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Mother Tongue Interference in Teaching and Learning English Language: A Case study of Kissi Teng, Kissi Kama and Kissi Tongi Chiefdoms in Sierra Leone

Samuel Tamba*

Eastern Technical University, Sierra Leone

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Abstract: The study revealed that mother tongue interference influences the teaching and learning of English in Kissi Teng, Kissi Tongi and Kissi Kama in communication. A descriptive approach was used for the study. Data was collected, analysed and interpreted from fifty respondents in five different selected schools, revealing shortage in English Language teachers, phonological, morphological, syntactic and direct transfer or translation from Mother Tongue to English Language, showing interference in teaching and learning the English Language.

Keywords: Mother Tongue, Second Language, Negative Transfer, Mutual Interference, Native Speaker, Direct Translation, Susceptible, Orthography, Word Order.

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INTRODUCTION

Every human being is endowed with language involving skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The Kissi language is spoken by approximately one thousand people in the three Kissi chiefdoms and many other Kissi people in Guinea and Liberia which are neighbouring countries to Sierra Leone.

English Language is used to communicate in verbal and non-verbal ways providing inter-personal relationship among speakers in various districts (Baker, 2001).

Mother Tongue is an individual's native language; a language of cultural heritage passed on from one generation to the other, (Wikipedia, 2016). Mother Tongue also refers to the language a child learns first. A child comes in contact with any language and learns it even though he or she is born to parents of different cultural transmission of languages.

Mother Tongue interference affects English Language through sound and interaction. One makes meaning of the language he or she hears or reads through a medium and shares knowledge of it (Ugwu, 2003). In terms of structural influence, the Mother Tongue produces unique and distinct effect (Eka, 2002).

The study used the Acculturation Theory which states that 'Language Acquisition is the result of the social and psychological integration of a learner (Acculturation) (Schumann, 1978:29). It further states

that there is correlation between the degrees of language proximity to the target language, and that the learner is only successful in acquiring a Second Language if there are fewer social and psychological differences between speakers of the Second Language. A learner who is a native speaker of the Kissi language, for example, should have close contact with the native speakers of the English Language to be able to hear it regularly if he or she were to study the English Language as a Second Language.

According to the Conceptual Frame Theory, Mother Tongue refers to a person's native language, a language learned from birth; also called First Language which a person acquires from birth. A cultural transition might take place if a child is taken to another speech community, or raised by a caregiver who speaks a different language other than his or her original Mother Tongue. Contemporary linguists and educators often use L_1 to refer to First Language or Native Language known as Mother Tongue, while L_2 is referred to as the Second Language or Foreign Language. Thus, L_1 in this case is the Kissi Language and L_2 is the English Language. Savage (2019) states that the concept of Mother Tongue is relatively fluid and that it clearly indicates that a child's First Language is the home language or the language(s) he or she comes in contact with to express ideas and associate names or meanings to objects.

The concept of Mother Tongue Interference is when a speaker of a native language mixes up a word in the target language to mean something different.

For example, someone wishing to learn a Spanish word 'rotto' might call "rotto" as rotten. Thus, this kind of transfer is what Gass & Selinke (1983:11) refer to as Language or Linguistic Interference.

Language Interference also involves the avoidance of an individual's speech of other languages as a result of the influence of the Mother Tongue, usually in negative and positive ways. Negative Transfer is the difficulties encountered in the use of a target language whereas Positive transfer is possible where there is similarity between First and Second Language (L₁ and L₂) Thus, Language Interference is simply the transfer of the Mother Tongue to the target language, (Kellerman, 1987:13). He states that a native speaker of English uses Apical pronouns differently, for example, compared to an Azerbaijani speaker. Azerbaijani consonants are dorsal and are formed at the back of the tongue, English consonants are produced at the tip of the tongue and are Apical sounds, (Veysall, 2015:85). When the difference between Mother Tongue and the Target Language is greater, the negative interference becomes greater, (Odlin 2001:56). Barnes (1999:90) maintains that it is not often easy to observe such phenomena because Positive Transfer occurs mainly among similar language units when the Mother Tongue and the Target Language are close to each other. Beebe (1977:231) states that Language Interference has a tendency that the learner translates the rules of the Mother Tongue into a Foreign Language. From the point of view of Psycholinguistics Language Interference is defined as the Negative Transfer of language skills and abilities from a Mother Tongue to a Foreign Language, (Beebe, 1980:433). Albert & Obler (2008) mention that people show more lexical interference on similar items.

