

Intralingual Factors and Academic Achievement in English Test of Orals, Among SSS Two Students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria

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## Certification

This is to certify that Adeyinka Olubunmi OSIBANJO with matriculation number LCU/PG/003789 carried out research study on "Intralingual factors and Academic Achievement in English Test of Orals Among SSS Two students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

The linguistic plurality of Nigeria poses challenges in harmonising and adopting a national language due to its multi-ethnic composition. English was adopted as the lingua franca. Despite the emphasis on competency in the National Curriculum for Senior Secondary Schools, concerns persist regarding graduates' ability to communicate effectively in English. Therefore, the current study investigated Intralingual Factors and Academic Achievement in Test of Oral Among Senior Secondary Two Students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study used a descriptive survey research design, utilising the English Test of Oral Achievement Test (ETORAT) and a questionnaire for collecting data. Three hundred and thirty-nine (399) Senior Secondary Two students from 13 schools in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria were sampled using the random sampling technique. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results of the research questions reveal students' high achievement levels with 35.40% scoring "Good" and 35.10% scoring "Excellent." There was a moderately positive correlation ( $r = 0.352$ ) found between mother tongue proficiency and performance in the Test of Orals. Contrastly, the relationship between linguistic diversity and academic achievement was weakly negative ( $r = -0.150$ ), suggesting that exposure to multiple languages may slightly hinder mastery of oral English. However, students perceived linguistic diversity positively, believing it enhances their performance. The study also found no significant joint influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on academic achievement ( $p = 0.280$ ), indicating that these variables together do not significantly impact performance. Nevertheless, both linguistic diversity ( $p = 0.001$ ) and intralingual factors ( $p = 0.021$ ) individually showed a significant relative influence on students' achievement in the Test of Orals. The current study concluded on the complex interplay between language-related factors and oral English proficiency, with important implications for educational practices aimed at improving students' communication skills. It was recommended that students be exposed to linguistic exposure.

**Keywords:** Intralingual, linguistic diversity, test of orals, mother tongue, academic achievement

**Word count:309**

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## List of Acronyms

Acronyms	Meanings	Pages
WAEC	West African Examination Council	1
NECO	National Examination Council	1
WASSCE	West African Senior Secondary School Examination	2
RP	Received Pronunciation	2
ESL	English as Second Language	v
EFL	English as Foreign Language	v
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies	22
L <sub>1</sub>	First Language	3
L <sub>2</sub>	Second Language	11
DL	Dominant Language	35
CLT	Communicative Language Testing	44
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development	46
SLA	Second Language Acquisition	48
ETO	English Test of Orals	48
OPIs	Oral Proficiency Interviews	52

C-DA	Computerized Dynamic Assessment	56
PET	Preliminary English Test	56
SAS	Science Anxiety Scale	56
ICC	Intraclass Correlation Coefficient	57
GR & R	Gauge Repeatability and Reproducibility	57
ETORAT	English Test of Oral Achievement Test	67
IFAAQ	Intralingual Factors and Academic Achievement Questionnaire	67
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance	75
ESPP	English Sounds' Pronunciation Passage	78

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The linguistic landscape of Nigeria reflects its diverse and heterogeneous nature, with estimates suggesting that between 400 to 520 languages are spoken across the country. This linguistic plurality poses challenges in harmonising and adopting a national language due to its multi-ethnic composition. Consequently, English has entrenched itself as the de facto official language, serving as both the medium of instruction from upper primary to tertiary education levels and as a subject in lower primary education. Relatedly, concerns have emerged regarding the declining standard of English proficiency among Nigerian students, particularly at the secondary school level, as evidenced by reports from educational bodies. Within this context, the Oral English component of English language examinations, such as those conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examinations Council (NECO), has come under scrutiny. Despite the emphasis on competency in the National Curriculum for Senior Secondary Schools, concerns persist regarding graduates' ability to communicate effectively in English. The historical evolution of the Oral English examination reveals a shift from optional to compulsory status, driven by the need to assess students' knowledge and skills in oral communication. However, challenges such as mass failure and logistical complexities prompted revisions, leading to the current iteration of the Oral English examination. Connectedly, studies acknowledge the socio-lectal variations in Nigerian English, which often stem from interference from students' mother tongues. Variations in pronunciation, particularly concerning dental fricatives and palatal alveolar sounds, highlight the influence of ethnic diversity on spoken English proficiency<sup>1</sup>.

Similarly, the Test of Orals in the West African Senior Secondary School Examination (WASSCE) has long been regarded as a challenging component of the English Language Assessment for Nigerian secondary school students. Despite its significance in assessing oral communication skills, it has consistently posed difficulties for students. Initially introduced as an oral examination, it later transitioned to a format primarily focused on identifying speech sounds. This shift, coupled with the lack of attention to intervention programmes aimed at enhancing performance, has accentuated many challenges. Previous studies highlight various factors contributing to the difficulties faced by students in the Test of Orals. These include the foreignness of Received Pronunciation (RP), non-proficiency in both performance and competence among students and teachers, and the inadequacy of intervention programmes targeting improvement. While the integration of oral assessment into language proficiency evaluation is recognised as crucial, the actual implementation and effectiveness of such assessments have been lacking. The Test of Orals encompasses various components such as identifying vowel and consonant sounds, rhyming words, correcting stress patterns, and recognizing phonetic symbols. Despite its intention to evaluate students' oral proficiency, the test often proves daunting, leading to low-performance rates. There are challenges in teaching pronunciation and oral communication which include ineffective teaching methods, the influence of students' mother tongue, and the lack of appropriate instructional materials. While some studies have explored the effectiveness of certain teaching methods, such as discussion-based approaches, their application specifically to the Test of Orals remains largely unexamined. Furthermore, the complexity of English pronunciation, characterised by inconsistencies between speech and writing, adds to the challenge which makes students struggle with variations in

pronunciation among English words and the lack of direct correspondence between spelling and pronunciation.

English as the official language in Nigeria, remains a foreign language which most Nigerians struggle to learn and use effectively. The status of English language in Nigeria is a very important and prestigious language. Also, the recognised form of the English language that is used and accepted for all official purposes like trade, commerce and communication in Nigeria is Standard English. Just as human beings compete for high positions in the world's socio-political and socio-economic arenas, so also do the languages, in the present globalised world. However, whereas human beings make conscious choices, the fate of the languages lies in the hands of their speakers who can decide to promote or demote them. Among the many choices that human beings make is that of linguistic choice, that is, which language to learn, speak and use for which or what purposes. Human beings also could decide to abandon a language they have spoken for years and then shift to another language for reasons best known to them. Such linguistic decisions or choices affect, and in fact, determine the survival and death of different

languages, most especially the minority ones, in a multilingual setting like Nigeria. The importance of language in the development of education in any nation has long been stressed by many scholars as the use of the appropriate language in teaching and learning greatly contribute to academic performance and success in school<sup>3</sup>.

Language plays a vital role in the learning process. Teachers must ensure that the language to be used in the different subject areas is the (L1) the first language heard at home. Of this fact, the Federal Government of Nigeria made special provisions for the teaching of language across the educational levels in the country's educational system. The National Policy on Education gave

great encouragement to the study of indigenous languages. The emphasis laid on the indigenous languages by the Government explains why more attention is placed on the three national languages, Yoruba, Hausa and Ibo<sup>4</sup>. Language is an oral phenomenon before it becomes written and standardised after which it becomes a tool through which we organise, our human language has a word for everything but because human language is so elaborate its speakers can make a linguistic response to any experience that they may undergo. To many, language is the most important form of human communication which has served as the most efficient and versatile mainly human activity. It is also important to note that language is not just a systematic symbolism but makes use of verbal elements and structures in brief, of what we commonly call words<sup>5</sup>.

Language has common attributes and unique differences. These differences in structures often give rise to substitutions of non-existing features and other forms of interferences. The English language gained ground as the official language in Nigeria with the advent of the colonial masters. They introduced Western education and religion. Schools had to be established to aid missionary work and business activities. In the initial stage, local languages were used as the medium of communication. Gradually the teaching of the English language was introduced to the school curriculum, from primary schools to tertiary institutions as well and it was used in other religious activities. English language is a world language, lingua Franca and a language of prestige. It is spoken as a first language in Britain and America. However, it is spoken as a second language in many countries of the world as a result of colonization. Although a second language, it can even be regarded as one of the major languages in African countries, because it has become such a vital tool for people daily<sup>6</sup>.

A language is a second language (English language) when it is chosen as the official language of a people who have other languages. In several countries of Africa, including Nigeria, it is the official language, the language of government, education, administration and general national and international transactions. It also, in these countries, serves as the language of the law courts, the mass media and commerce. In many such countries, it did not become important by choice. It is the major aspect of British colonialism which has stuck like glue years after the countries regained their independence. Textbooks have remained in English, especially in countries like Nigeria where there are numerous indigenous languages which deter curriculum planners from providing texts in so many languages. In many African countries today, there could be no serious interchange of professional knowledge, and no education beyond the primary school level, without the English language. The multiplicity of languages has seen to this and has placed the English language in a very superior position as a unifying force and will likely remain so for a very long time<sup>7</sup>.

In Nigeria, the role of English is quite important especially since the problem of multiplicity of languages is acute. Therefore, it is not foreseeable that any language group will dominate the others successfully to become accepted as the language of education and government. The assertion is without prejudice to the Federal Government of Nigeria's selection of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba as her National languages. The importance of the English language is so acutely felt that it has remained a compulsory school subject and a pre-requisite for further education. Without a pass at the credit level, one does not hope to advance further in the country's educational ladder. This is the reason behind parents worry about their wards' level of performance in the language. Such parents are quick to identify lapses which are sometimes erroneously regarded as marks of falling standards. Since English is needed for both internal and

external communication, the teachers of the language have a lot of work to do. Other problems can face a child whose mother tongue is different from the language of the school. He often tends to linguistically in his mother tongue while expressing himself in the second language. This usually encourages rote learning and so impairs understanding<sup>8</sup>.

There is also the question of educational loss especially in systems where the use of the second language begins too early in the first few years of school. Such educational losses, make it mandatory for a child to begin his educational career in his mother tongue while learning a second language as a school subject. With such a practice, the transition from home to school is gradual and rewarding. Contrastively, English learners of Nigerian indigenous languages, and vice versa, should ordinarily experience language learning problems bordering on interference as a result of different sound systems. The problem could make it difficult for the English learners of Yoruba to achieve success in their language learning process, the same thing goes for other learners of English<sup>9</sup>.

In response to the challenges identified in the background, there is a need to understand the complexity of the English test of orals among senior secondary two students In Ibadan Southeast local government area, Oyo State, Nigeria. studying this could lead to implementing, a comprehensive approach that will address the challenges related to English tests of orals to effectively support students in developing oral English proficiency.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The complexity of the English test of orals among Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria, presents diverse challenges that hinder effective language acquisition and communication. Pronunciation problems emerge as a

central concern within the broader discourse on Nigerian English, garnering attention from linguists due to their pervasive impact on language proficiency. While some scholars contend that acquiring Received Pronunciation (RP) in a second language (L2) context is relatively straightforward, the reality for SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast reveals persistent obstacles stemming from interference from their native languages. The complexity emerges as a primary issue, encapsulating the diverse challenges inherent in English language acquisition in Nigeria. SS2 students grapple with various linguistic hurdles, including sentence construction, pronunciation errors, and stress misplacement, particularly evidenced among Yoruba speakers who substitute phonemes like /d/ for /ðis/. These difficulties are compounded by behaviourist theories that underscore the influence of learners' first language (L1) on their acquisition of English as a second language (L2), further exacerbating the complexity of language learning.

Additionally, interference poses significant obstacles to SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, as their native languages intersect with English, impacting their proficiency in oral English. Nigeria's linguistic diversity, with over five hundred indigenous languages spoken, underscores the prevalence of language contact situations, occurring in various social settings such as markets, schools, and political offices. Consequently, the need to navigate multiple linguistic systems alongside English underscores the formidable challenge of language acquisition for SS2 students in the region. Despite concerted efforts to promote oral English as the primary medium of communication in Nigeria, SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast continue to encounter difficulties in mastering phonological features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. These supra-segmental features profoundly influence communication, yet their usage differs significantly from most Nigerian languages, posing a formidable barrier to effective language proficiency. Therefore, the focal point of this study is to dissect the factors contributing to the complexity of the English test

of orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria. By delineating these challenges, the study aims to provide insights that can inform targeted interventions aimed at enhancing students' pronunciation and communication skills. Ultimately, such interventions are crucial for fostering linguistic proficiency and facilitating effective intercultural dialogue among SS2 students in the region.

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. investigate the level of academic achievement in the Test of Oral among Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria, during the English test of orals.
2. examine the influence of mother tongue on academic achievement in Test of Oral among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria
3. determine the influence of linguistic diversity in Nigeria, on the academic achievement in the Test of Oral among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State Nigeria.
4. identify the intralingual factors in the English Test of Oral among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State Nigeria.
5. examine the effects of intralingual factors on the achievement in English Test of Oral among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State Nigeria.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised and answered to guide this study:

1. what is the level of academic achievement in Test of Orals among Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria?
2. how significant is the relationship between mother tongue and achievement in Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria?
3. How significant is the relationship between linguistic diversity and academic achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria?
4. What is the influence of linguistic diversity on academic achievement in the test Test of Orals?

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## **1.5 Hypotheses**

H<sub>0</sub>1: There will be no significant joint influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on achievement in Test of Oral among SS2 Students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria

H<sub>0</sub>2: There will be no significant relative influence of linguistic diversity and intralingual factors on achievement in Test of Oral among SS2 Students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria

## **Scope of the Study**

This study is focused on investigating intralingual factors and academic achievement in the Test of Oral among senior secondary two students. Connectedly, the geographical scope of this research covered public senior secondary schools in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area of Oyo State.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Conducting a study on the complexity of the English test of orals among Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria, has the following consequences for various stakeholders within the educational terrain and the wider society. For students, understanding the challenges associated with oral English proficiency assessments can provide valuable insights into their learning process. We will be able to identify specific areas of difficulty and students can tailor their language learning strategies to address pronunciation issues and improve overall communication skills. Moreover, targeted interventions informed by research findings can enhance students' confidence and competence in oral English, thereby preparing them for academic and professional success in an increasingly globalized world where English proficiency is often a prerequisite.

Teachers will gain a deeper understanding of the linguistic challenges faced by their students. Armed with this knowledge, educators can develop more effective teaching methods and instructional materials that address the specific needs of SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast. By incorporating strategies to mitigate interference from native languages and promote accurate pronunciation, teachers can facilitate more meaningful language learning experiences and foster a supportive learning environment conducive to linguistic development. Policymakers and curriculum planners play a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape and setting standards for language learning and assessment. Insights from this study can inform policy decisions regarding curriculum development, teacher training, and the integration of oral English proficiency assessments into national educational frameworks. By aligning policies and practices with the linguistic needs of students, policymakers can promote equitable access to quality education and enhance the overall effectiveness of language instruction in Nigerian schools.

At the governmental level, addressing the complexities of English language learning and assessment has broader implications for national development and global competitiveness. English proficiency is increasingly recognized as a key determinant of economic growth, social mobility, and technological innovation. By investing in initiatives that support language acquisition and communication skills among students, the government can empower future generations to participate more effectively in the global economy and contribute to Nigeria's socio-economic development. Furthermore, the findings of this study can benefit the general society by promoting linguistic diversity and intercultural understanding. Effective communication is essential for fostering social cohesion, resolving conflicts, and promoting mutual respect among individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. By equipping students with the skills to navigate linguistic diversity and engage in meaningful

cross-cultural dialogue, this study can contribute to building a more inclusive and harmonious society where differences are celebrated and valued.

### **1.8 Limitations to the Study**

This research work was confronted by some limitations such as limitation of time and difficulties related to combining of office responsibilities with marriage and being a nursing mother. These constraints could affect the collection of data collection in various schools. Financial limitations could be a prominent challenge considering the state of the country.

### **1.8 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Language Interference:** Language interference, also known as cross-linguistic influence, refers to the phenomenon whereby the acquisition or proficiency in a second language (L2) impacts the linguistic structures and usage patterns of the learner's first language (L1). This influence can manifest across various linguistic domains, including phonology, syntax, and semantics systems

**English Language:** English is a global lingua franca, facilitating communication and interaction among people from diverse linguistic backgrounds, both domestically and internationally. Proficiency in English is indispensable for effective communication and the exchange of ideas.

**Phonetics:** Phonetics is the study of speech sounds. The science of phonetics aims to describe all the sounds of all the world's languages.

**Sounds:** English language belongs to the Indo-European language. Standard British English or Received Pronunciation has 44 speech sounds, Of these, 24 consonant sounds, and 20 vowel sounds.

**Mother tongue:** A mother tongue, also known as a first language (L1), native language, or native tongue, refers to the initial language a person is exposed to from birth or during the critical period of language development. It represents the primary linguistic environment in which an individual grows up and acquires language skills naturally, typically within their family or community setting. A mother tongue is not merely a language of ethnic identification but denotes the language in which a person attains full native fluency

**Oral English:** Oral English refers to the system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings. It is how we verbally communicate with one another and is comprised of syntax, pragmatics, morphology, and phonology

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> J Akanya & C. G. Omachonu, *Effects of the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO) Oral English syllabi on secondary school leavers' spoken English in Kogi State, Nigeria*, **British Journal of Education**, 7(2), 2019, 105-120. Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK. ISSN 2054-6351 (print), ISSN 2054-636X (online)

<sup>2</sup> H. H. Wakkai, & O. H. A. Mahfoodh, *The Effect of Discussion Method of Teaching on Nigerian Secondary School Students' Performance in English Test of Orals*, **Journal of Language Teaching and Research**, 14(1), 2023, 163-171. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1401.17>

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<sup>6</sup> Y. Chen, W. Ren, & C. Y. Lin, *English as a Lingua Franca: From Theory To Practice*. **Language Teaching**, 53(1), 2020, 63–80. doi:10.1017/S0261444819000302

<sup>7</sup> R. Mesthrie, *African Englishes From a Sociolinguistic Perspective*, **Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics**. 2019. Available at: <https://oxfordre.com/linguistics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199384655.001.0001/acrefore-9780199384655-e-225>.

<sup>8</sup> A. Ayofe & M. Funke, *Effect of Mother Tongue on Academic Performance of Students in English Language in Obokun Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria*, **Al-Hikmah Journal of Educational Management and Counselling**, 4 (1), 2021, 32-37 (ISSN: 2695-2009) (E-ISSN: 2695-1991)

<sup>9</sup> J. N. Oruwari, N. T. Nwanorim, & K. Ugochukwu, *Pedagogical Implication of Error Analysis on Second Language Teaching*. *Nigeria Academic Forum*, 28(1), 2021, 1-21. ISSN: 1596-3306.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Related Literature**

This chapter is concerned with the comprehensive reviews of concepts, theories from the previous studies to give credence to this study and situate it well within the already existing body of knowledge. For this reason, the chapter is written under the following subheadings:

#### 2.1. Conceptual Review

##### 2.1.1 Concept of Pronunciation

##### 2.1.2 Significance of Oral English Proficiency for Students

##### 2.1.3 Factors Affecting the Teaching and Learning of Oral Tests of English

##### 2.1.4 Language Interference

##### 2.1.5 Concept of Mother Tongue

##### 2.1.6 Influence of First Language on Oral English

#### 2.2 Theoretical Review of Literature

##### 2.2.1 Communicative Language Testing Theory

##### 2.2.2 Second Language Acquisition Theories

##### 2.2.3 Vygotsky Sociocultural Learning Theory

#### 2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

#### 2.4 Conceptual Framework of the Study

## 2.5 Summary of Gap in the Literature

Endnotes

## 2.1 Conceptual Review

### Concept of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is how language is spoken; how a word is pronounced; the way a person speaks the words of language. Some scholars state that pronunciation refers to how we produce the sound that we use to make meaning when we speak. It includes the particular consonants and vowels of a language (segments), and aspects of speech beyond the level of individual segments, such as stress, rhythm, intonation, and phrasing (suprasegmental aspects). Pronunciation is a set of habits of an individual to produce sounds. The habit of producing a sound is acquired by repeating it over and over for correction when it is pronounced wrongly. On the other hand, pronunciation is also defined as the production of a significant sound which is used as a part of a code of a particular language and to achieve meaning in the context of use. From the explanation previously, the researcher concludes that pronunciation is the way a person utters a word or language<sup>1</sup>. There are two elements of pronunciation, namely Segmental and Suprasegmental features. The sound can be significantly affected by speech features. In this case, when we learn English well, we will find two kinds of speech features<sup>2</sup>:

a) Segmental feature: A segmental feature system is the sounds that include vowels, consonants, clusters, and diphthongs. The classification is based on the differences in the functions in utterance and their ways of production. Segmental feature refers to the sound units which are

arranged in a sequential order. The sound units of utterance are represented by phonetic symbols  
Segmental features include vowels and consonants<sup>3</sup>:

### 1) Vowel

A vowel is made by voiced air passing through different mouth- shapes; the differences in the shapes of the mouth are caused by different positions of the tongue and the lips. There are two types of vowels, namely Pure vowels or Monophthongs and Diphthongs. Pure vowels are represented by a single character, consisting of a long vowel and a short vowel. A long vowel is characterized by a length mark made of two dots<sup>4</sup>. There are five long vowels:

1. /i:/ = seat , key
2. /a:/ = part , car
3. /u:/ = soup , cool
4. /ɔ:/ = pork , sport
5. /ɜ:/ = flirt , shirt

There are five short vowels in English, those are:

1. /ɪ/ = kill , pill
2. /ɜ/ = pet , leg
3. /ɒ/ = pot , lot
4. /ʊ/ = food , put
5. /ʌ/ = bat , pat

The remaining two sounds are single sounds, no short or long :

1. /ʌ / = sun , cut

2. /ɜ / = ago, about

The Eight Diphthongs

1. /au/ = cow , loud

2. /ai/ = five , might

3. /ei/ = pay , fail

4. /I e/ = beer , dear

5. /ɜu/ = go , so

6. /ɜe/ = air , pair

7. /Uɜ/ = poor , true

8. /CI/ = boy , soil

2) Consonants

Sounds which are not vowels are consonants. Consonants are produced when there are obstructions made by two articulators against the outgoing air somewhere in the mouth cavity.

