

**INTERFERENCE OF IGALA LANGUAGE IN LEARNING ENGLISH
LANGUAGE AT THE LOWER BASIC SCHOOL LEVEL IN KOGI
EAST EDUCATION ZONE, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA**

BY

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PG/Ph.D/13/65410

**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS EDUCATION
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA**

OCTOBER, 2018

TITLE PAGE

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARTS EDUCATION, FACULTY
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(ENGLISH)**

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APPROVAL PAGE

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(Student)

Prof. Uju Umo
(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

To my daughter, Hussena and my grandson Ojonile. To my mother, Hassanatu for all she has been through for being a mother to me.

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All glory and thanks to Almighty God who made it possible for this work to be completed and for his protection on every journey embarked on during the study. Thanks be to Him for provision and the enablement to get to the end of it all. He has done it again!

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**Alhassan, Habiba Oma
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka.**

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ABSTRACT

English language is indispensable in the educational system from the Lower Basic Level through all other stages of education in Nigeria. The achievements of pupils in English language, especially in public schools have been low. One of the reasons for low achievements by pupils in English language is interference of their mother tongue in learning the language. Mother tongue interference hinders effective learning of English language at the early stage where English is learned as a subject while the widely used language of instruction is the mother tongue (language of the immediate community) of the pupils. The poor standard in education and low performance in English language by pupils necessitated the need for effective learning of English language at the early stage of learning. This study was therefore embarked on to find out the interference of Igala language in learning English language at the Lower Basic Classes. Five research questions and two null-hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 476 Lower Basic II pupils in public schools in Kogi East Education Zone was used for the study. Simple random sampling techniques was used to sample five schools in each of the two local government areas sampled. Five of the schools were located in urban areas and five were in the rural areas. In each of the ten sampled schools, one intact class was randomly sampled for the study. The study looked at the pronunciation of words with regard to the production of vowel and consonant sounds of English language and translations of constructions at the level of morphology from Igala language into English. A 50 item Incidence of Interference Interview Schedule (IOIIS) developed by the researcher, which was validated by three experts from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was used for data collection. Reliability of the instrument was ensured through trial testing using the Kuder-Richardson (K-R) 21 formula. An internal consistency of 0.90 was obtained. The test was administered on the sampled group with the help of research assistants in the schools. The research questions were analyzed using the statistical tools of frequency and percentage while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Chi-Square. The findings of the study revealed that there was Igala language interference in learning English language at the Lower Basic Class. Female pupils performed better than the male pupils in articulating vowel and consonant sounds as well as in the aspect of morphology of English language. In the same vein, pupils attending schools in the urban areas performed better than their counterparts attending schools in the rural areas. There was significant difference between urban and rural pupils interference ratings. Recommendations were made based on the findings. The major recommendation was that curriculum planners and textbook writers should re-design the Basic Education Syllabus and Textbooks by making use of research works on Igala language and items in the local environment of pupils.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Language, being at the centre of all human activities is vital to human existence. It is the means by which human beings communicate thereby facilitating all human activities. Ezikpe (2010) defined language as a social phenomenon with a central function of making interpersonal communication easy. It is a formalized code used by a group of people to communicate with one another. Menegbe (2009) pointed out that language is described as words, their pronunciation and methods of combining them and how they are used and understood by a considerable community over a long period of time. When used appropriately, language enables people to mediate on a common ground of understanding and people are consequently, able to react accordingly to issues and in ways that are bound to facilitate decisions geared towards the realization of agreed national objectives. According to Anyanwu (2007) asserted, language is a social phenomenon, and as such, it is closely tied up with the social structure and value systems of any society.

A language is a tool for the transmission of culture. The progress of a people's way of life and civilization from generation to generation is possible through the medium of language. According to Okafor and Ugwu (2007), language fosters social cohesion at all levels of living in a society. Through the use of language, people get to understand one another and appreciate the living conditions, viewpoints, and aspirations of other people. Ngugi (2006) affirmed that language is the primary means of communication, knowledge, and power, the bedrock of civilization and culture.

As a vital tool that permits people to function in all spheres of human existence, language is crucial in the Nigerian education sector. Alabi, Adebiye, and Olatayo (2008) pointed out that language is an indispensable factor in the meaningful existence of man. It establishes man as a social being who not only uses words as a vehicle of socio-cultural transmission but also as a means of knowledge advancement and educational development. In the field of academics, language makes learning possible since it is a means of communicating ideas, feelings, and desires. It provides a cognitive process, which could be seen as the primary function of language. It is for the importance of language in education that the Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN 2013) makes pronouncements in the National Policy on Education (NPE) for all levels of education in Nigeria. For the Lower Basic Education, the policy states that:

The medium of learning in the primary school shall be the language of the immediate community for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject, from the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of immediate community and French shall be taught as subjects (pg.10).

From the above declaration, the policy statement for the Lower Basic School is clear that the language of instruction should be the mother tongue of the pupils. The introduction of the Basic Education to the education system in Nigeria is as a result of the reform in the Early Child Education in the Country. Igbokwe (2015) observed that following the decision of the Federal Government of Nigeria to introduce the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in September 1999, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) re-structured and realigned all Primary and Junior Secondary School (JSS) curricular into 9-year Basic Education Curriculum for implementation in Nigerian Schools with effect from September, 2008. The 9-year and the revised 9-year Basic Education curricular in Nigeria are

categorized into Lower Basic (Primaries 1-3), Middle Basic (Primaries 4-6) and Upper Basic (Junior Secondary 1-3). The language of the immediate environment which is the pupil's mother tongue should be used for instruction, while English should be learned as a subject. This is to allow the pupils to learn the English Language before it could be used as the language of instruction. In the light of the above declaration, the language required for instruction at the Lower Basic School in Kogi East Education Zone is Igala language which is the mother tongue of the pupils. The pupils at this level learn English as a subject since teaching and learning in Igala language is wide spread in the public schools where this study is centered, in line with the directive of the Federal Government in the national language policy.

Mother tongue is the native language of a group of people. Mother tongue according to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2011) may be referred to as primary or first language. The first language is the language acquired first by an individual. If children and their parents speak Igala before learning any other language, Igala is the children's mother tongue and their first language (L1). However, if a child of Igala parents living in England acquires English first before acquiring Igala, English is described from this condition as his first language. Mother tongue is widely used among children in most homes and communities in Nigeria. It should be the language used for instruction in schools both in the rural and urban communities as recommended in the national language policy. As pointed out earlier, the Federal Government of Nigeria (2008) stipulated in the NPE that the language of instruction in the Lower Basic Classes shall be the language of the immediate community for the first three years. The language of the immediate community for most children in Nigeria is their mother tongue. According to Alhassan (2017), the rationale for the mother tongue policy is the known fact that children learn better when they are taught in their mother tongue at the early stage of

education. This fact is based on the famous UNESCO positive research findings and other researches on the use of mother tongue medium of instruction at the early stage of children's education worldwide.

The term 'mother tongue' according to UNESCO (2011) is commonly used in policy statements and general discourse in education issues. It is an obvious yet not generally recognized truism that learning in a language which is not one's own provides a double set of challenges, not only is there the challenge of learning in a new language but also that of learning the new knowledge contained in that language. Mother tongue instruction is the practice of teaching children in the language they speak from home. UNESCO has encouraged mother tongue learning in early childhood and primary education since 1953. According to UNESCO (2011), when children are offered opportunities to learn in their mother tongue, they are more likely to enroll and succeed in school, and their parents are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's education. Mother tongue-based education especially benefits disadvantaged groups, including children from rural communities. Girls and rural children with less exposure to a dominant language like English stay in school longer and repeat grades less often. Ball (2010) stated that six to eight years of education in mother tongue are essential to develop the literacy and verbal proficiency level of learners required for academic performance in schools. Literacy in mother tongue as Ball pointed out allows for a linguistic foundation for learning additional languages. On the gains of mother tongue instruction, Iyamu and Ogiegbaen (2005) posited that mother tongue provides a rewarding school learning experience which can be a continuation of home experience that guarantees cognitive equilibrium. Teaching children in mother tongue such as Igala language is of immense benefit at

the early stage of learning, hence the adoption of mother tongue instruction in the NPE for early learning.

People come to understand and use their mother tongue through the language acquisition process which is not the same as the language learning situation. In language acquisition, the process is informal, unconscious and with little effort on the part of the child. Language acquisition means to the process by which the child comes to use his first language which in most cases is the mother tongue. According to Opega (2008), a child acquires his mother tongue through practical exploration of his physical and social environment. The mother tongue is acquired unconsciously through social interaction with parents, older siblings, peer group and members of the wider community. The child is surrounded by situations that stimulate language acquisition, play, games and other interesting activities form the basis of the quick mastery of the language. Opega (2008) maintained that imitation, repetition, and reinforcement are essential characteristics of mother tongue acquisition. The child listens attentively to parents and members of the family as they speak what he or she hears and repeats these often. The child is encouraged if the correct sound or utterance is reproduced, and corrected if incorrectly uttered. In language acquisition, language items are not structured. Whatever situation the child encounters is an opportunity for acquiring language. A child acquiring the mother tongue has very high motivation. He requires it as the only means to communicate his desires and feelings. The language acquisition process makes a deeper and more lasting impression on the mind of a child than second language learning.

Language learning is the process of learning another language after an individual has acquired the mother tongue or the first language. Alhassan (2009) noted that language learning is a process by which an individual is helped to learn a new language. It is usually in a formal setting

or through conscious and organized methods. There are usually needs for people to learn new languages. These could be for the purpose of business, employment or education. An example of the language learning situation is the position of English and French in Nigeria. The Nigerian child has to learn English or French taught in the classroom in a formal and organized manner. Opega (2008) pointed out that language learning involves conscious efforts on the part of the teacher and the learner. In this situation, the language learning activity is formal, systematic and often associated with the artificial classroom. Learning is in an organized and formal way. Second language learning is usually problematic because of the unnatural settings for learning and mother tongue interference.

Igala language is the language of Igala people. A group located mainly in the central part of Nigeria. Before the British Colonization, the people lived in a kingdom known as the Igala kingdom headed by the Ata. The seat of Ata and the original home of the Igala people is Idah. Igala language is one of the numerous local languages in Nigeria. It is regarded as one of the minority languages in the country.

Igala language as Omachonu (2012) affirmed belongs to the West Benue-Congo and more precisely one of the 'Yoruboid' languages in Nigeria. Other languages in the group are Yoruba and Itsekiri. Igala is a common language in Kogi State, spoken by over two million natives in nine Local Government Areas of Kogi East Senatorial District ñ North Central Nigeria. Kogi East Education Zone is located within the angle formed by the confluence of the rivers Niger and Benue. It is situated on the eastern region of Kogi State. It is bounded on the North by Benue State, on the West by River Niger, on the East by Enugu State, and on the South by Anambra State. (See Appendix D Pg. 123).

As a register tone Language, Igala has three basic tonemes high, mid and low (H. M. L.). Basically subject, verb and object (SVO) with no grammatical tense, and major word classes include nouns and verbs. The standard Igala orthography emerged in 1980 and was approved and published by the then National language centre, Lagos under the Ministry of Education. The approved orthography has the following 32 letters.

a b ch d e f g gb gw h i j k kp kw l m n
ng nm nw ny o p r t u nwu w y

The Language got its first attempt of development in 1948 when Rev. John Clerk presented a word list of the language in his specimens of Dialects (published at Berwick-upon-Tweed, England). Among notable efforts is the German Missionary, S.W. Kolle who listed one hundred Igala words in his massive work, *the polyglota Africana* (published by the CMS London). In 1855, Samuel Ajayi Crowder (late Bishop of the Niger) published a comparative word list of Igala and Yoruba with their English meanings. In 1867, the first Igala primer was written by Rev. A. G. Comber and published by the CMS, London.

The use of mother tongue, that is, Igala language in teaching and learning in Kogi East Education Zone is common in public schools in conformity with the Federal Government proclamations in the National Policy on Education. Some teachers seem not to understand the requirements of the NPE as they do not publicly agree that they use the mother tongue. Alabi, Adebiye, and Olatayo (2008) observed that in public primary schools, hardly do they use English even in upper primary schools. They maintain that a lot of pretences is even going on among teachers as to the language of instruction they use in the class to teach the pupils. They may profess using English as a medium of instruction, but in actual fact, it is the mother tongue of the

pupils they are using, albeit, without control. Ogunsiji in Alabi, Adebaye, and Olatayo (2008) captured this phenomenon succinctly in the following words:

In virtually all public primary schools, the children do not receive their education in English either at an earlier or later stage, yet the government, teachers, and learners engage in a game of proclaiming to the world that English is the medium. The truth is that the teacher teaches the children with his own or the children's mother tongue (pg. 29).

The situation seems not to be different in schools in Igala speaking areas of Kogi State. Children are taught using the local language, especially in public Schools. This practice continues up to the Secondary School Level sometimes. The teachers speak Igala to the pupils in and outside the classroom. The fact that the pupils speak no other language except Igala, so when they start school, the teacher has no option than to teach them in Igala language. As teaching and learning are carried out in Igala language, English language is also taught and learned as a subject at the Lower Basic Classes in Kogi East Education Zone. Igala language ñ the mother tongue of the pupils in which they have attained the appreciable level of proficiency and also the language in which they learn at this level could interfere with their learning of English language.