They state also that languages with more similar structures such as English and French, are more susceptible to mutual interference than two dissimilar language items including Kissi and English. More learning difficulties take place as revealed by (Selinker, 2009; Kulay, 200; Bham- Kuliza & Stevenson, 2003; Karch & Kasper, 2003; Bialystok, 2000; & Dordick, 2006).

The individual who learns a language from childhood is known as a 'native speaker' of that language (Wikipedia, 2007). English Language and Krio are used by teachers and pupils in the teaching and learning process. In Sierra Leone, Krio is the Lingua Franca used along with English Language: the curriculum provides that Themene, Mende, Limba and Krio be studied in Sierra Leone as Sierra Leonean Languages in school. At the moment, the policy of teaching and learning of Sierra Leonean Languages (SLL) has not been done for the other languages such as the Kissi language, perhaps due to lack of adequate orthography in the Kissi language. Even though that is the case, the pupils are taught in class with emphasis for clarity through code switching by

teachers: water (mɛɲndɔ); palm oil (chuɛimɔ siŋ); salt (helle); and so on.

The Kissi language is a native tongue spoken by a group of people who live in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. The Kissi language is the main language in the three Kissi chiefdoms in Sierra Leone and pupils and teachers use it in school to express themselves in the teaching and learning process as in the following expressions: (Diomɔɔɔ veeloo) ----- calling words, which means 'Reading' in English; (domɔɔ woŋɔɔ) – shirt wearing, which means 'wearing a shirt'.

These examples are direct translations from Kissi to English Language. They are ungrammatical semantically and lack word order in English.

Further examples which show direct translations in Kissi include:

- 1) Direct translation: I will take a car (I cho mɔmbillo chua)
Correct: I will board a car.
- 2) Direct translation: I want to appear with my eyes. (I cho lakɔ fula lahɔllo).
Correct: I want to go and do an introduction for my fiancée.(engagement)
- 3) Direct Translation: He has a lot of brain (In a casual way) O nɔ hullɔɔ bɔɔ)
Correct: He is intelligent or clever.
- 4) Direct Translation: Alcohol drink too much (ambiguous)
(Muɛiyɔɔ kolɔɔ bɛndoo)
Correct: Getting intoxicated with wine or too much intake of alcohol.
- 5) Direct Translation: Call me (Bulɔɔɔɔɔte)
(veelul labuulaɔɔte)
Correct: Do not worry call me.
- 6) Direct Translation: I am seeing them coming (I chon ndɔ chɔɔ hunɔɔ)
Correct: I can see them coming.

Interference in Kissi is at various levels: from word or vocabulary, word order, semantics, and other forms of grammar or features. The Kissi Language has varying Linguistic features including morphology, phonology, and suprasegmental, prosodic and so on. The orthography of language has consonants and vowels. Consonants consist of single letters, and double letters while vowels consist of monophthongs and diagraphs.

Consonantal examples include:

- B as in - bɔɔɔɔ (hands)
bɔɔɔɔ (work)
bɔɔɔɔ (cotton tree)
bololɔɔ (gluttonous)
- D as in - dɔɔɔɔ (medicare)
diɔɔɔɔnde / diɔɔɔɔde (stupidity)
diyɔɔ (kill)

F as in - fɔndɔn (gift)
 fɔndɔn (place)
 finyɔn (father)
 fɔllɔn (elderly men)

H as in - hɛlle (salt)
 hɔllɔn (sky)
 hɔkioo (sin)
 hɛngɔɔ (pan)

K as in - kɔlɔn (walking)
 kɔndɔɔ (to fetch)
 kiolɔɔ (bite)
 kindɔ (lock)

L as in- lomɔɔ (burn)
 Lɔɔ (beat)
 lɔndɔn (far away)
 lomɔndo (sauce)

M as in - mɔmɔɔ (food/rice)
 mɔmɔndo (mist)
 mɔlɔn (help)

N as in - nɔɔ (marriage)
 nɔnɔɔ (beauty)
 nɔnɔɔ (August)
 nɔnɔɔ (milk)

