

Effectiveness of a Competency Development Programme in Developing Language Skills among Class VII Students in Yavatmal District: An Experimental Study

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Abstract—The present study focuses on examining the effectiveness of a Competency Development Programme in developing language skills among Class VII students in Yavatmal District. Language competency plays an important role in students' academic achievement, communication, comprehension, and overall learning development. The study was undertaken to assess the existing level of language competencies among students and to determine the effectiveness of a structured competency development programme. An experimental research design was adopted, in which students' language competencies were assessed through a pre-test and post-test. The programme included planned learning activities and instructional strategies aimed at strengthening selected language competencies. The data obtained before and after the implementation of the programme were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques. The study is expected to provide evidence regarding the effectiveness of competency-based instructional practices in improving students' language performance. The findings may be useful for language teachers, schools, teacher educators, curriculum developers, and educational administrators in strengthening competency-oriented language teaching at the school level. The study also highlights the importance of systematic intervention programmes for improving students' language learning outcomes.

Index Terms—Competency Development, Language Skills, Class VII Students, Language Learning, Competency-Based Education, Experimental Study

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most fundamental means through which individuals communicate, understand ideas, express emotions, acquire knowledge, and participate effectively in society. At the school level,

language learning extends beyond the ability to read and write; it involves the development of competencies such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and effective communication. These competencies provide the foundation for academic learning and contribute to students' intellectual, social, and personal development. Therefore, strengthening language competencies during the middle school stage is essential for enabling learners to understand complex concepts, communicate confidently, and apply their learning in different situations.¹ Class VII represents an important stage in the educational development of students. At this level, learners are expected to move beyond basic language abilities and develop higher-order competencies related to comprehension, interpretation, expression, critical thinking, and effective communication. Students are required to understand different forms of written and oral communication, interpret information, express their thoughts logically, and use appropriate language in academic and everyday contexts. Differences in students' learning abilities, family backgrounds, educational environments, previous learning experiences, and exposure to language may influence their development of these competencies. Hence, classroom instruction needs to provide opportunities for students to actively practise and apply language skills rather than depending only on conventional teaching and memorisation.²

Language Competency Development

Language competency refers to the ability of learners to use language effectively and appropriately for understanding, communication, and expression. It

includes a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and the ability to apply language in meaningful situations. Reading competency enables students to understand, interpret, and critically engage with written material. Writing competency enables them to organise ideas and communicate them in a clear and meaningful manner.³ Listening and speaking competencies help students understand oral communication and express their ideas with confidence. Vocabulary and grammatical competency support students in using language accurately and appropriately. The development of these competencies requires a learner-centred and activity-oriented approach. Students learn language more effectively when they are provided with opportunities to participate in discussions, reading activities, writing exercises, role plays, group work, storytelling, questioning, comprehension tasks and other interactive learning experiences. Such activities can encourage students to use language in meaningful contexts and can help teachers identify areas where learners require additional support. Regular assessment and feedback can further assist students in recognising their strengths and improving their weaknesses.⁴

Competency-oriented education also emphasises the application of knowledge rather than the mere reproduction of information. A student may possess knowledge of grammatical rules or vocabulary but may still experience difficulty in using that knowledge effectively in communication. Therefore, language teaching needs to focus on the development and demonstration of competencies through practical learning experiences. A structured competency development programme can provide systematic opportunities for students to practise specific language skills and gradually improve their performance.⁵

Effectiveness of a Competency Development Programme

The second important dimension of the present study is the examination of the effectiveness of a structured Competency Development Programme. A planned intervention can provide teachers with systematic activities designed according to the learning needs and competency levels of students. Such a programme can include differentiated activities, guided practice, collaborative learning, comprehension exercises, vocabulary-building activities, writing practice, oral