States that there are two reasons why the consonant is important in a word. The first, consonant contributes more to making English understandable. Second, consonants are generally made by a definite interference of the vocal organ with the air stream, so easier to describe and understand.

fricative, affricative, nasal, lateral and glide consonants. A way of producing a plosive

consonant is mainly characterised by a complete obstruction somewhere along the speech tract, and after that, the air is suddenly released so that an explosive sound is heard<sup>5</sup>. The sounds that belong to plosive consonants are:

1. /p/ = Pat , pit

2. /t/ = tall ,top

3. /k/ = kit , kill

4. /b/ = ball , bit

5. /d/ = dog , dot

6. /g/ = get , gear

b. Fricative consonant

A fricative consonant is produced when the outgoing air meets with a narrowing of the air passage and the obstruction of outgoing air is said to be partial. The sounds that belong to fricative consonants are:

1. /f/ = five , floor

2. /v/ = viva , view

3. /θ/ = three , thank

4. /ð/ = the , then

5. /s/ = sit , set

6. /z/ = zoo , zip

7. /ʃ/ = shop , sheet

8. /r/ = ring , river

9. /h/ = hat , hire

c. Affricative consonant: An affricative is a kind of stop: the outgoing air also meets with a complete obstruction somewhere in the mouth. However, the stoppage in a stop is suddenly released. There are only two affricatives produced at the same point of articulation, one is the voiced sound /dʒ/ as in 'judge' and the other is a voiceless sound /tʃ/ as in 'church'

d. Nasal Sound

A nasal sound is similar to a stop in terms of its way of production. However, in producing a nasal sound the velum is lowered than so that the outgoing air is free to pass through the nasal cavity. The nasal sounds are:

/m/ = mat , moon

/n/ = noon , name

/ŋ/ = ring , sing

d. Lateral

A lateral consonant is produced when the air goes out through the sides of the tongue there being a complete closure in the middle of the mouth by putting the tip of the tongue against the

teethridge. Lateral consonants are found in almost any language. However, English has two kinds of lateral consonants, which are /r/ as in 'root' and /l/ as in 'lip'.

e. Glide consonant

Glide consonants are speech sounds that are on the borderline between vowels and consonants. But, because of the lack of stress and weakness of breath force, it will be better to class glide sounds among consonants. The sounds that belong to glide consonants are /y/ and /w/ sounds.

b) Supra segmental feature

Supra-segmental features are like the style used in words or sentences. Supra segmental feature refers to such features as stress, pitch, intonation, and other features that always accompany the production of speech. There are three kinds of supra-segmental features, namely stress, intonation, and syllable<sup>6</sup>.

1) Stress

Stress is an essential feature of word identity in English stress is also the degree of force or loudness with which a syllable is pronounced to give it prominence. Stress can be classified into three kinds of stress, namely; strong or primary stress, medium or secondary stress, and weak stress or no stress. Stress has an important role in English because different stress will differentiate meaning and intention. Intonation is the movement of the voice between high and low pitch.

2) Intonation: Intonation is the going up and down of pitch over different syllables in an utterance. Intonation can be formed by a sequence of contrasting pitch levels in a sentence. Intonation is used to express a great number of different meanings, including emotions and

attitudes. The word „Yes“, for example, can be said with a falling voice, a rising voice can make „Yes“ mean „ I agree“ or „ Perhaps it is true“ or „You cannot be serious“ or „Wow, you are so right“ or any number of other things<sup>7</sup>.

### 3) Syllable

A syllable is a sound unit in a word or one beat. For example, you can clap your hand one time when saying “Me” and three times when saying “December”. May has one syllable. December has three syllables. The patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables of words create rhythm in longer linguistic units. English syllables may have close juncture, that is they are connected together very closely without pause; but in other cases, they are so loosely connected that there seems to be a pause in pronunciation<sup>8</sup>. Words can be divided into syllables. For instance: Stay: one syllable

About: two syllables i.e 'a/ bout'

Passenger: three syllables i.e 'pa / ssen / ger

### **Significance of Oral English Proficiency for Students**

Oral English proficiency holds significant importance for students, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, where students may come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Mastery of the English language, especially in terms of speaking, is crucial for effective communication both within and beyond the classroom setting. In EFL classes, students often exhibit varying levels of proficiency in different language skills, with some excelling in speaking while others may struggle. Therefore, the ability to speak English fluently is essential for facilitating meaningful interactions and fostering language acquisition. The four language

skills—speaking, writing, listening, and reading—complement each other and play integral roles in achieving fluency in English. However, speaking skill stands out as particularly vital, as it allows students to express themselves verbally and engage in real-time communication. In EFL classrooms, the goal is to equip students with the ability to engage in fluent conversations in English, thereby enhancing their overall language proficiency. Teachers play a crucial role in creating conducive learning environments that encourage active participation and practice in speaking English. Transitioning from traditional face-to-face teaching to online instruction presents unique challenges, especially concerning the incorporation of speaking activities. While online platforms offer flexibility and accessibility, they also require innovative teaching methods to effectively teach and assess oral English proficiency. Teachers must adapt their instructional strategies to engage students in speaking practice, despite the limitations of remote learning environments. This may involve utilising videoconferencing tools, incorporating speaking tasks into lesson plans, and providing opportunities for students to record themselves speaking English. Research underscores the importance of integrating speaking activities into online language instruction to enhance students' oral proficiency. Through collaborative efforts between teachers and students, online classes can foster a learner-centred approach where students actively participate in speaking activities, discussions, and role-plays. By leveraging digital tools and resources, educators can create interactive learning experiences that facilitate language acquisition and promote effective communication skills. Furthermore, recognising the significance of oral English proficiency extends beyond the classroom, as it prepares students for future academic and professional endeavours. Proficiency in spoken English enhances students' confidence in communicating with others, both in formal and informal settings. In today's interconnected world, where English serves as a global lingua franca, proficiency in spoken

English opens doors to diverse opportunities, including higher education, career advancement, and intercultural communication<sup>9</sup>.

The comprehensive study you provided sheds light on the critical role of technology in teaching Oral English in Nigerian secondary schools. The findings reveal a widespread recognition among English Language teachers of the value that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) bring to the instruction of Oral English. This acknowledgment is crucial, given the challenges that learners face in mastering pronunciation and other aspects of spoken English, particularly in a context where students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The significance of Oral English proficiency for students in Nigeria cannot be overstated. This is because English is not just a subject but a fundamental tool for communication and social interaction. In a country with hundreds of languages and diverse cultures, English serves as a unifying language, essential for national cohesion, education, and participation in the global community. Proficiency in Oral English is particularly vital as it enables effective communication in various spheres of life, including education, business, and social interactions. The positive perceptions of English Language teachers towards the use of ICTs in teaching Oral English signify a recognition of the potential of technology to enhance learning outcomes. By leveraging ICT tools such as multimedia resources, language labs, and online platforms, teachers can create dynamic and interactive learning environments that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. These tools not only make learning more engaging and enjoyable but also provide students with access to authentic materials and real-life language contexts, thereby facilitating language acquisition and proficiency. However, it is important to address the challenges faced by English Language teachers in integrating technology into their English language instructional practices<sup>10</sup>.

The significance of English oral proficiency for students extends far beyond mere linguistic ability; it plays a pivotal role in their personal, academic, and professional development. As articulated in the study by Eslit and Valderama, effective communication in English is imperative for establishing clearer and better interactions, whether in spoken or written form. In today's globalised world, where English serves as a common medium of communication among diverse cultures and nations, proficiency in speaking English is essential for navigating various social and professional contexts. Findings have underscored the importance of assessing and enhancing students' speaking skills, particularly in areas such as grammar, vocabulary, discourse, pronunciation, and interaction. These skills not only facilitate effective communication but also contribute to students' confidence and self-expression. However, the study also identifies areas where students may require support or remediation, such as pronunciation and interaction.

Furthermore, the significance of English oral proficiency extends beyond academic settings. Proficient oral communication skills are crucial for success in various professional fields, where effective communication is essential for collaboration, negotiation, and presentation. Additionally, in an increasingly interconnected world, individuals with strong English oral proficiency have a competitive edge in accessing global opportunities, whether in education, employment, or cultural exchange programmes. It is highlighted that motivation plays a crucial role in language learning, including the development of oral proficiency. Students who are motivated to learn English, whether driven by their communicative needs or professional aspirations, are more likely to actively engage in speaking activities and strive for improvement. Therefore, fostering a supportive and motivating learning environment is essential for nurturing students' enthusiasm and commitment to enhancing their English oral proficiency<sup>11</sup>.

### 2.1.2 Teaching and Learning Oral Tests of English

Teaching and learning English oral skills among students present several challenges, particularly in ensuring effective language acquisition and proficiency. Despite the recognition of the importance of oral English proficiency in today's globalised world, various hurdles exist in the educational context. One significant challenge lies in creating a conducive environment for immersive language learning. While strategies like watching English movies, immersing oneself in English news, and consistent practice are beneficial, providing opportunities for students to engage in authentic conversations can be difficult within the confines of a classroom. Limited exposure to native or proficient English speakers and the absence of real-life situations where English is the primary mode of communication can hinder students' progress in developing their oral skills. Moreover, individual differences among students pose another obstacle. Some learners may struggle with pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary acquisition more than others, requiring personalised attention and tailored feedback. However, in a classroom setting with limited time and resources, addressing the diverse needs of each student becomes challenging for educators. Furthermore, the integration of technology, while advantageous, may also present challenges, particularly in ensuring equitable access to digital tools and resources for all students. Economic disparities or infrastructure limitations may hinder some students from fully benefiting from technology-enhanced language learning experiences. Additionally, cultural factors and learner motivation play crucial roles in oral English proficiency. Students' reluctance to speak in English due to fear of making mistakes or feeling embarrassed can impede their progress. Overcoming such psychological barriers requires fostering a supportive and encouraging learning environment where students feel comfortable taking risks and practising their language skills without fear of judgment<sup>12</sup>.

Corrective feedback is a crucial component in the teaching and learning of English, particularly in developing learners' oral skills. Despite ongoing debates among educational scholars about its effectiveness, its significance is recognised in enhancing English language proficiency. For instance, a recent study involving law major sophomores at a higher education institution demonstrated the positive impact of various types of corrective feedback—explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, recasts, and clarification requests—on learners' oral accuracy. The findings revealed that explicit corrective feedback led to greater improvements in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation compared to a control group receiving no feedback. This highlights the essential role of teacher interventions in fostering students' English competency, particularly in spoken communication<sup>13</sup>.

The teaching of oral English has become increasingly vital in the context of a globalised economy, where effective communication in English is essential for transnational exchanges. With advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and speech data recognition (SDR) technologies, the landscape of oral English learning is evolving, offering new opportunities for enhancing teaching and learning experiences. AI-driven tools have been shown to alleviate teachers' workload while fostering greater learner engagement and flexibility. The integration of speech quality evaluation algorithms can objectively assess learners' pronunciation and clarity, providing real-time feedback to improve their oral communication skills. Despite these advancements, research on SDR and speech quality evaluation in oral English education remains limited, necessitating further exploration to fully leverage these technologies. As the demand for effective oral communication continues to grow, innovative approaches that harness AI and automated speech evaluation are crucial for developing learners' proficiency and confidence in spoken English<sup>14</sup>.

Language serves as a vital communication tool, its primary function being to facilitate and nurture social relationships. In the context of economic globalisation, effective communication between individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds has become crucial, with English emerging as a key medium for international interactions. Within education, mastering oral English is particularly significant, as it empowers students to communicate effectively while supporting the broader development of essential language skills, such as vocabulary, listening, reading, and writing. Engaging in oral English practice—through activities like reading aloud and participating in dialogues—helps students build confidence, overcome fear of speaking, and improve self-expression. Furthermore, group discussions and interactions expand students' perspectives, stimulate critical thinking, and encourage the habit of thinking in English, which enhances creativity and imagination. However, in China's exam-driven education system, oral English often receives less emphasis compared to reading, writing, and listening. Even when oral tests are included in academic exams, classroom activities promoting speaking skills are often too simplistic to capture student interest or build confidence, resulting in many students struggling with verbal communication. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offers a practical solution by emphasizing learning through task completion, encouraging students to use English in meaningful, real-world contexts. By designing interactive tasks aligned with students' cognitive levels and everyday experiences, teachers can enhance oral and communicative skills while fostering more engaging and effective language acquisition<sup>15</sup>.

The teaching and learning of oral English have become crucial in language education, given its role as a primary mode of communication. In the context of language instruction, oral English encompasses one of the core skills, alongside listening, reading, and writing. These skills are interconnected, and the development of speaking abilities contributes significantly to students'

overall language proficiency. The shift from traditional teaching methods, like the Audio-Lingual Method, to more interactive approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) reflects a broader recognition of the need for real-life communication in language learning. CLT emphasises not only the mastery of linguistic structures but also the functional and contextual use of language, fostering students' communicative competence by promoting fluency over grammatical perfection in the early stages of learning. CLT's learner-centered approach encourages interaction, task-based activities, and authentic communication environments, providing students with meaningful opportunities to practice oral skills. This method helps bridge the gap between classroom instruction and everyday language use. Teachers, acting as facilitators, employ innovative strategies, including the use of technology, English films, and extracurricular activities, to enhance students' speaking abilities. Furthermore, the integration of oral communication into students' daily lives and creating a supportive, engaging atmosphere are essential for boosting students' confidence and motivation to use English actively. Thus, the promotion of oral English competence is seen not just as an academic requirement but as a critical life skill for effective communication in both educational and social contexts<sup>16</sup>.

Oral English education stresses pronunciation, intonation, stress patterns, and overall communicative competence, enabling learners to effectively express themselves in various social and academic contexts. However, teaching Oral English can be particularly challenging due to the need for interactive and immersive approaches that enhance both fluency and accuracy in language use. Traditional methods of instruction, such as rote memorisation and lecture-based teaching, often fail to engage students actively, highlighting the need for more dynamic and learner-centered approaches. Recent trends in language pedagogy advocate for multimodal and hands-on learning approaches, especially within Content and Language Integrated Learning

(CLIL) settings. Multimodal task designs incorporate various sensory and communicative modes—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and linguistic—to support the learning of oral communication skills. These approaches enable students to engage in more meaningful and authentic language use by integrating tasks such as hands-on activities, group discussions, and poster presentations. Empirical research suggests that such multimodal and experiential learning strategies significantly enhance students' oral communicative competence by promoting active learning and deeper engagement with language<sup>17</sup>.

The teaching and learning of oral English have always been essential components of language education, particularly in non-native English-speaking contexts. As oral proficiency is a critical skill for effective communication, language educators often focus on developing students' abilities in areas such as pronunciation, fluency, and coherence. Traditionally, oral English education has relied on classroom interactions, peer discussions, and teacher feedback to enhance speaking skills. With an emphasis on real-world communication, speaking assessments in language courses aim to measure students' ability to use English in diverse contexts, ensuring their readiness for both academic and professional environments. However, assessing oral proficiency poses challenges due to its subjective nature, requiring considerable resources, including human raters and evaluators. In response to these challenges, technological advancements have led to the introduction of automated systems such as Automated Speech Evaluation (ASE). ASE systems, including SpeechRater, aim to reduce the workload of human raters by using machine learning to assess speaking performance. While these systems are becoming more sophisticated, capable of evaluating features such as pronunciation, fluency, and grammatical accuracy, concerns remain regarding their ability to fully capture the depth and complexity of oral communication. Consequently, the debate continues over the efficacy and

limitations of ASE systems in evaluating important aspects like content and discourse coherence, which are still evolving. These innovations are reshaping how oral English is taught and assessed, particularly in high-stakes language proficiency tests like TOEFL, where test preparation and learning strategies are influenced by the presence of ASE<sup>18</sup>.

In the context of teaching oral English in China, where English is perceived primarily as a foreign language, students often face significant challenges, particularly in speaking skills. Despite extensive formal education in English, many learners experience "mute English," characterized by an inability to engage in spoken communication due to a lack of supportive environments and high levels of anxiety related to language use. Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a crucial factor influencing EFL learners' speaking abilities, as it encompasses skills such as self-awareness, adaptability, and interpersonal relationships that can help students navigate the emotional hurdles associated with speaking English. Research indicates that students with higher EI are more likely to maintain motivation, cope with stress, and engage in effective communication. However, the existing educational framework often emphasises reading and writing over speaking, leaving students with limited opportunities for oral practice. This highlights the need for an educational approach that fosters a supportive speaking environment and integrates EI development to enhance students' confidence and competence in English speaking<sup>19</sup>.

The teaching and learning of oral English have evolved significantly with the integration of innovative pedagogical frameworks such as the Flipped Classroom Approach (FCA) and advances in online collaborative learning technologies. Traditionally, language instruction emphasized in-class activities, often leading to a passive learning experience for students. However, the FCA promotes a student-centered environment where learners engage with course

materials asynchronously—such as video lessons—before attending synchronous class sessions that prioritize active collaboration and peer interaction. This shift not only enhances motivation and engagement but also aligns with theories of cognitive development by facilitating social interaction among students, as articulated in the Community of Inquiry framework. The use of online platforms and tools has further transformed this landscape, enabling learners to participate in interactive discussions and collaborative tasks beyond the classroom, thereby improving their oral proficiency and overall language skills. As digital natives, today's students benefit from diverse multimedia resources and online communities that enhance their language learning experiences, making the development of oral English skills more dynamic and effective<sup>20</sup>.

The teaching and learning of oral English have become increasingly vital in the context of China's integration into the global landscape, particularly as English emerges as the dominant language in international communication. Despite early exposure to English starting in the third grade of elementary school, many students continue to struggle with effective communication. This gap highlights the pressing need for innovative teaching methodologies that foster strong oral skills. Traditional approaches have often proven inadequate, characterised by outdated teaching concepts, low student engagement, and a lack of dynamic participation. Consequently, educators are prompted to reassess current pedagogical strategies to better align with the demands of a rapidly changing global environment. In response to these challenges, the integration of multimodal teaching methods offers a promising avenue for enhancing oral English proficiency. By leveraging diverse teaching resources and engaging students through various channels—such as multimedia presentations and interactive discussions—teachers can create a more stimulating learning atmosphere. Research indicates that this approach not only cultivates students' communication skills but also fosters critical thinking and collaboration,

essential competencies for success in a modern context. As technological advancements continue to shape educational landscapes, the incorporation of artificial intelligence and data-driven methodologies in language instruction further underscores the need for adaptable, innovative strategies that prioritise student engagement and effective language use<sup>21</sup>.

