four provinces has one or more dominant languages and a number of minority languages. The emblematic status of English, due to its historical association with the elite and proto-elite (Haque 1983, Rahman 1998, 2002), has helped in making it a prestigious language. English is the language of power in comparison with Urdu, the national language, and other regional languages of Pakistan (Rassool and Mansoor 2009). Each new government soon after it assumes power announces its policy of teaching English to the masses as a way of achieving its democratic ideals of equality of opportunity. As this decision is politically motivated, it comes as no surprise that implementation efforts fall short of the supposedly democratic intent of the policy. This official rhetoric of providing 'equal' opportunities for learning of English as a potential tool to level differences among the social classes, without a study of current provision and teachers' ability to teach English effectively, does not match the overall education policy in Pakistan. Thus the teaching of English stays as a live issue on the agenda of every successive government (Shamim 2008).

Some skills in English language

Vocabulary Knowledge

One of the components of language proficiency that has been shown to have a strong effect on reading comprehension is vocabulary knowledge in the language being read (Coady, Mgoto, Hubbard, Graney, & Mokhtari, 1993). Other research suggests that vocabulary knowledge is gained through extensive and frequent reading (Cho & Krasben, 1994; Constantino, 1995; Joe, 1998). This dual interaction is the basis of the "beginner's paradox" (Coady, 1997, p. 229): Learners need to read to gain vocabulary knowledge, but they need vocabulary knowledge in order to read. (Reading specialists, including Grabe and Stoller, 2002, and Laufer, 1997, posit that a minimum of 3,000 words is needed to be able to read independently in the second language.)

Vocabulary knowledge is more than knowledge of the basic meanings of words. Comprehension is affected by both the breadth--or size---of a learner's vocabulary and the depth of knowledge about the pronunciation and spelling, morphological properties, syntactic properties, connotations, polysemy (a word's multiple meanings), and register (context and appropriateness) (Qian, 1999). Listening comprehension depends upon lexical knowledge (vocabulary). The meanings of words contribute to the meanings of sentences, which make up much of oral communication. The same skills are used during reading individual words as a foundation for text comprehension. During the Early Years, most children extend their vocabulary at a very rapid rate, possibly adding in the order of 50 to 70 words to their vocabulary base per week. Much of this vocabulary growth occurs as the result of oral conversation. By the time children are five, it is estimated that they have an oral vocabulary of some 14,000 words. Beyond that age, oral conversation is a much less effective means of promoting vocabulary knowledge for most children (although it remains crucial for children for whom English is an additional language). This is because most conversations contain words that everyone uses and understands. The practical issues for teachers therefore are how to:

- ensure vocabulary growth continues through the school years □
- Narrow the vocabulary gap between children who enter school with good and with poor language (Beck and McKeown in press, 2006).

Having learners identify their specific literacy goals maintains their interest and motivation (Comings & Cuban, 2000; Comings, Parella, & Soricone, 2000). When readers are able to comprehend vocabulary words quickly, they are better able to understand the meaning of a sentence or passage. When readers struggle with the meanings of individual vocabulary words, they will have difficulties connecting the meanings of words in a sentence or passage (McLeod & McLaughlin, 1986).

To avoid frustration, readings in which students are familiar with 90-95% of the vocabulary should be chosen (Calderón, 2007). In addition, independent reading should be “structured and purposeful” if it is to be beneficial (Francis, 2006, Book 1). Students must learn and implement the strategies of good readers, such as predicting, monitoring for understanding, asking questions during reading, and summarizing after reading (Francis, 2006, Book 1).

Writing

Effective writing requires mastery on both the micro and macro level; while students must think about spelling and choosing precise words, they must also be mindful of overall organization of ideas. If the students have learned how to write in another country, they may organize their ideas differently and/or use a less direct argumentation style than is typical of the American academic context (Fox, 1994). Teachers should also be aware of the differences between the writing styles of different genres. Since learners’ expectations affect their ability to perform in English (Walqui & DeFazio, 2003), teachers should highlight their disciplines’ unique features. “For example, in American history, this might include period rhetoric and referents such as the Constitution; in science it might include the ways that conclusions are stated; and in literature, it might include the routine phrases that indicate a fairy tale is in process” (Walqui & DeFazio, 2003, p.5). For low-literacy students, teachers should begin by focusing on the meaning of the writing, then move on to mechanics as their writing progresses (Barron & DiCerbo, 2006).