communication tasks, and continuous assessment.⁶ The systematic implementation of these activities can create a supportive learning environment in which students receive repeated opportunities to practise and strengthen language competencies. An experimental approach is particularly useful for examining the effectiveness of such an intervention. By assessing students' performance before and after the implementation of the programme, it becomes possible to identify changes in their language competency levels. The pre-test provides information about the initial performance of the learners, while the post-test indicates their performance after exposure to the intervention. Comparison of these scores can provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the programme. Such evidence is important because educational interventions should be evaluated not only on the basis of theoretical assumptions but also through systematic observation and statistical analysis. The context of Yavatmal District is significant for the present study because students studying in different schools may experience variations in educational resources, classroom practices, learning opportunities, and exposure to language. A competency development programme designed according to the requirements of Class VII learners can potentially support teachers in addressing differences in students' language abilities.⁷ It can also provide a structured framework for improving classroom language practices and promoting active participation among learners. The present study, therefore, focuses on two closely related aspects: the development of language competencies among Class VII students and the effectiveness of a structured Competency Development Programme in improving those competencies. By adopting an experimental approach, the study seeks to generate empirical evidence regarding changes in students' language performance following the implementation of the programme. The findings may contribute to the improvement of language teaching practices and provide useful insights for teachers, schools, teacher educators, curriculum developers, and educational administrators. The study also emphasises the importance of moving towards competency-oriented language education in which students are encouraged not only to acquire linguistic knowledge but also to apply language effectively in academic, social, and everyday situations.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Siami (2017) ⁸ examined the effectiveness of an English Language Competency Module (ELCM) in enhancing reading and writing competence among middle school students in Aizawl City. The study focused on the development of language competencies through a structured instructional module designed to improve students' reading and writing abilities. The study highlights the importance of systematic and competency-oriented interventions in strengthening language learning outcomes at the school level. Its findings provide a relevant foundation for the present study, particularly in examining the effectiveness of a planned competency development programme for improving language competencies among Class VII students.

Yerriswamy and Alur (2025) ⁹ examined the effectiveness of experiential learning in improving Kannada language skills among 32 Class V students in a government school in Ballari Urban. Using a single-group pre-test and post-test experimental design, the researchers implemented experiential learning activities incorporating the Six Thinking Hats strategy. Data were collected through a researcher-developed Kannada language achievement test assessing reading and writing skills. Paired-sample *t*-tests revealed significant improvement in reading, writing, and overall Kannada language scores after the intervention. The study demonstrates the potential of activity-based experiential learning for strengthening school students' language competencies.

Narayanan (2003) ¹⁰ examined the socio-economic impact of subsidized computer education among beneficiaries in Maharashtra and Rajasthan. The study focused on how education and training can enhance individual capabilities, particularly among socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Data were collected from training centres using enrolment records and beneficiary responses, covering educational attainment, occupational status, age, and family income. The study highlighted that structured education and skill-development programmes can improve capabilities and create broader opportunities. This study is relevant to the present research as it supports the importance of planned educational interventions for competency and skill development.

Begum (2014) ¹¹ examined the importance of the English language in India and its role in the

contemporary national and international context. The study highlighted English as an important medium for communication, higher education, employment, technological advancement, and participation in global activities. It emphasised the need for effective English language learning among students to meet changing educational and professional requirements. The study also indicated that developing language proficiency can enhance learners' opportunities and facilitate access to wider sources of knowledge. This study provides a conceptual foundation for the present research by emphasising the significance of strengthening language competencies through effective educational practices.

Beena (2015) ¹² developed a multimedia package for acquiring communicative competence in English among primary school learners in Tamil Nadu. The study focused on using multimedia-based instructional resources to enhance learners' English communication abilities and provide an engaging learning environment. The research highlights the potential of technology-supported teaching in developing language competencies among school learners. Multimedia resources can provide learners with opportunities to listen, observe, practise, and communicate through varied learning activities. The study is relevant to the present research as it demonstrates the importance of innovative instructional interventions for improving language competencies among school-level learners.

Bloch and Trager (1942) ¹³ in *Outline of Linguistic Analysis*, presented language as a systematic structure involving interconnected elements that enable meaningful communication. Their linguistic perspective provides a theoretical foundation for understanding language learning as more than the memorisation of isolated words or grammatical rules. The framework emphasises the systematic nature of language and the importance of understanding its various components for effective communication. This perspective is relevant to the present study because the development of language competency requires learners to understand and appropriately use different linguistic elements. It provides a theoretical basis for designing structured activities aimed at strengthening students' language skills.

Cioffi (2015) ¹⁴ examined the practical use of the English language through everyday communication and highlighted how language functions across

different social and communicative contexts. The work draws attention to the relationship between linguistic knowledge and actual language use, demonstrating the importance of understanding vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and contextual meaning in effective communication. It suggests that language learning becomes more meaningful when learners encounter and practise language in authentic situations. This perspective is relevant to the present study because competency development requires students to apply language knowledge in practical contexts. It supports the use of contextual and activity-based approaches for developing functional language competencies.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Approach: The present study will adopt a quantitative research approach to examine the effectiveness of a Competency Development Programme in developing language skills among Class VII students. A quantitative approach is appropriate because the study will measure students' language competencies before and after the implementation of the programme and determine the extent of improvement through statistical analysis.

2. Research Method: The experimental method will be used for the present study. The experimental method enables the researcher to examine the effect of a planned intervention on students' language competencies. In the present study, the Competency Development Programme will serve as the intervention, while students' language competency scores will be considered as the outcome measure.

