

# Exploring English Grammar Competence and English Language Attitude among the Secondary School Students

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## Abstract

*In this study, the investigator attempted to study the relationship between English grammar competence and the English language attitude among the secondary school students at Puliangudi municipality in Tenkasi district. One hundred and ninety nine students studying in secondary school were the sample of the study. English grammar competence was measured by a test constructed and validated by the researcher. English language attitude tool was standardized by the researcher combine with my supervisor. The results revealed that there is a significant very low positive correlation between English grammar competence and the English language attitude among the secondary school students. Further, the high and low achievers showed a significant difference in their grammar competence. Boys and girls did not show any significant difference in both grammar competence and the English language attitude. The study has broad implications to be practised in second language.*

**Keywords: Grammar, Competence, English Language, Attitude**

## Introduction

English education is an essential part of our school education and provides specific training in listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW). As one considers the nature of English, the teaching and learning of English should include proposing grammar problems, formulating sentences, studying with the help of the under guidance. Initiations and expectations of English language should be brought to students' learning ability. The outcomes of English education should promote the grammar competence among the learners. Teaching the basics of English grammar has a long term process but having been written many grammar books of English language. Yet, every year are presented with multiple works in this topic (Tarasova). Linguistics is a science describing human thinking. It uncovers fixed rules rather than pervasive tendencies. Every language is specialized in the world but the hard fact is that this language is used almost in all the countries of the world. In India, it occupies an important place in academic culture. Moreover, it holds significant value. Wherever we go in the nation it is used very much almost in every place. We find the majority of the name boards hanging in front of the located places are in English. In every application form, administration in local and regional offices almost record is in English.

## Grammar

Grammar is the study of the accepted usages of language and the relationships of parts of sentences. Grammar is the science of language. It is an analytical and terminological study of sentences. Until recently, Grammar stressed correctness, as in the Webster Collegiate Dictionary's definition, "The art of the right use of a language". Learning the English grammar is more daunting due to the complexity of grammar rules (Metom et al.). Grammar is considered to be one of the important elements within writing in relation a language. According to (Sheen and Ellis) Grammar can be defined as the rule of how to combine and construct words into larger units in aspect of meaning. Grammar is the fundamental discourse machine in every language in general. If good English grammar competence do not have to students, students will never be certain of what to speak and how to speak. In addition, (Priyanto and Lies Amin) also points out good grammar ability may lead to higher articulation rate and better fluency.

## Competence

Communicative competence is a term coined by the anthropological linguist Dell Hymes (1967, 1972), (Celce-Murcia). Chomsky (1965) emphasized, competence will proceed so far as understanding of underlying competence (Wasow). Competence is the ability to do something clear or effectively. It is this which enables language competence and thus also language performance. The ability is to do something right or rules based. Grammar competence refers to knowing how grammar is used in writing.

## English Language Attitude

Students had more positive attitudes toward the English language than English grammar (Akay and Toraman). Learning a language is closely related to the attitudes towards the languages (Starks and Paltridge). In the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1992:199) 'language attitudes' are defined as follows: The attitude which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language. Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty

of learning, degree of importance, elegance, social status, etc. Attitudes towards a language may also show what people feel about the speakers of that language (Karahana).

## Secondary School Students

The students studying in secondary are referred to as Secondary School Students. In the present study, tenth standard students are secondary school students.

## Puliangudi Municipality

It is one of the municipalities in Tenkasi District of Tamilnadu.

## Objectives

- To find out whether there is any significant difference in English grammar competence between the high and low achievers of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.
- To find out whether there is any significant difference in English grammar competence between the boys and girls of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.
- To find out whether there is any significant difference in English language attitude between the high and low achievers of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.
- To find out whether there is any significant difference in English language attitude between the boys and girls of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.
- To find out whether there is significant relationship between English grammar competence and English language attitude among the secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.

## Hypotheses of the Study

- There is no significant difference in English grammar competence between the high and low achievers of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.
- There is no significant difference in English grammar competence between the boys and girls of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.
- There is no significant difference in English

language attitude between the high and low achievers of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.

- There is no significant difference in English language attitude between the boys and girls of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.
- There is no significant relationship between English grammar competence and English language attitude among the secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.

### Purpose of the Present Study

The aim of this study was: - To investigate the interlaced relationship between English grammar competence and the English language attitude among the secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.

### Method

The present study attempts to find out the competence in the application of English grammar rules of secondary students. Since the problem is concerned with “Survey” type, the investigator has selected the normative survey method for conducting the study. The questionnaires were prepared by Researcher along with the supervisor. Instrument, design and analysis data was collected through two questionnaires. The first part of the questionnaire required personal information Gender (male/female), Grade (high achiever 70 and above, low achiever 69 and below). The researchers had selected those who have secured 400 and above out of 500 as high achievers, and those who have secured 399 and below out of 500 marks as low achievers in first revision exam conducted on February 2022, 2021-2022 academic year. The second part of the questionnaire asked the students about their competence in the application of English grammar. It consists of 20 questions with two options (option 1, option 2) and their answer were ranked as which option is right answer (1), wrong answer (0). The second questionnaire was their attitudes towards the use of English context based on twenty statements having two-point Likert scale based on (Buschenhofen), and their attitudes were ranked as (2) agree, and (1) disagree. There is no time limit for answering the questions.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in English grammar competence between the high and low achievers of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.

**Table 1: Difference in English Grammar Competence between the High and Low Achievers**

Variable	No	Mean	SD	Calculated value	Remark
High achievers	123	47.73	4.65	6.07	Significant
Low achievers	76	17.57	3.28		

(At 5% level of significance table value of ‘t’ is 1.984)

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in English grammar competence between the boys and girls of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.

