

Role of English in Indian Competitive Exam

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1 Abstract

The importance of English in India's competitive examinations has grown substantially, affecting opportunities for millions of young candidates over the past twenty years. English has become a medium not only for communicating, but also as a road to access to higher education, state job opportunities and the ability to move up the career ladder in India. Unfortunately, many students (particularly those who were educated in vernacular medium schools) find the English portion of (i.e., the English portion) of the exam they are taking as an impediment instead of a means of accessing greater educational and economic opportunities through examination success. The goal of this action-research study was to identify the difficulties students encounter while preparing for competitive examinations such as (exams such as) the Union Public Service Commission of India Exam (UPSC), the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC), Banking examinations, Staff Selection Commission (SSC) examinations, and Railway Examinations and to explore how their (30) weakness in English may be addressed so as to enable them (the weak students) to be more successful on competitive examinations (i.e., on exams such as) than they would have been without intervention. The research was conducted over a period of 8 weeks with thirty aspirants to competitive examinations from a bachelor's degree granting institution in Maharashtra. The study employed the following methods of data collection: diagnostic tests, classroom observations, targeted-intervention techniques, and post-

testing analysis. Through targeted data collection, the study identified common areas of difficulty such as: (lack of) knowledge of grammar, comprehension (knowledge) and skills, vocabulary (knowledge) and exam-orientated writing (skills). The study also demonstrated (illustrated) that a significant portion of students' attitudes towards, confidence in and exposure to, using English significantly influence the students' performance. As such, the study developed a structured intervention program consisting of:

- (1) weekly English practice sessions;
- (2) reading activities;
- (3) vocabulary notebooks;
- (4) mock exams;
- (5) peer tutoring; and
- (6) workshops of strategies to improve English skills in the context of taking competitive examinations.

The results of the study demonstrate that targeted, contextual and exam specific English skills training improved the students' overall performance.

2. Keywords:

Action Research in ELT, English Proficiency Enhancement, UPSC/MPSC/SSC/Banking Exam Preparation

Language Barriers in Indian Education, Diagnostic Assessment, Targeted Intervention Programme, Vocabulary

Development, Grammar Workshops, Reading Speed, Writing Skills, Mock Tests, Peer Learning, Student

Reflections, Pre-test/Post-test Analysis, Confidence Building, Language Anxiety Reduction, Regional Medium

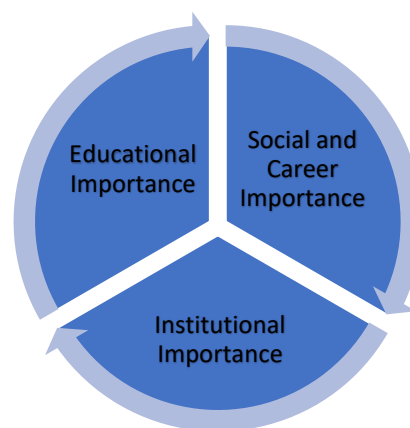
Difficulties, Constructivist Approach, Strategy Development of Exam Performance.

3. Introduction

3.1 Background of the Study India has a rich variety of languages. Students may learn in Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, or other languages during their schooling, yet nearly all major competitive exams in India include at least one section that tests English skills. Exams like UPSC Civil Services, MPSC, Banking (IBPS/SBI), Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Board (RRB), Defense Services, TET/CTET, and even private sector recruitment tests increasingly depend on English as a way to measure comprehension, reasoning skills, and job readiness. In many cases, English is not just another subject; it serves as a gatekeeping skill. Students who perform well in English can quickly qualify for prelims, achieve higher ranks, and feel more confident during interviews. Those who struggle with English often get disqualified even if they excel in other subjects. This gap creates a psychological barrier where English becomes linked to anxiety, low confidence, or self-doubt. For many college students, especially those from rural areas or those who attended regional medium schools, the shift to English-intensive competitive exams can be challenging. This isn't due to a lack of intelligence or talent but a lack of structured exposure and guided practice in English. Competitive exams require specific skills: quick comprehension, error-free writing, vocabulary recognition, correct grammar, and reasoning ability. These skills do not develop automatically; they need intentional and consistent training. This action research is based on classroom observations where many students

preparing for competitive exams noted difficulties with English instructions, misunderstood questions, and felt anxious during English-based sections. Through guided academic support, this research aims to explore how improving English skills can boost student confidence and performance in competitive exams.

3.2 Significance of the Study This study is significant in three ways:



- **Educational Importance:** English proficiency directly affects exam scores. A student who can't understand a passage, question, or instruction loses marks unnecessarily. This research demonstrates how focused English training can help bridge this gap.

- **Social and Career Importance:** English opens doors to jobs and opportunities. When students enhance their English skills for competitive exams, they not only pass tests but also gain confidence in workplace communication and during interviews.

- **Institutional Importance:** Colleges and coaching centers often emphasize General Knowledge, Reasoning, Math, and current affairs. Structured support for English usually gets less attention. This research offers a practical model for integrating English training into preparation courses for competitive exams.

3.3 Need for the Study There is a clear and urgent need for structured English support for competitive exam aspirants. In classroom discussions, many students express:

- Difficulty with exam vocabulary
- Slow reading speed
- Hardships with grammar-based MCQ's
 - Anxiety over English comprehension passages
- Limited exposure to English newspapers
- Difficulty expressing ideas in English during interviews most importantly, students are eager to improve but don't know how. They tend to practice randomly instead of following a structured approach. Teachers often prioritize completing the syllabus over building skills. This study aims to:

- Identify specific areas of struggle
- Create and implement a training program
- Measure improvement
- Recommend practical strategies for long-term implementation

3.4 Purpose of the Study The main purpose of this action research is:

To examine the role of English in India's competitive exams and to enhance English proficiency among college-level competitive exam aspirants through targeted intervention. The study specifically focuses on:

- Understanding students' current English skills
- Measuring the effectiveness of training methods
- Fostering positive attitudes toward English
- Building confidence and exam readiness

3.5 Research Questions

1. What role does English play in major competitive exams in India?
2. What challenges do college students face in English sections of competitive exams?