The following teaching methods of writing have demonstrated positive effect sizes. They are presented in order from most to least effective.

1. summarization,
2. collaborative writing,
3. specific product goals,
4. word processing,
5. sentence combining (rather than de-contextualized grammar exercises),
6. pre-writing, inquiry activities, process writing,
7. studying models, and,
8. writing for content area learning (Graham & Perin, 2007)

In addition, ELLs must learn explicit strategies on how to write, depending on the type of text (Calderón, 2007). Students should be exposed to the various genres of writing used in schooling such as procedural and historical recounts, reports, persuasive writing and others (Schleppegrell, 2004).

Grammar

Knowledge is important, but only insofar as it enables students to communicate “accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately” (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Grammar instruction assists English learners in becoming aware of a structure and then continuing to notice it in subsequent encounters (Fotos, 2001). Once students have internalized the structure through repeated exposure, they can use this knowledge to monitor their own language use. Historically, language teaching methods have alternated between two opposing approaches: those that focus on analyzing the language and those that focus on using it. At one end of the spectrum, students learn about the grammar, sounds, and vocabulary of the language, but they may seldom or never be required to use it in meaningful communication. At the other end, students begin using the language immediately in order to acquire it (Larsen-Freeman, 2001).

Grammatical skills

Comprehension at the sentence level (and beyond) depends upon having good grammatical skills. **Grammar** is a system of rules that specifies the order in which words can be used in sentences (**syntax**), and how word order is used to convey meaning. Formally, grammar is made up of **morphology** as well as syntax. Morphology refers to the basic structure of words and the units of meaning (or morphemes) from which they are formed. For example, the word ‘boy’ is a single morpheme but the compound word ‘cowboy’ can be thought of as containing two morphemes, ‘cow’ and ‘boy’. There is therefore an intimate relationship between grammar and meaning and, therefore, comprehension. Although sentences can be both grammatical and semantically unlikely, for example ‘the fish walked to the buses, we will not be concerned with such unusual examples here. More usually, the grammatical structure of a sentence is closely related to its meaning so that different grammatical forms generally take particular semantic roles in the sentence. Nouns usually refer to agents or objects whereas verbs refer to actions or feelings. In a similar vein, prepositions signify location while adjectives and adverbs are used to describe nouns and verbs respectively.

Defining comprehension

Intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader.” (Harris and Hodges 1995, 207). There are three main reasons why children will fail to progress in reading comprehension:

- inefficient word-level reading skills
- poor oral language skills
- Lack of print experience and/or negative attitudes to reading.

When trying to understand a particular child’s difficulty, teachers should ask themselves a simple set of questions, as follows. Is the child able to?

- read the text at the independent or easy level
- complete the task when listening but not when reading
- understand and follow the instructions given
- complete the task at a more simple level or with an easier text
- demonstrate a concept or strategy but not be able to explain it adequately
- complete part of the task but not be able to orchestrate a final full answer
- complete the task at a slower rate
- complete the task when provided with a model or supported step by step
- Detect where an error has been made

Reading Comprehension Skills

Defining reading comprehension may not be an easy task, since a lot of cognitive processes are involved in the process of reading. Johnston (1983) sees reading comprehension as the process of using the cues provided by the author and one’s previous knowledge to infer the author’s meaning.

However, a lot more is involved in reading comprehension than differencing, as various other authors conceptualize reading comprehension not in terms of just inference, but other skills. Viewed as the most universally recognized skill, comprehending word meaning is a contextual skill which involves inferring meanings of unknown words, phrases, expressions and pictures used in a text (Nyarawanda, 2001). Johnston (1983) also stresses the importance of the nature of the reading comprehension passage when he observes that the performance of an individual in a (comprehension) test will depend on, among other factors, the characteristics of the text and prior knowledge, the reader's socio-economic background and the linguistic level of the text.