The teaching and learning of oral English have become increasingly significant in second language (L2) education, primarily due to the growing recognition of pronunciation as a crucial indicator of oral proficiency. L2 learners often aspire to achieve pronunciation levels similar to those of native speakers, underscoring their commitment to mastering the language. Traditional assessments of L2 learners' oral performance have relied heavily on human raters who evaluate pronunciation against established phonetic norms. However, advancements in assessment methodologies, particularly the incorporation of the Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) framework, have provided a more nuanced approach to evaluating oral proficiency. CAF emphasizes that each dimension, including pronunciation, contributes distinctively to overall performance, thus guiding educators in designing more effective teaching strategies. The advent of Automatic Speech Scoring (ASS) systems has revolutionized the assessment landscape for oral English proficiency, allowing for greater objectivity and efficiency in evaluating learners' pronunciation and fluency. These systems, leveraging technologies like Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR), facilitate detailed error identification and feedback, particularly in the context of English pronunciation. As ASS continues to evolve, it not only complements traditional evaluation methods but also raises important questions regarding its alignment with established CAF metrics. Understanding the interplay between ASS indices and CAF dimensions is essential for enhancing the teaching and assessment of oral English, ultimately contributing to improved language acquisition outcomes for L2 learners<sup>22</sup>.

Affective factors significantly influence students' oral proficiency in English. Anxiety, self-restriction, and motivation all play pivotal roles in shaping how students communicate orally. Anxiety can act as a barrier, hindering students' ability to express themselves effectively, particularly in face-to-face interactions or during assessments. Conversely, motivated students tend to engage more actively in speaking tasks, demonstrating higher levels of confidence and participation. Teachers can support students by providing positive reinforcement and fostering a supportive classroom environment that encourages risk-taking and experimentation with language. Cognitive factors are also crucial in oral proficiency development. Speaking involves complex processes such as conceptualisation, formulation, and articulation. Learners must navigate these processes simultaneously, selecting appropriate information, choosing suitable words, and delivering speech fluently and accurately. Difficulties in cognitive processes can impact the linguistic quality of students' speech, highlighting the interconnectedness of cognitive and linguistic factors in oral communication. Linguistic factors, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency, are fundamental aspects of oral proficiency. Vocabulary and grammar provide the building blocks for constructing meaningful sentences, while pronunciation and fluency contribute to effective communication. Teachers play a critical role in addressing these linguistic aspects through explicit instruction and practice activities tailored to students' proficiency levels. Effective teaching strategies are essential for fostering oral proficiency development. Group work, role play, problem-solving, and discussions are examples of strategies that promote communication and interaction in the classroom. Teachers should carefully select and implement appropriate strategies based on students' needs and objectives,

ensuring that speaking activities are engaging, meaningful, and scaffolded to support language development. The curriculum guides the teaching and learning of oral proficiency skills, providing a framework for instruction. Emphasising speaking tasks aligned with real-life contexts and academic requirements enables students to apply English language skills authentically. Curriculum planners should regularly review and update curricula to prioritise oral proficiency development, providing teachers with resources and support to enhance instructional practices and facilitate student learning. By addressing affective, cognitive, linguistic, and instructional factors, educators can create a supportive environment conducive to improving students' oral proficiency in English<sup>23</sup>.

The global demand for English proficiency has risen significantly due to the transformative effects of globalisation on education, making English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction vital for tertiary students aiming to enhance their educational and career prospects. As English becomes a dominant medium of instruction across various fields, effective pedagogical strategies are essential for improving students' speaking skills. Research indicates that approaches such as cooperative learning, pre-task planning, and task-based language teaching (TBLT) can lead to substantial gains in language proficiency. For instance, studies have shown that cooperative learning groups help mitigate linguistic barriers, while pre-task planning can alleviate grammatical difficulties. Moreover, task repetition and meaningful speaking tasks have been linked to increased fluency and grammatical accuracy, ultimately fostering a more engaging learning environment for EFL learners. Learners, particularly Arabic speakers, encounter significant obstacles due to structural differences between English and Arabic, underscoring the need for tailored instructional approaches<sup>24</sup>.

Oral English proficiency among students in Nigeria is influenced by a myriad of factors, reflecting the complex linguistic landscape of the country. One significant factor is the historical legacy of British colonisation, which entrenched English as the language of administration, education, and elite status. This colonial heritage means that English proficiency is often seen as a marker of social and economic prestige, creating incentives for students to master the language. However, the multilingual nature of Nigerian society adds layers of complexity to oral English proficiency. With over 521 indigenous languages spoken across the country, students often navigate between their native tongues and English, which can affect their fluency and pronunciation. Additionally, the regional variations in English usage, influenced by factors such as ethnicity and socio-economic background, contribute to differences in oral proficiency among students from various parts of the country. Furthermore, the status of Nigerian Pidgin as a widely spoken informal language adds another dimension to oral English proficiency. While Nigerian Pidgin serves as a lingua franca in many informal settings, its non-standardised nature and informal status may hinder students' ability to transition effectively between Nigerian Pidgin and formal English<sup>25</sup>.

The significance of spoken English has gained increasing prominence, highlighting the limitations of traditional English education models that primarily focus on writing, listening, and reading skills while often neglecting essential communication abilities. Effective spoken English requires not only practical application but also a strong foundational understanding of the language, as comprehension skills and situational awareness are crucial for real-life communication. To address these gaps, this paper proposes a dynamic evaluation method for oral English self-study systems, emphasizing continuous learner assessment through formative and summative evaluations. By leveraging contemporary online learning platforms, the proposed

evaluation structure allows for timely tracking of learners' progress, enabling a more targeted approach to enhancing spoken English proficiency. In addition to a robust evaluation framework, the establishment of a supportive hardware system is essential for assessing spoken English learning outcomes effectively. By collecting and analyzing voice data from participants, the system can provide constructive feedback compared against a standardized English phonetic database. Furthermore, the incorporation of Hidden Markov Models (HMM) within the self-learning framework aids in recognizing spoken language patterns, thereby facilitating personalized insights into learners' progress. The application of limit theory further enriches this approach by modeling events and estimating probabilities based on historical data, ultimately enhancing methodologies for evaluating and improving spoken English acquisition. Through these innovative strategies, the paper aims to foster more effective language learning and communication skills among learners<sup>26</sup>.

### **2.1.3 Language Interference**

Language interference, in the Nigerian context, refers to the phenomenon where the linguistic features of one language influence the production or comprehension of another language, particularly in multilingual settings where individuals are exposed to multiple languages. This interference can manifest in various ways, such as code-switching, code-mixing, and phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical transfer. In Nigeria, with its rich linguistic diversity and the dominance of English as a lingua franca, language interference is prevalent across different language interactions. For instance, where children are growing up in urban areas like Calabar, the influence of English as a dominant language can lead to interference in the use of indigenous languages. Code-switching and code-mixing, where speakers alternate between languages or blend elements of different languages within the same discourse, are

common forms of language interference observed in Nigeria. This can occur in various social contexts, such as homes, schools, churches, and public places, as indicated by the survey findings. For instance, children may code-switch between English and their indigenous languages depending on the setting or the interlocutors present. Furthermore, language interference can also be seen in the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features of Nigerian English, which often reflect the influence of indigenous languages. This includes the adoption of indigenous words and expressions into English discourse, as well as the adaptation of English pronunciation and grammatical structures to align with native language patterns<sup>27</sup>.

Language interference refers to the influence of one language on another, particularly when speakers are bilingual or multilingual. When two languages come into contact, elements from one language can inadvertently affect the structure, vocabulary, or pronunciation of the other, leading to deviations from linguistic norms. This phenomenon often arises when speakers are more proficient in their first language and carry over patterns from it when using a second language. Interference can occur at various levels, including morphology, syntax, and phonology, often resulting in the borrowing of words, affixes, or structures from the more dominant language into the less familiar one. The rapid evolution of language due to social, cultural, and technological changes further contributes to this phenomenon, as speakers adapt their language use to new contexts and influences. One of the primary drivers of language interference is bilingualism, where speakers alternate between two or more languages, causing cross-linguistic transfer. This interference is not only a deviation but also a natural consequence of language contact. Speakers might unintentionally mix elements from their mother tongue into a second language, especially when expressing concepts or ideas that do not have direct equivalents in the second language. Additionally, interference can be driven by factors like insufficient vocabulary

in the target language, the desire to express regional identity, or the gradual disappearance of words from a language. While it is sometimes viewed as an error, language interference reflects the dynamic and evolving nature of language in multicultural and multilingual contexts<sup>28</sup>.

Whether monolinguals resolve lexical interference within a single language using mechanisms akin to the bilingual language control used by bilinguals to manage interference across languages is being studied. Language control is believed to involve top-down cognitive processes, often studied through tasks involving language switching. Research has examined picture naming in balanced and non-balanced bilinguals (Experiments 1 and 2), as well as monolinguals (Experiments 3 and 4). In the bilingual groups, participants named pictures in both languages, while monolinguals used basic-level (e.g., shoe) and subordinate-level (e.g., sneaker) names. Key measures included switching costs (time delay when switching between languages or name types) and mixing costs (delay in naming within a mixed block as compared to a blocked task). Results showed signs of dominant deprioritisation in both bilingual and monolingual groups, suggesting that bilingual language control mechanisms might generalize to monolingual lexical selection. This finding indicates that the same top-down cognitive control processes may be used to resolve interference within a single language as well as across two languages. For example, bilinguals exhibited larger costs when naming in their dominant language after naming in the non-dominant language, while monolinguals showed similar larger costs when switching from basic-level to subordinate-level names. Unexpectedly, in monolinguals, basic-level names were produced more slowly overall than subordinate names, suggesting a complexity in how lexical dominance operates within a language that cannot be fully explained by traditional bottom-up models of monolingual lexical interference resolution. These findings highlight the potential overlap between monolingual and bilingual interference resolution mechanisms, with

implications for understanding the cognitive control required for word selection across different linguistic contexts<sup>29</sup>.

Language interference occurs when elements from a learner's first language (L1) affect their production or comprehension of a second language (L2). Phonological interference refers to errors in pronunciation caused by differences between the phonetic systems of the two languages. For instance, learners may struggle with English vowels, diphthongs, consonants, and allophonic variations due to differences in articulation and phonemic inventory between mother tongue and English. Grammatical interference involves errors in the structure or morphemes of the second language influenced by patterns from the first language. Also, learners might incorrectly apply morphological rules such as singular-plural agreement, to English, leading to grammatical errors in their speech. Similarly, lexical interference occurs when vocabulary from the first language intrudes into speech or writing in the second language. Learners mix their mother tongue and English words, resulting in lexical errors and communication breakdowns. Factors contributing to language interference, include bilingualism, limited vocabulary in the target language, prestige and style considerations, and disloyalty to the target language. Bilingual individuals, especially those who use both languages frequently, may experience interference as they navigate between their L1 and L2. Limited vocabulary in the target language can also lead to reliance on L1 vocabulary, while concerns about prestige and style may influence language choices in communication. Additionally, disloyalty to the target language, wherein L1 structures are applied in L2 speech, can result in erroneous or nonsensical utterances. Understanding the concept and definition of language interference is essential for language teachers and learners alike. By recognising the potential sources of interference and the factors contributing to it, educators can develop strategies to mitigate its effects and support learners in achieving greater proficiency in

the target language. Language learners, on the other hand, can become more aware of the challenges posed by interference and work towards overcoming them through targeted practice and exposure to the target language<sup>30</sup>.

Moreover, Language interference refers to the influence of a person's native language (L1) on their use or learning of a second language (L2). This phenomenon occurs when the structures, patterns, and rules of L1 affect the acquisition and usage of L2, leading to either positive or negative transfer. Positive transfer happens when similarities between the two languages assist the learner in producing correct language forms, such as when shared grammatical structures or vocabulary aid comprehension and usage. Negative transfer, on the other hand, involves the transfer of inappropriate language habits, resulting in errors. This is particularly common in situations where the native and target languages have significant structural differences. Comparative linguistics (CL) plays a key role in identifying these language interferences by contrasting languages and pinpointing typological features that may lead to interference. The study of language interference is connected with the fields of psycholinguistics and bilingualism, with early contributions made by German psychologists like John A. Bergstrom and George Elias Muller. From a linguistic perspective, interference is viewed as a deviation from linguistic norms, with areas such as phonology, grammar, and lexicon being affected. For instance, learners of English from Turkic language backgrounds may omit articles or pronouns due to the absence of these features in their native language. The study of interference also highlights the importance of identifying whether the native language should be integrated into foreign language instruction. Understanding both positive and negative transfers can enhance language teaching methodologies by addressing errors arising from interference and utilizing the similarities between languages to improve the learning process<sup>31</sup>.

The discourse on language interference in foreign language teaching underscores a significant challenge faced by educators globally. This issue arises particularly within the context of structural methods, such as audio-visual and audio-oral approaches, where learning a foreign language often involves imitation and mechanical responses to language stimuli. These methods traditionally exclude explicit theoretical explanations and comparisons with the learner's native language. However, as the limitations of these approaches become apparent, discussions surrounding language interference gain prominence as educators seek to understand its impact on foreign language acquisition. Language interference, as conceptualised within modern didactics, serves as a methodological principle guiding approaches and educational tools in language instruction. The theoretical underpinnings of interference draw from the fields of bilingualism and the theory of contacts, examining how communication between language systems can lead to deviations from linguistic norms. Psycholinguistically, interference manifests as the negative transfer of language habits and skills from one language to another, while linguistically, it involves interactions or changes in linguistic structures and elements, resulting in deviations from established norms in spoken and written language. Bilingualism plays a crucial role in shaping the nature of language interference. Correlative bilingualism, where both language systems coexist independently, contrasts with subordinate bilingualism, where one language dominates over the other, leading to interference. Interference can manifest in various forms, including interlanguage and intralanguage interference, and can be implicit or explicit, depending on whether mistakes are made overtly or subtly in language expression. The discussion further delineates types of interference mistakes across phonetic, lexical, and grammatical levels. Phonetic interference often leads to mispronunciations and confusion between phonetic sounds, while lexical interference involves the incorrect use or expansion of

word meanings. Grammatical interference encompasses changes in language structures and elements, influenced by semantic and formal distinctions between native and foreign languages. Contrastive analysis and error analysis emerge as primary methodologies for studying and addressing interference. Contrastive analysis involves comparing language systems to identify similarities and differences, while error analysis focuses on real deviations from linguistic norms in speech and writing<sup>32</sup>.

More so, language interference refers to the phenomenon where a speaker's proficiency in one language influences their use of another language, often leading to errors or cross-language transfer in speech, writing, or comprehension. This is particularly evident in multilingual contexts where an individual speaks more than two languages. Research on third language (L3) acquisition suggests that, contrary to what might be expected, learners often experience more interference from their second language (L2) than their native language (L1). This is despite typically having greater proficiency in the L1. Studies have found that the L2 can influence the acquisition of the L3, especially in areas such as syntax and vocabulary. The L2 status hypothesis posits that non-native languages (L2 and L3) may share cognitive similarities in terms of learning environments and memory processes, making them more likely to interfere with each other than with the L1. Even after trilinguals become fluent in all three languages, interference between the L2 and L3 continues to be observed. For example, speakers might find themselves switching more frequently between their L2 and L3 rather than their L1, and studies have shown that naming tasks in the L3 are more likely to be influenced by L2 structures than by the native L1. This continued interference might be due to stronger inhibition of the native language to reduce competition during language production, as suggested by Green's Inhibitory Control Hypothesis. Ultimately, language interference underscores the complex interactions within a

multilingual speaker's mental lexicon and how different languages influence one another beyond the early stages of language acquisition<sup>33</sup>.

Language interference, often referred to as language transfer, is a crucial phenomenon in second language acquisition that highlights the influence of a learner's first language (L1) on their learning of a second language (L2). This interference can manifest in various forms, including phonology, vocabulary, and grammar, affecting learners' proficiency and overall communicative competence in the target language. Research has shown that while L1 can sometimes facilitate L2 learning through positive transfer—where similarities between the two languages aid in the acquisition process—negative transfer is more commonly reported, particularly among learners with significant linguistic differences. For instance, Afghan learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) may encounter challenges stemming from the phonological and syntactical features of their native languages, such as Pashto and Farsi, which differ significantly from English. Studies have indicated that these learners may struggle with pronunciation, grammatical structures, and vocabulary usage due to their ingrained L1 habits, leading to various communicative difficulties. The impact of L1 interference in EFL contexts is particularly pronounced in regions experiencing socio-political instability, such as Afghanistan, where the research landscape has been limited. Despite the diverse linguistic environment, the experiences of Afghan EFL students regarding L1 interference remain underexplored, leaving a significant gap in the literature. The interplay between L1 and L2 acquisition becomes crucial in understanding how Afghan learners navigate these challenges and leverage their linguistic backgrounds. Qualitative research focusing on their lived experiences can shed light on the specific strategies they employ to overcome negative transfers, as well as the positive aspects of utilizing their L1 in the learning process. Understanding these dynamics is essential for language

educators, who can then tailor their teaching approaches to better support Afghan EFL learners, ultimately enhancing their language acquisition outcomes<sup>34</sup>.

Language interference, defined as the negative influence of a learner's first language (L1) on their acquisition of a target language, plays a significant role in the process of learning foreign languages. As more than a billion people globally engage with English—whether as a native, second, or foreign language—the need for mastery in English has become paramount for effective communication in our interconnected world. This necessity has permeated various educational contexts, including Islamic boarding schools, where students are often required to alternate between Arabic and English. Within such settings, like Al-Mashduqiyah in East Java, students are expected to communicate fluently in both languages. However, they frequently encounter challenges, resulting in errors during both oral and written communication due to the interference of their L1. This phenomenon occurs across all language components, including phonology, morphology, and syntax, as learners navigate the complexities of language structures that may differ significantly from those in their native tongues. Research has demonstrated that language interference can stem from a variety of factors, such as grammatical changes when transferring from one language to another, the elimination of grammatical structures absent in the target language, and the alteration of grammatical functions influenced by another language's patterns. Previous studies have highlighted the prevalence of grammatical interference in language production, particularly among students with limited vocabulary or insufficient understanding of systematic grammar, leading to errors in both speaking and writing. For instance, students at Al-Mashduqiyah have been observed producing sentences that reflect the syntactic structures of their L1, resulting in awkward or incorrect English phrasing. Consequently, understanding the underlying causes of language interference is essential for both

learners and educators. By identifying and addressing these challenges, students can become more conscious of their language errors, and teachers can develop targeted strategies to mitigate the impacts of L1 interference on students' English language proficiency<sup>35</sup>.

Language interference, a concept central to the field of second language acquisition, refers to the negative influence of a learner's first language (L1) on their ability to effectively communicate in a target language (L2). As more individuals around the globe engage with English—whether as a native language, a second language, or a foreign language—the mastery of English has become crucial for social, academic, and professional interactions. In diverse educational settings, including English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs, learners often face challenges related to L1 interference, which can manifest in various ways across phonology, vocabulary, and grammar. For instance, students may struggle with pronunciation or may apply L1 grammatical rules to English, leading to errors in both spoken and written communication. Such challenges highlight the need for effective instructional strategies to address these interferences and enhance language learning outcomes. Research has consistently shown that language interference is a pervasive issue in EFL contexts, impacting learners' proficiency and confidence. Errors resulting from L1 transfer can hinder students' communication abilities have also been emphasised. Various factors contribute to language interference, including differences in grammatical structures, phonetic patterns, and vocabulary usage between L1 and L2. As learners navigate these differences, they may produce sentences that reflect their native language's syntax, leading to miscommunication or ambiguity. Understanding the nature and sources of language interference is essential for educators to help students develop greater awareness of their linguistic errors and provide targeted support. By identifying and addressing these challenges,

teachers can facilitate more effective learning experiences and help students improve their proficiency in English<sup>36</sup>.

Language interference is a significant challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly for students like those in the Tadris Bahasa Inggris (TBI) programme in Indonesia. As these students predominantly use Indonesian in their daily conversations, their mother tongue frequently influences their English writing, leading to common errors stemming from the application of Indonesian language structures and vocabulary. This interference is particularly evident in tasks such as reflective journaling, where students often engage in word-for-word translation from Indonesian to English. Such practices hinder their ability to develop strong writing skills and adversely impact the quality of their assignments and final papers. Therefore, understanding the role of native language interference is crucial for addressing the writing difficulties faced by EFL learners and enhancing their language proficiency. The phenomenon of language interference encompasses both interlanguage and intralanguage influences. Interlanguage interference arises when negative transfers occur due to differing linguistic patterns between a learner's first language (L1) and the target language, resulting in structural mistakes. Conversely, intralanguage interference manifests when learners apply their existing knowledge of the target language incorrectly, leading to errors in writing or speaking. While many studies have explored language interference within the EFL context, there is a notable gap in research focusing on reflective journal writing, an essential tool for students to process and reflect on their learning experiences. Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to analyze how L1 interference impacts the language use, accuracy, and structure of reflective journals written by EFL students, ultimately aiming to inform and improve teaching methodologies in this area<sup>37</sup>.