ɔ in nɔɔ (burn)
 nɔnɔ (three)
 nɛɛ (mewling)

P as in poombɔɔ (boy)
 Pouwo (stone)
 pɔnɔn (farm house)

S as in – seleɔndo (grasshopper) – singular form
 sɔnɔɔ (tortoise)
 sɔnɔn (suffering)

T as in - tɔndɔn (conflict)
 Tɔkɔɔ (chimpanzee)
 tɔmɔn (monkey)

V as in- visɔn (animals)
 violɔɔ (giving birth)

W as in - winɔɔ/viinɔɔ (thief)
 wɔsioo (year)
 wololɔn (load)

Y as in – yinɔdimiiyo (December)
 yilɔɔ (greeting)
 yɔwɔn (omen)

Kissi has Double – letter Consonants which include the following:

Ch as in - Chiɛyo (house)
 chɔndɔ (outcry)
 chuɔmbɔɔ (girl)

Gb as in – Kpeɔngboɔ (bench)
 kpɔnɔnɔɔ (shrine)

Kp as in kpɔtɔn (step)
 Kpeiyɔ (rubber)
 kpeɔɔ (toothbrush)

Mb as in - mbɔn (yes)
 lembɔɔ (trousers)
 demboɔ (stomach)
 mboomɔn (hammock)

Nd as in – nde (grandmother)
 dɔndɔn (medicare)
 deɔndɔɔ (hoe).

Mg as in - ngɔɔ (elder brother/mother)

Nɔ as in - kpeɔnɔɔ (bench)
 Senɔnɔ (spread)
 vionɔɔ (hide)

Ny as in - nyinɔn (spirit)
 nyindɔɔ (push)
 nyumndɔn (darkness)

Sh as in - shoɔngoo (chisel)
 shɔmbulɔn (shame)
 sheɔlɔn (slippery)

Kissi has twenty- four consonants and seven vowels including “C”, “G”, “J”, “R”, “X” and “Z”, some of which are usually replaced by other consonants as in the following:

- “S” replaces “C” as in “Simbɔn” meaning “ a rolled swamp – grass”
- “CH” replaces “J” as in “chemisi which means “James”.
- “R” (is absent) in Kissi but is always replaced by “L” as in “lɔbeiyɔ” which means “rubber” eventhough the original name of rubber in Kissi is “kpeiyɔ”. However, “Z”, “Q” and “X” are absent in Kissi because at the moment, there is no orthography for them.

Place of articulation and manner of articulation are ways in which Kissi consonants are described with respect to sound. These refer to the ways in which the articulators come into play to make a sound in Kissi, with respect to the vibration of the vocal tract. The following are respectively consonant chart and vowel chart:

Consonant Chart
Place of Articulation

Manner of Articulation	Bilabial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labial velar	Glottal
Stop (voiceless)	P	t		k	Kp	
Prenasalised	b mb	d nd	sh	ŋg	gb	
Affricate			ch			
Fricate	f w	s			v	h
Nasal	M	n		ŋ		
Approximate or glide		l	j	w		

Source: Wikipedia (2021).

Vowel Chart

	Front	Back
Close mid	i	u
Close	e	o
Open Mid	ɛ	ɔ
Open	ɒ	

Source: Wikipedia (2021)

The Kissi Language has seven monophthongs as shown in the chart. A single vowel is doubled to produce a long sound realised in English as a diacritic as in / bɔ:d/ bird /ɔ/ is/ɔɔ/ in Kissi.

Kissi uses covert subjects as Semantic Roles derived from the discourse as shown in the following expressions:

- “Fula loɔ” which means “Get out of there”
- “Kɔ O sukuu” which means “Go to school.”
- “Chɔɔ o dio” which means “Leave the door.”
- “Kpata ya le” which means “Don’t step on me.”
- Denɔɔl lɔle which means “Don’t shout at me.”

Here the subjects of the sentences are hidden and are only derived from the expressions by a speaker or hearer, showing that the Kissi Language expresses semantic, morphological and phonological features which make the language unique.

Odlin (2009:27) states that “Transfer “ in Mother Tongue Interference refers to the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language, and that language transfer” is a psychological term describing a situation where one learned event influences the learning of a subsequent learning event.