3. How can focused interventions improve students' English performance?
4. Which specific English skills (reading, grammar, vocabulary) are essential for exams?
5. How can colleges incorporate English training into competitive exam coaching?

3.6 Statement of the Problem Many Indian students preparing for competitive exams face significant challenges due to limited English proficiency. This affects their understanding of exam questions, their ability to interpret passages, and their performance on English-based MCQ's. The problem worsens when English becomes a deciding factor for passing preliminary stages. Despite being intelligent and hardworking, students fail because of:

- Their school background's lack of focus on English
- A lack of confidence
- Viewing English as a difficult language
- Practicing without a proper strategy
- Insufficient guidance. This issue needs immediate attention because English is no longer optional in competitive exams; it is crucial for success.

3.7 Objective of the Study Major Objective:

To improve English proficiency among competitive exam aspirants and assess how English impacts exam performance.

Specific Objectives:

1. Identify key English skills needed for competitive exams.
2. Diagnose students' current strengths and weaknesses in English.
3. Design and implement a structured English intervention program.
4. Evaluate the impact of the intervention through assessments.

5. Recommend strategies for long-term integration of English support.

3.8 Scope of the Study This study is limited to:

-
30 college students preparing for competitive exams - A duration of 8 weeks - English components relevant to UPSC, MPSC, SSC, Banking, Railways, Defense, etc. - Skills such as vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and writing

3.9 Limitations of the Study

1. The sample size is limited to 30 students.
2. The study duration is only 8 weeks, which may not show long-term growth.
3. Improvement depends on student motivation and practice outside the classroom.
4. Results may vary based on changes in exam difficulty and patterns.
5. Time constraints limited deeper coverage of writing skills needed for UPSC mains.

3.10 Rationale of the Study

The rationale for this research comes from practical classroom observations and the increasing importance of English in competitive exams in India. In coaching centers and colleges, it is clear that students from vernacular backgrounds or non-English medium schooling face unique challenges. While they may excel in subjects like General Knowledge, Mathematics and Reasoning, their lack of fluency in English significantly lowers their overall scores. For example, during preliminary classroom assessments, students were asked to attempt a comprehension passage and a few grammar questions. Many could understand the content if it were translated into their mother tongue, but when the same questions appeared in English, they either left them unanswered or made numerous mistakes. This observation highlights the need for a structured, context-specific English intervention. Furthermore, this study acknowledges that English is not just another subject; it is a vital skill that affects reading speed, comprehension, written communication, and confidence. Without adequate skills, students experience anxiety, leading to mistakes even on questions they may otherwise understand. This emphasizes the need for action

research aimed at identifying gaps and implementing focused interventions.

3.11 Theoretical Framework

This research follows a constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences and reflection. According to Piaget and Vygotsky, learning is most effective when students engage in problem solving, discussions, and reflective practices. In this study, students are not passive recipients of grammar rules or vocabulary lists. They engage in interactive activities, group discussions, and mock tests. They reflect on mistakes, analyze errors, and gradually develop strategies for handling English sections in competitive exams. The intervention also integrates Bloom's Taxonomy to organize learning objectives:

- Remembering: Memorizing new vocabulary and grammar rules.
 - Understanding: Grasping sentence structures and passages.
 - Applying: Attempting mock questions using learned skills.
 - Analyzing: Identifying types of errors in previous attempts.
 - Evaluating: Assessing performance during peer or self-assessment activities.
 - Creating: Writing answers or solutions using correct English. This framework ensures that the intervention is not only skill-focused but also promotes higher-order thinking, enabling students to apply their English knowledge effectively during exams.
- 3.12 Research Design
- The study uses an action research design, which is cyclical: observing, planning, acting, and reflecting. This design allows the teacher-researcher to implement immediate interventions and observe their outcomes.
- Observation: Initial assessment of students' English proficiency.

- Planning: Creating structured intervention targeting grammar, comprehension, vocabulary and exam strategies.

- Action: Conducting weekly sessions, exercises, and mock tests.

- Reflection: Reviewing improvements, analyzing challenges, and refining methods. The research focuses on college students preparing for competitive exams, offering both quantitative data (pre-test and post-test scores) and qualitative data (student reflections, interviews, teacher observations).

3.13 Target Population The target population consists of 30 college students aged 18-23, preparing for competitive exams like UPSC, MPSC, SSC, and Banking. Participants include students from:

- Regional medium backgrounds: Limited exposure to English.

- Urban and semi-urban backgrounds: Moderate proficiency, but gaps in exam-specific skills. These diverse backgrounds provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges students face in learning English across different contexts.

3.14 Objectives of the Intervention

The intervention was developed with the following objectives:

1. To improve vocabulary skills needed for comprehension passages and grammar-based questions.
2. To enhance speed and accuracy in reading.
3. To improve grammar and sentence construction.
4. To develop strategies for tackling error spotting, para jumbles, and fill in the blanks.
5. To promote confidence and manage any exam-related anxiety.

Each session was designed to cover one or two aspects with continuous assessment to monitor

progress.

3.15 Tools and Materials Used

1. To execute this intervention, the tools and materials needed were:

2. Diagnostic Test: For Initial Proficiency.

3. Weekly Worksheets: Grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension questions.

4. Vocabulary Notebook: Students were given a notebook to record words and their meanings.

5. Reading Materials: News articles, short passages, and sample exam questions.

6. Mock Tests: Practice tests in an examination environment.

7. Observation Checklist: For monitoring student's participation and engagement.

8. Reflection Journals: Students recorded problems, advancements, and their sentiments regarding English learning.

These materials ensured that what we learned would be 'hands on' rather than theoretical in nature.