According to Egwuogu (2017), performing important roles in the national life of the country has made the English language so colossal and prestigious that it subjugated the indigenous languages, relegating them to the background. The elevation of English has also affected the standard of education making it lower, since, it has been established empirically by the famous Ife experiment that majority of children taught in mother tongue at the primary level of education performed better than those taught in English. Egwuogu (2017) maintained that the language situation in Nigeria has given rise to bilinguals not only in respect of English and indigenous languages but also in the indigenous languages due to long period of interaction

between English and the Nigerian environment on the one hand and between Nigerians from different socio-linguistic backgrounds who live together in different towns and cities and interact with one another. This is the real language contact phenomena in Nigeria. Ubong (2017) asserted that Nigeria is known to harbour a multiplicity of ethnolinguistic groups; therefore, it is no doubt a multilingual nation. The different languages and dialects in Nigeria are in contact with the English language. The implication of this is that most Nigerians are regarded as bilinguals, that is to say, that a large number of them speak, at least two languages ñ one indigenous language and the English language.

As Spolsky (2010) affirmed, a bilingual is a person who has some functional ability in a second language. This may vary from a limited ability in one or more domains, to very strong command in both languages, which is called balanced bilingualism. Olaoye (2007) pointed out that in balanced bilingualism, the individual is fully competent in two languages and he or she is also bicultural, i.e. he or she is a member of two or more cultural groups of the languages. Individuals as Olaoye (2007) maintained, can become bilinguals through intermarriage, travels, and trade, religious conversion, dual nationality through deliberate learning of a second language and through contact with a bilingual country or residence in a bilingual society. The degree of bilingualism differs from one person to another, in the age they acquired or learned the languages, in the order in which the two are acquired, and in the ability to keep both languages apart. Between the languages of the home (mother tongue) and that of the school (second language), there is often a difference. Bilinguals generally experience phases during which one language becomes more prominent than the other. When a situation like this persists, there is a strong tendency for one of the languages to gain ascendancy over the other, with the result that

one eliminates the other. Mother tongue often suffers this metaphoric death, through disuse of the MT, and ever use of the second language.

Maintaining the mother tongue is express as a desirable form of cultural diversity in societies, to promote ethnic identity, to lead to social adaptability, to add to the psychological security of the child and to develop linguistic awareness. Because of its many gains, many countries including developed ones have resorted to bilingual education at the early stage of learning. Fishman (1976) observes that in very general terms, bilingual education means some use of two (or more) languages of instruction in connection with teaching courses other than language per se. He maintains that within this broad definition, vastly different types of programmes and programme goals are being pursued. Fishman (1976) categorizes bilingual education programmes as transitional bilingualism, mono-literate bilingualism, biliterate bilingualism partial and biliterate bilingualism full.

Transitional Bilingualism is where the mother tongue is used in the early grades to the extent necessary to allow pupils to "adjust to school" and or "master subject matter" until their skill in the English is developed to the point that it alone can be used as the medium of instruction. Fishman notes that such programmes do not strive toward goals of fluency and literacy in both languages with opportunity throughout the curriculum for the continued improvement towards mastery of each word. Rather, they state goals such as increasing overall achievement of mother tongue speaking, by using both their local language and English as media of instruction in the primary grades. Such programmes (consciously or unconsciously) correspond to the societal objectives of language shift and give no consideration to long-range institutional development and support of the mother tongue.

Monoliterate Bilingualism, according to Fishman (1976), indicates goals of development in both languages for aural-oral skills but do not concern themselves with literacy skills in the non-English mother tongue. Thus such programmes emphasize developing fluency in mother tongue as a link between home and school, with the school providing recognition and support for the language in the domains of home and neighbourhood; but they are not concerned with the development of literacy skills in the non-English mother tongue. As Fishman remarked, this type of programme is intermediate in orientation between language shift and language maintenance, and the societal effect of such a programme might be one of language maintenance in the short run.

Similarly, the Biliterate Bilingualism Partial seeks fluency and literacy in both languages, but literacy in the mother tongue is restricted to certain subject matter most generally that relate to the ethnic group and its cultural heritage. In such a programme, reading and writing skills in the mother tongue are commonly developed in relation to the social sciences, literature, and the arts, but not in Sciences and Mathematics. This kind of programme is clearly one of language maintenance coupled with a certain effort at culture maintenance (perhaps even cultural development should the programme result in the production of journalism, poetry, and other literary art forms).

Biliterate Bilingualism full is where students are to develop all skills in both languages in all domains. Typically, both languages are media of instruction for all subjects (except in teaching the languages themselves). Clearly, this programme is directed at language maintenance and development of the minority language. Fishman noted that from the viewpoint of much of the linguistically and psychologically oriented literature this is the ideal type of programme. The

author states that it results in "balance, coordinate bilingual children capable of thinking and feeling in either of the two languages independently."

It is a truism that by imperatives of Nigeria's history of colonization by Britain, according to Onuigbo (2006), the internal linguistic complexity in Nigeria and the necessities of modern times, English is both the second and official language of the people of Nigeria. It is the most crucial out of all legacies bequeathed to Nigeria by the British colonial administration. Commenting on the dominant status of English language in Nigeria, Onuigbo posited that the English language had become a fact of life in Nigeria and many other countries of the world where the language is used as a second language. As Onuigbo maintained, it is still important that as the frontiers of the language increases, it continues to acquire new significance and to place new demands on the users. In Nigeria, however, English is used in many situations ñ home, office, market, social gathering, administration, government, commerce, industry, law, inter-ethnic communication and most importantly in education, the reason for which English has become a core subject in the educational system in Nigeria. The Federal Republic of Nigeria made several policy declarations on the English language which shows the official position of the language and its place and role in Nigeria's educational setting.

The English language is the language of formal education which enhances the social and economic status of individuals and consequently of the Nigerian nation. In Nigeria, proficiency in the English Language is a necessary route to respectable jobs as well as to higher education. It is the official language of the country, and it enables the citizens to function in all sphere of national life. The effective use of English is what many learners in the second language situation in Nigeria lack. The lack of proficiency in the use of English language by learners is prevalent and exhibited in all aspects such as phonology, morphology, syntax and so on. The learning of

the language begins at the Lower Basic School Level of classes 1 ñ 3. It is learned as a subject and also serves as a medium of instruction from the Middle Basic Education level of classes 4 ñ 6. At the point of transition at the Middle Basic Level where English should be the language of instruction, the policy has not been adhered to strictly as teachers continue to use the mother tongue of the pupils for instruction. For this reason, Jibrin (1990) asserted that there were no definite 'chronogram' and legal provisions to enforce and make the implementation of the policy effective and successful in all ramifications. This generates a situation where learners switch to their mother tongue or pidgin. Onuigbo and Eyisi (2008) noted that English language education in Nigeria does not only contend with interference problems from native languages but also with the corrupting influence of pidgin. Learners are thereby incapable of activating vocabulary for a given task. The plight of Igala learners of English language as a second language is not different from the above situation.

According to Okpanachi (2013), Igala speakers have problems with pronunciation of certain English vowel and consonant sounds. Igala speakers of English are not able to articulate correctly the following vowel sounds: /i/, /æ/, /ɜ:/ and /ɛ/. Igala speakers are not able to distinguish between /i/ and /i:/. It is the same with other length and qualitative distinction as words like *ósitô* /sit/ and *ócityô* /siti/ are pronounced as /si:t/ and /si:ti/. Okpanachi (2013) maintained that learners have problems with the central vowels /ɜ:, ɜ:/, all these are articulated as /ɔ/ as in the following; *ócutô* /Kɜt/ as /kɔt/, *ówordô* /wɜ:d/ as /wɔd/, *ónurseô* /nɜ:s/ as /nɔs/. Sometimes, / / is pronounced as /a/, for example in the word *óaboutô* / baut/ as /abaut/. In addition, the vowel /æ/ as in *ómanô* /mæn/ and *óbadô* /bæ/ are pronounced /man/ and /bad/ respectively. This is an indication that /æ/ is wrongly pronounced as /a:/. There is also the

problem of vowel substitution. The diphthong /i / is substituted for /ɛ / . For instance the words ócareô /kɛ / , ópairô /pɛ / and óbearô /bɛ / are pronounced /kɪ / , /pɪ / and /bɪ / .

Commenting further, Okpanachi (2013) maintained that, learners do not have much problems with the consonant sounds. However, difficulty arises with the production of the palate-alveolar affricate /tʃ/ which is pronounced as potato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/. The voiceless dental fricative /θ/ is pronounced as alveolar plosive /t/, for instance the words "thick" /θɪk/, ómethodô /meθ d/ are pronounced /ti:k/ and /metɔd/. The voiced dental fricative /ð/ is pronounced as voiced alveolar plosive /d/. Another pair of sounds which speakers substitute constantly for each other is /z/ and /s/. The Igala learner cannot differentiate between the sounds. Furthermore, the voiced palate-alveolar fricative /ʒ/ is pronounced as /ʃ/ and /j/, voiceless palate-alveolar fricative and the semivowel.

Igala speakers of English also have problems with the pronunciation of words with consonant clusters. It is more obvious in the final position. When there is a consonant cluster at the final position, vowels are slotted in between the consonants. For instance, a word like "middle" /midl/ is rendered as /midul/ and "little" /litl/ as /litu/. As a result of slotting in of vowels, some consonants in the cluster are eliminated, while dropping the final alveolar lateral /l/ and substituting the vowel /u:/ for it.

In the aspect of morphology, Igala learners of English also encounter problems which result into interference. This could be due to the differences in the morphological processes of Igala and English language. Concerning the morphology of English, Ekundayo, Salami, and Oni (2002) noted that certain words can be further sub-divided into minimal forms that have

meaning, these minimal forms usually occur in a number of words in the language. Such minimal words are referred to as morphemes, for example, the word farmer, walked, laughed, boyhood can be sub-divided into farm+ er, walk+ ed, laugh+ ed , boy+ hood. Walk, farm, laugh, boy, ed, -hood are morphemes. The root is the morpheme that remains after all affixes have been removed from a word.

Though all languages perform the same functions to the users of language, no two languages can be said to be the same. For this reason, English and Igala language are not the same. A contrastive analysis of the two languages by Ikani (2004) revealed that there were areas of differences in the language especially at the levels of phonology and morphology (the speech sounds and word formation). Speech sounds are the discrete units into which every utterance or sound in a particular language can be broken down. They are the vowels and consonants of a particular language. A vowel is a speech sound produced when air passes from the lungs, through the mouth, and across the lips without obstruction by any organ of speech. Okorafor (2012) pointed out that English vowels are twenty (20) in number. Out of the twenty vowels, twelve (12) are called monotonies or pure vowels because they are each clearly recognizable as one sound, and eight (8) are called diphthongs or impure vowels because they sound like two different vowels fused together in pronunciation. The monothongs are classified into seven short vowels and five long vowels. In Igala language, the speech sounds of the language vary from those of English language. Igala language as Omachonu (2000) indicated functions with a seven (7) vowel system. This is in sharp contrast with the English vowels which are twenty in number. The long vowels and diphthongs do not exist in Igala speech sounds. A consonant is a speech sound produced when the airway is totally or partly obstructed by one or more organs of speech. In producing a consonant, two or more organs of speech such as the tongue and the palate often

interact with each other. The English consonants are twenty-four in number. They are categorized based on the manner of articulation into plosives, fricatives, Affricates, liquids, semivowels, and Nasals. The Igala language consonants are twenty-three (23), categorized into Plosives, Fricatives, Affricates, Semi vowels, and Nasals. According to Okorafor (2012), plosives are articulated with the mouth closed first, followed by sudden (explosive) release of air, fricatives with the frictional passage of air across a narrow opening in the airway. Affricates are articulated when a fricative is preceded by a consonant the production of which involves complete closure of the air track followed by the sudden release of air. Liquids are consonants articulated without friction because the vocal cords are open. The semivowels or glides are called semivowels because there is no significant obstruction of airflow through the mouth during their articulation and nasals are articulated with most of the air passing upwards from the lungs escaping through the nose.

Some of the vowel and consonant sounds in the English language are absent in Igala language. The production of such sounds may constitute problems to Igala learners of English Language. At the Lower Basic classes where learners are introduced to learning the English language, some are faced with difficulty in pronouncing English words such as school, teacher, exercise-book, field, basket, eraser and so on. This hinders the effective learning of the English language on a good foundation at Lower Basic Level. The liquids categories do not appear on the Igala consonant chart. Though other categories are similar in both languages. Some consonants in Igala language do not exist in English language; examples are /kp/, /kw/, /gb/ and so on.