Statement of the problem

An analysis of performance of grade 3rd students in English at Province of Punjab in Pakistan

Objectives of the study

1. To compare the performance of schools in subject English.
2. To compare the achievements of male and female students in subject English.
3. To find out level of achievement in vocabulary of students.
4. To find out level of achievement in grammar of students.
5. To find out the level of achievement in writing of students.
6. To find out the level of achievement in comprehension of students.
7. To find out the difficulties which are faced by the primary level students in English

Methodology and Procedure

In this research study the researcher use descriptive method. Descriptive research describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. The description is used for frequencies, averages and other statistical calculations. Research must have an impact to the lives of the people around you. (Wikipedia.com). the population of this study consists of male and female students of Government Schools of Punjab Province. It was decided to include 3rd Grade Students. The researcher takes the sample of 798 students of Grade 3rd from Government schools. The researchers collect the data from the 33 Punjab province schools. Before selecting the sampling technique the researchers considered the variables selected from the research work then it is found that most suitable sampling technique is convenient sampling. To develop the achievement test of English, third-grade English book has taken by the researcher which is commonly used in government sector schools published by the Punjab Textbook Board.

This book contains the following concepts.

1. grammar
2. vocabulary
3. comprehension
4. writing

Analysis and interpretation of Data

This chapter deals with analysis and interpretation of data. The aim of the study was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of grade 3 students in the subject of English at elementary level. DTSC collected the data through an achievement test, which consists of four concepts: vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, writing at district level. The information obtained through the achievement test about different concepts is calculated and analyzed in SPSS and in Excel. The results are presented here in the form of tables and graphs, which shows the weak and strong areas of students

Level of Achievement and Conceptual Problems of the Students

Concept 1 (Writing)

Interpretation:

- In question 1, the average percentage of part (a) and part (b) is 51.6% and 33.4% respectively. This shows that students are weak in concept of writing. They can't tell anyone about themselves in correct English and can't do correct conversation in English with anyone.
- Question 4, part (C) is about read the text and by using the given list of words and writes a similar text. The response is 2.86% which shows that almost all students are nil in writing.

- Question 4, part (D) is about write sentences about your best friend. The response to the question is 6.28% which shows that students are weak in essay writing

Concept 2 (Vocabulary)

Interpretation:

- Question 2, part (a), (b), (c) and (d) measures the concept of vocabulary of students.
- In Part (a), the average mean % is 79.85 which shows that majority of the students answer correctly, few students have difficulty in the spellings of numbers.
- In part (b), students are unable to write the correct spellings of “telling the time”. The mean % is 36.69 which show that students are weak in telling the correct time.
- In part (c), the average mean % is 46.15 which show that students are able to write the names of colours with correct spellings.
- In part (d), students are not able to write the spellings of words with different sounds. The response on this question is 24.65% which shows that students are confused in spelling the words with different sounds. They cannot recognize the right words and spellings.
- In part (f), the question is about vocabulary in which the names of fruits and vegetables were asked. The response to this question is 50.5% which shows that 50% students have good vocabulary.
- In part (h), the response is 25.04% which shows that majority of the students cannot explain the correct spellings of use of senses in English.
- In part (i), the question is to check that students know the alphabetical order or not. The response is 25.37% which shows that quarter of whole sample can response correctly.
- In question 4, part (a). The students were asked to tell the correct spellings of parts of human body. The response is 48.02% which shows that almost half of the sample is able to answer correctly.

Concept 3 (Grammar)

Interpretation:

- Question 2, part (e) is about use of prepositions. The response shows that 32.89% students use the correct prepositions in a sentence.
- In part (g), the question is about what units are used in English to sold vegetables and fruits. The response to this question is 27.10% which shows that very few students know the measuring units.
- In part (j), the question is about the use of has or have to complete the sentences. The response is 28.36% which shows that almost 30% students know the use of has or have.
- Question 4, part (b) is about rearrange the words and makes a meaningful sentence and the use of punctuation the response to the question is 12.41% which shows very low response that the students are weak in punctuation.