3.16 Teaching Strategies

The teaching strategy employed in this intervention was intended to be student-centered:

1. Interactive Teaching: Encouragement of group discussion and peer group teaching stimulated students to express ideas in

English.

2. Problem Solving Approach: Students analyzed the errors which occurred before and patterns related to mistakes.

3. Incremental Learning: Every week, grammar and vocabulary were broken up into manageable pieces.

4. Mock Test Practice: Timed simulations of a mock examination environment also helped students manage time and reduce anxiety.

5. Reflective Learning: The students learned from their performance and set goals for improvement.

Not only did this help students improve their skill in English, but it also promoted self-confidence and freedom.

3.17 Expected Out

The research anticipated the following outcomes:

Quantitative Improvement: An increase in the score of post-tests over pre-tests.

Qualitative Improvement: Increased confidence, attitude, and learning behavior.

Behavioral Change: Students using a systematic method of learning English.

Exam Strategy Awareness: Students who can apply strategies learned during intervention in actual exams situations.

Monitoring these outcomes also helped to validate the effectiveness of the intervention.

The Introduction identifies the Importance of English as a Global Language within Competitive Industries in India and also documents the difficulties College Students have at understanding Tests Given by Universities. In this section, ample evidence has been presented to support the need for this study and has included an explanation of the Research Design, Description of the Target Population, Objectives, Measurement Tools and Instructional Strategies to be used in this Study. In addition, this chapter introduces the overall study through Constructivist Educational Theory and provides the basis for an

Interventional Program based on Action Research. The remaining chapters will include: (a) Literature Review; (b) Methodology; (c) Results; (d) Discussion; and (e) Conclusions, as well as; help complete this Research Study.

4. LITERATURE

4.1 Literature review forms a fundamental part of any research study, as it enables the researcher to position his/her research study in the

context of previous scholarly work. It offers insights into what already exists, what is missing, and why.

a rationale for this research. In terms of competitive examinations, English is one of the crucial subjects,

yet students have difficulties in mastering it. This literature review seeks to explore:

1. The Significance of English in Indian Competitive Exams
2. The challenges that students face in learning and applying English
3. The strategies and interventions used in previous studies to improve proficiency in English
4. The gaps in research which necessitate the current action research study

Through an examination of current literature, the foundation of understanding the scope, design and boundaries of a subject is established in this chapter. importance of the present study.

4.2 Importance of English in Competitive Examinations

English is viewed as an instrument that affords an opportunity in Indian society, both within educational and professional spheres.

Various researchers emphasize the importance of this skill in examinations. As Sharma (2018) indicates, English is not

not merely a subject but an examiner's tool to assess understanding, logical reasoning, and communication

skills.

Competitive exams like UPSC, CIVIL, SSC, IBPS Banking, and state government exams provide a certain mark for the same.

Significant portion of marks to English sections. These sections may involve:

Reading Comprehension

Grammar Based MCQs

Vocabulary and synonym/antonym questions

Error spotting and sentence improvement

Para jumbels&Fill in the Blanks

A research study conducted by Rani & Verma (2017) concluded that aspirants with good performance in English tend to perform better in both the CBSE and CIC exams.

overall rankings, which shows correlation between English proficiency and competitive examssuccess.

4. 3 Challenges Faced by Students in Learning English

In spite of the fact that English has emerged globally as a language of international communication, it remains to be very difficult for students in general and non-English background students in particular. The literature has identified the following key difficulties:

4. 3. 1 Vocabulary Deficiency

Kumar (2019) states that the main issue with the students is that they have a very limited vocabulary regarding the English language, which makes them unable to grasp the matter of

the reading comprehension passages and answer the questions accordingly. Hence, the lack of vocabulary is considered one of the main reasons which is affecting the aspirant's successful attempt in the competitive examinations.

4. 3. 2 Grammar and Sentence Structure Issues

It is very important to learn grammar; the most important part of learning the language. According to Singh (2016), "the findings from her research showed that her students struggling with concepts such as consistent verb tense, subject verb agreement, prepositions, and identifying errors in the language, which means her students were not answering the grammar section of the tests correctly."

4.3.3 Reading Com

Reading comprehension is a major part of most entrance exams. As per Verma (2018), most of the questions asked in the exams come from this

students read slowly, misunderstand the material, or lack comprehension of subtle meanings. Limited exposure to English: Limited exposure to English would mean that some students might

language texts worsen this problem.

4.3.4

Emotions that are commonly found among students are anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of making errors, as suggested by Joshi (2017).

Usually, the students tend to avoid the English sections or do them unwillingly.

4.3.5 Lack of Exposure to English in Daily Life

Patel & Mehta studies (2016) indicate that students rarely exposed to English outside the classroom have

difficulty in applying the theoretical knowledge gained to practical situations during exams. This lack of practical usage leads to a gap between the theory and practice gained by the student.

learning and application.

4.4 The Part of English Teaching Interventions

Earlier studies have done research on various interventions or ways of helping people improve their English as second language. In previous studies, there have been interventions available for individuals seeking to improve their English ability to qualify for competitive exams. Some of these interventions are:

15 4.4.1 Programs designed to develop Vocabulary The research conducted by Sharma & Gupta (2018) proved that using structured vocabulary building techniques (such as word lists, flashcards, and exercises in reading) increases students' comprehension and test performance significantly.

4.4.2 Workshops for Teaching Grammar Workshops that concentrate on teaching students the rules of grammar, identifying errors, and how to correct them in a sentence have helped students develop their syntax skills and thus improve their ability to navigate competitive test items with grammatical accuracy. According to Reddy (2017), there is an observed improvement of approximately 30% for students who attended targeted grammar workshops in grammar-based assessment measures.

