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**Title:** A Study of English Language Competence among Secondary Level Students of Mau District, Uttar Pradesh, with respect to their School and Home Environment

**Keywords:** English Language Competence, Oral Competence, Written Competence, Grammatical Competence, School Environment, Home Environment

Language is a unique feature of human beings which is used for expression of thoughts, feelings and emotions. It can be called as an essential prerequisite for human growth and development. Every language makes its own place in community, society and nation by being the means of communication for day to day conversation. English occupies this place in most of the communities, societies and nations by being a link and library language. It is the most widely used language of the world. Teaching English aims at the development of English language competence among students so that they may be successful in different ventures of life. This competence implies the knowledge of the rules of English grammar and the ability to perform English language tasks related to different language skills with minimum level of errors. After reviewing relevant researches, it was found that none of the researches are done in rural area of Mau District where students are deprived of better exposure to and opportunities for academic success. These areas need more researches to better understand their real problems and to bring appropriate solutions for improvement. Many studies concluded that socio-economic status affects academic achievement in English. But very few have given different dimensions of sociological and psychological environment which were responsible for poor performance in English language. It was considered worthwhile to study the language competence in English among secondary level students of Mau district and to know what basic areas of errors in oral and written English are prevalent there.

Objectives: i) To assess written competence of secondary level students studying in UP Board affiliated schools of Mau district. ii) To assess oral competence of secondary level students studying in UP Board affiliated schools of Mau district. iii) To assess grammatical competence of secondary level students studying in UP Board affiliated schools of Mau district. iv) To study students' written competence in English with respect to their school environment. V) To study students' written competence in English with respect to their home environment. Vi) To study students' oral competence in English with respect to their school environment. Vii) To study students' oral competence in English with respect to their home environment. Viii) To study students' grammatical competence in English with respect to their school environment. Ix) To study students' grammatical competence in English with respect to their home environment.

Population and Sample: All secondary school students of Mau district, Uttar Pradesh, studying in class IX UP Board Government schools constituted the target population. Out them, 250 students were taken as sample of the study. Schools were selected randomly by

lottery method and from each school; students were selected using systematic random sampling technique.

Tools Used: The required data was collected by using following tools which were constructed by the investigator herself:

- i. English Test for Class IX
- ii. Home Environment Scale
- iii. School Environment Scale.

Data Analysis: For analysis of oral and written competencies, the investigator has constructed Rubrics. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using Percentage, Mean Score and Standard Deviation, ANOVA and t-test. The analysis was done with the help of MS Office Excel 2007 and SPSS.

Results and Interpretation: The analyses revealed that majority of the students have low level of written, oral and grammatical competencies in English. Though they studied English as compulsory subject during their eight years of elementary education, they lack the level of competence required on completion of Class VIII. The reason might be the faulty teaching styles and practices, lack of exercises and drills in classroom and major focus on rote memorization of rules rather than understanding the meaning in the process of learning. It was also found that there are differences in English language competence among students studying in schools situated in rural and urban localities. Locality of school plays an important role in enhancing or hindering the development of English language competence among students. But gender does not have any impact on English language competence of students.

It is shown that English language competence gets affected by different sociological and psychological environment being provided at home and in schools. Socio-psychological milieu of school and home put an impact on English language competence of students. The factors like motivation, attitude, involvement, encouragement, cognitive and emotional support, reward and punishment, second language exposure and opportunities, access to modern amenities, etcetera play vital role for the development of human beings and success thereof. It is revealed through the study that students with high levels of positive parental attitude, motivation, acceptance, involvement, cognitive and emotional support showed better levels of written, oral and grammatical competence in English than low and average levels of the same dimensions. Thus, due to lack of proper guidance by teachers and parents, motivation, attitude, exposure, parental involvement and encouragement, Government school students have low levels of written, oral and grammatical competencies.

Further, it can be added that teachers' teaching style, negligence of English language skills in Hindi medium schools and students' practice of memorizing everything by heart might also be the reasons for poor level of English language competence of students. At the end, the educational implications and suggestions for further studies were also given briefly in the study.