According to (Wardugh, 2000), “Transfer” is a tool used to account for or explain the errors which actually occur. The assumption here is that the chances of learning a Second Language have problems such as differences between the L₁ and the L₂ resulting to a negative transfer of the language; but the absence of any linguistic differences results to positive transfer or facilitation of a positive transfer.

Thus, Mother Tongue greatly affects speech production such as in the case of /r/ which is absent in Kissi Language as in “luba” instead of “rubber” , “lum” instead of “room”. Harme (2007) states that speaking is the ability to convey a message, and that the Mother Tongue influences accent. (Derwing & Munro, 2009:476; & Gary & Robert, 2014) quote (Harding, 2011) about the various aspects of forming an accent as the prosodic and segmental features and different pronunciations including variations in vowel and consonant sounds.

Dulay & Burt (2002) consider interference of language or Mother Tongue as the automatic transfer due to surface structure or situation of the first leading to errors.

Weinrich (2000:64-65) reveals that factors responsible for Language Interference include bilingual background – “Shɛiyo” in Kissi means “chair” in English; disloyalty concerning the use of ill – formed structures within the target language as in “I want to eat “ Yɔmbeleɔ,” “ meaning ““I want to eat yambelen” meaning “I want to eat cassava”; “I want kolaɔ” meaning “I want to go”.” Here there is negative transfer from the Mother Tongue directly to the Target Language, English Language.

In communication process, redundancy takes place with variations in the Target Language. For example, tindɔɔ” meaning “staff or “a stick used for walking” and “tiptoe” respectively.

Some expressions which are absent in Kissi are borrowed words in English: “Ebolɛiyo - (Ebola virus); “Sikɛetiyo” – (cigarette); “Kolonɔɔ” – (Corona virus); “Nɔmbeiyo” (number). Thus, Lekova (2010) outlines

that Language Transfer can be a situation where the speech participants are bilingual and lack the accepted vocabulary.

The Interlingua factor is an important factor in language learning, especially in Contrastive Analysis. It states that Mother Tongue is the only source of errors, as seen in “I can see a beautiful bird” (I cho chɔɔ yoo Kɛndɔɔ) by a Kissi speaker. In Kissi the adjective comes after the noun that it describes. For example, “big book” becomes “book big” (Yɔu bɛndɔɔ); “beautiful woman” becomes “woman beautiful” (uanalano Kɛndɔɔ).

The verb can be positioned even at the beginning of a sentence for example “Drink water” becomes “water drink” or it remains the same: (Mɛɛndɔɔɔ Kɔlɔɔ or kɔlɔɔ mɛɛɛndɔɔɔɔ); “will you go to fetch water?” (ɔ cho lɔkɔ mɛɛɛndɔɔɔɔ Kɔɔɛndɔɔɔ). These are errors due to negative transfer of the rules in L₁ directly to L₂.

While Dulay *et al.* (2002:97) states that errors are caused by the differences between the First and second language, Coder (2001); & Richard (2007:19) say the errors are the result of interference in learning a Second Language. Taiwo (1993) argues that English Language has become the world’s international language, and that it is the predominant language that is highly relevant and spoken around the globe; it’s the easiest means of disseminating information, diplomacy and so on.

Statement of Problem

The teaching of English language lacks adequate human resource of trained and qualified teachers and this has a lot of setbacks including interference in teaching and learning. There is also lack of motivation by policy makers and so the learners suffer psychological problems as a result of these problems affecting fluent communication.

Aim and Objectives of the study

The main aim of the study was to find out about the influence which Mother Tongue has on the pupils and the teachers in teaching English Language. The objectives included to:

- Find out the level at which the Mother Tongue interference affects the teaching and learning process.
- Find out if there are trained and qualified teachers to teach English Language.
- Identify factors that pose problems in the teaching and learning of English Language.

Scope of the Study

The study was based on the influence which the Kissi Language has on the teaching and learning of English Language.

Hypothesis

Mother Tongue Interference in the learning of English Language is on the increase. The alarming increase poses a lot of problems in the teaching and learning of English Language.

Justification of the Study

The study was critical because it identified the numerous factors that influence the interference of Mother Tongue on the teaching and learning of English Language including phonology, syntax, semantics, and morphology.

Limitations to the Study

The study was limited to inadequate finance to prepare questionnaires, pay for transportation to move to schools to collect data and to collect completed questionnaires. Time too was a serious challenge in completing the research work.

