



Assessing the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on English Language Proficiency among Secondary School Students in Kerala

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Abstract: Learn how the COVID-19 epidemic has affected people's ability to speak and understand English with this research. The study here is experimental in nature and employs a quantitative methodology. Higher education students are included in this study as a population. To determine the sample size, a random sampling procedure is used. As many as thirty-six undergraduates will participate in this research. The paired t test method is used to examine the data. A statistically significant outcome is shown by the study's sig (p). Its value is less than 0.05, namely 0.000. One may argue that the distinction is valid. Mean values are 59.30 before COVID-19 and 49.33 during the pandemic. It suggests that college students' English proficiency was greater before the COVID-19 epidemic than it was thereafter. Research on the English Language Competence of Secondary School Students in Kerala State, India, with an Eye on Their IQ and Academic Performance in English Topics. Thus, the stratified random sampling method was used to choose schools and localities, while the cluster sampling approach was used to select students. The current study's sample was chosen utilising a multistage sampling procedure.

Keywords: Education Special, Covid-19, English language, Kerala

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INTRODUCTION

"The nation's wealth will be passed on to the child." It is the offspring of a nation who will determine that nation's fate. Therefore, a country's educational strategy should be crafted with the capacity of its youth to build a world-class nation in mind. By recognising each student's unique set of skills, aptitudes, talents, etc., educators may better guide their students towards developing their full potential. Learning about each student's unique set of skills and interests is an important part of any quality education. It is possible to assess the students' strengths and areas for improvement in order to tailor their educational experiences to their individual needs. Therefore, a child's linguistic competence grows in tandem with his or her linguistic information acquired at home and in the classroom. A child's linguistic competence is fully formed by the time he or she reaches the high school level.

Many parts of modern life have been impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic, but the realm of education has been particularly affected. Because of this, the educational system as a whole must change. As far as we can tell, COVID-19 has four major implications for the future of education and curriculum development. First of all, there is a tightrope that ties all policies and global learning processes together. As a second point, we need to rethink how teachers are to be involved in shaping classroom practices. three, recognising the future value of life skills, and four, enabling a broader range of technologies to support teaching and learning. Education for girls has taken a major hit because to the COVID-19 epidemic. The

topic of female education is connected to the gender gap in society and the many types of prejudice that females encounter. Only 2/3 of the world's females were enrolled in secondary education in 2018, while 130 million girls were not in school at all. More than 11 million girls' education is in jeopardy, and the COVID-19 epidemic has the potential to exacerbate existing disparities. The Internet and online education are also less accessible to females.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jessica M. Namkung et.al (2022) While many school districts made an effort to continue instruction during the COVID-19 period, the amount of time spent educating and the methods used to provide it varied each district. Students from low-income families may suffer an even more severe loss of knowledge as a consequence of this educational upheaval, which can exacerbate existing opportunity disparities. But there is a lack of data that can provide us the critical context we need to understand how the epidemic affected students' ability to study. Most instructors reported poor instructional efficacy despite using alternate types of teaching and seeing changes in delivery methods, according to the results. Curriculum coverage, the number of kids requiring interventions, and pupils prepared to go to the next grade all decreased significantly, according to instructors, in 2020–2021, compared to usual years. Additionally, educators noted that children from disadvantaged backgrounds benefited more from the changes made to their lessons. Research employing data from students' previous academic performance confirmed that there were less effects of students' greater academic performance on their learning and teachers' ability to impart that knowledge.

Sumitra Pokhrel et.al (2021) The COVID-19 pandemic has been the most devastating disruption to the world's educational institutions, affecting about 1.6 billion pupils in more than 200 countries. Due to school closures, more than 94% of the world's pupils have been impacted. This has drastically changed our lives in every way. Regulations that restrict mobility and promote social distance have greatly upset traditional methods of learning. Reopening schools after the lifting of restrictions is another challenge, especially with the implementation of several new standard operating procedures. There has been a deluge of research on many facets of schooling in the brief period after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some schools have begun to move away from the more conventional model of classroom teaching. The next 2020–2021 academic year has many people anxious, and maybe even more so than before. The existing system of education and assessment procedures must undergo an urgent and profound transformation. We have an opportunity to establish the framework for online education because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study will examine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on online paper instruction and learning and provide recommendations for moving forward.

Giorgio Di Pietro (2023) This study makes an effort to compile previous studies that have looked at how the COVID-19 school shutdown affected students' academic performance. The average impact of the pandemic on learning was negative, according to our meta-analysis. This learning gap seems to be around the same size as what kids go through when a big natural catastrophe (like Hurricane Katrina) severely interrupts their education. Additionally, compared to other courses, students have lost a greater amount of ground in maths and science. Furthermore, it seems that pupils still have not been able to complete any unfinished learning from the epidemic, even though it has been at least a year after the initial lockdown.