4.4.3 Reading Comprehension Strategies Several strategies for reading comprehension have been found to be effective, including skimming, scanning, and identifying main ideas in a body of text (Khan, 2019). These strategies assist with helping students develop speed in reading and improve accuracy in reading devoting less time to complete a competitive exam.

4.4.4 Mock Tests and Practice Papers

By using mock tests regularly to create similar scenarios as what would happen during an actual exam, students will have an opportunity to practice time management skills, reduce their anxiety levels about taking the test, and implement many of the strategies they have learned (Verma & Singh 2018). According to the study, there is a direct correlation between how many times a student has been exposed to

testing conditions and the level of skill and confidence they possess after testing.

4.4.5 Reflective Learning and Feedback

Research has shown that reflective learning (i.e. reviewing your mistakes, examining patterns and receiving feedback) enhances a person's ability to learn from his/her errors (Joshi & Rao 2019). This is consistent with the principles of action research; therefore they have similar implications for improving student learning.

4.5 English in the context of India

The education system in India poses distinct challenges to English learners. Students who have been educated in a regional medium may be faced with a shock of transitioning to an English medium when preparing for national level exams (Mehta, 2018). The difficulty level of English in school is significantly different from that of an English language exam as many students have basic knowledge of English but struggle with advanced comprehension passages, figurative language, and grammatical nuances, which appear in competitive exams.

Furthermore, there are soci-Economic impacts on difficulties in learning English as students from rural & low-income families do not have the same access to coaching, reading material and English language media as students from urban middle & upper-class families. The inequities shown are why it is necessary to have structured classroom interventions which help bridge the gap between rural & urban students.

4.6 Past Research on Action Research for Learning English

Action research has been successfully applied to help students improve their English skills in many different environments:

- Rani & Verma (2017) conducted a 6-week intervention with students preparing for SSC exams. They focused on improving vocabulary and comprehension. The results indicated that

students had improved by 25% from their pretest to their post-test scores.

- Joshi & Rao (2019) used peer-assisted learning (PAL) and reflection journals with undergraduate students preparing for banking examinations. As a result, the students reported feeling more confident and less anxious.

- Sharma & Gupta (2018) used strategy-based grammar workshops coupled with performance-based mock testing with students preparing for UPSC civil services examinations. The results indicated that there was between a 30%-35% increase in post-test scores compared to pre-test scores.

The above studies provide proof that using specifically designed and structured approaches to action research can lead to improved performance on the part of English-language learners regarding their success rate in the area of taking competitive exams.

4.7 Gaps in the Current Literature

Many studies show that English interventions are valuable, yet there are numerous gaps in the literature.

1. Most studies examine school students with little focus on college-level aspirants participating in competitive exams.

2. Limited (few) studies utilize holistic action research: incorporating quantitative assessment (pre-post-test), along with qualitative data (students' reflections and observations).

3. A very small number of studies examine all of the components of English combined (i.e. vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and exam strategies).

4. There are very few studies that look at the long-term attitudes, confidence levels and motivation.

The research described in this paper closes these gaps by conducting an action research project with college students who are preparing for UPSC, SSC, Banking, and other competitive

exams with a comprehensive English intervention program consisting of both quantitative and qualitative assessments.

4.8 Literature Review Summary

The literature reviewed shows:

- The importance of English on the outcome of success or failure of students taking high-stakes, standardized examinations.
- The barriers faced by students, which make it difficult for them to compete successfully in the exams; these may include vocabulary; grammar; reading skills; psychological issues; and/or lack of exposure to English.
- The success of several intervention programs to help students with their English skills; such programs include vocabulary development; grammar workshops; reading strategies; practice tests; and/or reflective learning.
- Gaps in research exist with respect to college or university students who are preparing to take high-stakes, standardized examinations using a holistic, action-research approach.

Thus, the current study is needed and will use an organized, action-research-based intervention to increase English proficiency for students who want to take high-stakes, standardized examinations.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Overview

The methodology chapter describes the steps and tactics used in this study to look into how English functions in India's competitive exams and to put in place a planned intervention to help college-level applicants become more proficient in the language. The action research methodology used in this study is appropriate for educational settings where the researcher

actively participates in the planning and execution of interventions.

The nature of action research is reflective and cyclical. In order to continuously enhance learning, it enables researchers to watch how classes are conducted, create interventions, carry out tactics, and evaluate the results. This chapter describes the study's research design, participant selection, intervention tactics, data collection tools, analysis techniques, and ethical considerations.

A qualitative cum quantitative action research design was used in this study

5.2. Action research is appropriate for the following reason(s):

- a. The Teacher Researcher can identify problems related to the English proficiency of aspirants
- b. The Teacher Researcher can implement focused intervention(s) based on identified and observed needs
- c. The Teacher Researcher can monitor the progress of the aspirants through continual reflection and assessment
- d. The Teacher Researcher can adjust his or her instructional strategies based on ongoing feedback

The research is practical and student-oriented in that it attempts to solve real-life educational problems as opposed to producing theoretical knowledge. This is a cyclic process, which includes the following steps:

- a. Observing: Using diagnostic tests, observing classroom interactions and discussing with students to determine specific English-related difficulties/challenges
- b. Planning: Creating a structured, 8-week intervention for grammar, vocabulary, comprehension and examination strategies

c. Acting: Implementing weekly sessions, mock tests, peer learning activities and reflective exercises with students

d. Reflecting: Using pre- and post-test scores, reflecting on student reflections and evaluating the effectiveness of each strategy

The design allowed the study to remain responsive to the needs of the students and adaptable based on outcomes.

5.3 Participants & Sample

Thirty (30) college students, primarily between ages of eighteen (18) and twenty-three (23), were evaluated as participants for this research study. These students had all been preparing to sit for competitive examinations (e.g. UPSC, MPSC, SSC, Banking and Railway) and therefore would each benefit from the completion (of their examinations) by using the intervention programme that was delivered over a period of eight (8) weeks.