Language interference is a common phenomenon encountered by students learning a foreign language, particularly in writing. As multilingual individuals strive to master writing in English, they often face unique challenges due to the influence of their first language. Writing, categorised as a productive skill, requires not only the ability to convey ideas effectively but also a solid understanding of syntactic structure and lexical choices in the target language. Many learners struggle with expressing their thoughts in writing, often resorting to direct translations from their native language. This tendency results from a lack of awareness regarding the distinct rules and structures that govern the two languages, leading to errors in grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. The impact of first language interference can significantly hinder students' writing abilities, particularly in contexts like Indonesia, where English is learned as a foreign language. It is highlighted that language habits established in a student's native tongue often transfer into their writing, resulting in mistakes that deviate from the target language norms. The influence of first language interference manifests across various linguistic levels—phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon—culminating in a range of errors in students' written expressions. Such interference is not limited to beginner-level students; even those with a firm grasp of English can falter when attempting to articulate their ideas in writing. Consequently, understanding and addressing the roots of language interference is crucial for fostering effective writing skills among foreign language learners<sup>38</sup>.

Language interference, as observed in Nigeria, is a phenomenon arising from the contact between languages, often facilitated by various societal interactions such as trade, conquest,

migration, religious conversations, and travel. Interference is defined as a situation where a previously learned language influences the acquisition of a second or further language, resulting in an intrusion in language acquisition. This interference manifests itself in various ways, affecting both the learning and speaking of English as an official language in Nigeria. Theoretical frameworks surrounding interference shed light on its complexities and implications. Interference is also described as the unintentional transfer of elements from the source language to the target language, leading to mistakes in translation and speaking. Interference is examined within L1 and L2 translations, suggesting that translating from L1 to L2 may result in stronger interference tendencies. Additionally, interference has been interpreted as going beyond the word level, including syntactic, lexical, and grammatical interference. He also acknowledges that interference can sometimes be seen as a positive aspect of translation, enriching literary works. In Nigeria, negative interference is prominent in language learning, especially among bilingual individuals. Negative interference occurs when the learner's response in the target language is influenced by strong components of their mother tongue. This is particularly evident in cases where individuals transfer forms, meanings, and distribution from their mother tongue to the second language, such as the semantic interpretation and its effects on sentence formation. Furthermore, Chomsky's perspective on linguistic competence highlights interference as a limitation to linguistic competence, as it distorts the order of language usage. This is particularly relevant in heterogeneous linguistic settings like Nigeria, where individuals strive to attain linguistic proficiency amidst exposure to multiple languages. Understanding the causes and manifestations of interference in Nigeria requires careful observation and analysis. Corder suggests that studying language breakdowns can provide insight into normal language functioning. In everyday practice, interference can occur in various contexts, particularly when

individuals are tense or emotionally stressed, underscoring its pervasive nature in language acquisition and communication in Nigeria<sup>39</sup>.

The issue of language interference has long been recognised as a significant obstacle to mastering a second language. This interference arises from the transfer of speech skills from one language to another, whether it be from the native language to a foreign language or from one foreign language to another. Its impact extends to both receptive and productive speech activities, influencing an individual's success in using and mastering a foreign language. Researchers have devoted considerable attention to understanding interference, as it affects various linguistic levels, including the lexical level, resulting in deviations from the language norm and numerous lexical errors among students. In Nigeria, where multilingualism is common due to the presence of numerous indigenous languages alongside English, language interference poses particular challenges in learning English as a second language. Interference can be categorised into two main types based on the source of its appearance: inter-language interference and intra-language interference. Inter-language interference occurs when the native language or a previously learned foreign language negatively influences the acquisition of a new language. This type of interference is especially pronounced at the initial stages of language learning. In contrast, intra-language interference occurs within the framework of the studied language, leading to the displacement of less mastered phenomena by more learned ones. Similarly, inter-language interference often results in the inappropriate transfer of phenomena from the native or previously learned languages to the target language being studied. This can lead to the formation of incorrect linguistic phenomena or the non-use of phenomena in the target language due to their absence in the native or first foreign language. Such interference can occur across various levels of the language system, including phonological, lexical, and grammatical levels. To

address the challenges posed by language interference, educators and methodologists have proposed various strategies. One approach involves periodic analysis of lexical units in both the native and target languages to identify potential areas of difficulty for students. Teachers can then tailor their teaching materials and exercises to mitigate the effects of interference and facilitate the learning process. Additionally, efforts to identify similarities and differences in the lexical structure of languages and determine "inter-language equivalents" can help students navigate linguistic challenges more effectively<sup>40</sup>.

The process of language acquisition, particularly the distinction between first and second language acquisition, is a multifaceted field of study that encompasses various factors such as age, linguistic background, and cognitive development. The distinction between first language (L1) and second language (L2) is fundamental in understanding how individuals acquire and use language throughout their lives. First language, often referred to as mother tongue or native language, is acquired during early childhood, typically before the age of three. It forms the foundation of linguistic competence and serves as the primary mode of communication for individuals within their native linguistic community. On the other hand, second language acquisition is the process by which individuals learn a language other than their native one, often for educational, professional, or social purposes. In many cases, this involves acquiring an official or societal language such as English. Research indicates that first language transfer plays a significant role in second language acquisition, with learners often relying on structures and patterns from their L1 when acquiring an L2. This transfer can manifest as interference, where features of the L1 influence the production of the L2. For example, learners may encounter difficulties in L2 pronunciation or syntax due to the influence of their L1 phonological or grammatical structures. It is hypothesised that the degree of difference or similarity between the

L1 and L2 influences the ease or difficulty of language acquisition. Additionally, Nation's research suggests that while the influence of the L1 on the L2 is significant, it can be mitigated through natural language use and exposure. Furthermore, age plays a crucial role in language acquisition, with younger learners often demonstrating greater proficiency in acquiring an L2 compared to adults. This is attributed to the plasticity of the developing brain and the absence of interference from the L1. However, research suggests that even adults can achieve high levels of proficiency in an L2, albeit typically not at native-like competence. In L2 writing, learners may exhibit transfer of L1 syntactic structures, leading to errors in their L2 compositions. Despite these challenges, learners often rely on strategies from their L1 to navigate L2 writing tasks. Similarities between L1 and L2 writing strategies have been observed, indicating that learners draw upon their existing linguistic knowledge to scaffold their L2 writing process<sup>41</sup>.

#### **2.1.4 Concept of Mother Tongue**

Mother tongue holds immense significance in students' educational journey, serving as the cornerstone for cognitive development, cultural preservation, and overall academic success. From birth, a child's first exposure to language is through their mother tongue, which shapes their understanding of the world and forms the basis of their linguistic and cognitive abilities. Studies have consistently shown that children educated in their mother tongue exhibit faster cognitive and intellectual development compared to those taught in a language that is not their mother tongue. The pivotal role of mother tongue in education, emphasises the importance of universal access to quality education in one's language. This indicates that education in the mother tongue enhances academic performance and fosters a deeper connection to one's culture and identity. Through the integration of vernacular languages in the early stages of learning, students can develop a sense of pride in their linguistic heritage and appreciate the rich diversity

of human culture. Furthermore, research has highlighted the multifaceted benefits of mother tongue education. Children who receive instruction in their mother tongue are more likely to achieve higher educational outcomes, as they can better comprehend and engage with academic content. Moreover, learning in one's mother tongue promotes inclusive learning environments by encouraging parental involvement and fostering greater self-confidence among students. Emphasis on multilingualism reflects a holistic approach to language education, recognising the value of proficiency in multiple languages while prioritising the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, especially in the foundational years of schooling. By embracing linguistic diversity and promoting the use of the mother tongue in education, students are empowered to communicate effectively, preserve cultural heritage, and contribute to national integration. However, the implementation of mother tongue education may pose challenges, particularly in regions with linguistic diversity. It requires adequate resources, teacher training, and support systems to ensure effective teaching and learning in diverse language contexts. Additionally, there is a need for flexibility in language policies to accommodate the preferences and needs of students and communities<sup>42</sup>.

Mother tongue instruction (MTI) plays a crucial role in the educational landscape of Sweden, particularly for immigrant students. As illustrated by the classroom setting at Magnolia School, MTI fosters not only linguistic skills but also cultural connections and a sense of belonging. In this environment, students engage in lessons that blend grammar with cultural narratives, such as the story of Hamdi Ulukaya, emphasising the importance of retaining one's linguistic heritage while adapting to a new society. The relational dynamics between students and teachers in MTI classes often reflect a more egalitarian approach compared to traditional educational contexts, fostering an atmosphere of camaraderie and shared learning experiences. Despite the recognised

benefits of MTI, its position within the Swedish educational system is somewhat precarious, often relegated to a marginalised status. While policy documents advocate for MTI as a fundamental right, its implementation frequently faces challenges, such as limited scheduling and a lack of integration with mainstream subjects. The historical evolution of MTI has shifted its framing from a tool for cultural enrichment and equality to a more utilitarian function aimed at facilitating integration for minority students. This change highlights the complex interplay of language, power, and identity in educational policy, necessitating a deeper examination of MTI's significance in supporting migrant students and its implications for broader societal inclusion<sup>43</sup>.

Mother tongue education plays a critical role in the cognitive and emotional development of children, as it is the language through which they construct knowledge, skills, and experiences within their community. Understanding the language of instruction is essential for conceptualising subject matter, which supports the argument that children should learn in their mother tongue. In South Africa, the adoption of the Language-in-Education Policy in 1997 aimed to rectify historical injustices by granting learners the right to receive education in their mother languages. This policy reflects the recognition of 11 official languages in the South African Constitution and promotes the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction, especially in the foundational years of schooling. The advantages of mother-tongue education include enhanced enjoyment of schooling, improved learning outcomes, increased self-esteem, and greater parental involvement, highlighting both cognitive and social benefits. Despite these recognised benefits, the legacy of colonialism and apartheid has left challenges in implementing mother-tongue education effectively in South Africa. Although the constitutional provisions and provincial language policies exist, many learners are still compelled to study in a second language, often English, due to the dominance of certain languages in the education system.

Research indicates that this policy remains poorly implemented, with many parents preferring English instruction for their children. This calls for a deeper examination of educators' perceptions regarding the challenges of mother-tongue education. Adopting an ecological approach to teacher agency can shed light on how educators navigate the complexities of policy implementation, shaped by their individual beliefs, available resources, and the specific contexts of their teaching environments<sup>44</sup>.

The concept of "mother tongue" gained significant international recognition in the 1950s when it was described as the language acquired during early childhood, serving as a person's natural medium for thoughts and communication. Following a pivotal UNESCO meeting in 1958 that advocated for mother tongue education, the term became central to discussions on language in education. However, in the African context, the concept has become increasingly ambiguous and problematic. Researchers have noted issues such as the lack of a clear definition, the multilingual nature of many African nations, and the effects of intermarriages on language use. These complexities complicate the understanding and application of mother tongue in educational settings, particularly in regions where socio-economic factors prevent children from being raised in a stable linguistic environment. Taking South Africa as a focal point, the country's rich linguistic diversity—evidenced by its 11 official languages—presents both cultural richness and educational challenges. The historical context reveals that indigenous education was primarily under missionary control until the 1970s, after which language disparities began to affect the education system more profoundly. Today, approximately 80% of South African children learn in a language that is not their mother tongue, contributing to poor literacy outcomes. Given this background, there is a need for reevaluation of the concept of mother tongue and proposes adopting the term "dominant language" to better articulate the complexities involved. This shift

in terminology is aimed at fostering clearer discussions and policies that address the foundational language issues within the educational system, encouraging further research and collective efforts to promote indigenous languages and improve educational outcomes across South Africa and the broader African continent<sup>45</sup>.

The concept of "mother tongue" has undergone significant scrutiny, particularly in the context of education in African countries, where it has become increasingly ambiguous and problematic. Initially synonymous with "native tongue," the term gained prominence internationally in the 1950s, referring to the language acquired in early childhood, serving as a natural instrument for thought and communication. However, challenges emerged, including a lack of clear definition, the multilingual nature of African societies, intermarriage effects on home languages, and socioeconomic factors affecting child-rearing practices. In a country characterised by linguistic diversity, the concept of mother tongue intersects with rich socio-cultural dynamics. Historical impositions, such as colonial education policies, have also shaped language disparities. The notion of mother tongue education emerged as a response, advocating for instruction in a child's first language during early schooling. However, practical challenges arise when presuming a child's mother tongue, especially in multilingual environments where the dominant language may differ from the presumed mother tongue. The traditional concept of mother tongue, particularly within African societies, faces criticism. In some traditional African cultures, the first language aligns with the father's language, diminishing the significance of the mother tongue concept. Questions arise regarding who constitutes the "mother" in language acquisition, challenging the applicability and relevance of the concept within African contexts. In response to these challenges, alternative frameworks such as the concept of "dominant language" (DL) offer clarity and precision. DL refers to the language most frequently used in social interactions,

reflecting a person's linguistic competence and preference. This concept acknowledges the complexities of language use in diverse contexts, transcending biological or familial ties. Recognising the limitations of the mother tongue concept, particularly in education, prompts the need for clearer terminology and policy frameworks. Stakeholder consultations, both nationally and locally, are essential in developing alternative concepts that resonate with African socio-cultural realities. Additionally, addressing the historical legacies of colonialism is crucial in shaping language policies that promote linguistic diversity and equity in education. Efforts to promote African languages and clarify language concepts should align with practical interventions that consider the educational and socio-cultural needs of African populations. While acknowledging the problematic nature of the mother tongue concept, tailored approaches are necessary to navigate linguistic complexities and promote inclusive education systems<sup>46</sup>.

Mother-tongue education, which is often viewed as a solution to various educational challenges, remains a topic of contention among educators and policymakers, particularly in multilingual societies. Proponents see it as a remedy for poor academic performance, while sceptics fear it could compromise the quality of education. The debate extends globally, raising questions about language selection, societal implications, and the alignment of language policies with economic and political agendas. At its core, mother-tongue education revolves around instructing students in languages familiar to them, typically those spoken at home. However, the selection of which language(s) to prioritize poses philosophical dilemmas. In a diverse linguistic landscape, decisions about which mother tongues to prioritise involve navigating issues of tribalism, racism, and discrimination. The relative nature of mother-tongue education calls for nuanced discussions, considering the broad spectrum of educational contexts. Common challenges to mother-tongue education in Africa include resource constraints, English hegemony, limited terminology in local

languages for technical subjects, and political factors. Resource shortages hinder policy implementation, while English dominance in various sectors perpetuates linguistic inequalities. Moreover, the linguistic diversity in Africa complicates language policy formulation, requiring strategic planning at multiple levels to avoid exacerbating societal divisions. Economic factors play a significant role in shaping language policies, with the state of the economy influencing the strength of language policies. English's global dominance reflects the resource power of English-speaking nations, affecting language choices in education and employment. Low salaries and brain drain further impede policy implementation, underscoring the complex interplay between economic conditions and language decisions. Political dynamics also shape language policies, with politicians wielding influence over policy implementation. Despite rhetoric supporting indigenous languages, politicians often prioritise English in public discourse, complicating language policy implementation in education. The legacy of apartheid further complicates language dynamics, reflecting historical inequalities and social tensions. Also, social factors including demographic changes, urbanisation, and cultural shifts, influence language policies. Demographic changes, such as migration and urbanisation, impact language use and identity, posing challenges to mother-tongue education. Moreover, evolving social norms and roles affect language planning, highlighting the dynamic nature of language policy in response to societal changes<sup>47</sup>.

The choice of language significantly impacts a child's educational experience, shaping not only their academic performance but also their cultural and social identity. Scholars underscore the importance of familiarity and continuity between the language spoken at home and that used in schooling. They argue that encountering a familiar language in the classroom fosters a sense of comfort and enhances the child's creativity and engagement with education. Mother tongue,

defined as the language a child learns first within their family and community, is deeply intertwined with personal, social, and cultural identity. However, defining the mother tongue poses challenges, especially in diverse contexts like Nigeria, where children may acquire languages other than their ethnic language due to various factors. There is an emphasis on language proficiency acquired in early childhood, reflecting a competency-based perspective that acknowledges linguistic rights and cultural heritage. In the educational context, mother-tongue instruction refers to teaching using the language a child is most familiar with, typically the language spoken at home. Research suggests that a strong foundation in the mother tongue can facilitate a better understanding of the curriculum and foster a positive attitude towards learning. However, the decision on the language of instruction is complex, and influenced by pedagogical, sociolinguistic, political, and economic factors. Pedagogically, proponents argue that children learn best in their mother tongue, necessitating the importance of starting from the known to the unknown. Instruction in a second language may hinder educational development and create cultural barriers, leading to a disconnect between the child's education and immediate environment. However, practical considerations such as language readiness and economic costs may limit the feasibility of mother-tongue instruction, especially in multilingual societies. Sociolinguistic factors further complicate the language choice for education. The status and attitudes towards languages, availability of teaching materials, and linguistic diversity within communities influence decisions on language use. Government policies often balance linguistic rights with economic and political considerations, sometimes prioritizing dominant languages over mother tongues. Literature on mother tongue education presents compelling arguments for both its advantages and challenges. Advocates highlight its role in preserving cultural identity, improving academic performance, and fostering critical thinking skills. Conversely, opponents point to

practical barriers such as the scarcity of instructional materials and teacher training, as well as concerns about discrimination and linguistic diversity within communities<sup>48</sup>.

There is a debate surrounding the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Nigerian lower primary schools, analysing both its merits and challenges. The concept of mother tongue refers to the language a child learns from birth, typically from their parents or caregivers. It is the language in which they are most proficient and comfortable expressing themselves. In the Nigerian context, where multiple indigenous languages are spoken alongside English, the choice of which language to use as the medium of instruction becomes crucial, particularly in the foundational years of education. The argument in favour of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction rests on several pillars. Advocates argue that children learn better and faster when taught in a language they understand well. This approach is believed to prevent delays in learning, enhance comprehension, and foster a sense of belonging and confidence in students. Additionally, involving parents in the educational process becomes easier when instruction is in the mother tongue, potentially leading to higher levels of parental engagement and support. Research suggests that embracing multilingualism can have long-term economic benefits for individuals and communities, as well as contribute to better academic performance and higher retention rates in schools. These advantages underscore the importance of considering the linguistic diversity within a country like Nigeria and tailoring educational approaches accordingly. However, despite these arguments, challenges exist in implementing mother tongue instruction. One concern is the feasibility of providing education in a diverse linguistic landscape where numerous languages are spoken. There's also the issue of fairness, as some children may come from households where English is predominantly spoken, potentially disadvantaging them in a system that prioritizes mother tongue instruction. Moreover, the practicality of finding

appropriate textbooks and educational materials in indigenous languages poses a significant challenge. Without adequate resources and support, the implementation of mother tongue instruction may face obstacles that hinder its effectiveness. In light of these complexities, it becomes essential for policymakers to carefully review and consider the implications of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. A comprehensive review should take into account factors such as linguistic diversity, educational equity, resource availability, and community engagement. Finding a balance between promoting indigenous languages and ensuring equal educational opportunities for all children is crucial for the success of such policies<sup>49</sup>.

The concept of mother tongue, often referred to as the first language, plays a pivotal role in language acquisition and learning. Scholars suggest that the influence of the mother tongue on learning a second language is significantly determined by the similarities and differences between the two languages. This influence manifests in various forms of language transfer, which includes sounds, grammar, meaning, phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Such transfer can lead to either positive or negative effects on second language acquisition; positive transfer enhances learning when the structures of both languages align, while negative transfer can hinder progress when differences lead to confusion or errors. This interplay of linguistic factors is underscored by the contrastive analysis hypothesis, which posits that understanding these differences is essential for effective language instruction. Research in this area has been significantly influenced by theories such as Universal Grammar proposed by Noam Chomsky, which suggests that learners possess an innate psychological framework that aids in language acquisition. Larry Selinker's contributions further emphasise the cognitive systems developed through the mother tongue, which learners draw upon when

acquiring a second language. This relationship highlights that the first language's structural and cultural elements inform how individuals navigate and master a second language. As the body of research evolves, understanding the nuances of mother tongue transfer—both its benefits and challenges—remains crucial for educators and learners alike, particularly as global communication continues to expand across cultural boundaries<sup>50</sup>.