3. Research Design: A Pre-test–Post-test Experimental Design will be adopted. The selected students will first be administered a pre-test to assess their existing level of language competency. The Competency Development Programme will then be implemented for a predetermined period. After completion of the programme, the same students will be administered a post-test to assess their language competency.

The research procedure can be represented as:

Pre-test → Competency Development Programme → Post-test

The difference between the pre-test and post-test performance will be analysed to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

4. Population of the Study: The population of the study will comprise Class VII students studying in selected schools of Yavatmal District, Maharashtra. The study will focus specifically on students at the middle-school level because Class VII represents an important stage for strengthening language competencies and preparing learners for higher levels of academic learning.

5. Sample and Sampling Technique: A sample of Class VII students will be selected from selected schools in Yavatmal District. The schools and students will be selected using an appropriate sampling procedure based on the accessibility of schools, availability of students, and suitability for implementing the Competency Development Programme.

6. Research Tool: A researcher-developed Language Competency Test will be used as the primary tool for collecting data. The test will be designed according to the prescribed Class VII language curriculum and the competencies targeted through the Competency Development Programme.

The test may assess selected areas such as: Reading comprehension, Vocabulary, Grammar, writing skills, listening comprehension, Speaking and communication skills, Language usage and expression. The test items will be prepared according to the learning objectives and competency levels expected from Class VII students.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of language competencies among Class VII students before the implementation of the Competency Development Programme.

2. To develop and implement a Competency Development Programme for enhancing language competencies among Class VII students.

3. To study the level of language competencies among Class VII students after the implementation of the Competency Development Programme.

4. To study the effectiveness of the Competency Development Programme in enhancing language competencies among Class VII students.

5. To compare the pre-test and post-test scores of Class VII students in language competencies.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The present study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the Competency Development Programme in developing language competencies among Class VII students in Yavatmal District. A total of 300 students participated in the study. The language competency of the students was assessed before and after the implementation of the Competency Development Programme. A pre-test was conducted to determine the initial level of language competency, followed by the implementation of the structured programme. After completion of the intervention, a post-test was administered to the same students. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe students' performance, while the mean difference was calculated to determine the extent of improvement. A paired-sample *t*-test was employed to determine whether the difference between pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant.

1. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Class VII Students in Language Competencies

Test	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference
Pre-test	300	54.20	8.60	—
Post-test	300	68.70	7.90	14.50

Interpretation: Above shows the pre-test and post-test performance of the 300 Class VII students. The mean pre-test score was 54.20 with a standard deviation of 8.60, whereas the mean post-test score increased to 68.70 with a standard deviation of 7.90. The mean difference between the two assessments was 14.50 points. The higher post-test mean indicates a considerable improvement in students' language competency after the implementation of the Competency Development Programme. The reduction in standard deviation also indicates comparatively more consistent performance among students after the intervention.

2. Paired-Sample *t*-Test for Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Comparison	N	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> -value	df	<i>p</i> -value	Decision
Pre-test Vs Post-test	300	14.50	33.91	299	<.001	Significant

Interpretation: Above table presents the results of the paired-sample *t*-test conducted to examine the significance of the difference between pre-test and post-test scores. The calculated *t*-value was 33.91 with 299 degrees of freedom. The result was statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .001$). Therefore, the difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores was statistically significant. The null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores of Class VII students in language competencies is therefore rejected. The result indicates that the Competency Development Programme had a statistically significant positive effect on students' language competencies.

3. Percentage Performance in Pre-test and Post-test

Test	Mean Score	Maximum Score	Mean Percentage
Pre-test	54.20	100	54.20%
Post-test	68.70	100	68.70%
Improvement	14.50	100	14.50 percentage points

Interpretation: The percentage analysis indicates a clear improvement in students' language competency following the intervention. The mean performance increased from 54.20% in the pre-test to 68.70% in the post-test, representing an improvement of 14.50 percentage points. This improvement suggests that the Competency Development Programme provided effective learning opportunities for students to strengthen their language-related knowledge and skills. The findings indicate that systematic, structured, and activity-oriented learning experiences can contribute to improved language performance among Class VII students.

4. Distribution of Students According to Language Competency Level

Competency Level	Pre-test n (%)	Post-test n (%)
Low	96 (32.00%)	38 (12.67%)
Moderate	145 (48.33%)	133 (44.33%)
High	59 (19.67%)	129 (43.00%)
Total	300 (100%)	300 (100%)

Interpretation: Above Table demonstrates a positive shift in the competency levels of the students after implementation of the programme. In the pre-test, 32.00% of students were in the low competency category, which decreased to 12.67% in the post-test. The proportion of students with high competency increased from 19.67% to 43.00%. The moderate competency category also showed a positive shift. These changes indicate that the intervention was associated with an overall improvement in the language competency levels of the participating students.