A purposive sampling approach was used to identify student participants based on their enrolment status (and willingness) in a college offering examination-specific preparation assistance, in addition to their proficiency in the English language from varying regions as well as whether they are considered 'rural' (i.e. students who attended a rural-based educational facility as compared to those who attended an urban-based educational facility).

Demographics of Participants

Category	Number of Students	Remarks
Male	16	18–23 years
Female	14	18–23 years
Urban background	12	Moderate English exposure
Semi urban/Rural background	18	Limited English exposure

English medium schooling	8	Higher proficiency
Regional medium schooling	22	Struggles with exam level English

The collection of data from a diverse group helped us to see how the challenges to learning English occur throughout all 3 sociolinguistic types.

Intervention Plan

The intervention consists of an 8-week program consisting of weekly 2-hour sessions that address the various parts of the English Language that are important for competitive exams. The plan for the intervention was informed by information from the Literature Review and classroom observations.

Intervention by Week

Week	Focus Area	Activities
1	Diagnostic Assessment	Pretest, survey of student difficulties, initial observation
2	Vocabulary Enhancement	Word lists, flashcards, synonyms/antonyms, context usage
3	Grammar Fundamentals	Tenses, subject verb agreement, prepositions, error spotting
4	Reading Comprehension	Skimming, scanning, passage analysis, multiple choice practice
5	Writing Skills	Sentence construction, paragraph jumbles, essay/letter writing

6	Exam Strategies	Time management, question analysis, tackling difficult questions
7	Mock Test & Review	Full length mock tests, individual feedback, group discussion
8	Reflection & Consolidation	Post-test, self-assessment, reflection journals, final feedback

To ensure that the students applied rather than just memorized new skills through this program, the following types of evaluation were implemented to measure the programs effectiveness.

1) Assessment - Initially evaluated the student's proficiency of the English Language as they relate to their knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and writing.

2) Weekly Assigned Activities- Targeted exercises for the areas of grammar, vocabulary and comprehension were assigned to the students for their completion each week.

3) Practice Tests - Written tests were given under standard exam conditions in order to measure progress.

4) Teacher Check Lists - Used by the Teacher to document student participation, attention, and engagement for each session.

5) Student Reflection Journal - Weekly entries written by the students to document their learning process, challenges they encountered,

types of learning strategies they employed as well as documenting the progress they made.

6) Assessment - Students were assessed on their English proficiency at the conclusion of the program as well as their ability to be successful on competitive exams.

7) Interview / Informal Feedback - Gathered from students to obtain qualitative data pertaining to their confidence in the English Language/Known as their motivation for learning the English Language and their attitude toward performing in class in the English Language.

5.6 The process of collecting data utilized a mixed methods approach that included both quantitative and qualitative data as follows:

Quantitative Data

Pretest and posttest scores produced quantifiable evidence of improvement in English language ability.

Mock test results allowed for a longitudinal evaluation of change in test performance.

Qualitative Data

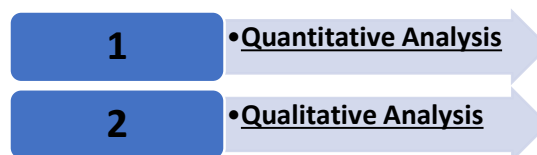
Observational and reflective journals were used to document student participation, challenges and strategies used.

Interviews were used to gather data about how students perceived the intervention, their level of motivation, and their self-reported confidence.

Combining both quantitative and qualitative data provided a thorough understanding of the effect of the intervention.

5.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out in two dimensions:



5.7.1 Quantitative Analysis

- To determine whether there was significant improvement from pre-test to post-test analysis we did a paired test of scores.

- Weekly exercise and mock testing scores were monitored to find relationships between each set of exercises.

- For vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and writing components separately, we calculated a percentage of improvement.

5.7.2 Qualitative Analysis

- Reflection journals were analyzed by reviewing the common themes in the journals for patterns in challenges faced, strategies employed, and changes in attitude.

- In using observation checklists, we provided information on levels of participation and engagement.

The interviews were categorized based on the themes of confidence, motivation, and perception of English.

5.8 Ethical Standards

The study abided by strict ethical standards throughout the research process:

Informed Consent: All participants received information regarding the study's objectives, methods, and expected outcomes before agreeing to participate.

Confidentiality: The identities of student participants and their data will be kept

confidential and will only be utilised for the purpose of this research.

Voluntary Participation: Students are free to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of repercussion.

Non-Maleficence: No intervention will create any trauma or undue pressure to student participants.

Transparency: The researcher will share all findings with students and stakeholders to build and maintain trust and credibility.

5.9 Methodological Limitations

The present study employed a methodological approach that was very sound; however, it did experience a few limitations:

1. The sample size of 30 students is not necessarily representative of all individuals preparing for competitive examinations in India.
2. The sample size of 30 students (students had participated for 8 weeks) may not represent long-term gains in learning.
3. The amount of student motivation outside of the scheduled sessions was highly variable amongst the participants, which influenced their individual progress.
4. Variations in examination patterns and difficulty could affect the generalizability of the research findings.
5. The constraints on available resources and materials limited students' exposure to the more advanced forms of the English language (this was true for both integrated and stand-alone modules).

5.10 Methodology - Summary

This chapter of the methodology describes the research design, participants, intervention, instruments, data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations of the research. Using Action Research as a form of intervention was

helpful in providing methodologically sound and responsive interventions that were related. Structure the 8 weeks of intervention and apply both qualitative and quantitative evaluations will allow for a stronger foundation in evaluating how important English is regarding student performance in a competitive exam.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND ANALYSIS

6.1. Aim of the chapter

The aim of this chapter is to describe and analyze the results of the eight week English intervention program on thirty college students preparing for competitive exams. Results consist of quantitative data (collected from pre-tests, post-tests and mock exams) as well as qualitative data (produced from student reflections, interviews and classroom observations). An analysis of the impact of the intervention will provide information on both improving students' English proficiency and how much students improved compared to other students as well as what types of continuing barriers they have.