Mother tongue, defined as the first language learned and still understood by an individual, plays a significant role in shaping cultural identity and health beliefs among immigrant populations. In the context of healthcare utilisation, particularly among immigrant families, mother tongue can influence communication styles, perceptions of healthcare practices, and adherence to health norms. Studies have shown that linguistic differences can affect how health information is received and understood, potentially leading to disparities in health-seeking behaviors. This is particularly relevant in the examination of gender-related healthcare practices, as cultural norms surrounding gender roles often manifest differently across various linguistic communities. For example, within the Indian diaspora, regional variations in mother tongue—such as Punjabi, Gujarati, and Hindi—may correlate with differing attitudes toward gender and healthcare access for sons versus daughters. In Canada, where a diverse array of immigrant communities coexist, understanding the interplay between mother tongue and healthcare utilisation is crucial. Research indicates that families may exhibit varying degrees of gender bias in healthcare access based on the cultural and linguistic contexts of their maternal country of birth. Such biases can affect routine preventive care, including immunizations and well-child visits, and may lead to what some researchers describe as "healthcare neglect" for daughters, particularly in communities with a documented preference for sons. By examining mother tongue as a variable, researchers can identify and quantify gender disparities in healthcare access, ultimately informing targeted

interventions aimed at promoting equitable health outcomes for all children within immigrant families<sup>51</sup>.

Mother tongue, also known as the native language, holds a vital role in shaping an individual's life and identity. It serves as the foundation upon which cognitive development, emotional expression, and cultural connection are built. From the moment a child is born, they begin to absorb the language spoken by their caregivers, which forms the basis of their understanding of the world around them. The significance of the mother tongue extends beyond mere communication; it plays a crucial role in intellectual development. Studies have shown that cognitive and academic achievements are greater when education is conducted in one's mother tongue. Learning in a familiar language enhances comprehension, critical thinking, and literacy skills, providing a solid foundation for future learning endeavours. Moreover, the mother tongue fosters a strong sense of personal and cultural identity. Language is intertwined with one's sense of self, influencing perceptions, emotions, and social interactions. By preserving and nurturing the mother tongue, individuals maintain a connection to their heritage, family, and community. This deep-rooted connection contributes to a strong sense of belonging and self-acceptance. Additionally, mother tongue proficiency facilitates the acquisition of additional languages. Children who are fluent in their native language have a better understanding of language structures and grammar, making it easier to learn new languages. This multilingual competence not only expands educational and professional opportunities but also fosters cross-cultural understanding and communication. Despite its undeniable benefits, mother tongue learning faces

numerous challenges, particularly in education systems that prioritize non-native languages. Many children enter school without proficiency in the language of instruction, leading to disparities in academic achievement and perpetuating societal inequalities. In marginalised communities, the lack of mother-tongue education exacerbates existing disparities and hinders access to quality learning opportunities. To address these challenges and promote mother tongue learning, several strategies can be implemented. Beginning literacy teaching in the mother tongue, ensuring the availability of relevant learning materials, and providing early childhood education in local languages are essential steps. Moreover, supporting effective teaching methods and training native-speaking teachers are critical for fostering language proficiency and academic success<sup>52</sup>.

Mother tongue education has gained significant attention in the global discourse on effective teaching and learning methodologies. Defined as the first language a child acquires, the mother tongue is not merely a means of communication; it is intricately linked to cognitive development, cultural identity, and educational success. In various countries, especially those with multicultural populations, stakeholders advocate for the use of the mother tongue as the primary language of instruction during foundational learning years. This approach is recognised for its potential to enhance critical thinking, improve learning outcomes, and reduce school dropout rates. Research highlights that utilising the mother tongue facilitates the development of essential cognitive skills, vocabulary, comprehension, and reading abilities, ultimately contributing to better academic performance in subjects such as mathematics and science. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education mandates the use of the mother tongue as the primary medium of instruction for the first three years of basic education. However, in practice, English often dominates the classroom, particularly in science subjects. This trend can be attributed to the

country's linguistic diversity, with over 300 ethnic groups, which complicates the effective implementation of mother tongue instruction. Despite evidence supporting the benefits of mother tongue education, including improved academic performance and student engagement, there remains a notable gap in the usage of local languages in Nigerian schools<sup>53</sup>.

Culture is understood as a multifaceted, socially acquired value system that shapes individual behaviours and interpretations. In healthcare, cultural competence encompasses the ability of providers and organisations to meet patients' social, cultural, and linguistic needs, thereby enhancing health outcomes and minimising disparities. Effective communication in healthcare can be impeded by interlingual asymmetries—language differences in multilingual contexts—and intralingual asymmetries—variances in communication styles between experts and non-experts. The importance of utilising patients' mother tongues is particularly pronounced in diglossic societies, where languages serve distinct roles; failing to do so may lead to miscommunication, adverse health outcomes, and dissatisfaction with care. To improve cultural competence, there is the need for implementation of strategies such as interpreter services, cultural awareness training, and the incorporation of culture-specific values into health promotion. While frameworks like the Calgary-Cambridge Guide provide communication training, they often overlook the unique importance of a patient's mother tongue. Translators and interpreters are vital in bridging communication gaps, necessitating cultural competence for effective healthcare delivery. The interaction between dominant (Spanish) and minoritised (Catalan) languages exemplifies the complexities of communication in diglossic environments. To further enhance cultural competence in healthcare, the study recommends training health professionals in cultural sensitivity, establishing policies to alleviate language barriers, and involving community members and families in healthcare decision-making.

The influence of a learner's mother tongue on their ability to acquire a second language has been widely acknowledged, particularly in the context of writing. Non-native English learners often encounter various challenges when producing written work, with errors frequently arising from the structural and phonological differences between their native language and English. Studies indicate that these errors stem from factors such as ignorance, social media influences, and peer pressure, but the impact of the mother tongue is particularly significant. Research suggests that as learners navigate the complexities of a new language, they often inadvertently apply the rules and structures of their first language, resulting in syntactical and semantic errors that hinder their overall writing proficiency. This phenomenon is further complicated in multilingual classrooms, where students from diverse linguistic backgrounds contribute to varied error patterns. In Pakistan, where over 66 languages and mother tongues coexist, understanding how these linguistic backgrounds affect English writing is essential for educators. The education system's dual focus on rote learning and exam preparation has exacerbated the challenges faced by students, leading to a decline in their writing skills. Error analysis studies have revealed that common issues among Pakistani students include verb-tense errors, spelling mistakes, and improper vocabulary usage, often linked to a lack of proper language instruction and self-directed learning. Identifying these specific error patterns allows educators to tailor their teaching strategies to address students' weaknesses, ultimately enhancing their English writing skills and overall language acquisition<sup>54</sup>.

The language policy in Zimbabwe has undergone significant transformations, particularly regarding the use of mother tongues in education. Initially established by the Judges Commission of 1962, which mandated English as the sole language of instruction, indigenous languages faced considerable marginalisation in the classroom. This policy persisted largely unchallenged until

post-independence, when the Education Act of 1987, later amended in 1996, recognised the importance of a child's first language as the medium of instruction from grades one to three. This shift was further solidified by the 2006 amendment, allowing for the use of Shona, Ndebele, or English based on the prevalent language spoken by students prior to form one. Despite these advancements, the implementation of such policies has been inconsistent, with English still dominating the educational landscape from primary to tertiary levels. Research emphasises the necessity of using mother tongue instruction to enhance learning outcomes, particularly in mathematics. Studies conducted in various African countries suggest that students who are taught in their first language tend to outperform those learning in a second language, as the latter imposes dual demands: language acquisition and concept comprehension. This is especially critical in mathematics, where comprehension of language significantly affects students' ability to solve problems. The current reliance on English in mathematics instruction has been shown to hinder understanding, creating what has been termed "instructional dead time" when students struggle to grasp concepts in a language they do not fully understand. By fostering an educational environment that prioritises mother tongue instruction, educators can enhance both literacy and numeracy skills, thereby empowering students to actively engage in their learning processes<sup>55</sup>.

### **2.1.5 First Language and Achievement in Oral English**

First language plays a critical role in the acquisition of oral English, especially in multilingual contexts like Nigeria. In such environments, English is often taught as a second language, and the linguistic structures of students' native languages can significantly influence their proficiency in speaking English. The interaction between a student's first language and their oral English skills often affects their ability to express themselves clearly, leading to varying levels of success in oral English examinations. For instance, students whose first languages lack certain phonetic or grammatical features present in English may struggle with pronunciation and fluency, which in turn, impacts their overall academic achievement in the language. These challenges are further compounded by the scarcity of qualified instructors capable of effectively teaching oral English in many regions, resulting in widespread poor performance in oral communication. In addition to linguistic interference, the teaching methods employed in oral English instruction often play a significant role in shaping students' achievement. The classroom, as a microcosm of language learning, becomes the environment where students engage in language experimentation and practice. However, many students are inadequately prepared for oral assessments due to limited exposure to practical speaking opportunities. Oral English, unlike written English, demands a higher level of spontaneous language production, which many students find intimidating. Studies have shown that students' performance in oral English correlates strongly with their abilities in other language components, such as essay writing and comprehension. Therefore, improving oral skills not only enhances verbal communication but also has a positive impact on overall academic achievement in English<sup>56</sup>.

The influence of one's first language (L1) on the pronunciation of a second language (L2) is a complex and widely studied phenomenon in linguistics. Research suggests that non-native

speakers often incorporate sounds from their L1 into their L2 speech, resulting in pronunciation errors. This tendency is particularly prominent when L2 sounds differ from those present in the speaker's native language phonetic system. Such interference between language sound systems can significantly impact foreign language competence and communication effectiveness. Studies highlight the prevalence of pronunciation errors among non-native speakers, with incorrect implementation of L2 sounds not found in the L1 system being a common occurrence. These errors can range from subtle deviations in phonetic articulation to more noticeable distortions of L2 sounds. Understanding the mechanisms underlying these pronunciation difficulties is crucial for language educators and learners alike. Furthermore, the effectiveness of targeted phonetic training in addressing these pronunciation errors remains a subject of debate and inquiry. While phonetic instruction can help learners become more aware of the differences between L1 and L2 sounds and develop strategies for improving their pronunciation, the extent to which these new elements are retained over time is uncertain. Factors such as individual learner characteristics, instructional methods, and practice opportunities all play a role in determining the efficacy of phonetic training programmes. The degree of influence exerted by an individual's L1 on their English pronunciation can vary significantly depending on factors such as language proficiency, exposure to English-speaking environments, and the age at which language learning began<sup>57</sup>.

Furthermore, first language interference significantly impacts students' achievement in oral English, especially in multilingual countries where ethnic groups use various vernaculars alongside the national language. When learning English as a second or foreign language, students often face challenges due to the influence of their mother tongue. This interference occurs in areas such as phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, leading to errors in pronunciation, sentence structure, and word choice. The psychological aspect of language learning plays a role

as well, as individuals accustomed to their first language habits struggle to adapt to the phonetic and grammatical rules of a new language. Sociolinguistic factors, such as the prevalent use of the mother tongue in daily interactions, further compound these difficulties, as students may find it challenging to switch to English in a structured learning environment. This phenomenon is particularly evident in speaking skills, where students face the most interference from their first language. Speaking, being the primary mode of communication, demands a higher level of fluency and accuracy in real-time language use. However, due to first language interference, students often apply their native language's phonological and grammatical rules to English, resulting in errors. These errors manifest in the mispronunciation of English sounds, incorrect sentence structures, and limited vocabulary, all of which hinder effective communication. Consequently, students' oral English performance suffers, as they struggle to overcome the ingrained linguistic habits of their first language<sup>58</sup>.

Language transfer, or the tendency for learners to apply the rules and structures of their native language to the target language, plays a significant role in shaping oral communication skills. This influence manifests in both positive and negative ways, impacting vocabulary usage, grammar structures, pronunciation, and pragmatic competence. Firstly, vocabulary poses a significant challenge due to differences between the first language (e.g. China) and English lexical systems. While some words may have similar meanings across languages, there are often subtle nuances and cultural connotations that learners may not fully grasp. Negative language transfer can occur when learners mistakenly assume one-to-one correspondence between words in their native language and English, leading to errors in word choice and usage. For instance, the countable/uncountable distinction in English nouns differs from Chinese, causing confusion for learners and resulting in grammatical inaccuracies. Also, grammar presents another area

where language transfer can hinder oral English proficiency. Chinese and English have distinct grammatical structures, leading to errors in verb usage, tense, prepositions, and articles. For example, the absence of articles in Chinese may lead to omissions or incorrect usage of articles in English by Chinese learners. Similarly, differences in verb conjugation and sentence structure can lead to grammatical errors, impacting the clarity and accuracy of oral communication. Pronunciation is heavily influenced by the phonological systems of the native language. Chinese, being a tonal language, has different intonation patterns and phonetic inventory compared to English. Negative transfer can result in mispronunciation of English sounds, syllable stress, and intonation patterns. Additionally, learners may struggle with phonemes that do not exist in their native language, such as the "th" sound in English, leading to pronunciation errors and difficulties in being understood by native speakers. Furthermore, pragmatic competence, which encompasses the social and cultural aspects of language use, can be affected by language transfer. Differences in communication norms and conventions between Chinese and English cultures can lead to pragmatic errors in speech acts, politeness strategies, and discourse patterns. Learners may inadvertently apply communication styles or strategies from their native culture, resulting in misunderstandings or inappropriate language use in English-speaking contexts. Beyond linguistic factors, language ego also plays a crucial role in shaping oral English proficiency. Language ego refers to learners' self-perception and confidence in using the target language. High language ego can inhibit learners from taking risks and practising oral English, fearing embarrassment or making mistakes. This reluctance to engage in spoken English may stem from a desire to preserve their self-image and competence in their native language. Consequently, language ego can act as a barrier to effective language learning and oral communication skills development<sup>59</sup>.

In peer interaction settings, the use of the first language (L1) among learners who share the same L1 is not solely driven by linguistic convenience. Instead, learners strategically utilise their L1 to accomplish various communicative goals, such as managing tasks, discussing vocabulary and grammar intricacies, and fostering interpersonal connections. This pragmatic use of L1 underscores its role as a valuable tool for facilitating communication and task completion within the context of second language (L2) learning. Moreover, it suggests a nuanced relationship between L1 proficiency and its utilisation in L2 learning environments. Several factors influence the frequency and functions of L1 use during L2 peer interaction. Among these factors are the proficiency levels of learners in the L2, the nature of the tasks being undertaken, and the broader learning context. While learners with lower proficiency levels in the L2 tend to resort to their L1 more frequently, the demands of specific tasks also shape the extent and nature of L1 usage. Furthermore, variables such as task types, modality, and repetition contribute to the dynamic and context-dependent nature of the relationship between L1 proficiency and L1 use. Task complexity emerges as a crucial factor that may influence the prevalence of L1 use during peer interaction. Although empirical evidence on the interaction between task complexity and L1 use remains limited, there is a suggestion that more complex tasks could potentially lead to increased reliance on the L1. The complexity of tasks, as characterised by their resource-directing and resource-dispersing dimensions, can impact learners' cognitive load and resource allocation during task performance, thereby influencing their propensity to use the L1 for communication and problem-solving. The Cognition Hypothesis posits that cognitively more complex tasks have the potential to enhance L2 learning outcomes by fostering deeper engagement, facilitating negotiation of meaning, and encouraging feedback exchange among learners. While existing research has primarily focused on the effects of task complexity on L2 linguistic performance

and interaction-driven learning activities, there is a growing need to explore how task complexity interacts with L1 use in peer interaction settings. Such investigations can provide valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying L1-L2 interaction and its implications for language learning pedagogy for English tests of orals among secondary school students<sup>60</sup>.

The relationship between a student's first language (L1) and their achievement in oral English proficiency has been a subject of great interest, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Mastery of core English skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—is critical for academic success in higher education, especially for non-native English speakers. However, achieving proficiency in these skills, particularly speaking, poses a significant challenge, even for students majoring in English. Speaking is often regarded as the most difficult skill, requiring not only a strong command of English but also the confidence to articulate thoughts publicly. As students navigate the learning process, their success is closely tied to the learning strategies they employ, which range from cognitive and metacognitive approaches to social and affective strategies. The ability to effectively use these strategies can greatly influence a student's ability to develop oral competence in English. Moreover, research shows that students who utilise a variety of language learning strategies are more likely to achieve higher levels of proficiency in English. For instance, students' ability to apply strategies such as persistence, self-directed learning, and collaborative projects can positively impact their speaking abilities. Additionally, the role of L1 in oral English achievement cannot be overlooked, as it can act as a scaffold for learning English. Students who receive instruction in their L1 alongside English instruction tend to show better academic outcomes. This is particularly true for complex tasks like speaking, where fluency and coherence depend on cognitive and linguistic foundations built in the first language<sup>61</sup>.

## **2.2 Theoretical Review of Literature**

### **2.2.1 Communicative Language Testing Theory**

This study can be theoretically examined through the lens of Communicative Language Testing (CLT) theory. CLT is rooted in the principles of communicative language teaching. It emphasises assessing learners' ability to use language for authentic communication. In this context, the complexity of oral English tests aligns with the communicative demands students face in real-life situations. Central to CLT is the notion of authenticity in language assessment. Authentic tasks mirror real-life communication scenarios, providing students with opportunities to engage in meaningful language use. Therefore, the complexity of oral English tests should be evaluated based on the extent to which they replicate authentic communicative situations encountered by students in their daily lives. CLT advocates for task-based assessment formats that require students to perform real communicative tasks. Therefore, the tasks of the English test of orals should be designed to elicit a range of communicative functions, such as expressing opinions, making requests, and negotiating meaning. The complexity of the English Test of Orals can be assessed based on the authenticity and complexity of the tasks students are required to perform during the assessment.

Furthermore, CLT emphasises the interactive nature of language use and assessment. Assessments should allow for meaningful interaction between the test taker and the interlocutor, reflecting the dynamic nature of communication. Therefore, the complexity of oral English tests should consider the degree to which they facilitate interactive communication, such as through dialogue, discussion, and role-play activities. In addition to assessing speaking skills, CLT emphasises the integration of language skills in assessment tasks. Oral English tests should cover

listening, reading, and potentially writing components to reflect the holistic nature of language use. The complexity of tests should be evaluated based on their ability to assess students' proficiency across multiple language skills in integrated tasks. Cultural sensitivity is another key aspect of CLT in language assessment. Assessments should be culturally appropriate and relevant to the context in which they are administered. Therefore, the complexity of the English Test of Orals should take into account the cultural backgrounds and communication styles of students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, ensuring that assessment tasks are inclusive and culturally sensitive.

Moreover, CLT emphasises the importance of providing constructive feedback to learners based on their performance in assessments. Feedback should support students' ongoing language development by helping them identify areas for improvement and build on their strengths. Therefore, the complexity of oral English tests should consider their potential to provide meaningful feedback to students, contributing to their language learning process. CLT also underscores the need for task variation and adaptation in language assessment. Assessments should include a range of task types and formats to accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of learners. The complexity of the English Test of Orals can be evaluated based on the variety and adaptability of assessment tasks, allowing for differentiation and personalised assessment experiences for students (Weir, 2018). Furthermore, CLT emphasises the role of assessment in motivating learners. Authentic assessment tasks can enhance learner motivation by making the assessment experience more meaningful and relevant to students' real-life communication needs. Therefore, the complexity of oral English tests should consider their potential to motivate students to engage actively in the assessment process and demonstrate their language skills confidently.

### 2.2.2 Vygotsky Sociocultural Learning Theory

Learning occurs within social and cultural contexts, and language plays a central role in mediating this process<sup>62</sup>. In the context of oral English tests, the complexity of the assessment can be understood in terms of its alignment with the sociocultural experiences and linguistic development of students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area. Vygotsky's theory emphasises the importance of social interaction in learning. In the context of language assessment, oral English tests should provide opportunities for students to engage in meaningful interactions with peers, teachers, and other members of the community. The complexity of the tests can be assessed based on the extent to which they facilitate collaborative learning and interaction, allowing students to scaffold their language development through social interaction.

Furthermore, Vygotsky introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which refers to the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with the assistance of a more knowledgeable other. The complexity of oral English tests should take into account students' ZPDs, providing tasks and activities that challenge them to extend their language skills while still being within their reach with appropriate support. Tasks that are too easy or too difficult may not effectively promote learning and development. Moreover, Vygotsky emphasised the role of language as a tool for thought and communication. In the context of language assessment, oral English tests should assess students' ability to use language for both cognitive and communicative purposes. The complexity of the tests can be evaluated based on their ability to elicit higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, as well as effective communication skills, such as clarity, coherence, and fluency.