Similarly, a comparison of English and Igala language at the morphological level is imperative. Muhammad (2013) affirmed that morphemes are the ultimate element of morphological analysis as a single word may be composed of one or more morphemes. The root

of a word is the basic part of the word. It is a morpheme on which words can be built through the addition of affixes. Affixes which are grammatical morphemes are added before, within or after the root of a word in order to give it a desired meaning. They are added to a word in order to change, expand, and modify the meaning of words and to help build new words. Affixes can be in form of prefixes, infixes or suffixes. In Igala language, however, affixes are mainly in form of prefixes and not very common in infixes. Affixation of words in the language occurs mainly in the form of prefixes. Contrasts in the morphology of English and Igala language pose learning problems to Igala learners of English at the Lower Basic Level. For instance, plurals are formed in English by adding the suffixes 's', 'es', 'ies' to words, while in Igala it is by adding the affixes 'am' and 'amb'. Tenses in Igala remain the same, but in English language, words take on 'ed', 'ing' or change their forms as in walk-walked, go - went, drink - drank and so on. The differences in the features of Igala and English make the learning of English as a second language problematic for Igala learners.

Interference is a major hindrance to communication and learning of a second language. Ikani (2004) noted that when speakers who have acquired the habits of one language want to learn a second language, there is the tendency for the speech habits of their first language to interfere in their efforts at learning and using the second language. According to Crystal (2003), second language (L2) is a language other than one's mother tongue used for special purpose, e.g., for education and government. It usually has official status or recognized functions within a country. The second language in Nigeria is English which has acquired a unique position. It is the language of instruction at all levels of education except the Lower Basic Classes of 1 - 3.

As the source of interference, the mother tongue according to Harmer (2008) has potentially negative and positive impacts; the positive may serve social and cognitive functions,

but on the other hand, reliance on it undermines interaction in English. Learners are thereby linguistically incapable of activating vocabulary for a chosen task. This problem is aggravated in a situation where there is a wide range of differences between the system of the native language of the learner and that of the target language. Past studies on the contact of English and Nigerian languages according to Ikani (2004) have located mother tongue interference at three levels ñ the level of sound, the level of grammar and the level of lexis which in other words are the levels of phonology, morphology, and syntax. At the level of sound or phonology, for instance, each language has a different stress and intonation system. The learner transfers the sounds of his own language (or their nearest equivalents) and the stress and intonation system to the language which he or she is learning. The structure (morphology and syntax) of the mother tongue may be transferred to English, especially in cases where English structures are problematic. Areas of major difficulty according to Ikani (2014), usually lie in the handling of English tenses, number, articles, prepositions, passive constructions, gender and the problems of correct answers to negative questions. Since language involves the expression of culture, there are usually areas of difficulties in the expression of certain concepts. The major ones include the kinship terminologies, colour, weather, or season, cookery/food, building, agriculture, flora-fauna and time concepts by Igala learners of English as a second language in Kogi East Education zone. These are sources of confusion for Igala learners especially at the early stage of learning the English language at the Lower Basic Classes.

Interference occurs when Igala-speaking learners use the linguistic features of their mother tongue to replace or approximate closely with the features of the English language. This happens because the Igala learners have internalized their first language and consequently, this affects their thinking process. Learners think first in their mother tongue and translate such

thought directly into English. The above is corroborated by Eyisi (2009) who pointed out that mother tongue or native language is usually very significant in the lives of speakers because it carries the culture and tradition of speakers. A person wishing to learn a second language is bringing into contact two languages within his linguistic characteristics. There is the danger of one influencing the other; especially the second in most cases is influenced most often at areas of semblance. Mahmoud (2006) asserted that the data on the interlanguage and language transfer show that it is highly probable that L2 learners will always think most often in the L1 first even at the advanced level. There is also the problem of lack of exposure to the English language by pupils entering into public schools at the Lower Basic Level in Kogi East Education Zone. So, for many pupils, it is learning a new language other than their mother tongue. This situation is responsible for the unsatisfactory language skills exhibited by some Igala learners of the English language. The mother tongue of Igala learners constitutes a source of interference at the Lower Basic classes. This study is focused on the interference of Igala language in learning the English language at the levels of phonology and morphology at the Lower Basic Classes.

The imbalance in male and female performance in academics in recent times is becoming alarming with the female taking the lead. Christine (2004) affirmed that from the time immemorial, males have supposedly been in the forefront in most spheres of life with visibly overwhelming better performance in academics. Nowadays, this trend has not only been altered but has resulted in making their male counterparts academic minority in terms of their performances by reasons that remain a puzzle. According to Amoo (2011), any change in academics that is acclaimed or assumed to portend inequality impacts or is capable of inflicting segregation on any sphere of human endeavours, demands close investigation. Klasen (2002) asserted that gender may be defined as what it means to be male and female. It is an array of

societal beliefs, norms and attitudes that determine and shape what is acceptable as male and female behavior and roles. It may also be explained as the economic, social, political, cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female.

Furthermore, proactive interference as Wolman in Afangideh (2005) pointed out is a psychological construct involving internal, dispositional mechanisms. Its likely effect on male and female are crucial especially with respect to the confirmed psycho-cognitive differences in the response of males and females in academic settings. Increasingly, gender has become indispensable in education matters. It is a relevant variable considered in language proficiency and use. Offorma (2004) indicated that there are divergent opinions on which gender achieves better than the other. It is believed by some that females achieve higher than their male counterparts. Azikiwe (2005) noted that the widely held views that females are superior to males in language use (acquisition and performance) are based on studies in foreign countries. In view of this, gender may constitute a factor that influences interference in the learning of English language at the Lower Basic Schools in Kogi East Education Zone.

Similarly, the location of schools in urban and rural areas may influence interference in the learning of English language at the Lower Basic Schools in Kogi East, commenting on the location of school Wilkins cited in Agu (2016) affirmed that what is needed in language learning is adequate exposure to the target language. The greater the exposure to the language, the more the learner can formulate and revise his hypothesis about the structure of the language. This points out that exposure to the target language is very important, but when schools are located in rural areas, the chances of exposure may be lacking. Schools located in urban areas have the advantage of exposure over those in rural areas. The current problem of poor quality in education in Nigeria to a large extent could be blamed on the inability of learners to master the English

language which is the language of education in the country. The problem begins from the point at which learners are introduced to learning the English language at the Lower Basic School. A preliminary study carried out by the researcher in Ankpa Local Government Area Schools revealed that the performance of pupils at the Lower Basic Classes is below standard. In the ten schools where the preliminary study was carried out, their English Language Examination results for the second term, Basic Class 2, 2016 showed a pass percentage of 18% - 46% (see Appendix E, Page 124). The poor performance in the English Language by pupils of the Lower Basic Classes could be due to difficulty in grasping the new language introduced to them. The pupils were already used to expressing themselves in Igala language at home before entering school. Their poor performance could have been as a result of mother tongue interference, as the manner of expressing themselves in Igala language could have been transferred to learning the English language.

In Kogi East Education Zone, the problem of lack of mastery of English language among learners lingers even to the point of entering into higher institutions of learning. Learners are unable to speak and write intelligibly in the English language. Their attempt at expressing themselves in English is often marred by poor pronunciation, inappropriate use of words and poor constructions. This is as a result of a lack of proper foundation in learning English at Lower Basic School. Adakonye and Danjuma (2010) corroborated the above view as they pointed out that one of the thorny issues in the teaching and learning of the English language is the poor linguistic foundation of students. They declared that learners of English as a second language in the polytechnic have poor English language foundation right from their primary and secondary school education. The inability of Igala learners of English language to grasp the rudiments of

the language from the Lower Basic School level affects their performance in English and in the entire educational process.

Statement of the Problem

The lack of mastery of English language among learners and poor quality of education in Nigeria are indications that learning is not effective, especially learning of English language at the early and crucial stage at the Lower Basic School. The English position language occupies in Nigeria is central and crucial to the development of the country. Among many important roles, it is the official language and a medium of instruction in schools and colleges. Despite the public and official emphasis on English, the outcome of learning has not achieved the desired objectives, that is, producing learners who are proficient in the functional use of the language. The problem of not achieving the desired objective of learning English language cuts across all levels of learning in the country.

At the higher level, employers in both the private and public sectors have complained about the poor quality of graduates. According to the World Bank in a report on labour market prospects for university graduates in Nigeria, the last well-trained crop of Nigerian graduates left the system in the mid-1980s. Since then, the products of university education are viewed by employers as half-baked graduates who are miserably ignorant even in their own areas of specialization. Two key skill areas, according to the report, where incompetence is blatantly displayed are communication and technical proficiency. The new graduate has the poor ability in oral and written expressions of English and is ill-prepared in those applied technical skills necessary for solving problems and enhancing business productivity. The origin of this poor quality of communication skills by the graduates began from the Basic School level which is the foundation laying stage for further learning.

Lack of proficiency in the English language among students is a growing concern in Kogi East Education Zone, North Central - Nigeria. As a teacher of English language in the zone, the researcher comes into contact regularly with individuals, who have completed the Basic Education but are unable to read and write meaningfully in English. The next to illiteracy state some find themselves serve as a source of discouragement for further learning to them after the Basic Education level. The case is the same among students who gain admission into higher institutions after the Secondary School education. Many teachers have observed that students cannot construct grammatically correct English sentences. The researcher has observed that some Igala learners of English language tend to apply the structures of Igala to their use of English and these result into a lot of un-English expressions with distortion of meanings. There is mother tongue interference at the levels of phonology, morphology, lexical and syntactic expressions of Igala learners of English. The Lower Basic level being the commencement point for the learning of English is the point where interference begins. Therefore, the problem of this study was to find out the interference of Igala language in the learning of English language at the Lower Basic School level of education in Kogi East Education Zone.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the interference of Igala language in the learning of English language at the Lower Basic School level. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. Find out the incidence of interference of Igala language in articulating the vowel sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes.
2. Find out the incidence of interference of Igala language in articulating the consonant sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes.

3. Find out the incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes.
4. Determine the influence of gender on the incidence of interference of Igala language in the learning of English at the Lower Basic Classes.
5. Determine the influence of location on the incidence of interference of Igala language in the learning of English at the Lower Basic Classes.

Significance of the Study

The Significance of this study emanated from the theoretical and practical bases of contrastive analysis in teaching and learning a second language. This study adopted contrastive analysis (CA) as it applies to every aspect of language (e.g., phonology, morphology, syntax and soon). Contrastive analysis hypothesis is based on comparison and contrast of languages. The principle of CA is that where two languages are similar, the positive transfer would occur, and where they are different, negative transfer or interference would result. These make CA predictive about where second language learner would have difficulties in learning. Adopting CA in this study would help to determine what pattern and structures are identical in Igala and English to facilitate learning among Igala learners at the Lower Basic Classes, and which patterns and structures are absent in their mother tongue ñ Igala that would pose interference problems in their learning of English language. It is hoped that the findings of the study would help Igala learners achieve mastery and attain the required skills necessary in English language usage. The results of this study would be of benefit to pupils, teachers, textbook writers, policymakers and curriculum planners. Pupils would benefit from the study as findings would contribute to their understanding of instruction, thereby positively affecting their achievement in English language and in all other subjects.

The findings of the study would equally help teachers of English as a second language in Kogi East Education Zone to expose the interference difficulties to their pupils and also help them understand how these difficulties arise. It would encourage teachers to employ materials and methods that would help learners to achieve more in the teaching and learning process. The findings of this study would also be useful to language methodology teachers in colleges of education and universities to emphasize the use of teaching methods like drills, substitution tables, or games by teachers at the Lower Basic Education as well as at the Secondary School levels.

The results of the study would equip textbook writers and instructional resource developers with information on the problem of mother tongue interference in order to receive due attention to their works. This they could do by placing more emphasis on the areas of difficulties in learning English for the second language learners.

The study would provide information for policymakers and supervisors of education on the need to adopt CA in teaching the English language in schools. The findings of this study would be useful to curriculum planners and developers to call for review and curriculum adaptation for more effective teaching and learning of English language by encouraging teachers through seminars and workshops to carry out CA of the L1 and L2 of pupils to identify areas of difficulties for appropriate teaching strategies.

The findings of this study would reveal the differential responses of male and female pupils of the Lower Basic Classes in learning English language skills and so help to decide on whether to give special attention and adopt separate instructional techniques for male and female Igala learners of English at the Lower Basic Classes. Furthermore, the results of the study would expose the differential influence of location on second language learning for which the necessary

corrective steps must be taken to arrest the situation. This would improve the teaching and learning of English language and boost pupils' performance at Lower Basic Classes in Kogi East Education Zone.

Scope of the Study

The study was delimited to investigate the interference of Igala language in the learning of English language among Igala learners at the Lower Basic Class II in Kogi East Education Zone of Kogi State. Emphasis was on phonology and morphology of English language. The study focused on the learning of vowel and consonant sounds in phonology and the use of plural forms and tenses in words in the aspect of the morphology of English. The study looked at the influence of gender and location on interference in learning the English language at the Lower Basic Class II in Kogi East Education Zone.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- (1) What is the Incidence of interference of Igala Language in articulating the vowel sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes?
- (2) What is the Incidence of interference of Igala Language in articulating the consonant sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes?
- (3) What is the Incidence of interference of Igala Language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes?
- (4) What is the influence of gender on the Incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils at the Lower Basic Classes?
- (5) What is the influence of location on the Incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils at the Lower Basic Classes?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H₁:** There is no significant difference in the interference ratings of male and female Igala learners of English language at the Lower Basic Classes.
- H₂:** There is no significant difference in the interference ratings of urban and rural Igala learners of English language at the Lower Basic Classes.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature review consisting of conceptual framework, theoretical framework, empirical studies and summary of literature review.