Concept 4 (Comprehension)

Interpretation:

- Question 2, part (K), the question is about to explain the different feelings in English after looking at the picture. The response is 6.29% which shows very low response that almost all students are unable to explain the feelings. The response shows that students are weak in comprehension.
- Question 3, the question is about to read the passage and answer the question i.e. comprehension. The response to this question is 19.86% which shows that only few students are able to answer the question after reading the passage.

Comparison of the Performance of Schools in Mathematical Concepts

School Names	Vocabulary	Grammar	Comprehension	Writing
GPS Bast	29	27	00.8	14
GGPS Ghu	71	62	73	28
GGPS Suk	70	55	56	22
GOVT.G.P	29	28	00.8	14
GPS Latk	26	17	5	5
GPS Koyl	87	70	43	34
GGPS Bam	76	52	26	26
GGPS Tib	78	60	38	24
GPS Syed	65	52	10	15
GPS Sair	40	15	3	7
GGPS Cha	43	27	00.8	14
GGPS Tea	51	38	29	17
GOVT. P	29	26	00.8	14
GGPS BAS	30	28	23	9
GPS #1,S	28	24	18	12
G.GP/S B	29	27	00.8	14
GOVT.PR	29	26	00.8	14
GPS Doga	30	29	23	8
GGPS Nab	27	22	15	11
GGPS Muj	49	46	18	7
GGPS Tha	38	25	0	2
GPS Chha	28	37	5	5
GPS Long	18	13	3	3
GPS Peer	24	16	16	5
GPS Nade	23	33	14	5
GPS No.1	74	73	61	25
GPS Dham	79	70	78	21
GGPS Abu	22	31	8	3
GGPS Rac	59	49	50	27
GGPS Muz	48	42	29	9
GPS Marh	8	10	0	0
GPS Meht	22	12	00.8	4
GGPS Muh	67	39	40	19

Comparison between the performance of male and female students

Group Statistics

Gender	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	df	t	sigs
Male	394	13.6726	10.16045	785	-0.761	0.477
female	393	14.1921	8.94958			

Interpretation

The mean of male and female students is 13.67 and 14.19 respectively. Their standard deviation is 10.16045 and 8.9 respectively which shows less variation between their performances as they are not significantly different.

Summary

The study is related to know the strengths and weaknesses at elementary level. The topic of the study was "An analysis of performance of grade 3 students in English."

The data was collected by DTSC; it is a Local Need Assessment survey. An achievement test was used which is based on four concepts: vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and writing. The data is collected from 798 students of 33 govt. schools of Punjab. This study will provide an opportunity for the teachers to overcome the weaknesses of students in the subject of English. Through this study the parents would also be aware of the problems of students that they face in the subject of English. So, this study will be helpful for the teachers, administrators and parents about how to treat the students to improve their weaknesses. For the identification of strengths and weaknesses of students in the subject of English. The collected data is analyzed statistically. The results were presented in the form of tables and graphs.

Findings

1. It is found that students of govt. schools of Punjab are weak in comprehension and writing.
2. The research shows that many of the students of govt. schools of Punjab are better in vocabulary.
3. But it is found that the students who are better in vocabulary are not good in writing.
4. The GPS KoylaBuksh performed good in vocabulary i.e 85% and GPSMehrKalanSchool perform low in vocabulary.
5. GGPS NabiPura performed well in grammar and GGPS Mehta Suja shows lowest performance in grammar.
6. The performance of GPSBastiNagarSchool is better as compared to other in comprehension.i.e 79%
7. The schools which perform nill in comprehension are Govt. P.R. and GGPS Teacher Colony.
8. In writing, the highest % is 35% which shows that almost all schools are weak in writing.