Additionally, Vygotsky's emphasis the importance of cultural context in learning. Suggests that tasks and activities should be culturally relevant and sensitive to students' lived experiences, ensuring that the assessments accurately reflect their language abilities and communication styles. In addition, the role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning is accentuated. In the context of language assessment, teachers play a crucial role in guiding students through the assessment process, providing support, feedback, and encouragement. The complexity of oral English tests should consider the quality of teacher-student interactions and the extent to which teachers effectively scaffold students' language development during the assessment. Moreover, Vygotsky's theory highlights the importance of cultural artifacts and tools in mediating learning. In the context of oral English tests, technological tools and resources can enhance the complexity of assessments by providing students with access to authentic language materials, multimedia resources, and interactive platforms for communication and collaboration. The complexity of the tests can be evaluated based on their integration of technological tools and resources to support language learning and assessment.

Moreover, the theory underscores the role of play and imagination in learning. In the context of oral English tests, creative and interactive tasks that allow students to use their imagination and express themselves freely can enhance the complexity of assessments. Tasks that encourage role-play, storytelling, and dramatisation can provide students with opportunities to use language in meaningful and creative ways, promoting language development and communication skills. Additionally, Vygotsky's theory highlights the importance of peer collaboration and peer interaction in learning. In the context of oral English tests, group activities, collaborative projects, and peer feedback sessions can enhance the complexity of assessments by providing students with opportunities to learn from and with their peers. The complexity of the tests can be assessed

based on their integration of peer collaboration and interaction, fostering a supportive and interactive learning environment.

### **2.2.3 Second Language Acquisition Theories**

Second language acquisition (SLA) theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the process by which individuals learn and acquire a second language, such as English, which is often taught as a foreign language in many countries, including Nigeria. This theory aligns with assessing the complexity of the English Test of Orals among Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Accordingly, language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current level of proficiency. In the context of ETO, the complexity of oral English tests may challenge students' comprehension abilities if the input provided in the test questions exceeds their linguistic competence. Furthermore, it emphasises the importance of meaningful interaction and negotiation of meaning in language acquisition. The oral component of the test necessitates students to engage in spoken interactions, which may pose challenges due to factors such as anxiety, limited vocabulary, and lack of fluency. Considering the Cognitive Perspective, SLTs emphasise the role of cognitive processes such as attention, memory, and problem-solving in language acquisition. Students facing cognitive challenges in processing and understanding the oral prompts, formulating responses, and monitoring their speech for accuracy and appropriateness may affect their oral English proficiency. Furthermore, the Affective Filter Hypothesis, suggests that affective factors such as motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence can influence language acquisition<sup>63</sup>. This signifies that students' performance in English Tests of Orals may be affected by test anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and lack of self-confidence in their speaking abilities. Additionally, the Input Processing Model posits that learners process

input for meaning before focusing on form<sup>64</sup>. Therefore, students may struggle to comprehend the oral prompts and questions if they encounter linguistic features or vocabulary beyond their current level of proficiency, hindering their ability to produce accurate and meaningful responses.

Moreover, the Monitor Model, distinguishes between acquisition and learning, suggesting that language acquisition is subconscious and implicit, while language learning involves conscious and explicit knowledge of grammar rules. Relatedly, it suggests that learners acquire grammatical structures in a predictable sequence, regardless of the order in which they are taught. Relying on these submissions, students may rely on their acquired linguistic competence to generate spoken responses but may struggle with explicit grammatical accuracy under the pressure of the test situation. Therefore, students' oral proficiency may reflect their stage of grammatical development, with errors and fossilisation occurring as they progress through the language acquisition process.

### **2.3 Review of Empirical Studies**

A study investigated the washback effect of the WAEC/SSCE English Test of Orals on teachers' methodology, particularly focusing on Senior Secondary School teachers of the English Language in Sokoto metropolis. In a mixed-method approach involving survey and case study strategies, data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The sample comprised 32 out of 41 English teachers selected randomly for the survey, while an additional 5 teachers were purposively selected for interviews. Quantitative data analysis involved frequencies, percentages, and mean ranking, while qualitative data from interviews were analysed qualitatively. The findings revealed that examination-related factors significantly influence teachers' choice and use of methodology, with teachers often aligning their teaching

practices with the format and content of the test. Specifically, factors such as WAEC syllabus, past question papers, and examination guide textbooks were identified as the most influential in shaping teachers' instructional decisions. This alignment with examination requirements sometimes leads teachers to prioritize test-related content over other aspects of the curriculum, potentially limiting students' exposure to a broader range of language skills and knowledge. The study highlights the negative washback effect of the examination system on teaching methodology, as teachers tend to focus primarily on preparing students for the specific requirements of the test rather than fostering a more comprehensive approach to language learning. The findings underscore the need for examination bodies to improve the testing system to promote a more balanced and effective approach to language instruction. This includes revising examination formats and content to reflect a broader range of language skills and competencies, as well as providing support and resources for teachers to develop more varied and innovative teaching practices. The qualitative data from interviews further supported the quantitative findings, revealing teachers' reliance on examination-related materials and their perception that adherence to the examination syllabus is crucial for students' success in the test. Teachers expressed concerns about time constraints and the pressure to ensure that students perform well in the examination, which often leads them to prioritise test preparation over other instructional objectives<sup>65</sup>.

A specific study conducted in the USA involving 117 bilingual kindergarten and first-grade children sheds light on the relationship between oral language proficiency and reading achievement in bilingual contexts. The study examined how vocabulary knowledge and morphosyntactic ability in both Spanish and English were related to English reading outcomes. Using both ordinary least squares (OLS) and quantile regression methods, the researchers found

that English vocabulary and morphosyntactic skills were significantly associated with reading achievement. However, English vocabulary knowledge emerged as the most critical factor at higher quantiles of reading achievement, suggesting that a strong vocabulary base is particularly beneficial for higher-performing readers. Cross-language analyses further revealed that Spanish oral language abilities, particularly vocabulary, played a significant role in predicting English reading achievement. Spanish vocabulary was predictive of reading performance at both high and low levels of reading achievement, indicating that bilingual children's reading skills are not solely dependent on their proficiency in English. In contrast, Spanish morphosyntax did not show varying effects across different reading levels, implying that vocabulary may be a more reliable predictor of reading success in bilingual children than morphosyntactic ability. These findings align with theoretical frameworks such as the Simple View of Reading, which posits that reading comprehension is a product of decoding skills and language comprehension. The results suggest that Spanish vocabulary may provide bilingual children with a stronger foundation for acquiring literacy skills than morphosyntactic knowledge. This insight emphasizes the importance of fostering vocabulary development in both languages to support reading achievement among bilingual learners<sup>66</sup>.

A recent investigation aimed to identify the English language proficiency thresholds necessary for minimizing language-related challenges experienced during their studies was carried out in Japan. Utilising a mixed-methods approach, the study surveyed 264 students in Tokyo, complemented by 13 follow-up interviews to gain deeper insights into their experiences. The exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses confirmed underlying dimensions, challenges aligning with the a priori assumptions of language skills, including reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The findings indicated that English language proficiency, as measured by the

TOEIC score, was a statistically significant predictor of the challenges encountered in the English proficiency programmes. Although no distinct threshold of proficiency was identified, variations in perceived ease of study correlated with differing levels of English proficiency. This suggests that while higher proficiency levels may alleviate some challenges, the relationship is nuanced and complex. Moreover, interview data revealed that the determination of language proficiency thresholds was influenced not solely by linguistic capability but also by factors such as prior content knowledge, motivation, and the classroom learning environment. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of language challenges in EMI contexts, highlighting the importance of considering a broader range of influences beyond mere language proficiency. Practical implications for pedagogy were discussed, suggesting that educators should not only focus on improving language skills but also address these additional factors to support students in English Medium Instruction (EMI) programmes effectively. By fostering a more holistic approach to language education, institutions can better equip students to navigate the challenges of studying in a foreign language, ultimately enhancing their academic success<sup>67</sup>.

Connectedly, a recent study sought to address English language learners, self-efficacy, and the achievement gap: understanding the relationship between academic and social-emotional growth by analysing the relationship between self-efficacy and academic growth in math and reading for during middle school. Using multivariate models, the study found that while students overall showed academic growth, self-efficacy declined for both English Language learners (ELLs) and non-ELLs, with ELLs experiencing significantly lower achievement and self-efficacy levels. The study also revealed that the slower academic growth seen in ELLs could be partly explained by their lower self-efficacy at the start of middle school. Specifically, self-efficacy was found to mediate the relationship between ELL status and achievement growth in math and reading. This

suggests that the initial self-efficacy gap between ELLs and non-ELLs contributes to the widening achievement gap over time. These findings highlight the importance of addressing both academic and social-emotional learning to support ELLs in closing achievement gaps, particularly through interventions that enhance self-efficacy in the early stages of their education<sup>68</sup>.

A study examined the challenges facing the teaching and learning of Spoken English in Nigerian secondary schools, focusing on the specific context of Ogun State. Conducted as a survey research, the study involved 200 English language teachers selected from 40 secondary schools in Ijebu East and Ikenne Local Government Areas. Through simple random sampling, the researchers gathered data using a self-constructed questionnaire with 30 items addressing various challenges in teaching and learning Spoken English. The reliability of the questionnaire was established through the test-retest method, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.81. The findings revealed several significant challenges impacting the teaching and learning of Spoken English in Nigerian secondary schools. Firstly, pedagogy emerged as a crucial factor influencing the learning of Oral English, with 80.5% of respondents agreeing that teaching methods play a significant role in students' acquisition of spoken language skills. Secondly, the study highlighted the detrimental effects of large class sizes on the teaching-learning process, with 78% of participants acknowledging its negative impact. Additionally, teachers' preferences for other aspects of the English language were found to affect the teaching of Oral English, as 91% of respondents expressed a preference for teaching other English language components over spoken English. Further, the inherent nature of English language sounds was identified as another challenge, with 87.5% of participants agreeing that the complexity of English phonetics influences the teaching-learning process. Interestingly, the mode of assessment was perceived

differently, with 50% of respondents indicating its impact on teaching-learning, while the remaining 49.5% disagreed. Finally, the availability of instructional materials emerged as a significant challenge, as 66% of participants agreed that the lack of materials negatively affects the teaching-learning of Spoken English<sup>69</sup>.

In an article that provides an insightful analysis of empirical studies spanning from 2004 to 2014 on second-language (L2) oral proficiency testing, with a specific focus on discourse and social interaction within these tests. The article organised the reviewed studies around three common test setups: oral proficiency interviews (OPIs), paired peer tests, and group peer tests. Through this framework, recent advancements in L2 oral proficiency testing research are explored, particularly within face-to-face contexts. The review highlights several key findings. Firstly, it notes a prevalence of studies focusing on the OPI format, indicating a significant body of research dedicated to this particular testing method. However, there is also evidence of a growing interest in paired and group tests, suggesting a broadening scope of research in the field of L2 oral proficiency testing. The review also identifies a gap in the literature regarding oral test studies within discourse journals. This observation suggests a potential area for future research collaboration and interdisciplinary exploration, where insights from discourse analysis could enrich our understanding of L2 oral proficiency testing practices and outcomes. Furthermore, the review underscores a notable emphasis on assessment, validation, and rater perspectives across the examined studies. While these aspects are undoubtedly crucial for ensuring the reliability and validity of L2 oral proficiency tests, the review suggests a need for more detailed analyses of interaction within these tests. This calls for a deeper exploration of interaction dynamics speaks to the importance of understanding how language learners engage in real-time communication tasks, which can inform both test design and teaching practices<sup>70</sup>.

A mixed-methods research study was conducted to examine the effect of the discussion method of teaching on Nigerian secondary students' performances in the Test of Orals. The research design employed was a sequential mixed-methods approach, comprising quantitative and qualitative phases. In the quantitative phase, a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was utilised, involving 24 students from a Senior Secondary School III class. The intervention involved teaching through the discussion method, specifically focusing on the concept of faulty analogy in English pronunciation. Subsequently, both pretest and posttest data were collected and analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-tests. The qualitative phase involved interviewing the participants to explore their perceptions of the intervention's effectiveness. Quantitative analysis of the pretest and posttest scores revealed a statistically significant improvement in students' performances following the intervention. The mean scores increased from 6.13 in the pretest to 6.88 in the posttest, indicating a positive impact of the discussion method on students' oral proficiency. Qualitative data from the interviews supported these findings, with students acknowledging the difficulty of the Test of Orals before the intervention and expressing positive evaluations of the discussion method. The findings suggest that the discussion method of teaching effectively enhances Nigerian secondary school students' performances in the Test of Orals. By actively engaging students in discussions and facilitating peer interaction, this teaching approach promotes a deeper understanding of language concepts and fosters confidence in oral expression. Furthermore, the intervention not only improved students' academic performance but also made the English Language course more enjoyable and meaningful for them<sup>71</sup>.

A group of researchers investigated the impact of test format on oral performance, focusing on test scores and discourse features such as accuracy, fluency, and complexity. The study involved

23 Iranian EFL learners who participated in three different test formats: monologue, interview, and group oral test. The productions of the participants were rated holistically and analytically by four raters. The findings of the study, analysed using Friedman and Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests, revealed that the participants achieved the highest scores in the group oral test, followed by the monologue and interview formats. However, the differences between the group oral test and monologue were not statistically significant. Furthermore, analysis of the produced discourse indicated significant differences among the three test formats. Specifically, the group oral test resulted in the most accurate production, while the monologue showed the highest level of complexity. Too, the study explored the relationship between the scores obtained in different test formats and the discourse features. It was found that accuracy features were significantly related to both analytic and holistic ratings across all test formats. This highlights the intricate relationship between discourse features and the factors considered by raters when assessing oral performance<sup>72</sup>.

A study that delves into the effects of the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO) Oral English Syllabi on the spoken English proficiency of secondary school leavers in Kogi State, Nigeria. It was grounded in the context of poor performance in the oral English tests of these exams and the resultant lack of intelligibility in students' communication. Through a survey research design involving five sampled schools, the study assessed students' oral proficiency using a criterion-referenced and bi-dialectal/transitional approach. Key findings indicated that while the WAEC and NECO syllabi were deemed adequate, the exclusion of the Alternative A Test (listening and speaking) rendered the Oral English Test less challenging. Moreover, the study suggests that the teaching of Oral English should be more practice-oriented, incorporating real-life situations rather than solely theoretical

instruction. Students' poor performance in oral English was attributed to various factors such as interference from their mother tongue, lack of qualified English teachers, and insufficient practice. Additionally, there was a discrepancy in opinions regarding whether Oral English was consistently taught when WAEC and NECO examinations approached. Regarding reasons for students' lack of intelligible speech, factors such as background, inability to master standard pronunciation, interference from the local language, ridicule, and inadequate teaching were highlighted. Teachers' responses indicated general agreement on the adequacy of the content of the WAEC and NECO syllabi, though there were reservations about the effectiveness of certain aspects, such as the choice of Alternative B and the theoretical nature of the oral test<sup>73</sup>.

The study on Saudi college students' and teachers' perspectives regarding the effectiveness of oral assessment techniques in EFL classrooms sheds light on crucial aspects of language teaching and evaluation. Utilising a mixed-method approach, the research delves into both quantitative and qualitative data to glean insights into the assessment practices and perceptions of both teachers and students. Quantitative findings, as depicted the array of oral assessment techniques employed by EFL teachers. Notably, a variety of communicative assessment methods such as oral discussion, role-play, dialogue, and picture description were utilised frequently, indicating a diversified approach to evaluating speaking skills. This aligns with contemporary pedagogical trends advocating for authentic and communicative assessment. Conversely, the study's results diverge from previous findings suggesting a lack of variety in assessment techniques among EFL teachers identifying a potential shift towards more diverse assessment practices. Qualitative insights complement these quantitative findings, providing a balanced understanding and contextualisation of the assessment practices observed. The qualitative analysis offers a deeper exploration of teachers' rationale behind the selection and

implementation of specific assessment techniques. For instance, the emphasis on communicative tasks like oral discussion and role play may stem from a pedagogical commitment to fostering real-world language use and interaction. This resonates with contemporary literature advocating for authentic assessment tasks aligned with communicative language teaching principles. Furthermore, the qualitative findings illuminate the congruence between teachers' assessment practices and pedagogical beliefs. The adoption of communicative assessment techniques reflects a departure from traditional assessment methods and signifies a pedagogical shift towards more learner-centred and task-based approaches. This finding contradicts previous research suggesting a prevalence of traditional assessment methods in Saudi EFL classrooms indicating potential advancements in pedagogical practices over time<sup>74</sup>.

A study explored the effects of computerised dynamic assessment (C-DA) and rater-mediated assessment on Iranian EFL learners' test anxiety, writing performance, and oral proficiency. The research involved 64 intermediate Iranian EFL learners, randomly divided into experimental and control groups. Various instruments, including the Preliminary English Test (PET) and the Science Anxiety Scale (SAS), were utilised to measure language proficiency and test anxiety. Both groups underwent pretests for oral and written skills before receiving the respective interventions. The experimental group received C-DA, while the control group underwent rater-mediated assessment. Over 19 sessions, evaluations were conducted after each phase, with SPSS software used for data analysis. The results indicated significant differences between the experimental and control groups in writing accuracy, fluency, and complexity post-tests, with the experimental group demonstrating higher scores. The findings suggest that C-DA positively influenced Iranian EFL learners' writing proficiency by enhancing accuracy, fluency, and complexity. The interactive nature of C-DA, along with tailored feedback and scaffolding,

facilitated students' writing development. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of dynamic assessment approaches in language teaching contexts to address individual learners' needs effectively. The implications of the study emphasise the potential of C-DA in improving EFL learners' writing skills and reducing test anxiety. Educators and curriculum developers are encouraged to integrate dynamic assessment techniques into language instruction to enhance learning experiences. Future research could explore the long-term effects of C-DA interventions and examine their applicability across diverse learner populations and language proficiency levels. Additionally, investigating the transferability of C-DA outcomes to other language skills, such as speaking and listening, could provide further insights into its overall effectiveness in language teaching contexts<sup>75</sup>.

The analysis of 21,409 participants from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Kindergarten cohort examined the influence of home and school factors on children's reading mastery throughout elementary school and Grade 8, focusing on home language use, timing of oral English proficiency, and English language learner (ELL) services. Findings indicate that non-English language use at home is associated with decreased reading mastery in Grades 1 and 3, though this effect diminishes by Grades 5 and 8 when teacher and school factors are considered. Additionally, the negative impact of delayed oral English proficiency on reading mastery is partly explained by school and teacher influences, especially the provision of ELL services. These results highlight the importance of offering language support services to language minority students and their families from the transition to school through the elementary years, underscoring the role of policy in fostering educational equity<sup>76</sup>.

A retrospective analysis explored why children, matched for English proficiency and socioeconomic status (SES) at the start of the school year and taught in English, showed

differing academic achievement by year's end. Factors such as productive competence in English morphology, syntax, vocabulary, verbosity, social interaction patterns, first language (L1) performance, and personality were examined. Despite notable intra-group variability, key findings emerged that hold significant implications for ESL curriculum design. Vocabulary knowledge was identified as the most critical aspect of second language (L2) competence for academic success, while grammatical accuracy had minimal impact on students' immediate academic performance. Additionally, social communicative competence did not necessarily translate to academic communicative competence. Crucially, the use of L1 was found to enhance conceptual development, even when assessed through L2, highlighting the role of bilingual support in fostering academic achievement in English learners<sup>77</sup>.

Also, a mixed-methods study conducted at a public university in Turkey examined the factors contributing to academic success in an Economics programme taught through English Medium Instruction (EMI) and Turkish Medium Instruction (TMI). Data from test scores of 159 fourth-year students and their General English Proficiency (GEP) scores were analysed, followed by semi-structured interviews with 12 students. Results revealed that GEP was not a significant predictor of success in EMI courses, while academic success in TMI significantly predicted EMI achievement. This suggests that integrating native language instruction alongside EMI courses enhances student performance in EMI, supporting a hybrid Multilingual Model of EMI implementation. Qualitative findings further highlighted students' reliance on first-language courses to improve their EMI outcomes. These insights highlight the value of a balanced linguistic approach and offer pedagogical and research implications for improving EMI success<sup>78</sup>.