Conceptual Framework

- Language
- The English language
- The Mother Tongue
- Igala Language
- Interference in Second Language Learning
- The Universal Basic Education in Nigeria
- Gender
- Location
- Schematic Representation of Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Framework

- Theory of Contrastive Analysis
- Theory of Error Analysis
- The Cognitive/Gestalt Theory of Learning
- The Conditioning Theory of Learning

Empirical Studies

- Studies on Mother Tongue Interference
- Studies on Learners' Achievement in English

- Studies on Learners Achievement in Language due to Gender
- Studies on Learners Achievement in Language due to Location

Summary of Literature Review

Language

Language is an important universal phenomenon that cannot be overlooked by any society. It is a medium of communication that permits people to interact and carry out their daily activities. Language has been given different definitions and descriptions by different scholars in relation to their fields and interests, but one thing remains central to most definitions of the concept. This has always been its communicative function. According to Opara (2012), Language is a peculiar human possession. It is what makes community living possible. It is also the facilitator of many of the breakthroughs in all spheres of human development. Menegbe (2009) noted that language is described as words, their pronunciation, and the method of combining them and how they are used and understood by a considerable community over a long period of time. Language could also mean audible, articulate, meaningful sounds as produced by the action of the vocal organs. It refers to a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks with understood meaning. Eyisl (2006) affirms that human language is systematic and so words used are properly arranged in linear sequences based on certain rules in order to enable man communicate his ideas, emotions and desires to member of his linguistic community. According to Alabi, Adebiye and Olatayo (2008). Language is an indispensable factor in the meaningful existence of man. It is a unique factor that distinguishes man from the other creatures. It establishes man as a social being who not only uses language as a vehicle of social, cultural transmission but also as means of knowledge advancement and educational development.

Language is the ultimate symbol of belonging; it is through language that culture is shared and transmitted. Language reflects the culture of its speakers, commenting on this, Akudolu (2012) notes that there is a close correspondence between French language for example, and its cultural practice and world view. Cultural attributions and value system orientations of a particular cultural group can be described, recognized and predicted through the use of language. Language plays a important role in cultural expressions, yet, the functions of a language far exceed the mere reflection of culture. As language embodies the ever changing experience of phenomena of the world, the speaker of a language will constantly reshape his/her cognitive system and world view through new categories of discourse.

Furthermore, Igyudu (2010) asserted that language serves as a means of communication and self expression. It is language that human beings use to express their ideas, thoughts and desires. It is a major part of a people's culture. This means that our cultures are interwoven in our languages. For every culture to fully express itself and go on to pass across its values to generations upon generations, it must rely on language and language attributes. Cooperative efforts and joint action are made possible by language. This means that it is human language that is used to call people together and enlighten them to embark on any meaningful project. Igyudu (2010) stressed that language is a very unique attribute of man that makes man a rational being because it is linked with man's cognitive ability. Okafor and Ugwu (2007) asserted that language fosters social cohesion at all levels of living in a society. Through the use of language, people get to understand one another and appreciate the living conditions, viewpoints, and aspirations of other people when used appropriately, language enables people to mediate on a common ground of understanding and people are consequently, able to react accordingly to issues in ways that are bound to facilitate decisions geared towards the realization of agreed national objectives.

Language, as Richard (2010) asserted, is the human vocal noise or arbitrary graphic representation of the noise in writing used systematically and conventionally by a speech community for purposes of communication. Language is what make it possible for people to express a worldview that is peculiar and unique to them in a special way and ultimately gives people their identity.

Language is a medium of exchanging ideas, feelings, thoughts and a tool for achieving social interaction among members of a social group. It is a tool for interpersonal interaction necessary for incorporating the individual towards the aims and aspirations of the society. Language in other words as Opara (2012) opined, ropes the individual into a society and also enables the individual to contribute to the sustenance of, and integration of that society. Adegbite cited in Opara (2012) stated that language is the central force operating in the evolution of human culture leading to all the state-of-the-art technological breakthroughs and explosion of knowledge in all fields of human endeavour, and all forms of communication are derived from language. Unarguably, human society in a united form will be difficult to conceive without language. Opara, Daudu and Opara (2007) pointed out that language does not only enable individuals to cooperate to advance the development of society, but also shapes the individual and group consciousness. The language of a group embodies the group's world views. The speaker of a language, therefore, has access to already-made system of categorizing what he perceives. Language is one of the principal tools for human development and societal regeneration.

Commenting on the concept of language, Akase (2012) observed that language considered in the dynamic function of its diverse roles in human existence, can also be viewed as a catalyst for the growth of human society. It can be seen as the ability, system, mode of

expression of thought, feelings and desires. Language is the phenomenon that makes other things possible. No system works effectively without a means of communication. Omachonu (2009) asserted that language is described as a human system of communication or a type of patterned human behavior which enables all people in a given culture or speech community to communicate and interact. It is a reflection of the thoughts pattern, feelings, values as well as the psychological and philosophical capacities of the people. Igala as a language no doubts functions in the same way among the language group as the above exposition. The importance of language to the existence of Nigeria as a country cannot be overemphasized. English language plays very important roles in the country as the official language. This is in conjunction with the various mother tongues of the people such as the Igala language. English and the various mother tongues are important in the country's education system.

The English Language

English is a non-indigenous language in Nigeria. It is the language used in Britain, United States of America, Australia and some other countries. According to Ohamara (2012), it is an indo-European language belonging to the West Germanic branch, the official language of Britain and United States and most of the common wealth countries. English language came to the West African sub-region and indeed into Nigeria between 1787 and 1861 through colonization by Britain. It is a well-known fact that the contacts between Africa and Europe constitute the means by which English language spread in the African continent through trade, colonization and linguistic imperialism. According to Ofulue (2017), since the introduction of English language and subsequent implantation and indigenization, the language has become an integral part of the sociohistorical reality of many once dominated modern political states across the world. Today, the regions of West Africa and East Africa are major sites where English has thrived as a direct

consequence of British colonization. Its post colonial history is now more than half a century in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda which were former British protectorates and colonies. Ofulue (2017) stressed that despite the linguistic principle of language equality, contact situations and their related multilingual sites faced with issues of language inequality and discrimination occasioned by the reality of power and dominance of colonialists.

In the same vein, Osakwe (2011), described English as a vagabond language having multiple homes in addition to its natural land. No language has roamed, traversing many regions of the world from place to place like English. Mufwene (2009) observed that English was introduced into Nigeria twice at different times and in different ways- first as spoken by British traders who spoke non- standard English varieties in contact with indigenous groups from which the Nigerian pidgin emerged and second as a language of education in the colonial era.

In the views of Odebunmi (2017), the colonial history has cost native English the ownership of its own tongue, an inevitable loss in the face of the global eventualities in the trend of English acquisition, but it has rewarded the victims of colonization with linguistic unification which would otherwise have been unrealizable without the common tongue offered by English. Corroborating this, Gargesh (2006) pointed out that rather than being considered a colonial liability, English is accepted as an asset in the form of a national and international language representing educational and economic progress. According to Maduakor (2003), English has been the language of power since the 17th century when English was beginning to emerge as a world power. It remained so till the end of the British Empire in the 19th century. Another power was emerging then to perpetuate the reign of English as the queen of all languages. This was the rise of America as a superpower. The successive ascendancy of English during the reign of two

world powers has established English as a world language. Maduakor (2003) affirmed that English is the language of world culture and civilization; it is the language of international diplomacy business and commerce. Alabi (2012) asserted that the era of British colonial rule enhanced the use of English in Nigeria. With the amalgamation of the Northern and southern protectorates in 1914, it became more appropriate to have a common language that will unite the country and make governance easier. The English language readily served that purpose. The colonial masters made it the language of administration, education, politics and all forms of official transactions. Government policies and official publications were made in English. Even the Nigerian constitution was written in English. The education ordinance of 1882 which declared English as the language of instruction in schools, and the certification system that specified a pass in English for the award of certificates required for employment in government departments and commercial firms, all helped to entrench English in Nigeria. Otagburagu (2002) affirmed that the consolidation of British colonial rule meant the formal implementation of the English language in the country's national and political life. Corroborating this, Nwaiwu (2012) noted that English language has remained the only language with which Nigeria can solve her multilingual problem. It has served her conveniently as a lingua franca cum official language. For this, as to Nwaiwu noted English language has been accorded a prestigious position since independence in 1960. It has remained one of the compulsory requirements for admission, promotion, graduation, certification and employment. As a non-indigenous language, English is a second language to many Nigerians. Ohamara (2012) asserted that as a second language, the Basic Education, Secondary and Tertiary Institutions include English as one of the major subjects learned. It is the dominant language of education, therefore of literacy and national development.

The importance of English to Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. It is not only used as a means of communication among the people but also taught at different levels of education in the country. Ndeche (2012) asserted that lack of competence in English language may render the citizenry unable to convey the intended ideas and messages across, or even when passed, the content of the message may not be properly understood. Failure in English language in education means failure in academic performance. This is so, according to Ndeche (2012) when the emphasis placed on English language is considered. English language in education sector plays an important role. It is the language of instruction from the middle basic classes to tertiary level.

English language is taught and learned as a second language in Nigeria. The teaching of English language involves a lot of areas which help the learner to master the language and also use it effectively. It covers the four major skills of language viz speaking listening, reading and writing. Ndeche noted that since English language is the language of education, it is necessary to adequately learn and use it. The teachers and students need to be proficient in the language to be able to achieve the goals of education by using the right and appropriate words in the teaching and learning process. The proper teaching of English language will help to better the individual in the environment. He or she becomes self confident and is capable of expressing himself and his needs with the language at his control; he or she is able to contribute what he has to the society. In learning a language, it is necessary that learners learn from a very early stage to become involved in real life communication.

English language like all developed languages consists of oral and written forms. Written language is the symbolic representation of speech into a universally accepted orthography. Written languages are developed; they have well-established orthographies, and standard written varieties, corpora or written literature, and highly sophisticated and dynamic Meta language.

Oral or spoken English is an integral and essential aspect of English. According to Onuigbo (2005), speaking skills in English language involves the ability to understand and to produce the English sounds and rhythms, correct grammatical use of words, phrases and idioms in everyday usage, different speaking styles to suit different topics and various levels of audience and social convention of speaking. This ideal situation has continued to elude learners of English as a second language in Nigeria and Igala learners of English in particular. English in the Nigerian situation, must of necessity, respond to the current demand or pressure in its teaching and learning especially at the Lower Basic School in Kogi East Education Zone.

The Mother Tongue

All existing societies have languages which facilitate their daily activities. Human beings are born into societies and they grow up speaking the languages of their societies. According to Agbedo, Abata-Ahura, Krisagbedo and Edward (2012), the language an individual grows up to speak which was acquires from his/her parents and the community is his/her mother tongue. The term mother tongue refers to the language that a human learns from birth. In other words, as Agbedo et al put it, it is the language in which the child undergoes language acquisition process. It is possible for a child to be exposed to two languages from birth. In this case, the child would likely grow up to acquire two languages simultaneously. These two languages so acquired and developed through early childhood, then become the child's mother tongues or first languages.

According to Elaigwu (2004), the mother tongue is the child's first language and this is usually acquired at home. It is closely associated with the child's growth and development. It is the language from birth, the language in which he/she dreams and thinks and in which he/she can easily and conveniently express his/her feelings and emotions. The mother tongue is part of the child's personality; he/she acquires the earliest, and possibly, the memorable experiences of life

in it. Elaigwu maintained that these experiences form the bedrock of the child's education. It is through the mother tongue that the child gets the ideas and attitudes of his/her community. Corroborating this, Opega (2008) pointed out that it is usually the language of the child's older siblings and people within the same environment who belong to the same language group. The mother tongue forms the basis of the registers of the native speaker and it is capable of expressing all his or her ideals and experiences. The mother tongue is acquired unconsciously without much effort on the part of the child. The sentence structures, lexicon and the sound system of the mother tongue are acquired in a natural and informal process.

The term mother tongue, though widely used as UNESCO (2011) indicated, refers to several different situations. Definitions often include the following elements: the language(s) that are learnt first, the language(s) one identifies with or is identified as a native speaker of by others; the language(s) one knows best, and the language(s) one uses most. Mother tongue could also be referred to as primary or 'first language'

The first major role of mother tongue, according to Mbah (2012), is to set the tone for the child to be used to the habits or culture of his or her immediate environment. According to Alabi, Adabiye and Olatayo (2008), the complexity in language acquisition and learning has shown that man has the capacity of learning and acquiring more than one language, thus, the first language acquired in any social environment during infancy becomes his/her first language (L1) or mother tongue. Subsequent languages learned thereafter, either through formal education or traveling, can be labeled as second, third and fourth language (L2, L3 and L4) and so on.

Igala language is the mother-tongue of children of the Lower Basic Classes in Kogi East Education Zone. The children are born into communities where only Igala language is spoken. Children acquire Igala language as their mother tongue. Effective instruction in Igala language at

the Lower Basic Classes paves the way for meaningful and successful learning of second language such as the English language in the educational system, thereby equipping learners for greater achievement in school and improved quality of education in general.