Conclusions

Generally a large number of students were not able to write English. In general, lack of comprehension is demonstrated. After analyzing the results, it is found that those students who are good in comprehension and writing are good in the subject of English.

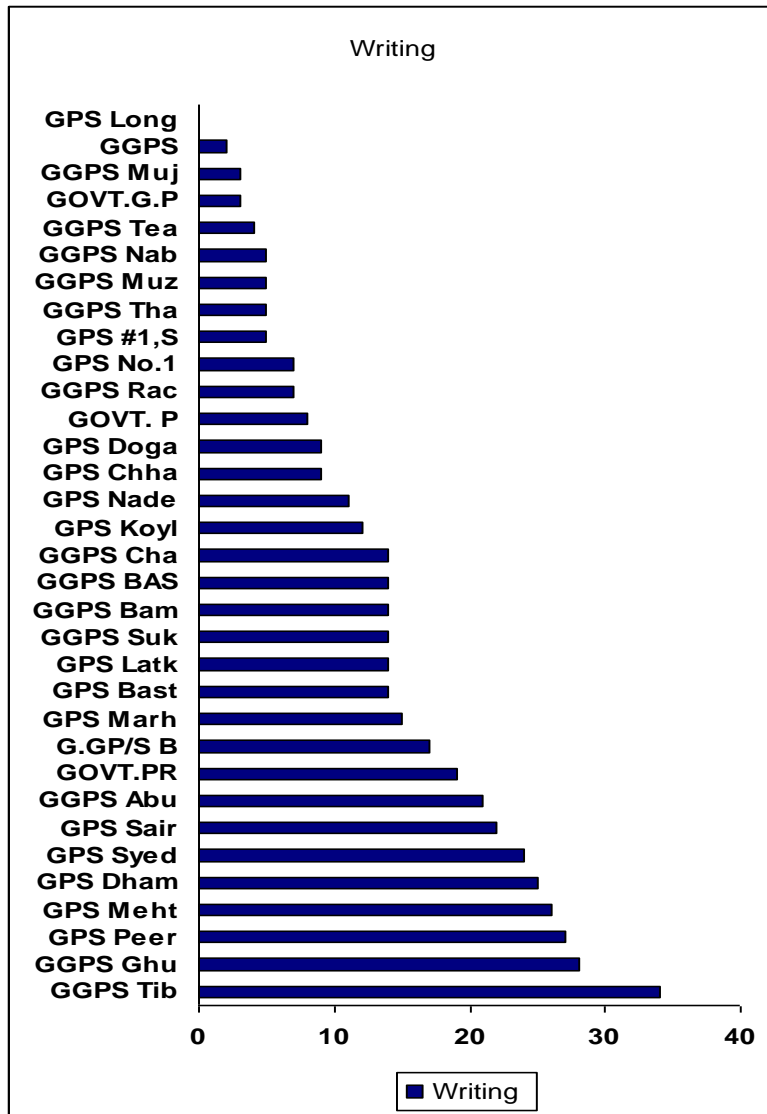
Recommendations

1. Writing ability of the students be improved by giving them special exercises and grammar.
2. Grammar and basic skills be also emphasized by well qualified teachers.
3. Students and teachers are both needed to give special emphasis on English learning.
4. Head teachers should be provided sufficient information to evaluate the learning difficulties of the students.
5. Teachers should also give special emphasis to identify the learning difficulties at elementary level.
6. There should be a competition among students for grammar and essay writing.
7. The students should be given proper guidelines for the improvement of mistakes.
8. Teachers should adopt the latest techniques for teaching English.
9. To make the gender competent and efficient it is needed to make them proficient in writing comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and writing, by providing the highly trained staff competent in English language.