METHODOLOGY

The study involved research design, study area, population sample and sampling, instrumentation, validation of the instrument, method of data collection and analysis of data.

A Descriptive Survey Research was used involving administering questionnaires on the influence of Mother Tongue interference in the teaching and learning of English Language in the selected schools in Kissi Teng, Kissi Kama and Kissi Tongi chiefdoms.

Study Area

The study area was in the Kissi Teng, Kissi Kama and Kissi Tongi chiefdoms in the Kailahun District. The Headquarter town of Kissi Teng is Kangama, whereas Dia and Buedu are the headquarter towns of Kissi Kama and Kissi Tongi respectively. The three chiefdoms have a fairly dense population of approximately 82,138 people. The chiefdoms have a sparse number of other ethnic groups including Fulla, Mandigo, Temne and Limba. The study area is about 82 miles away from Kenema, the provincial headquarter town. There are approximately 70 primary and secondary schools in the three chiefdoms with approximately 45,000 pupils. Five schools and fifty respondents were however targeted for the study.

Population (Sample of Population)

The population consisted of 50 pupils and teachers from the secondary schools in the three Kissi Chiefdoms – Kissi Teng, Kissi Kama and Kissi Tongi in the Kailahun District, Eastern Sierra Leone.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire had 20 items divided into three sections. The questions were drawn on a four point rating scale, namely Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (DA), and Strongly Disagree (SD) on the scale 4, 3, 2 and 1; where 4 represented Strongly Agree, 3

Agree, 2 Disagree and 1 Strongly Disagree. Respondents ticked the most correct item in each case.

Validation of Instrument

The prepared questionnaire was validated to see whether the questions were in line with the research objectives and were incorporated into the final instrument following necessary corrections.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected designed and questionnaires were administered the questionnaires. Completed questionnaires were collected and analysed into percentages.

Method of Data Analysis

The mean score was used to analyse data to give clear hypothesis, based on real limits of SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2, SD = 1 where “SA” represented “Strongly Agree”, “A” represented “Agree” “D” represented “Disagree”. A total of ten points using 3.00 as a cut-off point was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study used a Qualitative Approach to interpret the results following the Mean Average against 5.0 rating as seen on the following tables: The Research Questions were carefully followed to provide results.

Research Question 1

How does Mother Tongue interfere in the teaching and learning of English Language?

Tables 1. Mean ratings on the influence of Mother Tongue in teaching and learning of English Language

No	Research item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (X)	Decision
1	The use of Mother tongue influences the way pupils speak in English	27	16	06	01	3.38	Accepted
2	The use of Mother Tongue affects pupils' pronunciation	25	18	05	02	3.32	Accepted
3	The use of Mother Tongue partly contributes to poor performance in English Language	21	19	08	02	3.18	Accepted
4	The use of Mother Tongue affects students' confidence in communication	21	19	08	03	3.16	Accepted
5	The use of Mother Tongue in communication or Teaching pupils usually influences their academic performance.	40	08	02	0	3.76	Accepted
6	Students who frequently practice to speak in English instead of the Mother Tongue perform extremely well in English Language	40	08	02	0	3.76	Accepted
7	The frequent use of the Mother Tongue enhances mixing Mother Tongue with English Language	31	16	02	01	3.54	Accepted
8	Continuous usage of English Language instead of Mother Tongue increases proficiency in English Language	41	08	01	0	3.78	Accepted
	Cluster mean	-	-	-	-	3.42	Accepted

The table expressed mean ratings of the score on the influence of the Mother Tongue on the teaching and learning of the English Language by pupils and teachers in Kissi Teng, Kissi Kama and Kissi Tongi in the Kailahun District. The results of the scores are positive, showing that the Mother Tongue has a significant effect on the teaching and learning of English Language. Many respondents strongly agreed (SA) and

Agree (A) respectively that the Mother Tongue has a significant effect on the teaching and learning of English Language.

Research Question 2

Are there qualified teachers who teach English Language effectively and efficiently in school?

Table 2: Mean rating on teachers' qualification and its influence on students' performance.