When teaching and learning is carried out at the early stage in the local language of the pupils, the practice is referred to as mother tongue instruction. UNESCO (2011) affirmed that mother tongue instruction generally is the use of the learner's mother tongue as the medium of teaching and learning in schools. It is considered to be an important component of quality education, particularly in the early years. The expert view is that mother tongue instruction should cover both the teaching of and the teaching through the language. The term mother tongue, as UNESCO (2011) asserted, is commonly used in policy statements and in general discourse on educational issues. UNESCO maintained that, it is an obvious yet not generally recognized truism that learning in a language which is not one's own provides a double set of challenges, not only is there the challenge of learning a new language but also that of learning new knowledge contained in that language.

On the relevance of mother tongue instruction for children, Ball (2014) commented that UNESCO has encouraged mother tongue instruction in primary education since 1953 and UNESCO highlighted the advantages of mother tongue education right from the start. According to Benson (2002), When taught in their mother tongue, children are more likely to enroll and succeed in school; parents are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's learning, girls and rural children with less exposure to a dominant language stay in school longer and repeat grades less often. Ball (2014) maintained that some educators argue that only those countries where pupils' first language is the language of instruction are likely to achieve the goals of education for all.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government in the National Policy on Education (2013) indicated that the medium of instruction in the primary school shall be in the language of the environment for the first three years. On the language policy, Okpanachi (2013) commented that there is no iota or grain of ambiguity in this policy as far as the use and status of mother tongue in primary schools in Nigeria is concerned. Mother tongue instruction is carried out in public basic schools under the pretence of using English, as teachers do not openly admit to using the local languages for instruction. This is due to lack of commitment by government regarding the policy. In Kogi East Education Zone, Igala language is used in teaching and learning in public schools not so much in compliance with government policy but out of necessity, since the pupils in public schools speak only their mother tongue.

Igala Language

Igala language is one of the indigenous languages in Nigeria. It is in the group of the minority languages in the country hence neglected in spite of the important roles it plays in the life of the people. The language is spoken by the people referred to as *óIgalaô*. According to Omachonu (2012), Igala language belongs to the west Benue-Congo and more precisely one of the *õYoruboidö* languages in Nigeria. Other languages in the group are; Yoruba and Itsekiri. Igala is a dominant language in Kogi State, spoken by over two million natives in nine Local Government Areas of Kogi East Senatorial District in North Central Nigeria.

Igala language is blended with traces of minor dialectal differences found mainly on the fringes and coastal areas of the Igala kingdom. This is as a result of close contact with neighboring communities of Idoma people of Benue State on the Eastern side, the Igbo people of Enugu and Anambara States on the Southern part. The major dialects include Ibaji, Ankpa and Olamaboro or Ogwugwu dialects. Peculiarities of these dialects according to Ikani (2010) in

Igala language include vowel assimilation, vowel elision, vowel insertion and variation in consonant sounds.

The phenomenon of vowels assimilating consonant features is attested to in nasalization, a process whereby vowels preceding or following nasal consonants become nasalized. Examples are:

Word	Nasalization	Gloss
òká	ònká /òTká/(Ankpa,Ibaji)	one
ègwákà	ègwánkà / ègwáTkà/(Ankpa,Ibaji)	eleven
óódù	óndù / óTdù/(Ankpa,Ibaji)	lord

Vowel elision in central, Ife and Ogwugwu dialects:

òlá	dà	/ lɔdá/	law
word	rule		
òjè	ákpá	/ dʒákpá/	corn food
food	corn		
gbà	k	/gb k /	take money
take	money		

Vowel insertion in Ankpa, Central, Ibaji and Ogwugwu dialects:

Vowel insertion in these dialects of Igala has the same pattern as can be seen below:

English	Igala
Bible /baɪbl/	ibaibùlù /iba:bɛlɛ/
Belt /belt/	ibéliti /ibeliti/
Hospital /hɒspɪtl/	àchibiti /ætʃibiti/

Vowel insertion is used to break up clusters in words borrowed from other languages.

Consonant variations in the dialects

/i/ versus /r/ versus /j/

Central	Ankpa	Ibaji	Ife	Ogwugwu	Gloss
yi/yú	li	li	yi	ri	see
liŋ	liŋ	liŋ	liŋ	rŋ	needle
l	l	l	l	r	neck

/dʒ/ versus /d/

Central	Ankpa	Ibaji	Ife	Ogwugwu	Gloss
ji	ji	di	ji	ji	to bury
aji	aji	adi	aji	aji	river
oji	oji	odi	oji	oji	head

/f/ versus /h/

Central	Ankpa	Ibaji	Ife	Ogwugwu	Gloss
àfà	àhà	àfà	àfà	àfà	luck
èfùfù	èhùhù	èfùfù	èfùfù	èfùfù	white
fiá	hiá	fiá/hiá	fiá	fiá	scatter

/n/ versus /d/

Central	Ankpa	Ibaji	Ife	Ogwugwu	Gloss
nàwá	dàwá	nàwá	nàwá	dàwá	be coming
nàché	dàché	nàché	nàché	dàché	be doing
nàló	dàló	nàló	nàló	dàló	be going

In (i), the occurrence of the sounds /r/ in place of /l/ in Ogwugwu dialect and /j/ in ife dialect reveal variations. Also in (ii), the post-alveolar affricate /dʒ/ is used in the dialects except Ibaji

where alveolar-plosive /d/ is used. (iii) reveals a very striking difference especially in Ankpa dialect, as the dental fricative /f/ is rendered as /h/ glottal-fricative, against the general or common rendition in the other dialects. In (iv), it could be seen that /n/ and /d/ reveal some differences as Ogwugwu and Ankpa use /d/ while others use /n/.

There is a general omission of the bilabial nasal /m/ in words across the dialects as seen in the following:

	English	Igala
number	/nʌmb /	nuber /nɛbæ/
plumber	/plʌm /	pluber /plɛbæ/
bomb	/bɔm/	bobu /bɛbu/

Inserting the Alveolar-nasal /n/ in words is more common in the Ankpa dialect as in the words below:

	English	Igala
Struggle	/strʌgl/	strungl /strɔTgul/
settle	/setl/	sentul /sentul/

There is also elision of the alveolar-lateral /l/ in the words which are usually pronounced as strung and sentu.

Like other languages, Igala language has its own features which Omachonu describes as a register tone language with three basic tonemes (H.M.L), isolating with agglutinative features, basically SVO, mark aspect but no grammatical tense, major word classes include noun and verbs. As a register tone language, it uses the three basic tones (tonemes) of high, mid and low constructively to perform both lexical and syntactic function in the language. Audu (2014) indicated that Igala is the language of the 9th largest ethnic group out of the existing over 300

ethnic groups in Nigeria. Audu, (2014) observed that it is one of the few ethnic groups that share intimate affinity with the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. Besides, Igala orthography (alphabetical writings and correct spellings of words) is one of the twenty seven orthographies recognized by the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) of the Federal Ministry of Education.

As a result of the central position the Igala people occupy geographically in Nigeria as Owolabi and Dada (2012) noted, it has been suggested that Igala language be adopted as the nation's lingua franca, but because it is a minority language the idea was quickly discarded. Commenting on this, they declared that suggestion of a seemingly political neutral language, Igala in the central part of the country has not worked. Apart from qualifying to be used for instruction as a language of the immediate environment in classes 1 ñ 3 of the lower basic school, Awobuluyi (2014) asserted that it was recommended as one of the nine Nigerian languages in addition to Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba to be allowed to feature in the country's formal school system. The pupils at the Lower Basic School in Kogi East Education Zone have already acquired the language from home before their enrolment into schools.

Interference in Second Language Learning

Interference is a common occurrence in second language learning. Weinerich according to Odoh (2015) was among the earliest linguists to make analysis of linguistic interference. He stated that interference is one of the main features of bilingual or multilingual situation. Where languages come into contact, usually for a bilingual, one is a source language and another is a target language. However, as Odoh (2015) observed, Tiffen came up with a more specific analysis of interference. He noted that it is not only the sound, stress and intonation systems of the first language that influence performance in English, but the grammar and the lexis of one

language is often transferred to the other. Corder pointed it out clearly that learning a second language, after acquiring verbal behavior in mother tongue is a matter of adaptation or extension of existing skills and knowledge rather than the re-learning of a completely new set of skills from scratch. Given this back-drop, Odenyi (2010) asserted that in an attempt for the learner to communicate his ideas, feelings, thoughts and attitudes in the new language, he/she falls back on the language system of the mother tongue. Otagburuagu, Obah, Onuigbo and Okoji (2007) pointed out that students who are learning English as a second language have difficulties in oral English because of the phonological differences between the English language and their mother tongue. This could be said to be the case of some Igala learners of English language.

At the level of phonology, English and Igala language have different sets of phonemes. The English phonemes are divided into broad categories of vowels and consonants. Vowels as Roach (2009) noted, are sounds in the production of which there is no obstruction of the flow of air as it passes from the larynx to the lips. The vowel sounds of English language are twenty (20) in number as indicated earlier, they are further classified into two broad groups; pure vowels and diphthongs. Pure vowels are the occurrence of a single vowel sound in a particular position, while diphthong refers to the occurrence of two vowel sounds in a given situation. Pure vowels or monothongs are twelve in all and are also divided into two; the long vowels which are five (5) and the short vowels are seven (7).

The vowel sound is termed short or long depending on how long it takes to articulate the sounds. For instance while /i/ in *ĩpitō* takes a shorter duration to articulate, /i:/ in *peep* takes a longer duration. When movement of the tongue is used as a parameter as Onuigbo (2008) indicated, the sounds are classified as front, centre and back vowel depending on the direction to which the tongue moves when such vowel is articulated. For instance /i:/, /i/, /e/ and /æ/ are

classified as front vowels, /ɜ:/, / / and /ʌ/ are classified as central while /u:/, /u/, /ɔ/, /ɔ:/ and /a:/ are classified as back vowels.

The shape of the lips is also used to classify the English vowels. The lips could be spread or round. This fact reveals that when certain vowels are articulated, the lips tend to spread, while in other cases, they are rounded. While /i/, /e/ and /æ/ are articulated with rounded lips, some other vowels as /ɜ:/, / /, /ʌ/ and /a:/ are classified as neutral.

Figure 1: Pure Vowels and Some words in which they occur

S/N	Vowel	Words		
•	/i:/	bee	Mean	Peach
•	/i/	pin	Lick	Bit
•	/e/	pen	Bed	Net
•	/æ/	cat	Man	Bat
•	/a:/	farm	Card	Half
•	/ɔ/	pot	Hot	Rock
•	/ɔ:/	caught	Talk	Board
•	/u/	cook	Put	Casual
•	/u:/	soon	Do	chew
•	/ʌ/	cut	Come	Sun
•	/ɜ:/	bird	Firm	Shirt
•	/ /	about	Mother	Above

Source: The Researcher

In addition to the vowels above are diphthongs which are eight in number. Diphthongs are vowels which differ from pure vowels because their articulation involves a glide from one vowel quality to the other. Diphthongs are therefore vowels which change their quality in the process of articulation.

Figure 2: Diphthongs and some words in which they occur

S/N	Diphthongs	Words		
•	/ei/	age	Bay	pay
•	/ai/	buy	File	rice
•	/ɔi/	boy	Voice	Toy
•	/ u/	low	Go	home
•	/au/	how	Cow	House
•	/i /	gear	Hear	Theory
•	/e /	hair	Hare	There
•	/u /	cure	Moor	Tour

Source: The Researcher

According to Omachonu (2000), Igala language operates a seven vowel system comprising the following vowels /a/, /e/, /e/, /i/, /o/, / / and /u/,

They are all monothongs and short vowels. They are articulated with rounded lips.

Figure 3: Some words in which Igala vowels occur

S/N	Vowels	Words		
•	/a/	aja/market	ala/sheep	una/fire
•	/e/	eda/shoes`	ewe/bird	ate/bed
•	/ /	ewo/goat	eti/ear	ejo/snake
•	/i/	lkwu/rope	iji/wood	ina/mark
•	/o/	oli/stick	llo/bell	omi/water
6.	/ /	ma/child	na/road	k /money
7.	/u/	unyi/house	uja/fight	uloko/mat

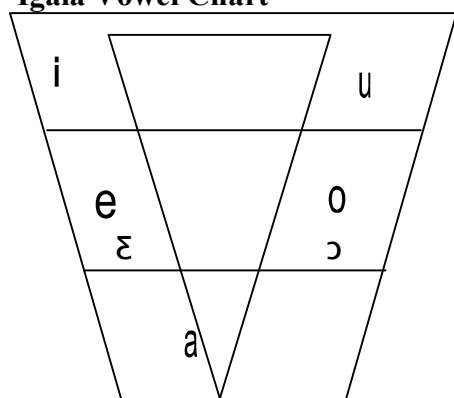
Source: The Researcher

Out of these seven, there is the tendency for five vowels to undergo nasalization in the environment of nasal consonants (a, , i, and u) do whereas (e and o) do not attest nasalization in the language.