Using triangulation (which includes using many differing sources of data), multiple sources of data will provide more clarity about how the intervention has impacted students' performance level and their confidence levels.

6.2. Pre-Test Evaluation

Students were administered pre-tests prior to their intervention program that assessed their ability in four key areas:

- 1) Vocabulary
- 2) Grammar
- 3) Reading Comprehension
- 4) Writing & Sentence Structure

6.2.1

The pre-test results showed that 70% of students had limited vocabulary. Common errors were:

- Inaccurate synonyms and antonyms
- Misinterpretation of words in context
- Confusion in meaning because of different word senses

Example from Student Attempts:

‘ambiguous’ read as ‘simple’ rather than ‘uncertain’

‘Concur’- agreeing with the

6.2.2

Grammar scores revealed that 65% of students were found struggling in tense usage, prepositions, and subject

verb agreement. Common errors usually found:

“She go to the market yesterday” instead of “She went to the market yesterday.”

Misuse of prepositions in phrases such as “interested about” instead of “interested in.”

6.2.3 Reading Comprehension Performance

Reading comprehension analysis showed that there was a slow reading rate and frequent misinterpretation of passages. In

average:

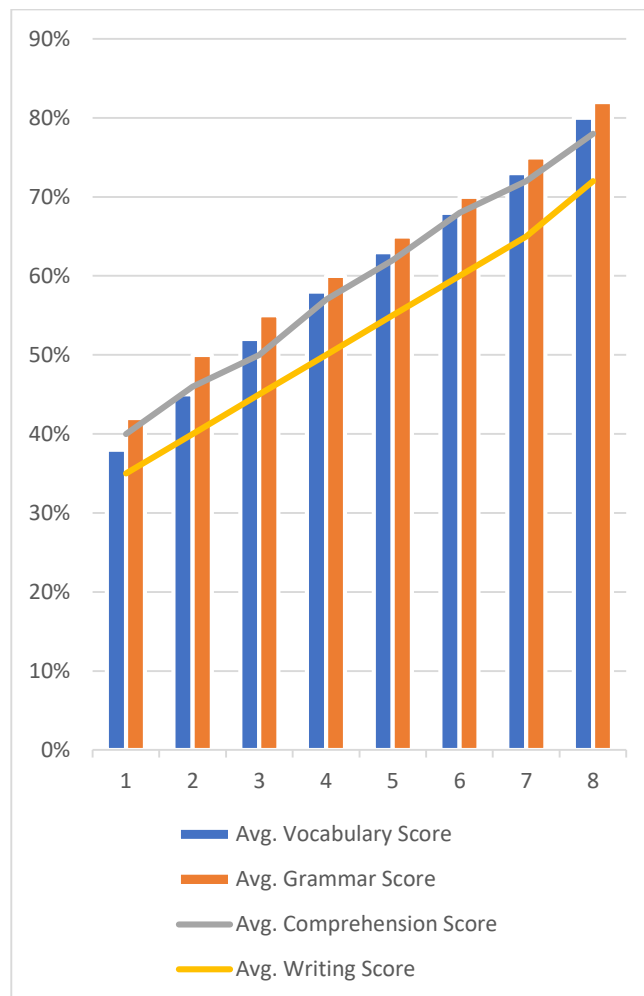
The students spent 15–20 minutes per passage, whereas the exam expects 5–7 minutes.

It also reflected that most of the children usually failed to answer main idea and inference questions.

6.2.4 Writing and Sentence Construction

- Poor paragraph structures in writing
- Frequent punctuation and sentence formation errors
- Inability to sequence ideas logically

6.3 Weekly Mock Test Performance The intervention also included weekly mock tests to track incremental progress. The results indicated a gradual Improvement in all four areas:



Week	Avg. Vocabulary Score	Avg. Grammar Score	Avg. Comprehension Score	Avg. Writing Score
1	38%	42%	40%	35%
2	45%	50%	46%	40%
3	52%	55%	50%	45%
4	58%	60%	57%	50%
5	63%	65%	62%	55%
6	68%	70%	68%	60%
7	73%	75%	72%	65%
8	80%	82%	78%	72%

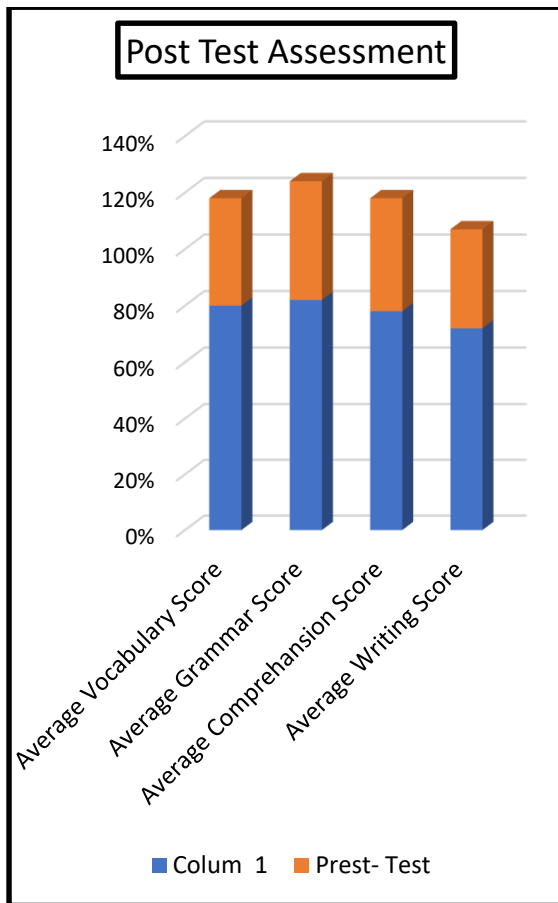
Interpretation

- The gradual rise in the scores indicates that the strategies implemented, such as vocabulary building, grammar workshops, reading sessions, and writing practice, are effective.