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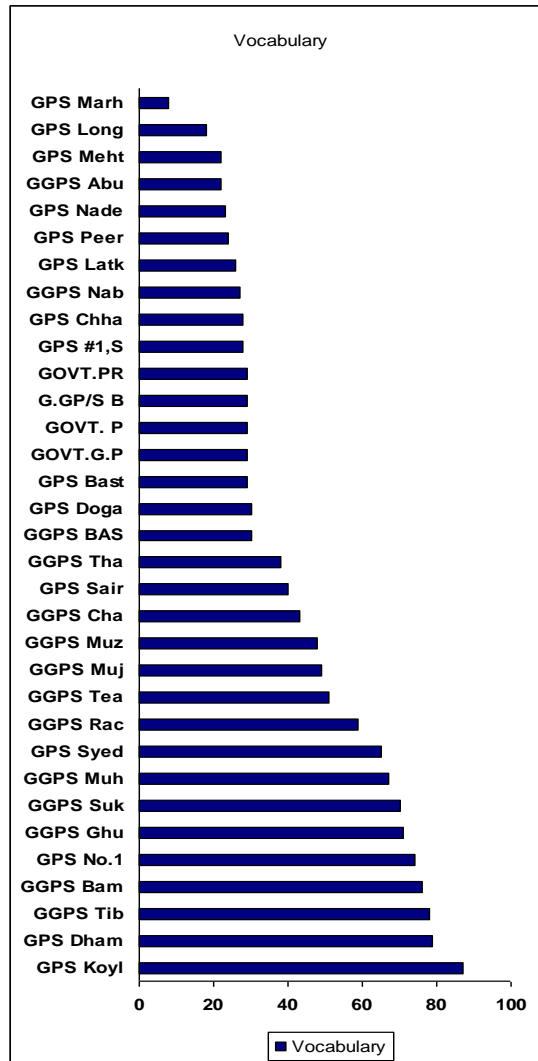
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Appendix (A)



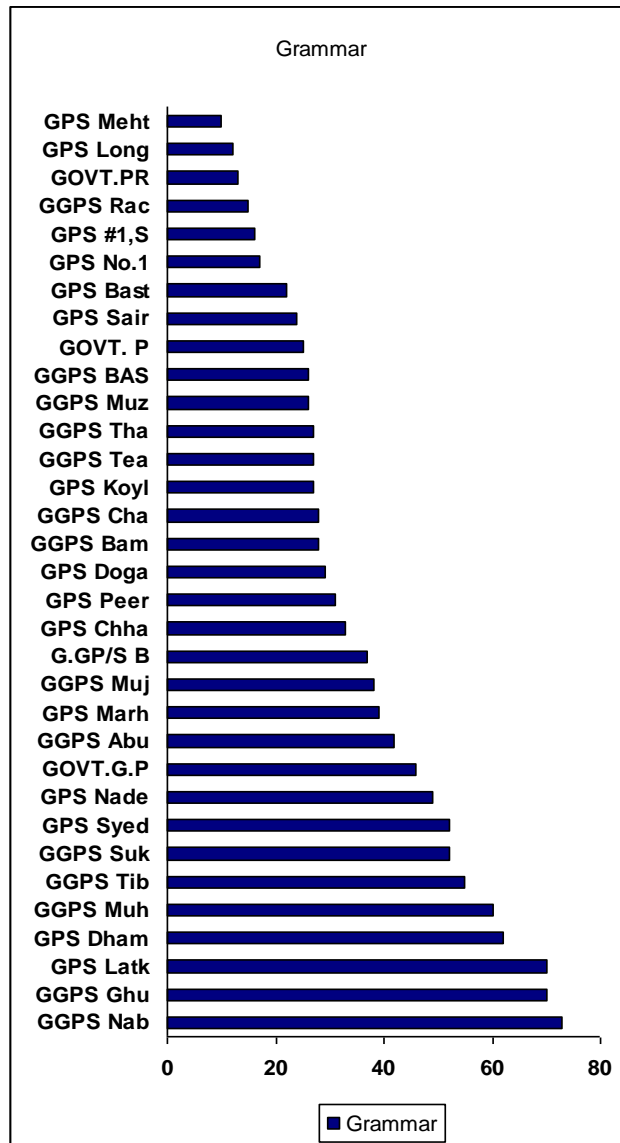
The highest performance in writing is 35% of School GGPS Tib. This shows that all the schools are weak in writing, as compared to comprehension, grammar and vocabulary. Majority of the schools shows low performance which is less than 15%. All the above graphs shows that majority of the schools are good in vocabulary and weak in writhing.