Figure 4: Vowel Charts

Igala Vowel Chart

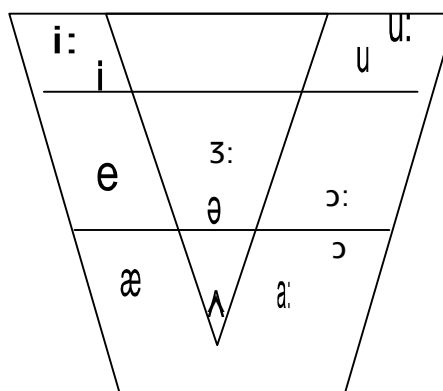
Igala Vowel Chart



Ikani (2004)

English Vowel Chart

English Vowel Chart



Onuigbo (2008)

The charts show that English language has twelve pure vowels. A further look at the vowel charts of Igala and English languages shows that Igala language lacks the long vowels /i:/, /u:/, /a:/ and /ɔ:/ and the central vowels /ɜ:/ / / and /ʌ/.

English diphthongs are also lacking in Igala language. They include:

/ei/, /ai/, /au/, / u/, /ɔi/, /i /, /e /, /u /

These English vowels create pronunciation problems for Igala learners of English and so, learners try to realize them by using close or corresponding vowels. Examples are:

	English	Igala Realization
Fit	/fit/	/fit/
Feet	/fi:t/	/fit/
Love	/lʌv/	/ lɛv/

Figure 6: Igala Language Consonant Chart

Manner of Articulation	State of Glottis		Place of Articulation
Stop (Plosive)	Voiceless	Voiced	
	p t k kp kw	B d g gb gw	Bilabial Alveolar Velar Labio velar Labialized velar
Nasal		M n ɲ (ny) T(ng) Tw (nw)	Bilabial Alveolar Palatal Velar Labialized velar
Fricatives	f h		Labio dental Glottal
Affricate	tʃ	dʒ	Palate-alveolar
Semi-vowels		R i j(y) w	Alveolar central Alveolar lateral Palatal Labio-velar

Omachonu (2000)

A look at the compared consonant chart below reveals these facts.

	English	Igala
Nasal alveolar	n	n
Bilabial	m	m
Palatal	ɲ	ɲ
Velar	T	T
Labia velar	ɲ	nw

PLOSIVE VELAR	k	k
Labialized velar	g	g
	•	kw
	•	gw
Labial velar	ŋ	kp
	•	gb

AFFRICATE

Palate-alveolar	tʃ	tʃ
	dʒ	dʒ

FRICATIVE

Labio-dental	f	f
	v	ŋ
Dental		ŋ
	ð	ŋ
Alveolar	s	ŋ
	ʒ	ŋ
Palate-alveolar	ʃ	ŋ

Ikani (2004)

Mother tongue Interference in the pronunciation of words by Igala learners of English language often occur in cases where English consonant sounds are absent in Igala language. This mostly affects the fricatives. Examples are:

	English	Igala Realization
then	/ðen/	/den/
Bath	/ba /	/bat/
Thin	/ in/	/tin/

Shot	/ʃɒt/	/tʃɒt/
Shoe	/ʃu:/	/tʃu/

The sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ do not occur in the word final position in Igala with the result that learners pronounce them with the sound /i/ in the word final positions:

Church	/tʃɜ:tʃ/	/tʃɜtsʃ/
Judge	/dʒʌdʒ/	/dʒɔdʒi/

The vowel harmony in Igala words are transferred to the pronunciation of English words by Igala learners, thereby realizing an initial and a final vowel pronounced in words starting and ending with consonant as in these words:

	English	Igala Realization
bucket	/bʌkit/	/ibɔketi/
pencil	/pens l/	/ipetʃulu/
machine	/m ʃɪn/	/imætʃini/
school	/sku:l/	/itʃekpulu/
soldier	/s ʊld /	/itʃɔjæ/

Igala learners of English are faced with the problem of consonant clusters in English language. Onuigbo in Ukwuezeh (2008) generalized that Nigerian languages have no consonant clusters, so it is with Igala language. In English there is a regular occurrence of consonant clusters unlike with the Igala language where there is no cluster but has a regular pattern of consonant vowel, consonant vowel (CVCV). The problem of Igala learners of English also corresponds with the views of Folarin in Ukwuezeh (2008) who stated that consonant clusters are the major problem which Igbo students encounter in the pronunciation of words. In his article, 'the problems of students' English', he pointed out that learner's problem may be that the learner either leaves out

one element of the problematic cluster, or inserts a vowel within the consonant cluster as an additional syllable in the word as shown below:

	English	Igala Realization
Penalty	/pen lti/	/penaliti/
Faithful	/fei fl/	/feitif€l/

The Igala realizations of the words are the wrongly pronounced forms resulting from insertion of vowels in the clusters.

Morphology is an aspect of the study of language. Morphology is the meaningful combination of sounds to form words. As earlier indicated, it is the study of the internal structures of words in language. In linguistics, morphology is seen as the study of internal structure of words and the relationships among words of the same language. Some basic terms used in the study of morphology of language include morpheme, free morpheme, bound morpheme, base, root and Affixe. Morphemes are the smallest meaningful constituents of a linguistic expression. They combine to make up words. It has been established earlier that a single word may be composed of one or more morphemes, for example boy + ish = boyish (two morphemes), boy + ish + ness = boyishness (three morphemes).

A free morpheme is a morpheme that can stand alone as an independent word, for instance; pot, cat, dog are words that cannot be broken down into smaller parts but can stand on their own and make meaning. Bound morphemes do not have intrinsic meaning of their own. They cannot exist alone in an utterance but must be attached to another morpheme/word. Examples are ãö, ãesö er; ãest; ãedô. These morphemes cannot be independent of other morphemes for instance, book + ãö = books, teach + ãesö = teaches, short + ãerö = shorter, small + ãestö = smallest and cook + ãedö = cooked.

The base refers to words that have one root and no additional bound morphemes or free morphemes. A base consists of a single root morpheme as in the word *goodness*; *good* is the base while the root of any word is its first and simplest form. It is the basic part of the word from where it derives its exact meaning. It is a morpheme (free morpheme) on which words can be built. For instance, *faith*, *un* + *faith* + *ful* + *ness* = *unfaithfulness*. In this word, *faith* is the root because it is the frame on which the word *unfaithfulness* is built through the addition of affixes.

Affixes being grammatical morphemes can appear at the beginning, within or after the root of a word, for instance *un*; *en*, *ful*, *ö* as in *unsure*, *flattened*, *prayerful* and *cups*. Basically, there are two types of morphology. They are inflection and derivation. Inflection is the type of morphology in which affixes combine with roots to indicate basic grammatical categories such as tense as in *talk* + *ed* = *talked* or plurality as in *cat* + *s* = *cats*. The morphemes *ed* and *ö* are inflectional suffixes in the words *talked* and *cats* respectively. English inflectional morphology has only three categories of meaning which are expressed inflectionally. They are numbers in nouns, tense aspect of verbs and comparison in adjectives.

Derivation is a process whereby affixes combine with roots to create new words. The difference between inflectional and derivational morphology is that inflectional morphology aims at using the existing words to make new words while derivational morphology aims at adding general meaning to the existing words. Word formation or morphological processes involve changes that the stems undergo as to adjust their syntactic or semantic meanings through the addition of affixes. The processes include compounding, affixation, clipping, blending and backformation.

In compounding, a word has a collection of two or more free morphemes and it is called a compound word. Compounding is a morphological process that involves the lexical combination

of two or more related morphemes to derive a new word with distinct meaning, examples are, home + work = homework, house + wife = housewife.

Affixation is a process by which affixes are added to word roots to form an entirely new word, for instance, in + patient = inpatient, un + comfort + able = uncomfortable

Clipping involves the formation of words by omission of parts of the words. The omission can be at the end of a word; as in photo(-graphy), or at the beginning as in reffridgerator (fridge). Blending is a morphological process whereby parts of two words are put together to form a new word, examples are news + broadcast = newscast, electro + execute = electrocute.

In backformation, an identifiable suffix from a word is cut off from the base which has previously not been a word. That base is used as a root, examples are pronunciation ñ pronounce, information ñ inform.

At the level of morphology, Igala learners of English are faced with the problem of expressing themselves in a language with different terminologies and word processes from those of their language. Learners tend to transfer terminologies from their mother tongue to express concepts in English where such concepts are new and unfamiliar. In doing so, the Igala learner does not have enough mother tongue repertoires to draw from as Omale (2001) described the language as being faced with scantiness of words and expressions. Words in Igala do not change forms as the English words do, through taking on affixes, infixes and surffixes. Igala words take on affixes and infixes in few instances. This explains why written expressions such as the following are common among Igala learners of English.

Igala	Wrong Expressions	Correct Form
àmon à wà	The peoples are come (wrong use of morpheme(s) and omission of (ing)	The people are coming.

àmìgb l à lo ti unyi uk ch	The girls goes to school (wrong use of (es) morpheme)	The girls go to school
àmim t à che iya.	The childrens are play (wrong use of morpheme(s) and omission of (ing)	The children are playing
omi che fá uw eti	I have warn you (omission of (ed) morpheme)	I have warned you
àmi imu àl wà	Mosquitoes are bite us (omission of (ing) morpheme)	Mosquitoes are biting us
máye mi lo ti ul Lagochi	my brother travel to Lagos. (omission of (ed) morpheme)	My brother traveled to Lagos
àm n k l a che uk l y y	The men are work slow (omission of (ly) morpheme)	The men are working slowly

These expressions are direct transfer from the mother tongue of learners to English language as a result of being used to expressing themselves in that manner in Igala language.

The Universal Basic Education in Nigeria

The universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was introduced by the government of former President Olusegun Obasanjo to reinforce participatory democracy in Nigeria by raising the level of awareness and general education of the entire citizenry. According to the coordinator of the Universal Basic Education Commissioner (UBEC), Professor Pai Obanya on the 30th of May 2000, the UBE programme was intended to be a visible evidence of Nigeria's strong commitment to the Jorntein (Thailand) 1990 declaration on the promotion of basic education for all. UBE is in line with the New Delhi 1991 declaration which required stringent efforts by the E-9 countries, that is, the nine countries of the world with the highest concentration of illiterate adults, (Nigeria inclusive), to drastically reduce illiteracy within the shortest possible time frame.

According to Dzever (2002), UBE, is in fulfilment of the Ouagadougou 1992 Pan-African declaration on the education of girls and women. Dzever asserted that it is also in line with Durban statement of commitment of 1998. Obanya (2002), asserted that UBE is in fulfilment of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) declaration on education in Africa 1997 ñ 2006, which required education for the continent. Obanya stressed that the UBE is in line with the Dakar 2000 declaration, calling for intensified activities to achieve education for all (EFA) goals by the year 2015.

In compliance with the lofty ideas, on 30th September, 1999 in Kangiwa square in Sokoto State, the UBE was launched by the former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. According to President Obasanjo, the programme was ñfreeö universal and compulsory and it was initiated to provide basic education to the Nigerian citizens and it also extended to all children from the age of six to fifteen. The programme was to encompass primary, junior secondary, adult and nomadic education. States and local government areas all over the country also launched the UBE programme at later dates. According to Obanya (2002), The programme has the following objectives:

- Develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- The provision of free, Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian Child of school ñ going age.
- Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency).

- Catering for the learning needs of young persons who, for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civil values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

In addition to the vision of the programme above, Obanya (2000) further stressed that in aligning the universal conceptualization of basic education to present day reality, UBE in Nigeria has had its scope broadened to include the following:

- Programmes/initiatives for early childhood care and socialization.
- Education programme for the acquisition of functional literacy, numeracy and life-skills, especially for adults (persons aged 15 and above).
- Specific programme for nomadic populations
- Out of school, non-formal programmes for up-dating the knowledge and skills of persons who left school before acquiring the basics needed for life-long learning.
- Non-formal skills and apprenticeship training for adolescents and youths who have not had the benefit of formal education.

The UBE constitutes the formal school system from the beginning of primary education to the end of the Junior Secondary School.

According to Igbokwe (2015), the Federal Government developed and introduced the 9-year Basic Education curriculum (BEC) in schools designed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). All extant primary and secondary school curricula were realigned to meet the key targets of the UBE programme. In view of some contemporary and national concerns and to make the curriculum more practical, relevant, interest-generating to the young learners and in line with global best practices, the 9-year BEC was recently revised in 2012 and its implementation has commenced in September, 2014.

The 9-year Basic Education is structured into three segments. The first years which is the Lower Basic Education consists of classes 1-3. The second stage also for three years is the middle Basic Education consisting of classes 4-6. The third segment which is also for three years, is the Upper Basic Education made up of the Junior Secondary School classes 1-3. This study is focused on the Lower Basic Education classes 1-3.

Gender

Although gender is a significant factor in educational and psychological research, it has only received sporadic attention in the studies of language learning. According to Mcelhinny (2003), gender is considered to be the social, cultural and psychological constructs that are laid upon the males and females. There is distinction between sex and gender. Sex refers to the psychological, biological and anatomical features that cannot change whereas gender roles can change according to society norms and expectations. Sadiqi (2003)n asserted that gender first appeared as a term in linguistics and then in other social science areas. In the 1960s and 1970s, the term gender was used to refer to masculine and feminine categories.