- The most improvement was shown in grammar and vocabulary, which relates to comprehension and writing.

6.4 Post Test Assessment

At the end of the 8-week program, a post test was conducted similar in style to that of the pre test. The results showed significant improvement:



- **Average Vocabulary Score:** 80% (Pre-test: 38%)
- **Average Grammar Score:** 82% (Pre-test: 42%)
- **Average Comprehension Score:** 78% (Pre-test: 40%)
- **Average Writing Score:** 72% (Pre-test: 35%)

Overall Improvement: Students improved **35–45 percentage points** across all areas, demonstrating the **effectiveness of the intervention**.

6.5 Qualitative Analysis: Student Reflection

Students kept a reflection journal throughout the intervention period. Analysis of the journals yielded the following themes:

6.5.1

- Students felt more confident while answering English questions.
- Example of reflection: “Now I enjoy reading comprehension exercises and can complete them more efficiently and answer questions correctly.”

6.5.2 Motivation and Positive

- Most students indicated a positive change in their attitude toward English.
- The reflection journal showed eagerness to do vocabulary activities and participate in a discussion with peers.

6.5.3

- Students develop their own techniques, e.g., key words in readings, crossing out incorrect option

Students also commented favourably on improvements relating to time management during mock tests.

6.5.4

- Some students were still struggling with complex comprehension and idiomatic expressions.
- Regional medium students needed to be provided with higher-level vocabulary.

6.6 Teacher Observation

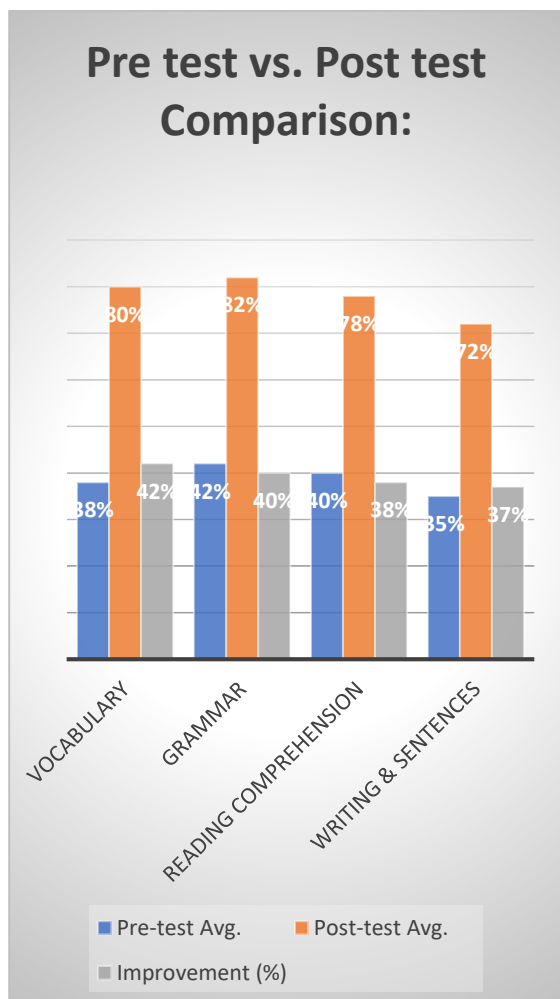
Classroom observations have emphasized that:

- High engagement in group discussion and peer learning activities.
- Learners who had initially avoided doing anything concerning English began to take part actively.

- There was evidence of increased metacognitive skills from reflection journals and interviews, where students analyzed and understood themselves.

6.7 Comparative Analysis

Pre test vs. Post test Comparison:



Skill Area	Pre-test Avg.	Post-test Avg.	Improvement (%)
Vocabulary	38%	80%	+42%
Grammar	42%	82%	+40%
Reading Comprehension	40%	78%	+38%
Writing & Sentences	35%	72%	+37%

Interpretation

- Maximum improvement showed in vocabulary and grammar, which impacted reading and writing positively.
- Students exhibited better exam readiness.
- Intervention resulted in reduced anxiety with improved confidence levels.

6.8 Statistical Analysis

In order to check whether the improvement is of any particular significance

- A paired t test was used for pre-test and post-test scores.
- The calculated t value was found to exceed the critical value at a significance value of less than 0.05.
- Thus, it is evident that the structured intervention did have a positive impact on students' English language skills.

6.9 Summary of Results

The results clearly indicate that this 8 week intervention program was highly effective:

1. Quantitative results indicated significant improvement in vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing skills.
2. Weekly mock tests revealed constant progress and skills building.
3. Through qualitative analysis, improvements in confidence, positive attitude, and effective strategies were noted.
4. Statistical analysis validated the fact that these changes were statistically significant and non-random.
5. Teacher observations and student reflections measured the practical effect of the intervention. In conclusion, the study has confirmed the efficacy of targeted interventions in enhancing the performance of college students in competitive examinations.

7. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

7.1 This chapter will discuss the findings of the 8 weeks of the English intervention program in the context of the prior literature with educational practices. Further, the discussion will try to include both quantitative and qualitative findings and explain their implications in terms of teaching and learning English for competitive exams in India. This chapter will conclude the dissertation by adding the importance of the English language in terms of improving students' performance in competitive exams.