Appendix (B)



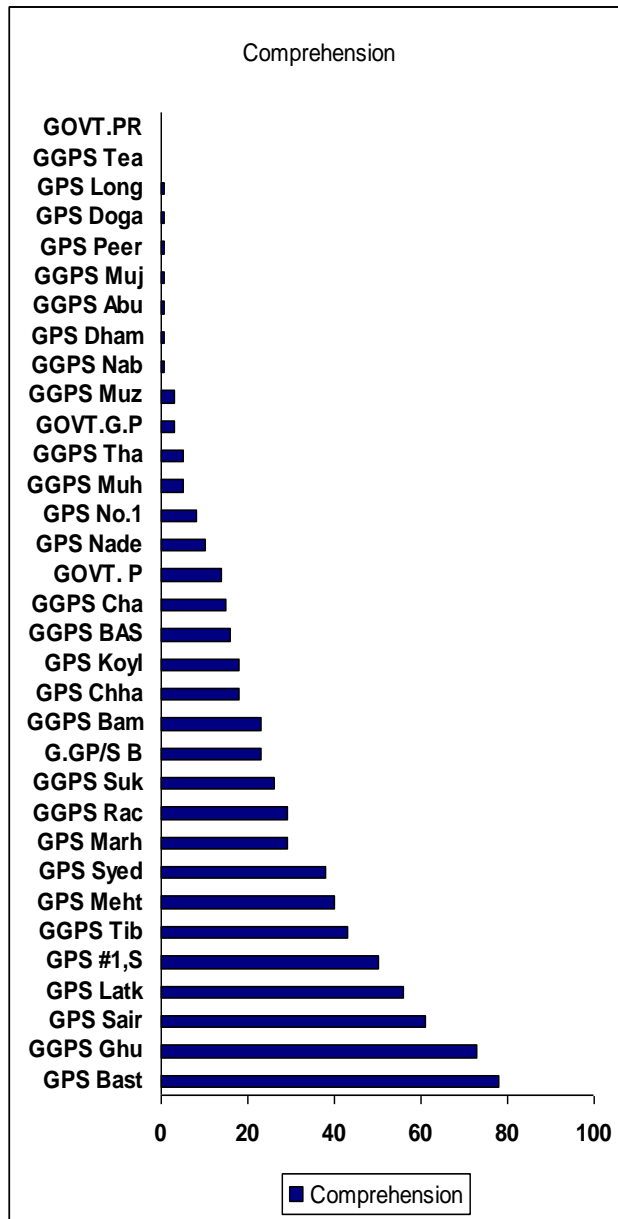
This graph shows that GPS KoylaBukhsh School students perform excellent in vocabulary as their percentage is more than 80 while GPS MarhiKalan School students shows low performance in vocabulary. The performance of schools from GGPS Basti Allah Baksh to GGPS Longowal is almost same i.e. less than 40%.the performance of schools from GPS Dhamkay to GPS NO.1 Sharakpur is almost 80% which shows that these school are also good in vocabulary. So the graph shows that majority of the schools have to pay attention to vocabulary area of students.

Appendix (C)



The graph shows that the performance of GGPS NabiPura is near to 80% which shows that the performance of students in vocabulary is better than grammar. The low performance in grammar is less than 20% and under this % Schools from GPSNO 1 Sharakpur to GPSMehtaSujalye. Overall the best performance in grammar is shown by GPSNabiPura.

Appendix (D)



The graph shows that performance of GPSBastiAllahBakshSchool is 79% in comprehension. There is a great variation in the performance % of schools as the lowest performance is zero. The performance of schools from GGPS NabiPura to Govt. P. R is zero. As compared to grammar and vocabulary, the performance of comprehension is very poor of majority of the schools.