**Table 2: Difference in English Grammar Competence between the Boys and Girls**

Variable	No	Mean	SD	Calculated value	Remark
Boys	97	30.13	8.95	0.85	Not significant
Girls	102	31.46	8.64		

(At 5% level of significance table value of ‘t’ is 1.984)

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in English language attitude between the high and low achievers of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.

**Table 3: Difference in English Language Attitude between the High and Low Achievers**

Variable	No	Mean	SD	Calculated value	Remark
High achievers	123	87.16	12.82	1.75	Not significant
Low achievers	76	44.27	5.26		

(At 5% level of significance table value of ‘t’ is 1.984)

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant difference in English language attitude between the boys and girls of secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.

**Table 4: Difference in English Language Attitude between the Boys and Girls**

Variable	No	Mean	SD	Calculated value	Remark
Boys	97	64.38	11.65	0.001	Not significant
Girls	102	64.00	9.46		

(At 5% level of significance table value of 't' is 1.984)

**Hypothesis 5:** There is no significant relationship between English grammar competence and English language attitude among the secondary school students of Puliangudi municipality.

**Table 5: Relationship between English Grammar Competence and English Language Attitude**

Variable	No	Correlation	Calculated value	Remark
Grammar competence	199	0.201	0.195	Significant at 0.05 level
English language attitude	199			

### Findings and Discussion

**Table-1** 't' test analysis shows that 42.73 the mean score of high achievers' grammar competence is significantly greater than 17.57 the mean score of low achievers' grammar competence. This may be due to the fact that high achievers' grammar competence has more than low achievers' grammar competence. Accordingly, 4.65 the standard deviation of high achievers' grammar competence is significantly greater than 3.28 the standard deviation of low achievers' grammar competence. Since the calculated 't' value (6.07) is greater than the table value (1.984) the hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference in grammar competence between the high and low achievers' is rejected and the high and low achievers differ significantly in grammar competence.

**Table-2** 't' test analysis shows that 30.13 the mean score of boys' grammar competence is

significantly less than 31.46 the mean score of girls' grammar competence. This may be due to the fact that girls' grammar competence has more than boys' grammar competence. Accordingly, 8.95 the standard deviation of boys' grammar competence is significantly greater than 8.64 the standard deviation of girls' grammar competence. Since the calculated 't' value (0.85) is less than the table value (1.984) the hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference in grammar competence between the boys and girls' is accepted and the boys and girls do not differ significantly in grammar competence.

**Table-3** 't' test analysis shows that 87.16 the mean score of high achievers' English language attitude is significantly greater than 44.27 the mean score of low achievers' English language attitude. This may be due to the fact that low achievers' English language attitude has more than high achievers' English language attitude. Accordingly, 12.82 the standard deviation of high achievers' English language attitude is significantly greater than 5.26 the standard deviation of low achievers' English language attitude. Since the calculated 't' value (1.75) is less than the table value (1.984) the hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference in English language attitude between the high and low achievers' is accepted and the high and low achievers do not differ significantly in English language attitude.

**Table-4** 't' test analysis shows that 64.38 the mean score of boys' English language attitude is significantly greater than 64.00 the mean score of girls' English language attitude. This may be due to the fact that girls' English language attitude has more than boys' English language attitude. Accordingly, 11.65 the standard deviation of boys' English language attitude is significantly greater than 9.46 the standard deviation of girls' English language attitude. Since the calculated 't' value (0.001) is less than the table value (1.984) the hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference in English language attitude between the boys and girls' is accepted and the boys and girls do not differ significantly in English language attitude.

**Table-5** The Pearson's Product moment correlation test has been employed to find out the relationship between grammar competence and English language attitude among the secondary

school students. As the calculated 'r' value (0.201) is more than the table value (0.195), the hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between grammar competence and English language attitude among the secondary school students" is rejected. According to the interpretation of coefficient of correlation table, the calculated correlation value (.201) is between (+.10 to +.30) category. So, it is inferred that there is significant very low positive correlation between grammar competence and English language attitude among higher secondary school students.

### Recommendations of the Study

- Always Students' and teachers' interactions should be in the English language. Moreover, Information transmission should be only in English.
- Students read daily the English NEWS paper.
- Teachers should clear Grammar doubts on the time.
- Teachers should make a chance to improve students' English attitudes. For example, everyone student should speak in English on any one topic, story or event.
- Teacher should show running commentary videos combined with bilingual language at the English language lab.
- It is recommended that the grammar competence and English language attitude among the secondary school students are to be enhanced through different activities like language seminar, speech competition, motivation programme etc.

### Implications and Conclusions of the Study

At the secondary level, the students develop the intellectual ability to study the grammar. Hence, the teachers can motivate to enhance the students in English language attitude. The development of grammar competence can provide to enhance English language attitude in secondary schools. In this research, the result was expected by us that students would have strongly positive grammar competence and the English language attitude among the secondary schools of Puliangudi municipality. However, the results show that they have very low positive attitudes. According to the correlation

results between the students' overall the grammar competence and the English language attitude in secondary level students, they welcome English as the frequently used foreign language. English is not compulsory but desire language for every student, teacher and every human being. Grammar competence and second language attitude needs to be strengthened, and teachers should teach the structure of English language. Teaching-learning system must give opportunity for communication in English and emphasis on English language attitude, which leads to the development of the grammar competence and the English language attitude.

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