Differences in the use of languages on the basis of sex have been observed by scholars. In some languages, the difference is so great that male and female actually use different words,

different pronunciations or different grammatical forms. This happens, for instance in Japanese in which some words are different for male and female. According to Omego (2013) female are claimed to be more linguistically polite than their male counterparts and in formal discussions, they are said to observe the necessary features, using the proper lexical items, and more discernible than the male speech form, which is always coded in idioms and proverbs. Females use more standard speech forms than males because they are more conscious of status than male. Females are more aware of the fact that the way they speak signals their social class, background or social status in the community.

The differences in male and female speeches manifest in many areas. In the area of phonology for instance, there are noticeable differences in a variety of languages. In Zulu, there is a phonological differentiation in the speech of male and female. Female, for example are prohibited from pronouncing words such as *óamanziô*, because it contains /z/, but can say *óamandabiô* which does not contain /z/. All these could influence the language learning behavior of the different sex.

To Haris (2007), gender is the innate biological attributes that differentiate male from female. These biological attributes tend to influence ones achievement in educational activities. Nnachi (2007) stated that female students do better than the males in language learning and other arts related courses.

Gender as Offorma (2004) opined is a socially learned constructed condition ascribed to individuals on the basis of being either male or female. The attributes are enforced through cultural practices where those individuals originated from. It is believed that the training and exposure given to male and female children in a given society depends to a larger extent on the

peoples belief or orientation and outlook which are fundamental to the level of one's achievement

There are however conflicting reports on the influence of gender in language learning and competency, there are those that claim that males out perform females in school achievement. Others claim that it is females that outperform males. Uzoegwu (2004) revealed that sex had a significant effect on achievement in essay writing. Male students achieved higher than the female ones. Umo (2001) is of the view that on the overall achievement of students in Igbo grammar when taught with games, female students achieved higher than males. In the light of the above contradicting report, disparity may exist in the level of interference between male and female Igala learners of English at Lower Basic Classes.

Location

The learning environment is an important factor in education. Akinbote (2010) noted that a learner is the product of his/her environment. The learning environment may affect the achievement of a learner in the educational process. Onunuju (2008) affirmed that educational performance of the child is to a large extent influenced by his environment. Some schools are located in more favourable environments than others. Ezeh (2005) stressed that school locations are known to influence the students learning through quality of teaching staff, class size and availability of infrastructure. According to Chinweuba (2017), the choice and location of school site have been indispensable aspect of any effective school planning, because it is the site that can influence the type of school to be built and the quality of the building. A child's environment, that is, rural or urban could exert considerable influence on his intellectual development. Chinweuba (2017) further stressed that an urban child has an edge over the rural one in terms of better education and socialization. The urban learners are exposed to better

environment with access to libraries, adequate space, continuation classes and mass media. The rural children are hardly exposed to these facilities because they are mainly from lower social class. As a result, children from this background might have lower academic achievement.

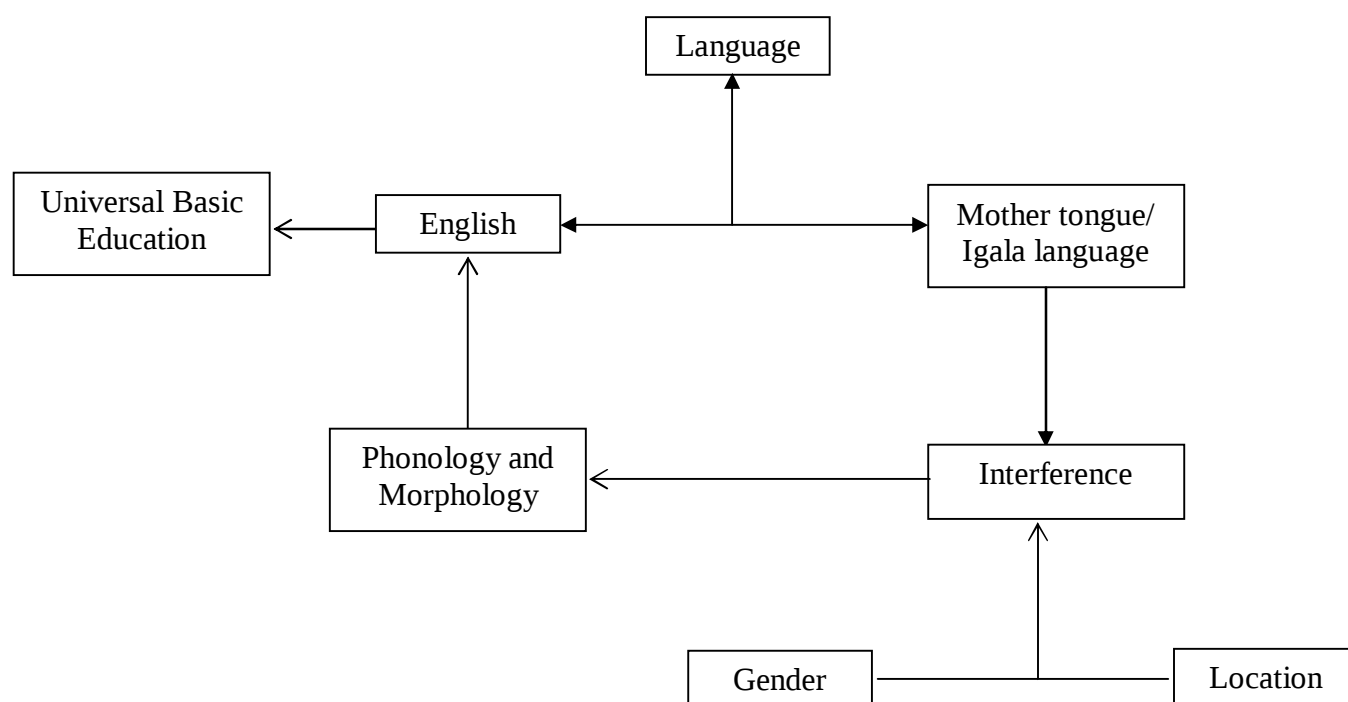
There has been controversy on the impact of school location on students' achievement level. The school plays a significant role on the attainment of cognitive psychological, moral and social development of a child. The location of a school is important because conducive environment for learning, and attention from government are dependent on the location of school. Okeke (2010) observed that schools in urban areas are stuffed with educational facilities than their rural counterpart hence, high level disparity in achievement of learners in the two locations exist.

Learners in the rural areas are not exposed to any other language apart from their mother tongue. English is only learned in the school. From the foregoing, it could be seen that urban and rural settings of schools could influence the level of Igala language interference in the teaching and learning of English at the Lower Basic Classes.

Language is central to any human endeavour and indispensable in the education system. English language is learned as a subject at the Lower Basic Classes while it is the language of instruction at other levels of education. The mother tongue is the language which individuals grow up to speak in their immediate environment before learning a second language. The mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction in the Lower Basic Schools. The mother tongue of pupils in Kogi East Education Zone is Igala language. It is recommended for instruction at the early Basic Classes of 1-3 by the Federal Government of Nigeria in NPE (2013). Pupils in Kogi East Education Zone have acquired and mastered Igala before the Lower Basic Education level. The phonology and morphology of Igala language interfere in the learning of English language at

the Lower Basic Classes. Pupils transfer the features of Igala language to English in these aspects as English is for most pupils a second language, coming into contact with it for the first time in school. Also, a source of interference in the learning of English could be due to the gender of the pupils. Gender is believed to influence learners' achievement in learning. Another factor of interference in the learning of English is location. Urban location could have a positive influence on learning of English language as a result of exposure to English and availability of instructional materials while the case of rural schools could be different.

Figure 7: Schematic Representation of Conceptual Framework



Source: By the Researcher

Language is central to any human endeavour and indispensable in the education system. English and the mother tongue (Igala) are languages. English language is learned as a subject at the Lower Basic Classes while it is the language of instruction at other levels of education. The mother tongue is the language which individuals grow up to speak in their immediate environment before learning a second language. The mother tongue is used as the medium of

instruction in the Lower Basic Schools. The mother tongue of pupils in Kogi East Education Zone is Igala language. It is recommended for instruction at the early Basic Classes of 1-3 by the Federal Government of Nigeria in NPE (2013). Pupils in Kogi East Education Zone have acquired and mastered Igala before the Lower Basic Education level. Igala language interferes in learning English at the level of phonology and morphology at the Lower Basic Classes. Pupils transfer the features of Igala language to English in these aspects as English is for most pupils a second language, coming into contact with it for the first time in school. Also, a source of interference in the learning of English could be the gender of the pupils. Gender is believed to influence learners' achievement in learning. Another factor of interference in the learning of English is location. Urban location may have a positive influence on learning of English language as a result of exposure to English and availability of instructional materials while the case of rural schools could be different.

Theoretical Framework

Contrastive Analysis Theory

The theory of contrastive analysis according to Kramsch (2007), was propounded by Lado in 1957. It is a theoretical approach for the analysis of problems of second language teaching and learning. The theory is hinged on the assumption that second language learners and users face difficulties which result from structural differences between their mother tongue and the second language. Based on this assumption, contrastive analysis structurally analyzes the two languages in order to show similarities and differences in the languages. Predictions of potential difficult areas for the second language learners and users are made from the outcome of the analysis.

This assertion gives predictive power to contrastive analysis, i.e. where differences are identified between aspects of two languages, the problems of the target language learner lie

therein. According to Hammer and Rice in Afangideh (2005), a systematic comparison of selected linguistic features of two or more languages is intended to provide teachers and textbook writers with a body of information which can be of service in the preparation of instructional materials, the planning of courses and development of classroom techniques.

Contrastive analysis attempts to understand and explain the nature of learners' performance in second language and accounts for why they speak and write the way they do. The contrastive analysis is based on the premise that although, languages have some common characteristics and features, they also have unique structural differences. For instance, certain English vowel sounds like /i:/ and /ɜ:/, and consonants sound like /ʃ/ and /z/ do not exist in the structure of Igala vowels and consonants, and so create problems for Igala learners and users of English. This results in learners replacing the non-existing sound with close sounds in Igala thus:

Vowel	/i:/	with /i/
Feel	/fi:l/	for /fill/
	/a:/	with /a/
Cast	/ka:st/	for /kast/
Consonant	/ʃ/	with /tʃ/
Shout	/ʃaʊt/	for /tʃaʊt/
Zip	/zip/	for /dʒip/

What Igala language learners have acquired from their mother tongue interfere in the learning of the second language. The problem is brought about as a result of the contrast between the two languages. These same problems may be faced by Igala learners of English at the Lower Basic classes in Kogi East schools. Following the basic assumption of contrastive analysis, the existence of cross-linguistic influence in language learning has been accepted as a fact. Afangideh (2005) noted that the second language learner is naturally liable to applying first language patterns and rules to second language learning situations. As long as the second

language learning situation is in the learner's native environment, the learner cannot be expected to suppress or abandon completely the first language influence. This makes the knowledge of contrastive data highly desirable.

The predictions from contrastive analysis inform the language teacher and enable him or her to adopt suitable teaching materials, methods such as the use of minimal pairs in solving problems faced by learners of English. James (1980) noted that it could be restated that contrastive analysis can predict what aspects of a given language will cause problems, difficulties, errors or even the tenacity of certain errors i.e. their strong resistance to extinction through time and teaching.

The contrastive analysis hypothesis discussed above is not without limitations. The limitations stem from the fact that not all errors are the result of negative transfer or interference. Other sources of errors include intra-lingual and transfer of training; strategies of L2 learning and L2 communication strategies. All these as well as direct transfer constitute problem for Igala learners of English language. The contrastive analysis is relevant to this work as there is a need for comparison of aspects of Igala and English language to determine areas of similarities and differences. This becomes especially relevant and Lower Basic Classes where the learning of English language as second language begins.

Error Analysis

Error analysis was developed by Corder in 1960. It was an alternative to contrastive analysis, an approach influenced by behaviourism through which linguists sought to use the formal distinction between the learner's L1 and the L2 language to predict errors. Error analysis is concerned with the second language learners' errors in trying to produce the target language. Corder posited that second language learners discover the target language by hypothesizing

about it and testing their hypotheses more or less than children do. According to this view, errors indicate that the learner actively learns the target language, as errors occur whenever a hypothesis tested by the learner does not work.

Error analysis examines errors attributable to all possible sources. It indicates that only some errors are attributable to mother tongue and suggests that learners do not actually make all the errors that contrastive analysis predicts they do. It claims that learners from different native language backgrounds make similar errors in learning one target language. Selinker in Afangideh (2005) posited that possible general sources of errors include language transfer, transfer of training, strategy of second language learning, strategies of second language communication and overgeneralization.

On the whole, error analysis seeks to account for learners' errors that contrastive analysis cannot predict. To the proponents of error analysis like Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), studying learners' errors serves two major purposes. First, it provides data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning processes can be made. Second, it indicates to teachers and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have most difficulty producing correctly, and which error types detract most from a learner's ability to communicate effectively. Wang (2007) stated that approach to error in spoken English is composed of five stages, which include: isolation, (also called discovery), identification, explanation, experimentation, and learning acquisition.