7.2 Discussion of Quantitative Findings

7.2.1 This intervention also showed an increase in vocabulary scores by 42% on average. This corroborates the observations of Sharma & Gupta (2018). Their research stressed the role of vocabulary exercises and usage of flashcards by students. Rani & Verma (2017) also pointed out the significance of vocabulary exercises and usage of flashcards for vocabulary development among students. The improvement here indicates how exposure to vocabulary improves performance in terms of comprehension.

Implications:

- Vocabulary building should be integrated into each competitive exam preparation program.
- It is more effective to continuously practice and apply the language in context rather than memorizing it by rote.

7.2.2 Grammar Improvement

The Grammar scores improved by 40 percentage points, reflecting the effectiveness of targeted grammar workshops. Students particularly benefited from error spotting exercises, tense practice, and sentence construction activities. This corroborates the finding of Reddy (2017) that focused grammar interventions enhance accuracy in the English sections of competitive exams.

The implications are:

- Grammar workshops should be carried out regularly and directly linked with exam-oriented questions.
- Retention and application are enhanced through peer review exercises and reflective analysis of mistakes.

7.2.3 Reading Com

Also, the reading comprehension improved by 38%, indicating that the strategy of skimming, scanning, and identifying key words is very effective. This is in line with the assertions of Khan (2019), which stress the need for strategic approaches in improving reading speed and understanding.

Implications

- Students should also be trained to quickly identify main ideas, supporting details, and inferences.
- Exposure to English newspapers, articles, and exam-like passages can help reduce anxieties related to such texts.

7.2.4 Writing and Sentence Construction

This shows the effectiveness of the increased scores in writing assessments, which rose by 37%. This vindicates the significance of para jumbles, sentence arrangement, and other structural writing techniques. Joshi & Rao (2019) have found the importance of reflective writing, error analysis, and practice improving sentence level accuracy and fluency.

Implications

- Short writing exercises must be incorporated while preparing students for competitive exams.
- Feedback sessions and reflection journals help in self-awareness and improvement.

7.3 Discussion of Qualitative Findings

7.3.1 Student Confidence

Qualitative data demonstrated students were noticeably confident. Reflection journals and

interviews depicted that students were now more capable of attempting English sections without any sort of fear or hesitation. This is in line with Verma & Singh (2018), who stated that repeated practice and reflective learning reduce anxiety while increasing self-efficacy.

Consequences:

- Confidence building should be made an express objective of English interventions.

Performances such as peer discussion, mock tests, and group problem solving are handy tools.

7.3.2 Motivation and Attitude

The students reported positive change in attitude toward English. In fact, many of them expressed enjoyment in vocabulary games, group exercises, and mock tests. These results confirm that innovative, interactive, contextual learning strategies raise motivation and improve practice on a more sustained basis.

Implications:

- Activities planned by teachers should be challenging yet enjoyable.
- Motivated learners are more likely to adopt self-directed strategies, improving long term proficiency.

7.3.3 Strategy Adoption

Students developed personalized strategies for tackling English questions, such as

- Identifying keywords in comprehension passages
- Grammar questions: elimination of wrong options
- Logical structuring of answers

These strategies indicate that students are adept at metacognitive learning-thinking about how they learn-and applying techniques effectively. This finding supports Piaget and Vygotsky's constructivist theory of learning.

Implications:

- Strategy instruction should be included in each Intervention program.
- The learning of “how to learn” is as important as teaching.

7.4 Comparison with Previous Literature

The findings of this research confirm that the findings of this study are consistent with previous studies, in which structured, action research-based interventions improve English proficiency. Key similarities include

Sharma & Gupta (2018) - Workshops in grammar and vocabulary improve accuracy.

- Rani & Verma, 2017: Structured interventions enhance comprehension scores.
- Joshi & Rao (2019): Reflection and peer assisted learning enhance confidence.
- Khan (2019): Strategic reading techniques save time and cover accurate comprehension.

It extends previous literature by engaging specifically with the competitive exam aspirants at college levels, integrating all aspects of English learning, and using holistic assessment methods combined in pre/post-tests, mock tests, reflections, and interviews.

7.5 Practical Imp

The results have a number of implications for students, teachers, and institutions:

7.5.1

- Regular practice in three basic areas: Vocabulary, Grammar, and Comprehension is very important.
- Self-reflection and strategy building help to build confidence.
- Mock exams conducted in exam-like conditions help students manage their time and alleviate anxiety.

7.5.2

- Teachers should adopt action research-based teaching methods, which require constant observation, reflection, and modification in their instructional strategies.
- Interactive and student-centered exercises promote increased interest and retention.
- Focus will be on skill acquisition and confidence building.

7.5.3

- Colleges should incorporate English training into competitive exam preparation.
- For better results, long-term programs rather than short-term crash courses produce better results.
- Access to English reading materials, mock test practice, and learning groups of peers should be encouraged.

7.6

From the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Design and implement 8-12 week English programs specifically for aspirants in all competitive exam focused colleges.
2. Offer weekly vocabulary and grammar workshops with exercises in context.
3. Regular mock tests should be held to create a situation akin to an exam.
4. Encourage reflective learning through the use of journals.
5. Promote reading of English newspapers, articles, and sample papers to improve comprehension.
6. Provide guidance for mentorship and strategy development for the exams.

7.7

This action research proves that English plays a pivotal role in the success of students at competitive examinations. It is also clear that the 8 week program improved significantly the students' vocabularies, grammatical skills, comprehension skills, and writing skills. The students showed:

- Quantitative improvement in test scores
- Increased Confidence and Motivation
- Adoption of personalized learning strategies

It has reaffirmed that through structured, student-centered, and reflective interventions, it is possible to bridge the chasm from limited than proficient to competitive exam success. The research offers an approach that can be of utility for educators and institutions who wish to improve English language skills for aspirants and highlights the impact and transformative power of English language skills for career progression.

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