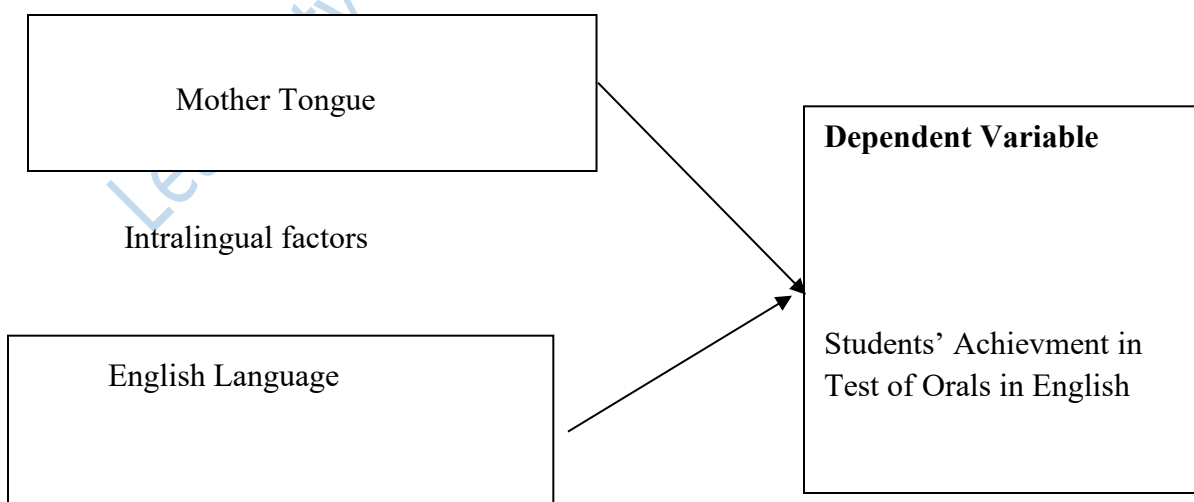
Relatedly, a study examined the relationship between course performance, English proficiency, motivation, and academic language skills within an English Medium Instruction (EMI) business program at a Japanese university revealed important findings regarding academic success in EMI contexts. Data from 146 students indicated that English language proficiency and academic English skills were significant predictors of success, emphasizing the need for targeted language support for lower-proficiency students. Interestingly, motivation did not correlate with higher academic performance, challenging existing research that often links motivation to success in language learning. Interviews with seven students highlighted that success in EMI is multifaceted, encompassing not only grades but also lecture comprehension, language proficiency gains, and long-term career advancement. These findings stress the complexity of achieving academic success in EMI and the necessity for comprehensive language and academic support services<sup>79</sup>.

A study specifically focused on the challenging realm of speaking proficiency tests in English language learning, where maintaining reliability poses significant difficulties. While existing research has explored various methods for assessing scoring consistency, this study stands out as the first to introduce the gauge repeatability and reproducibility (GR&R) approach to the educational context. By employing both intra- and inter-rater reliabilities, along with validation using the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), the research evaluated the effectiveness of the GR&R method in identifying reliability issues compared to traditional approaches. Through a

case study involving three examiners assessing 30 recordings of a speaking proficiency test, the study demonstrates the superiority of the GR&R method in detecting scoring inconsistencies over the ICC approach. Moreover, the research identifies several key factors influencing scoring disparities, including group performance estimation, the order of work presentation, rubric complexity and clarity, the selected topic by the student, familiarity with accents, and recording quality. Importantly, it not only identifies these root causes but also proposes practical solutions to address them, thereby enhancing the precision of the measurement system. It can be inferred through this study that various stakeholders in language proficiency assessment, include educational institutions, test developers, and policymakers have influence on English tests of orals. The GR&R method offers significant contributions by addressing reliability issues, which are crucial for ensuring fairness and accuracy in subjective judgments. Ultimately, this research benefits overall performance comparisons and decision-making processes in language education<sup>80</sup>.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

### Independent Variables



## 2.5 Summary of Gaps in the Literature

Although the literature presented highlights several key areas of research in language studies, particularly focusing on challenges and methodologies related to the assessment and teaching of spoken Test of Orals in English there are notable gaps that emerge from the synthesised studies. Firstly, while there is extensive exploration into the challenges facing the teaching and learning of spoken English, particularly in the Nigerian context, there appears to be a lack of attention to the specific needs and experiences of students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Understanding how factors such as multilingualism, language contact, and language attitudes intersect with spoken English proficiency could provide valuable insights into effective pedagogical approaches tailored to the unique contexts of learners. Secondly, the literature highlights the influence of examination systems, such as WAEC and NECO, on teaching methodologies and student performance in oral English tests. However, there is limited discussion on potential alternative assessment models or reforms that could mitigate the negative washback effects of high-stakes examinations. Exploring innovative assessment practices, such as portfolio assessment, performance-based tasks, or task-based assessment, could offer alternative avenues for evaluating oral proficiency while promoting more holistic language learning experiences.

Furthermore, while there is a growing body of research on dynamic assessment approaches, such as computerised dynamic assessment (C-DA), there is a need for more longitudinal studies to investigate the sustained impact of these interventions on language proficiency development over time. Longitudinal research designs could provide valuable insights into the long-term effectiveness and transferability of dynamic assessment techniques across diverse learner populations and proficiency levels. Additionally, the literature review underscores the

importance of reliability and validity in oral proficiency assessment, particularly in high-stakes testing contexts. However, there is a limited exploration of the socio-cultural and contextual factors that may influence rater judgments and scoring consistency in oral proficiency tests. Investigating the role of factors such as accent variation, cultural bias, and rater training in oral proficiency assessment could enhance our understanding of the complexities inherent in subjective assessment practice.

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## Chapter Three: Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

### 3.2 Population of The Study

### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

### 3.4 Description of the Research Instrument

### 3.5 Validity of the Instruments

### 3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

### 3.7 Data Collection

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## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

This chapter contains the methods and techniques that will be used in this study. Specifically, it presents the research design, the population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, validity and reliability of the instruments, methods of data collection and methods of data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The descriptive survey research design was used to carry out this study. The research entailed collecting data from representative samples of the population of the study so that their responses to the items of the questionnaire can be analysed and findings generalised on the population. It was considered appropriate for the study because the research was concerned with the collection of data, as they existed, with no manipulation from the researcher, for the purpose of accurate description and interpretation of data.

#### **3.2 Population of the Study**

The research population represents the totality of all subjects that conform to the set of specifications as stipulated for this research. It consisted of the entire students that the researcher desired to use as subjects and respondents to the research instrument. The breakdown of the number of Secondary Schools and the population of students in each school as found in Ibadan Southeast Local government is displayed in Table 3.2.1 below:

**Table 3.2.1 Population of Public Secondary Schools in Ibadan, Southeast Oyo State**

S/N	Public Secondary Schools in Ibadan Southeast Local Government	Population of Students in the School
1.	Saint Anne's School, Ibadan.	123
2.	Yejide Grammar School, Ibadan	203
3.	Olubi Grammar School Ibadan	132
4.	Saint Luke's Grammar School, Ibadan.	110
5.	Saint David Grammar School, Ibadan	140
6.	Community Secondary School, Kudeti, Ibadan	221
7.	Anglican Grammar School, Ibadan.	194
8.	Eyinni Grammar School, Ibadan.	225
9.	Ori Aje Grammar School, Ibadan.	167
10.	Saint Anne's School II, Ibadan.	110
11.	Saint Luke's Grammar School II, Ibadan.	200
12.	Ibadan Grammar School, Ibadan	240
13.	Community Eyinni High School II	185
	Grand Total	2,250

**Source:** Ministry of Education, Secretariat, Ibadan, Oyo state.

### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The activities for this research covered Ibadan Southeast local government local government area, Oyo State. There were thirteen (13) public secondary schools in the local government. 339 SSS2 students were sampled for this study. Simple random sampling which

adopted the convenience technique was used to select the sample. To ensure a good mix of representation of the population of the study. The Yamane Formula was used to determine the sample size suitable for this study as follows with the total population of SS2 students as the baseline:

Saint Anne’s School, Ibadan with 123 students

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{123}{1 + 123(0.05)^2}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e= is the level of significance

$$n = 123$$

$$n = \frac{123}{1 + 123(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 123$$

$$n = \frac{123}{1.30} = 94$$

$$n = 123$$

$$n = \frac{123}{1.30} = 94$$

Yejide Grammar School with 203 students

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{203}{1 + 203(0.05)^2}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e= is the level of significance

$$n = 203$$

$$n = \frac{203}{1 + 203(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 203$$

$$n = \frac{203}{1.30} = 135$$

$$n = 203$$

$$n = \frac{203}{1.30} = 135$$

1.50

Olubi Grammar School with 132 students

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\frac{1 + 132(0.05)^2}{1 + 132(0.0025)}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e= is the level of significance

$$n = 132$$

$$\frac{1 + 132(0.05)^2}{1 + 132(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 132$$

$$\frac{1 + 132(0.0025)}{1.32} = 100$$

$$n = 132$$

$$\frac{1 + 132(0.0025)}{1.32} = 100$$

Saint Luke's Grammar School with 110 students

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\frac{1 + 110(0.05)^2}{1 + 110(0.0025)}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e= is the level of significance

$$n = 110$$

$$\frac{1 + 110(0.05)^2}{1 + 110(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 110$$

$$\frac{1 + 110(0.0025)}{1.27} = 86$$

$$n = 110$$

$$\frac{1 + 110(0.0025)}{1.27} = 86$$

Saint David's Grammar School 140

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\frac{1 + N(e)^2}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government  
 e= is the level of significance  
 n= 140

$$\frac{1+140(0.05)^2}{1}$$

n= 140

$$\frac{1+140(0.0025)}{1}$$

n= 140

$$\frac{140}{1.35} = 103$$

Community Secondary School, Kudeti, Ibadan with 221 students

n= N

$$\frac{1 + N (e)^2}{1}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e= is the level of significance

n=221

$$\frac{1+221(0.05)^2}{1}$$

n= 221

$$\frac{1+221(0.0025)}{1}$$

n= 221

$$\frac{221}{1.55} = 142$$

Anglican Grammar School with 194 students

n= N

$$\frac{1 + N (e)^2}{1}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e= is the level of significance

n= 194

$$\frac{1+194(0.05)^2}{1}$$

$$n = 194$$

$$\frac{194}{\sqrt{1 + 194(0.0025)}}$$

$$n = 194$$

$$\frac{194}{1.48} = 131$$

Eyinni Grammar School, Ibadan with 225 students

$$n = N$$

$$\frac{225}{\sqrt{1 + N(e)^2}}$$

n = the required sample size

N = is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e = is the level of significance

$$n = 225$$

$$\frac{225}{\sqrt{1 + 225(0.05)^2}}$$

$$n = 225$$

$$\frac{225}{\sqrt{1 + 225(0.0025)}}$$

$$n = 225$$

$$\frac{225}{1.56} = 144$$

Oriaje Grammar School, Ibadan with 167 students

$$n = N$$

$$\frac{167}{\sqrt{1 + N(e)^2}}$$

n = the required sample size

N = is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e = is the level of significance

$$n = 167$$

$$\frac{167}{\sqrt{1 + 167(0.05)^2}}$$

$$n = 167$$

$$\frac{167}{\sqrt{1 + 167(0.0025)}}$$

$$n = 167$$

$$\frac{167}{1.41} = 118$$

Saint Anne's Grammar School II with 110 students

$$n = N$$

$$\frac{1 + N(e)^2}{1 + 110(0.05)^2}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e= is the level of significance

$$n = 110$$

$$\frac{1 + 110(0.05)^2}{1 + 110(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 110$$

$$\frac{1 + 110(0.0025)}{1.27} = 86$$

$$n = 110$$

$$\frac{1 + 110(0.0025)}{1.27} = 86$$

Saint Luke's Grammar School II with 200 students

$$n = N$$

$$\frac{1 + N(e)^2}{1 + 200(0.05)^2}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e= is the level of significance

$$n = 200$$

$$\frac{1 + 200(0.05)^2}{1 + 200(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 200$$

$$\frac{1 + 200(0.0025)}{1.5} = 133$$

$$n = 200$$

$$\frac{1 + 200(0.0025)}{1.5} = 133$$

Ibadan Grammar School with 240 students

$$n = N$$

$$\frac{1 + N(e)^2}{1 + 240(0.05)^2}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e= is the level of significance  
n= 240

$$\frac{1+110(0.05)^2}{1+240(0.0025)}$$

n= 240

$$\frac{1+240(0.0025)}{1.6} = 150$$

n= 240

$$\frac{1+240(0.0025)}{1.6} = 150$$

Community Eyinni High School II with 185 students

n= N

$$\frac{1 + N (e)^2}{1 + 185 (0.05)^2}$$

n= the required sample size

N= is the total population of SS2 students in Ibadan South-east local government

e= is the level of significance

n= 185

$$\frac{1+185(0.05)^2}{1+185(0.0025)}$$

n= 185

$$\frac{1+185(0.0025)}{1.46} = 126$$

n= 185

$$\frac{1+185(0.0025)}{1.46} = 126$$

Total required sample size is 1572

### 3.4 Description of the Research Instruments

The instruments for the study were a standardised achievement test and a questionnaire. The standardised test was named the English Test of Oral Achievement Test (ETORAT) and the Intralingual Factors and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (IFAAQ). The questionnaire comprised two sections A and B. Section A captured students' demographic data while Section B was focused on items that were derived from the objectives of the study.

### **3.5 Validity of the Instruments**

The English Test of Oral Achievement Test (ETORAT) was adapted for Test of Orals of WAEC which is a standardised instrument considering that it is an international examination taken by students across West African countries and has strong validity. The face validity and content validities of the questionnaire was determined by experts in the field of tests and measurement through a pilot test. It was calculated at 0.77.

### **3.6 Reliability of the Instruments**

The Test of Orals of WAEC is a standardised instrument considering that it is an international examination taken by students across West African countries and has strong reliability. The reliability of the Intralingual Factors and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (IFAAQ) questionnaire was determined through pilot testing. It was calculated at 0.79

### **3.7 Data Collection**

Data was collected by distributing Intralingual Factors and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (IFAAQ) to students selected for the research. The students were asked to tick the appropriate columns as it applied to them. They also attempted the English Test of Oral Achievement Test (ETORAT) and their answers were scored and recorded to provide information on the level of achievement in the Tests of Orals.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Specifically, descriptive statistics of frequency count, simple percentage, mean, and standard deviation was used to

analyse the research questions. Inferential statistics of Multiple Regression and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

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## Chapter Four Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter contains the results and a brief description of the findings. Specifically, it presents the demographic data analysis of schools chosen for this study, the age of respondents, and answers to the research questions and hypotheses.

### 4.1: Data Presentation

**Table 4.1.1: Demographic Data Schools that Participated in This Study**

<b>School</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Saint Anne's School, Ibadan	27	27	7.96	7.96
Yejide Grammar School, Ibadan	29	56	8.55	16.52
Olubi Grammar School Ibadan	27	83	7.96	24.48
Saint Luke's Grammar School, Ibadan	26	109	7.67	32.15
Saint David Grammar School, Ibadan	25	134	7.37	39.53
Community Secondary School, Kudeti, Ibadan	27	161	7.96	47.49
Anglican Grammar School, Ibadan	25	186	7.37	54.87
Eyinni Grammar School, Ibadan	31	217	9.14	64.01
Ori Aje Grammar School, Ibadan	33	250	9.73	73.75
Saint Anne's School II, Ibadan	21	271	6.19	79.94
Saint Luke's Grammar School II, Ibadan	26	297	7.67	87.61
Ibadan Grammar School, Ibadan	21	318	6.19	93.81
Community Eyinni High School II	21	339	6.19	100.00

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

This table presents the demographic data regarding selected Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area schools. Saint Anne's and Olubi Grammar School have 27 students, accounting for 7.96% of the total, with a cumulative percentage of 7.96% and 24.48%. Yejide Grammar School has 29 students, making up 8.55% of the total, bringing the cumulative percentage to 16.52%. Saint Luke's Grammar School has 26 students, representing 7.67%, and the cumulative percentage rises to 32.15%. Saint David Grammar School has 25 students, contributing 7.37%, with a cumulative percentage of 39.53%. Community Secondary School, Kudeti, Ibadan, also has 27 students (7.96%), pushing the cumulative percentage to 47.49%. Anglican Grammar School has

25 students (7.37%), bringing the cumulative to 54.87%. Eyinni Grammar School has 31 students, which is 9.14% of the total, and the cumulative percentage reaches 64.01%. Ori Aje Grammar School has 33 students (9.73%), raising the cumulative to 73.75%. Saint Anne's School II, Ibadan, has 21 students (6.19%), making the cumulative percentage 79.94%. Saint Luke's Grammar School II has 26 students (7.67%), bringing the cumulative to 87.61%. Ibadan Grammar School has 21 students (6.19%), resulting in a cumulative percentage of 93.81%. Finally, Community Eyinni High School II has 21 students (6.19%), which brings the cumulative percentage to 100.00%.

**Table 4.1.2: Age of Respondents**

Age Group	Number of Students	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
12-14	88	25.96	25.96
15-16	85	25.07	51.03
17-19	87	25.66	76.69
19 and above	79	23.31	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Field Survey 2024*

Table 4.1.2 presents the age distribution of 339 respondents, categorised into four age groups. The age group 12-14 comprises 88 students, representing 25.96% of the total, with a cumulative percentage of 25.96%. The 15-16 age group includes 85 students (25.07%), bringing the cumulative percentage to 51.03%. The 17-19 age group has 87 students (25.66%), a cumulative percentage of 76.69%. Lastly, the age group 19 and above consists of 79 students, making up 23.31% of the total, with a cumulative percentage of 100.00%. The total number of respondents is 339, accounting for 100.00% of the population.

## 4.2 Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the level of academic achievement in Test of Orals among Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria?

These scores are based on these on these criteria: 0-9 Fail, 10-11 Fair, 12-13 Good 14-15 Excellent

**Table 4.2.1: Summary of Students' Scores in English Proficiency Test**

<b>Student Scores</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>	<b>Remark</b>
7	5	1.47%	1.47%	Fail
8	5	1.47%	2.94%	Fail
9	10	2.95%	5.89%	Fail
10	30	8.85%	14.74%	Fair
11	50	14.75%	29.49%	Fair
12	60	17.70%	47.19%	Good
13	60	17.70%	64.89%	Good
14	59	17.40%	82.29%	Excellent
15	60	17.70%	100.00%	Excellent
<b>Total</b>	<b>339</b>			

**Table 4.2.2: Summary of Students' Scores in English Proficiency Test**

<b>Remark</b>	<b>Minimum Score</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Fail	7	9	8.13	20	5.89%
Fair	10	11	10.63	80	23.60%
Good	12	13	12.50	120	35.40%
Excellent	14	15	14.49	119	35.10%
<b>Total</b>				<b>339</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Source:** Field Survey 2024

Table 4.2.2 provides a summary of the student's achievement in the English Test of Orals. The test scores are categorised into four achievement levels: Fail, Fair, Good, and Excellent. The table includes the minimum, maximum, and mean scores for each category, as well as the frequency and percentage of students falling into each category. Scores in the "Fail" category range from 7 to 9, with a mean score of 8.13, comprising 20 students (5.89% of the total). The "Fair" category has scores from 10 to 11, with a mean of 10.63, including 80 students (23.60%). The "Good" category spans scores from 12 to 13, with a mean of 12.50, and is the largest group with 120 students (35.40%). Lastly, the "Excellent" category, with scores from 14 to 15 and a

mean of 14.49, includes 119 students (35.10%). Overall, this data helps answer research question 1 suggesting that students' level of achievement is relatively high, with more students scoring in the "Good" and "Excellent" categories than in the "Fail" or "Fair" categories.

**Decision: High level of students' achievement**

**Research Question 2:** How significant is the relationship between mother tongue and achievement in Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria?

**Table 4.2.3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the Relationship between Mother Tongue and Achievement in Test of Orals Among SS2 Students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria**

**Correlations**

		Mother tongue	Test of Orals
Mother tongue	Pearson Correlation	1	.352**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	339	339
Test of Orals	Pearson Correlation	.352**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	339	339

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Table 4.2.3 presents the correlation between mother tongue and achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria. The Pearson Correlation coefficient is 0.352, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the use of the mother tongue and students' achievement in the Test of Orals. This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed), as shown by the significance value (Sig.) of 0.000. This implies that as the use of

the mother tongue increases, there is a corresponding increase in achievement in the Test of Orals among the students. The sample size (N) for both variables is 339, indicating that the analysis was conducted on a substantial number of students.

**Research Question 3:** How significant is the relationship between linguistic diversity and academic achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria?

**Table 4.2.4 Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the Influence of Linguistic Diversity on the Achievement in Test of Orals Among SS2 Students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria**

		<b>Academic achievement in Test of Orals</b>	<b>Linguistic Diversity</b>
Academic achievement in Test of Orals	Pearson Correlation	1	-.150*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.017
	N	339	339
Linguistic Diversity	Pearson Correlation	-.150*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	
	N	399	339

\*\* Correlation Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table 4.2.4 presents the correlation between linguistic diversity and academic achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria. The Pearson Correlation coefficient is -0.150, indicating a weak negative relationship between linguistic diversity and students' performance in the Test of Orals. This suggests that as linguistic diversity increases, there is a slight decrease in academic achievement in the Test of Orals. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, with a significance value (Sig.) of 0.017. This implies that the observed relationship could not have occurred by chance and that linguistic diversity

does have a significant influence on students' oral test performance. The analysis was conducted on a sample of 339 students.