This finding highlights the need for increased measures to help pupils make up for lost knowledge and prevent detrimental effects on both individuals and society in the long run.

Intan Puspitasari et.al (2021) The effect of the pandemic on linguistic maturation is the focus of this study. The Kolaka campus of SDS Muhammadiyah Pomalaa was the site of the study. Participating in this study were fifth graders; the researcher administered a diagnostic exam to 15 of these pupils and then interviewed 5 of them. The researchers in this study opted for a descriptive qualitative approach to their study design. Information gleaned via diagnostic exams and interviews. Both the diagnostic scores (the average student had a low score) and the interview data showed that students were passionate about studying despite the epidemic, suggesting that the pandemic had an effect on students' poor language development.

Mutaz Alkhresheh (2021) Since its emergence in March 2019, the coronavirus illness 2019 (COVID-19) has impacted almost every country, causing death tolls, economic collapse, social disintegration, and most notably, the education sector. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) was one of these nations; the illness had the greatest impact on KSA's university system. Therefore, there is a serious problem with the English language programmes offered by universities in KSA. As a result, educational institutions have had to deal with challenges including quarantine, social withdrawal, travel limitations, and the shutdown of campuses. As a result, there is a global trend towards wanting to change and enhance English language education. Almost every campus of every major university in large cities including Riyadh, Jeddah, Medina, Mecca, Dammam, and others in KSA had been working on their teaching system before the COVID-19 outbreak. Qualitative research methodologies that augmented secondary data were the centre of attention in this study's systematic surveys and investigations. The study also incorporates a comprehensive literature evaluation of almost forty published and acknowledged research publications, which include thirty research articles, four books, four reports, and two reputable websites on the topic. One hundred fifty students and faculty members from Dammam, KSA's Imam Abdurrahman Bin Faisal University filled out surveys to provide secondary data for this case study. Furthermore, Before and after the introduction of English, it sheds light on the method of acquiring the language, as well as past and future university studies of COVID-19.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Students from Kerala School English Department are taking part in the research. In order to eliminate the researcher's bias, researchers use a basic random sample procedure. The data is mostly derived from interviews that assess participants' English skill levels. The data that backs up the claims are based on observations and documentations. In addition to gathering information, the interviews serve as assessments of students' English competence in areas such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. Discovering and recording information about pupils' actions is the goal of the observation and documentation.

Table –1 Details of Sample

Zone	Urban	Rural
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	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Kochi	102	100	95	85
Munnar	110	128	98	90
Kozhikode	124	104	96	86
Thissur	102	105	98	96
Kollam	101	109	98	93
Total	539	546	485	450

Table 1 shows that out of the total number of students enrolled in secondary schools, 1085 were drawn from urban areas, with 539 boys and 546 girls; out of the total number of students enrolled in rural areas, 935 were drawn from 485 boys and 450 girls. So, a total of 2020 kids were chosen to participate in the research, with 1024 males and 996 girls included in the sample.

(1) A self-constructed English Language Proficiency Test

Ability to Speak the Language The researcher developed an English proficiency exam to gauge the level of English proficiency among secondary school students in Kerala State. The test was subjected to a battery of standardization procedures.

(2) English language achievement

Standard scores are a translation of the percentage of total marks pupils earned in the English course during the 2015–16 school year. In this research, these average scores were used as measures of language proficiency.

DATA ANALYSIS

The information presented here pertains to linguistic acquisition by pupils both with and without access to online education before to and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

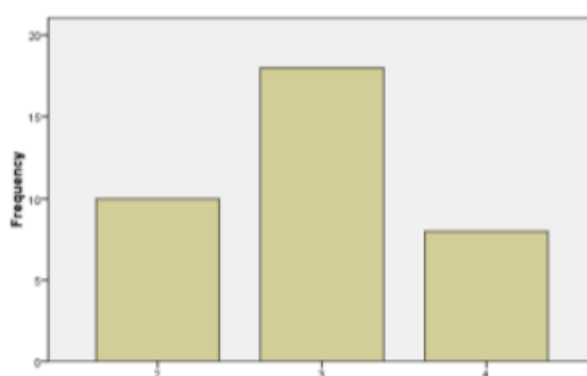
Before COVID 19

Students' pre-COVID-19 exam scores, collected via interviews before to online instruction, are used in this study. The supplied exam was filled out entirely in English by all individuals who participated in this study. The statistical descriptive results show that there is a median of 56.50, a standard deviation of 1.19, and an average of 59.30. A maximum score of 82.00 was achieved by the participants, while the lowest score was 39.00. Table 1 and graph 1 show the proportion of college students who met the exam standards before the

COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 2 Test before COVID 19 in Higher Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Able to meet routine social conversation in limited type of profession.	10	27.8	27.8	27.8
	Able to participate conversation with the accuracy of grammar and vocabularies in formal and informal situation associated to practical, social, and professional matters.	18	50.0	50.0	77.8
	Able to use the target language fluently and accurately in all level of professional context	8	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	



Graph 1 Percentage Criteria of test before COVID 19 in Higher Education

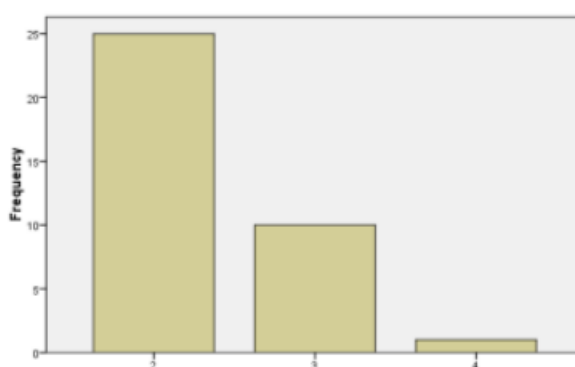
According to the percentage criterion produced by the SPSS programme, ten pupils, or 28 percent, rank two in terms of their English language competency. It claims that students are able to meet together regularly for public exchanges in a less-than-ideal work setting. Fifteen pupils, or half of the class, have a competency level of three in English. Level 4 (four) English proficiency is achieved by 8 students (22% of the total) and it confirms that they can participate in formal and informal conversations using correct grammatical forms and vocabulary in practical, unconstrained, and professional contexts. Higher education students may confidently and accurately perform in any professional setting, according to this notion.

During COVID 19 with Online Learning

Information on college students comes from an interview-based exam that was administered to them before to COVID-19 as part of their online education. In this research, the participants' responses are given in the target language. In terms of statistical description, we find that 49.33 is the mean, 48.50 is the median, and 9.56 is the standard deviation. A maximum score of 77.00 was achieved by the participants, while the lowest score was 34.00. Graph 2 and Table 3 show the % criterion for students' test scores when they are studying online.

Table 3 Percentage Criteria of Test during Online Learning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Able to meet routine social conversation in limited type of profession.	25	69.4	69.4	69.4
	Able to participate conversation with the accuracy of grammar and vocabularies in formal and informal situation associated to practical, social, and professional matters.	10	27.8	27.8	97.2
	Able to use the target language fluently and accurately in all level of professional context	1	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	-



Graph 2 Percentage Criteria of Test during Online Learning

Table 3 shows that the % criteria of the test during COVID-19 with online learning were confirmed by the SPSS programme. It shows that 25 students, or 69% of the total, are at the 2nd level of English proficiency. In this way, it becomes clear that the students are able to participate in professional-level English conversations. Ten pupils, or 28% of the total, are classified as having a competency level of 3 in English. Fourth Level One student out of three demonstrates exceptional command of the English language by achieving competence. This individual is able to communicate well in both official and casual situations, regardless of the audience or occupation. It proclaims that college students are capable of speaking and writing English effectively in any professional context and that they know how to employ grammar rules appropriately without allowing them impede their communication.

The results of the current investigation were analysed and evaluated. Research is useless—regardless of how trustworthy or valid the data is—unless analysis and interpretation are carried out after data collection in a study.

Participants in this research were secondary school students who had their IQ and English competence tested. Next, the results were categorised according to certain factors, including sex, region, educational attainment, and IQ. Table 4 contains the information.

Table 4 Boys and girls of urban and semi-urban area in context to English language proficiency and intelligence level

	English language proficiency				Intelligence level			
Area	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
Sex/Level	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Higher	174	172	140	138	182	171	142	140
Medium	199	182	184	176	199	184	187	172
Lower	178	180	149	148	170	179	144	150

CONCLUSION

The results and explanations of the research show that college students' levels of English proficiency were significantly different before and after COVID-19. Therefore, we accept their dissimilarity at face value. A study examining the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' academic achievement. Preventative education is providing better results than response education during the COVID-19 epidemic. Researchers in this study looked at secondary school pupils' English competence with their IQ and how well they did in English classes. The creator of the English proficiency exam was a researcher. Teachers and students alike will benefit from this exam since it will allow them to gauge their students' English ability and use that information to tailor their educational experiences.

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