No	Research item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (X)	Decision
1	Teachers use English Language throughout the lesson	08	04	28	10	2.20	Rejected
2	Teachers discourage pupils from using the Mother Tongue in class.	24	19	05	02	3.30	Accepted
3	Teachers reward students who use English Language correctly in communication in class.	24	18	05	03	3.26	Accepted
4	Teachers use learning materials such as audio-visual aids in teaching.	11	10	18	11	2.42	Rejected
5	Teachers encourage continuous use of English Language in class	03	13	33	01	2.36	Rejected
6	Teachers use instructional technology (modern tools) to compliment teaching.	04	20	14	12	2.24	Rejected
	Cluster mean					2.63	Rejected

The table clearly shows that Mother Tongue has significant influence on Second Language learning. It also shows that there are inadequate trained and qualified teachers who teach English Language. From the table, items 1, 4, 5 and 6 produced negative results, giving (2.20), (2.42), (2.36) and (2.24) with a cluster mean of (2.63) below the cut-off point of (3.00). This clearly shows that the qualification of the teachers in English

Language has significant effect on pupils' performance in English Language, especially that there is acute shortage of trained and qualified teachers in the three Kissi Chiefdoms in the Kailahun District in Sierra Leone.

Research Questions 3

What are the problems posed by the Kissi Language in teaching and learning English Language?

Table 3: Mean rating on the problems posed by the Kissi Language in the teaching and learning of English Language.

No	Research items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (X)	Decision
1	The Kissi Language influences pupils' mispronunciation	30	15	03	02	3.46	Accepted
2	The spelling patterns of English words are affected by the Kissi Language	13	16	15	06	3.72	Accepted
3	A student usually says They are calling you; (A cho num yeelɔ)	33	12	04	01	3.54	Accepted
4	Mother Tongue affects pupils sentence construction abilities.	18	22	07	03	3.10	Accepted
5	A pupil may say "you have too much brain" (A no boo hullaŋn)	28	15	02	05	3.32	Accepted
6	A student may say I will go and take a motor bike" (I cholako kandɔochu)	29	09	03	09	3.16	Accepted
	Cluster mean					3.22	Accepted

The table reveals that all items (1-6) produced a positive result, indicating that Kissi Dialect has a modest

influence on English Language and usage thus greatly affecting performance. The mean ratings obtained

included (3.46), (2.72), (3.54), (3.10), (3.32) and (3.16). This shows that many errors are produced by pupils in the use of English Language through Mother Tongue Interference.

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

Mother Tongue Interference has a significant influence on the academic performance of students in English Language.

This is because an individual's First Language tends to affect his or her acquisition of the Second Language due to the transfer of some linguistic properties of the First Language to the Second Language. Thus, the semantics, Syntax and Phonology of the First Language affect the teaching and learning in the Second Language, which is English Language. This outcome is in agreement with Dulay *et al.* (2002) who see language interference as the automatic or direct transfer due to the influence of the surface structure of the First Language onto the surface structure of the target language, English Language.

The findings also revealed that due to interference, pupils construct their own rules through their L₁ as purported by (Selinker, 2001; Sehjar, 2008; & Ellis, 2007). Also, it revealed that the shortage of adequate qualified teachers in English language does not help pupils to be proficient in English. It further showed that the Kissi Language has a significant influence on the academic performance of students, as expressed by Adijo (2013), who states that the language an individual expresses is like any other language in a country that poses significant problem in the use of English Language. For example, instead of saying "you are being called" a Kissi pupil may say they are calling you; (A cho num veelo) in Kissi. This is as a result of Direct Translation from the Kissi Language to English Language.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study sought to find out the influence of the Mother Tongue interference on academic performance. Questionnaires were designed as a means of collecting information from 50 respondents. The Acculturation Theory was used to explain the relationship between Mother Tongue Interference and pupils' academic performance in English Language. It also dealt fully with the concepts of Mother Tongue, Mother Tongue Interference, performance how the First Language affects syntax, the second Language in teaching and learning, language transfer, factors that cause language transfer and so on. The findings showed that Mother Tongue Interference has significant influence on academic performance and that the qualification of

teachers too has significant influence on the teaching and learning of English Language.

Based on the findings, therefore, the study concluded that Mother Tongue Interference greatly influences the academic performance of pupils in the use of English Language. Finally, the study recommended that school administrators should enforce strict rules and regulations in the use of the Mother Tongue and must ensure that English Language should be used in every class in teaching and learning instead of any frequent use of the vernacular language.

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