Research Question 4: What is the influence of linguistic diversity on academic achievement in the test Test of Orals

**Table 4.2.4: Summary of Response to the influence of linguistic diversity on academic achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria**

S/N.	Statements	Mean	SD	Positions
1.	My exposure to linguistic diversity enhances my achievement in Tests of Orals	3.07	0.80	First
2.	Interacting with individuals who speak different languages boosts my achievement in Test of Orals	3.50	0.74	Second
3.	Practising English with peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds improves achievement in the Test of Orals	3.32	0.70	Third
4.	Exposure to linguistic diversity enhances my understanding of native English speaking and improves my achievement in the Test of Orals	3.53	0.70	Fourth
5.	Embracing linguistic diversity in the classroom improves my achievement in the Test of Orals	3.03	0.80	Fifth

**Weighted mean = 3.29**

**Criterion mean = 2.00**

*Source: Field Survey 2024*

**Decision Rule:  $P < 0.05$  indicates a significant influence,  $P > 0.05$  indicates an insignificant influence.**

Table 4.2.4 relates to Research Question 3, examining the influence of linguistic diversity on academic achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria. The table shows that students generally perceive linguistic diversity as positively impacting their achievement. According to the decision rule, where Strongly Disagree =1,

Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, and Strongly Agree = 4, lower mean scores reflect disagreement with positive statements about linguistic diversity. Students agreed that exposure to linguistic diversity enhances their achievement in Tests of Orals (mean = 3.07, SD = 0.80) and strongly agreed that interacting with individuals who speak different languages boosts their achievement (mean = 3.50, SD = 0.74). They also agreed that practising English with peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds improves their Test of Orals achievement (mean = 3.32, SD = 0.70) and strongly agreed that exposure to linguistic diversity enhances their understanding of native English speaking (mean = 3.53, SD = 0.70). Finally, students agreed that embracing linguistic diversity in the classroom improves their achievement (mean = 3.03, SD = 0.80). The weighted mean of 3.29, significantly above the criterion mean of 2.00, indicates an overall positive perception of linguistic diversity's impact on academic achievement. This higher weighted mean reflects that respondents generally agree or strongly agree that linguistic diversity contributes positively to their performance in the Test of Orals.

### **4.3 Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>: there is no significant joint influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on achievement in Test of Orals among SS2 Students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria.

**Table 4.3.1: Summary of Regression Analysis Showing Joint Influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on Achievement in Test of Orals in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	336.821	2	168.410	2.628	.280
	Residual	17707.105	337	77.600		
	Total	18043.926	339			

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

- a. Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement in the Test of Orals
- b. Determinants: (Constant), Intralingual factors, mother tongue

**Decision Rule:  $P < 0.05$  (the null hypothesis is rejected),  $P > 0.05$  (the null hypothesis is accepted)**

Table 4.3.1 presents the ANOVA results for testing the first null hypothesis: there is no significant joint influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria. The table shows that the regression model, which includes intralingual factors and mother tongue as determinants, has a sum of squares of 336.821 and a mean square of 168.410. The residual sum of squares is 17707.105 with a mean square of 77.600. The F-value is 2.628 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.280 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Since the p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, according to the decision rule mentioned above, the null hypothesis “there is no significant joint influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on academic achievement in the Test of Orals among the students” is accepted.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relative influence of linguistic diversity and intralingual factors on achievement in Test of Oral among SS2 Students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria

**Table 4.3.2: Summary of Regression Analysis Showing Relative Influence of linguistic diversity and intralingual factors on Achievement in Test of Orals in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria**

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	38.704	3.379		13.095	.000
	Linguistic Diversity	1.114	.973	.088	1.351	.001
	Intralingual factors	.678	.869	.058	.895	.021

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

- a. Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement in the Test of Orals
- b. Independent Variables: Linguistic diversity, Intralingual factors

**Decision Rule:  $P < 0.05$  (the null hypothesis is rejected),  $P > 0.05$  (the null hypothesis is accepted)**

Table 4.3.2 presents the coefficients for the analysis based on the null hypothesis 2: there is no significant relative influence of linguistic diversity and intralingual factors on achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria. It reveals that the constant (academic achievement in the Test of Orals) has an unstandardised coefficient (B) of 38.704 with a standard error of 3.379, and a t-value of 13.095, which is highly significant ( $p = .000$ ). For linguistic diversity, the coefficient is 1.114 with a standard error of .973 and a standardised coefficient (Beta) of .088, resulting in a t-value of 1.351 and a significance level (p-value) of .001 ( $p < 0.05$ ). For intralingual factors, the unstandardised coefficient is .678 with a standard error of .869 and a standardised coefficient (Beta) of .058, with a t-value of .895 and a significance level (p-value) of .021. Since the p-value for linguistic diversity is less than the alpha level of 0.05, it indicates a significant relative influence of linguistic diversity on achievement in the Test of Orals. However, the p-value for intralingual factors is also lesser than

0.05, indicating that intralingual factors have a significant relative influence on achievement in the Test of Orals. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted because linguistic diversity and intralingual factors have significant relative influences.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Findings**

The findings from Table 4.2.1 show that the academic achievement of SS2 students in the English Test of Orals in Ibadan Southeast Local Government Area is high, suggesting that students' level of achievement is relatively high, with more students scoring in the "Good" and "Excellent" categories than in the "Fail" or "Fair" categories. These results provide a foundational understanding of the general academic achievement level and provide a means for examining the specific factors that might influence this positive outcome. Research Question 2 addresses the impact of mother tongue on students' achievement in the Test of Orals. As shown in Table 4.2.2,

The relationship between mother tongue and achievement in the Test of Orals was found to be moderately positive, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.352. This significant correlation suggests that students who have a strong foundation in their mother tongue tend to perform better in the Test of Orals. This finding suggests that proficiency in a student's first language can enhance their understanding and mastery of English, particularly in oral communication. The positive correlation highlights the potential benefits of incorporating mother tongue education into the curriculum to support students' overall academic achievement. The findings of the current study is opposed to the study which examined how Yoruba language affects the pronunciation of English sounds by secondary school students in Ibadan North, Oyo State. The study adopted a

descriptive qualitative approach, collecting data from ten students from two public secondary schools in Ibadan North, Oyo State. Their pronunciations were recorded and analysed using the English Sounds' Pronunciation Passage (ESPP). The findings showed that students struggled to pronounce certain English consonants (/z/, /ŋ/, /ð/, /θ/, /v/) and vowels (/ɜ:/, /ə/, /ɑ:/, /ʌ/, /ɔ:/, /æ/, /i:/, /u:/, /ɔɪ/, /iə/, /ei/, /əʊ/, /εə/, /ʊə/, /ɪə/) correctly due to interference from their mother tongue, Yoruba. This interference significantly influenced their articulation of English sounds<sup>1</sup>.

Table 4.2.3 relates to Research Question 3, the relationship between linguistic diversity and academic achievement in the Test of Orals was explored, revealing a weak negative correlation with a Pearson coefficient of -0.150. This significant but weak correlation suggests that as linguistic diversity increases, there may be a slight decrease in students' performance in oral English. This finding indicates the challenges students face when exposed to multiple languages, which may lead to confusion or difficulty in mastering the nuances of oral English. However, it is important to note that the negative impact is not strong, suggesting that while linguistic diversity presents challenges, it is not a major barrier to academic achievement in this context. This finding is supported by the finding analysis data from the UK Millennium Cohort Study, which found that multiple language exposure negatively affected school readiness and vocabulary at age 3 (with mitigated effects from higher maternal education) and vocabulary at age 11, had no direct impact on spatial working memory or gambling task scores, and revealed that early cognitive abilities and socioeconomic status are crucial for understanding the effects on hot and cool executive functions<sup>2</sup>.

Table 4.2.4 addresses Research Question 4, examining the influence of linguistic diversity on academic achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria. The table shows that students generally perceive linguistic diversity as positively

impacting their achievement. According to the decision rule, where Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, and Strongly Agree = 4, lower mean scores reflect disagreement with positive statements about linguistic diversity. Students agreed that exposure to linguistic diversity enhances their achievement in Tests of Orals (mean = 3.07, SD = 0.80) and strongly agreed that interacting with individuals who speak different languages boosts their achievement (mean = 3.50, SD = 0.74). They also agreed that practising English with peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds improves their Test of Orals achievement (mean = 3.32, SD = 0.70) and strongly agreed that exposure to linguistic diversity enhances their understanding of native English speaking (mean = 3.53, SD = 0.70). Finally, students agreed that embracing linguistic diversity in the classroom improves their achievement (mean = 3.03, SD = 0.80). The weighted mean of 3.29, significantly above the criterion mean of 2.00, indicates an overall positive perception of linguistic diversity's impact on academic achievement. This higher weighted mean reflects that respondents generally agree or strongly agree that linguistic diversity contributes positively to their performance in the Test of Orals. The current study opposes the data from 207 students using regression statistics which showed that neither phonological variations nor language exposure had a significant relationship with students' achievement in silent sounds, and their combined effect also did not significantly contribute to this achievement<sup>3</sup>.

Table 4.3.1 presents the ANOVA results for testing the first null hypothesis: there is no significant joint influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on academic achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria. The regression model includes intralingual factors and mother tongue as determinants, and the table provides detailed statistical results. The sum of squares for the regression model is 336.821, with a corresponding mean square of 168.410. The residual sum of squares is 17707.105, and the mean

square for the residuals is 77.600. The F-value, which measures the overall significance of the regression model, is 2.628. The significance level (p-value) associated with this F-value is 0.280.

According to the decision rule, if the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant joint influence of the variables. Conversely, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. In this case, the p-value is 0.280, which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, based on the decision rule, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant joint influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on academic achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria. Despite the presence of these factors, their combined effect does not significantly impact students' performance in the oral English test. This finding suggests that other variables not included in the model might play a more substantial role in influencing academic achievement in this context. Consequently, educators and policymakers might consider focusing on additional factors beyond intralingual elements and mother tongue to enhance students' performance in oral English assessments. This finding contrasts with the study in South Africa, on Grade Nine students' Science achievement was strongly influenced by the equivalence of home and school language and the frequency of using the school language at home. Other significant factors included cultural capital related to language, certain classroom conditions, and selected school-level factors<sup>4</sup>. For

Table 4.3.2 presents the regression analysis results for testing the second null hypothesis: there is no significant relative influence of linguistic diversity and intralingual factors on achievement in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria.

The regression model reveals that the constant (academic achievement in the Test of Orals) has an unstandardised coefficient (B) of 38.704 with a standard error of 3.379 and a highly significant t-value of 13.095 ( $p = .000$ ). For linguistic diversity, the coefficient is 1.114 with a standard error of .973 and a standardised coefficient (Beta) of .088, resulting in a t-value of 1.351 and a significance level (p-value) of .001. Since the p-value for linguistic diversity is less than the alpha level of 0.05, it indicates a significant relative influence of linguistic diversity on achievement in the Test of Orals. For intralingual factors, the unstandardised coefficient is .678 with a standard error of .869 and a standardised coefficient (Beta) of .058, with a t-value of .895 and a significance level (p-value) of .021. Similarly, since the p-value for intralingual factors is also less than 0.05, it indicates a significant relative influence of intralingual factors on achievement in the Test of Orals.

Therefore, based on the decision rule and the p-values obtained, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relative influence of linguistic diversity and intralingual factors on academic achievement in the Test of Orals is rejected. The findings demonstrate that both linguistic diversity and intralingual factors significantly influence students' performance in the Test of Orals among SS2 students in Ibadan Southeast, Oyo State, Nigeria. This suggests that exposure to linguistic diversity and the presence of intralingual factors play important roles in enhancing students' oral English proficiency and overall academic achievement in this context. This finding is supported by a recent study at Nakhchivan State University which reveals that multilingualism significantly enhance cognitive functions, particularly cognitive flexibility and memory, while also promoting greater cultural awareness, empathy, and understanding of cultural nuances<sup>5</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> I. Akinsola & B. Olaosebikan, *Influence of Mother Tongue Interference on Senior Secondary School Students' Articulation of English Sounds in Ibadan North Local Government Area*. **International Journal of Arts and Social Science Education**, 3(1), 2019, 37-45.

<sup>2</sup> J. D. Clayden, S. Hope, F. Argyri, S. Goksan, A. Stefani, L. Wei & F. J. Liegeois, *The Impact of Multiple Language Exposure on Cognition During Childhood: Evidence From The UK Millennium Cohort Study*. **Frontiers in Psychology**, 14, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1158333>

<sup>3</sup> O. Olagbaju & K. Ogunyemi, *Phonological Variations and Language Exposure as Correlates of Achievement in Silent Sounds in ESL Classrooms in Ibadan South-East LGA, Nigeria*, **International Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics**, 6(1), 255-262.

<sup>4</sup> C. H. Prinsloo, S.C. Rogers & J. C. Harvey, *The Impact of Language Factors on Learner Achievement in Science*. **South African Journal of Education**, 38(1), 2018. Article 1438. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38n1a1438>

<sup>5</sup> H. Alisoy, *The Impact of Multilingualism on Cognitive Function and Cultural Awareness*. 2024.10.13140/RG.2.2.32310.10565

## Chapter Five

### Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 1.1 Summary of Findings

Samples for this study were drawn from 13 schools with varying student counts and percentages. Ori Aje Grammar School had the highest representation with 33 students (9.73%), whereas Saint Anne's School II had the lowest, with 21 students (6.19%). The respondents were divided into four age groups: 12-14 (88 students, 25.96%), 15-16 (90 students, 26.56%), 17-18 (82 students, 24.19%), and 19 and above (79 students, 23.31%). The distribution of students' scores in the English Test of Orals was categorised into four levels: Fail, Fair, Good, and Excellent. The majority of students scored in the "Good" and "Excellent" categories, with 35.40% (120 students) scoring "Good" and 35.10% (119 students) scoring "Excellent." This suggests a relatively high level of student achievement, with fewer students scoring in the "Fail" (5.89%) and "Fair" (23.60%) categories. The overall mean score for the "Excellent" category is 14.49, highlighting the high performance of the students.

The relationship between mother tongue and achievement in the Test of Orals was found to be moderately positive, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.352. This significant correlation suggests that students who have a strong foundation in their mother tongue tend to perform better in the Test of Orals. This finding suggests that proficiency in a student's first language can enhance their understanding and mastery of English, particularly in oral communication. The positive correlation highlights the potential benefits of incorporating mother tongue education into the curriculum to support students' overall academic achievement.

The study also found that students generally perceive linguistic diversity as positively influencing their academic achievement in the Test of Orals. The mean scores, all above the criterion mean of 2.00, indicate agreement or strong agreement with positive statements about linguistic diversity. Specifically, students agreed that exposure to linguistic diversity enhances their achievement (mean = 3.07), interacting with individuals who speak different languages boosts their achievement (mean = 3.50), and practising English with peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds improves their Test of Orals performance (mean = 3.32). They also strongly agreed that linguistic diversity enhances their understanding of native English speaking (mean = 3.53) and agreed that embracing linguistic diversity in the classroom improves their achievement (mean = 3.03). The overall weighted mean of 3.29 reflects a positive perception of the impact of linguistic diversity on their academic success.

The first null hypothesis, which states there is no significant joint influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on achievement in the Test of Orals was tested. With a F-value is 2.628 with a  $\alpha$  and a p-value of 0.280, which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant joint influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on academic achievement in the Test of Orals. Finally, the regression analysis for testing the second null hypothesis, which states there is no significant relative influence of linguistic diversity and intralingual factors on achievement in the Test of Orals reveals that both linguistic diversity ( $p = .001$ ) and intralingual factors ( $p = .021$ ) have p-values less than 0.05, indicating significant relative influences on achievement. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, demonstrating that linguistic diversity and intralingual factors significantly influence students' performance in the Test of Orals.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study concludes that while there is no significant joint influence of intralingual factors and mother tongue on students' achievement in the English Test of Orals, both linguistic diversity and intralingual factors significantly and positively influence oral English performance. The findings highlight the importance of linguistic diversity and frequent English usage in enhancing students' oral proficiency, as reflected in the high achievement levels, with students scoring "Good" and "Excellent." Furthermore, students' perceptions support the positive impact of linguistic diversity and intralingual factors such as vocabulary size, grammatical accuracy, and pronunciation proficiency on their oral English skills. Therefore, fostering an environment that promotes linguistic diversity and frequent use of English is crucial for improving students' oral proficiency

## **5.3 Recommendations**

The following were recommended based on the findings of the study:

1. There is a need to promote exposure to various languages and linguistic environments to enhance the achievement in the Test of Orals.
2. School should implement activities that involve multiple languages in the curriculum to leverage the positive impact of linguistic diversity.
3. Policies be enacted that encourage frequent use of English in different contexts to improve the achievement in the Test of Orals
4. Students be provided with targeted training to improve pronunciation proficiency and coherent discourse construction.

5. Regular assessment for monitoring students' achievement in the Test of Orals be carried out to provide personalised support to address their challenges.

#### **5.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

Findings from this study contribute to existing knowledge by underlining the positive impact of linguistic diversity on achievement in the Test of Orals by stipulating that exposure to multiple languages enhances language skills. Contrary to some expectations, the study shows that mother tongue does not significantly hamper the achievement in the Test of Orals, challenging the notion that native language interference is a major barrier. While students value intralingual factors like vocabulary size and grammatical accuracy, the study reveals these factors do not have a significant relative influence on their own. The significance of considering linguistic and intralingual factors together, despite their joint influence not being significant, suggests a need for an integrated approach in language education.

#### **5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research**

Based on these findings, further studies should explore the specific aspects of linguistic diversity that most effectively enhance achievement in the Test of Orals, such as the role of cultural context and language exposure frequency. Furthermore, research should investigate the apparent disconnect between students' perceptions of intralingual factors and their actual impact on performance, potentially by examining these factors in different educational settings or among different age groups. It would also be beneficial to delve deeper into the potential nuanced influences of the mother tongue on various aspects of language learning, to better understand why it appears not to hinder oral English proficiency significantly. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into how these influences evolve and contribute to sustained language

acquisition. Finally, similar studies like this one should be carried out in other local governments and with a larger sample for the improved generalisability of the results.

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**Appendix**  
**Department of Arts & Social Science Education**  
**(English Education Unit.)**

**Oral English Complexity Questionnaire**

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is constructed to collect data solely for research. Kindly respond to the questions below with all sincerity and to the best of your ability. Thank you in anticipation. This questionnaire is to be completed by Students.

**Instruction:** Tick the appropriate box as it applies to you

1. Gender: Male { } Female { }
2. Age: Below 13-17 years { } 18-22 years { } Above 22 years { }
3. Religion: Christianity { } Islam { } African Traditional Religion { }  
Others { }

SA – Strongly, A- Agree, D – Disagree and SD – Strongly disagree

SN	Item	SA	A	D	SD
1	Mother tongue negatively affects my ability to learn oral English				
2	Proficiency in my mother tongue prevents me from understanding English intonations				
3	Thinking in my mother tongue before speaking English hinders my oral English skills.				
4	My exposure to my mother tongue outside of school hinders my English-speaking abilities				
5	Maintaining fluency in my mother tongue reduces my ability to				

	communicate in English effectively.				
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6	My exposure to linguistic diversity enhances my understanding of different English accents				
7	Interacting with individuals who speak different languages boosts my confidence in speaking English				
8	Practising English with peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds improves my oral English skills				
9	Exposure to linguistic diversity enhances understanding of native English-speaking skills.				
10	Embracing linguistic diversity in the classroom improves overall oral English proficiency				

11	The teacher's method of teaching influences my oral English skills.				
12	The interactive teacher's teaching style encourages active participation and practice in speaking English during my class				
13	Teachers' effective explanations during English-speaking activities improve my English-speaking ability				
14	How engaging do you find the teaching methods used by your teacher in enhancing your oral English proficiency?				
15	Student-centred teaching technique facilitates my oral English Proficiency.				

16	The current oral language teaching methodologies prepare me for the complexity of the English test of orals				
17	The current teaching methods adequately cover the various components tested in the English test of orals				
18	The current teaching methodologies help enhance my speaking skills for the English test of orals				
19	I feel confident applying the strategies taught in class during the English test of orals				
20	I am satisfied with the effectiveness of				

	the current oral language teaching methodologies in preparing me for its complexity				
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## Endnotes

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