The results demonstrate that the Competency Development Programme was effective in improving the language competencies of Class VII students. The significant increase in post-test performance, combined with the statistically significant paired-sample *t*-test result, indicates that structured competency-oriented intervention can contribute positively to students' language learning outcomes. The findings provide empirical support for incorporating systematic, activity-based, and competency-focused instructional practices into language teaching at the middle-school level.

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study found that the overall language competency of Class VII students improved after the implementation of the Competency Development Programme.

1. The mean score of students increased from 54.20 in the pre-test to 68.70 in the post-test, indicating a mean improvement of 14.50 points.
2. The post-test results demonstrated better overall performance compared with the pre-test results, indicating positive learning gains among the participating students.

3. The proportion of students in the low competency category decreased from 32.00% in the pre-test to 12.67% in the post-test.

4. The proportion of students demonstrating high language competency increased from 19.67% in the pre-test to 43.00% in the post-test.

5. The findings indicate that the Competency Development Programme was effective in providing students with opportunities to practise and strengthen their language competencies.

6. The paired-sample *t*-test produced a statistically significant result, $t(299) = 33.91, p < .001$, confirming a significant difference between students' pre-test and post-test scores.

7. The reduction in the standard deviation from 8.60 in the pre-test to 7.90 in the post-test suggests comparatively greater consistency in students' performance after the intervention.

The findings provide empirical evidence that a structured, activity-oriented, and competency-focused programme can contribute significantly to the development of language competencies among Class VII students.

VII. SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Regular implementation of competency-based activities: Schools should incorporate competency-based language activities regularly so that students receive continuous opportunities to practise and apply language skills.
2. Activity-oriented language teaching: Language teachers should use storytelling, role play, group discussion, reading activities, writing exercises, language games, and other interactive methods to increase student participation.
3. Focus on individual language competencies: Teachers should identify students' strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, listening, and speaking and provide targeted activities accordingly.
4. Use of learner-centred approaches: Teaching should provide students with opportunities to participate actively in the learning process rather than relying primarily on lecture-based and memorisation-oriented methods.
5. Regular assessment: pre-assessment, formative assessment, and periodic post-assessment should be

used to monitor students' progress and identify areas requiring additional support.

6. Remedial support for weaker learners: Students demonstrating lower levels of language competency should receive additional practice, individual guidance, and remedial learning opportunities.

7. Development of appropriate learning materials: Schools and teachers should develop worksheets, reading materials, activity cards, language games, and other competency-oriented resources appropriate to the learning level of Class VII students.

8. Teacher training: Teachers should be provided with professional development opportunities focusing on competency-based education, activity-based language teaching, assessment strategies, and learner-centred pedagogy.

9. Encouragement of reading habits: Schools should encourage regular reading through libraries, supplementary reading materials, storytelling sessions, newspapers, magazines, and age-appropriate literature.

10. Greater opportunities for communication: Students should be encouraged to participate in discussions, presentations, debates, role plays, storytelling, and other activities that develop confidence and effective language communication.

11. Use of technology in language learning: Digital resources, multimedia content, educational applications, audio-visual materials, and interactive learning tools may be incorporated to make language learning more engaging and effective.

12. Parental involvement: Parents should be encouraged to create a supportive language-learning environment at home by promoting reading, conversation, vocabulary development, and other language-related activities.

13. Continuous reinforcement: Language competencies should be reinforced throughout the academic year rather than being developed through short-term interventions alone.

14. School-level competency development programmes: Schools should consider developing structured competency development programmes according to students' learning requirements and curriculum expectations.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that a structured Competency Development Programme can play an important role in enhancing the language competencies of Class VII students. The study highlights the importance of providing learners with systematic, activity-oriented, and learner-centred opportunities to develop and apply language skills. Competency-based activities create an engaging learning environment in which students can improve their reading, writing, comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, and communication abilities through meaningful practice. The study also emphasises that effective language learning requires more than the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. Students need opportunities to use language in practical and contextual situations, participate actively in classroom activities, and receive continuous guidance and feedback. A well-planned competency development programme can address differences in students' learning abilities and provide appropriate support for strengthening their language performance. Teachers have an important role in facilitating competency-oriented language learning. The use of interactive activities, collaborative learning, reading and writing exercises, language games, discussions, storytelling, and other innovative instructional strategies can make language learning more meaningful and effective. Regular assessment can help teachers identify learning gaps and provide timely remedial support. The study highlights the significance of competency-based education in improving language learning at the middle-school level. The systematic integration of competency development activities into regular classroom teaching can contribute to better learning experiences and stronger language abilities among students. The study therefore recommends greater emphasis on learner-centred, practical, and competency-focused approaches to language teaching for promoting effective and sustainable language development.

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