The first stage in error analysis is discovery or recognition. Wang preferred to call it isolation. This is the key stage of the analysis, and teachers should note the whole errors respectively. The second stage is identification. Here the type of error is identified as either pragmatic errors or linguistic error. If it falls into linguistics kind of error, the teacher should sub-

divide it into different categories viz: pronunciation, morphological, semantic, syntactic errors etc. For different types, he should mark with different signs such as Ⓜ (grammatical errors), Ⓢ (syntactic error), Ⓜ (morphological error) and so on. The third stage of error analysis is explanation. In this stage, the teacher describes not only the errors he/she has identified and is about to treat, but also where the problem occurred and what it involves. He/she explains why the learner has not been able to speak or write the language well.

The final stage and the fifth stage of error analysis is learning acquisition which Wang (2007) called providing correctness. Here the students may learn quickly, re-learn later or learn slowly and re-learn periodically. Days later, the teacher may check some points concerning their errors, give some topics for communication, and see if they can perform better in the real communication situation. This five-stage approach avoids both the monotony and stress of intense audio-lingual classrooms. It is less artificial and yields result as good as, or better than traditional error correction. Studying learners errors have some major advantages, as it provides data from which inferences about the nature of language learning process can be made as pointed out earlier. The primary aim of error analysis is to identify types and patterns of error in order to establish error taxonomies. These are supposed to be used to describe inter language and its development as it affects the learner.

The main achievement of error analysis is that errors are no longer regarded as signs of inhibition that need to be eradicated instead, they are regarded as useful evidence of strategies of learning and as perfectly natural aspects of second language acquisition. It has however been criticized for a number of practical problems. Firstly, it has proved difficult to determine whether there is an error at all, and if so what exactly constitutes it. Secondly, there is usually more than one way to classify an error. Thirdly, causes of errors are difficult to identify. Error analysis is

relevant to this study as it enables and encourages teachers at the lower basic classes to identify the errors of pupils. It is by so doing that they can map out ways of helping the pupils to overcome such errors.

The Cognitive/Gestalt Theory of Learning

The cognitive/gestalt theory was propounded in 1912 by Wertheimer and was later elaborated by his associates ñ Koffka and Kohler. The theory holds the view that a person perceives objects as a unified whole, not as a cluster of individual sensation. It deals with the problem of how an individual gains an understanding of himself and the environment. The theory states that for learning to take place, the following must be done:

The teacher should start from known to unknown and from simple to complex.

The teaching must be divergent and convergent.

The learner must be encouraged to set out goals for learning.

The learner's mental capacity must be considered.

Time should be allowed for fumbling and unaided search until the goal is realized.

The cognitive field theory emphasizes the structural characteristics of the learner, the changes in perception, knowledge, purpose and intellectual processes going on in any learning episode. The theory reverts to the view that man is a thinking being. His mind has a role in language learning and so should be fully involved in the process because speech is a manifestation of the thought of the speaker. It aims at equipping the learner with required grammatical competence in the target language to enable him control its structure.

This theory is aimed at equipping learners with required competence in the second language learning and to enable them control its structure. That is why learning is said to have taken place if the learner is able to make sense of what he reads or hears and to give a

meaningful expression of the composition. Language learning therefore becomes a problem solving task in the learner's difficult areas. This theory believes that human beings acquire or learn language because they have innate capacity to do so. The theory also implies that learners should not be spoon-fed so that they can have a good mastery of what they were taught.

The application of this theory would help Igala learners of English have a good foundation in the language on which to build further learning. Teaching English language needs to start from known to unknown and from simple to complex. Also, the teachers at the Lower Basic Classes would be able to recognize the structural characteristics of the learners, the changes in perception, knowledge and intellectual process going on during learning and therefore improve their methods of teaching English language to pupils.

The Conditioning Theory of Learning

The conditioning theory of learning according to Ukpong (2000) was propounded by a Russian Psychologist Pavlov in 1912. The theory lays emphasis on the formation of an association between a conditioned stimulus and a conditioned response through a repeated pairing of a conditioned stimulus (CS) and unconditioned stimulus (US) in order to strengthen or reinforce the association which the learner needs to acquire and retain skills in a given teaching and learning situation. In the experiment carried out by Pavlov, saliva flowed from a dog's mouth not only when food was placed in its mouth, but when it heard the approaching footsteps of the person bringing the food or the sound of a bell rung just before food was presented. From the result of the experiment, he concluded that the dog had learned to associate other stimulus; sound of footsteps or a bell to the presentation of food. He called the sound of the bell neutral or indifferent stimulus, even when the bell was rung without the food, the dog still salivated. Pavlov

succeeded in conditioning the behavior of the dog towards the sound of the bell and thus the name conditioning theory.

The theory justified that learning can be conditioned. What is required is the control of the environment or the learning situation. To control any learning situation therefore, extra-verbal and non-verbal communication should be used. This will go a long way to sustain the learner's attention. The dog was conditioned with the sound of the bell, in the same way, the learner's attention is conditioned with the gestures and facial expressions by the teacher because the learner learns those abstract things which the teacher cannot describe but can only communicate through the use of gestures and facial expressions.

In relation to this study, the theory implies that in teaching and learning English language, if the learner's attention is conditioned by facial expressions or gestures, learners learn abstract concepts. The attention of Igala pupils learning English at the Lower Basic Classes can be conditioned by the teacher through gestures and demonstrations to learn abstract concepts not existing in their mother tongue and their environment. The potential problem areas for the pupils therefore become less abstract and easily understood.

Empirical Studies

Studies on Mother Tongue Interference

In every second language learning situation, interference is an unavoidable phenomenon. As a result, the review of other research works on interference is pertinent in this study. In a study carried out by Afangideh (2005), on interference of Anaan in English verb tenses among different categories of secondary school students, the researcher indicated that the intention was to compare and contrast the lexical verbs of Anaan and English by highlighting the similarities and differences. It was also to determine how the differences constituted interference in the

performance of the different grade levels, on the male and female Anaan Secondary School learners of English at different locations. Four research questions and four null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Two research designs of survey analytic and casual comparative were used for the study. The population was sourced from two co-educational schools. The English lexical verb Achievement Test was the instrument for data collection, and data was analyzed by t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Results revealed that English and Anaan lexical verbs have a number of resemblances, but in spite of the apparent similarities, there were many peculiar differences in both systems. The study is related to the current study as they are both on the interference of Nigerian local languages with English language learning. The current study however differs because it deals with broader aspects of language and at the lower level of learning.

While carrying out a study titled mother tongue interference with Foreign language: A case study about A2 (Level 2) oral production in a Colombian public university in (2012), Manrique stated that the case study attempted to understand the mother tongue interference with English language oral production of beginner students in the A2 level of learning. The students were enrolled at a foreign language department in a Colombian public university. Three main themes of analysis were proposed: (a) characteristics of the students' oral production (b) activities that encouraged oral production among students and (c) the role of the mother tongue while learning a foreign language. Five class sessions were observed by the researcher, and the data gathered was supported by two semi-structured interviews to obtain the participants' own perspectives. Findings revealed some advantages and disadvantages of using the mother tongue as a reference to speak in the foreign language, identifying the syntactic and morphological failures in participants' speech. This study is similar to the current study as they are both on

inference in learning English but differ in scope as the study was set in Colombia and it dealt with university students while this study deals with pupils of the Lower Basic School in Kogi East, Nigeria.

Studies on Learners' Achievement in English

A study was carried out by Ukwuezeh (2008) to determine the phonological problem of Edem secondary students in learning English language. The design of the study was descriptive survey. A self-made competence test was used as the instrument for data collection. The findings reveal that Edem students have phonological problem of using (t) sound for / / sound, /d/ sound in place of /ð/ and /n/ for /l/. Hence the word "London" is pronounced "Nondon". It has been discovered that both /l/ and /n/ sounds are found in Edem but distinction cannot be made between the two by learners. Also, vowel sounds are inserted between consonants and a word with consonant ending is added a final vowel. The irregularity in English pronunciation affects Edem students greatly.

Also, a study on students' achievement in English language was carried out by Muodumogu (2003). The study investigated teachers' perceptions of the use of instructional materials for effective teaching of vocabulary and provided insight as to how to improve on the current instructional practices. Data were collected from 62 English language teachers located in 13 secondary schools in Jos. A teacher perception questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The result of the study revealed that teachers agreed with 5 of the 12 items that measured their perceptions of the use of instructional materials for teaching vocabulary. The results further revealed that respondents disagreed with statements that suggested that teaching was not essential for comprehension. The study is related to the current study as they both focus on the learning of English language.

In another study, Ngonebu (2002) focused on the structure of English in science and technology. The purpose of the study was to find out to what extent the discourse features of expository writing of engineering students differed from those of engineering register. The results of the study indicated that twenty five cohesive strategies occurred as features of engineering discourse, the study sample employed to different degrees, the same cohesive strategies as identified in engineering register, seven cohesive strategies occupied the same hierarchical plane with those of the sampled engineering texts. The study further revealed that the remaining eighteen strategies of the study were hierarchically different from those of engineering texts. The study like the current study is on the subject of English language, but the study deals with advanced learners of the language and a more specialized aspect of register.

In a study on the effect of self-regulating strategy on reading comprehension achievement of senior secondary school students conducted by Eze in (2002), results indicated that instructing students in the use of comprehension monitoring strategy (CMS) had a facilitative effect on their reading comprehension. Results of the study further indicated that the high ability students in the treatment group achieved significantly higher than the low ability students in the same group. Eze concluded that the difference in the relevant background experience of the two ability groups could be the possible explanation for their differential achievement in reading comprehension.

Though the study like the current one is on language, it differs as it focused on reading and comprehension among senior secondary school students. The current study on mother tongue interference in learning of English finds its results useful as it reveals that learners do not have the same level of achievement in learning.

Studies on Learners Achievement in Language Due to Gender

A study carried out by Ngonebu (2002) examined the language patterns of science and technology discourse exhibited by male and female students. Ngonebu used a sample of engineering students that registered for courses GS 101 and 102 (use of English) at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in the 1998/1999 academic session. Results of the study indicated that male students were more proficient in the use of syntactic strategies of engineering discourse than the female ones. The study is relevant to the current study as it studied gender which is also a variable of interest in the current study.

With gender as a variable of interest, Omachonu and Offorna (2009) studies reading difficulties experienced in the learning of English language by Junior Secondary School students in Idah Education Zone of Kogi State. The study adopted the Expost Facto design using the simple random sampling technique. In the study, Omachonu and Offorna found that there was no significant difference in the achievement of males and females. Omachonu and Offorna's study is relevant to this study because it studied gender as a variable like the current study.

A research was conducted by Azikiwe in (2005) titled Gender influence on achievement in language to determine the influence of gender on language behavior in Nigeria. In the research, thirty-one works on the influence of gender on language achievement were reviewed. It was discovered that seventy-four percent of the works showed that there was no influence of gender in language use in Nigeria. Only thirteen percent agreed that gender influences achievement in favour of male or female respectively. The statistical tools of frequency and percentage were used to analyze thirty-one empirical studies. The result of the study showed that the assumption that females are better than male in language use is not tenable in Nigeria. The

study is relevant to the current study as it was carried out in Nigeria just like the current study to determine the influence of gender on achievement in language.

Another study was carried out by Okwo, Osuagwu and Aguekwe in (2003) to investigate the effect of multimedia approach in students' achievement in poetry. The study was on experimental post-test only control group design using a sample of 81 SS3 students randomly assigned to two treatment conditions: text-audio-picture, media-mix and text only modes. Results of the study indicated that the group exposed to the text-audio-picture mode performed significantly better than the text only group both in sections on the theme and poetic devices. Also, boys performed significantly better than girls in the section of poetic devices. The superior performance of boys was against the popular opinion that girls often do better in language than boys. The study is related to the current study as gender are variables of interest in both studies.

In another development, Umo (2001) in a study on the effects of games on the achievement and interest of junior secondary school students in Igbo grammar revealed that gender was a significant factor on the overall achievement of students in Igbo grammar when taught with games. In that study, female students achieved higher than males. The study is relevant to the current study as gender one of the variable of interests is a focus in the study as the current study.

In the study conducted by Cavanagh, Della and Mollon (2001) in Australia, they remarked that studies on gender-based education indicated apparent underachievement of boys. The decline in the achievement of boys had been accompanied by a decline in appropriate behavior, self-esteem and emotional growth. They further remarked that the reported underachievement of boys had become a fashionable topic for educational debates and discussions in many countries. They also added that the area in which boys were said to have underachieved

greatly was literacy and that the situation was not peculiar to Australia. They noted that the results from the national English literacy survey in Australia indicated that males consistently performed at a lower level on literacy bench marks in primary schools compared with girls. The study is relevant to the current study as it focused on gender variable in learning English language at the early stage of learning which is also of interest to the current study.

From the foregoing analysis on the influence of gender on school achievement generally and on language in particular both in Nigeria and internationally, there are divergent outcomes. While some studies ascribe higher school achievements to girls; others attribute higher school attainments to boys. All these point out to lack of uniformity on reports about influence of sex in school attainments with reference to learning a second language. This gap necessitated the gender variable in this study.

Studies on Learners Achievement in Language Due to Location

School location in this study refers to urban-rural school setting. It is an important variable in this study. Concerning the effect of school location on students' school language achievements, a number of studies have been carried out. In a study conducted by Uzeogwu in (2004) on the effect of co-operative learning method on achievement of senior secondary two students, results indicated that school location was not a significant factor on students' achievement in essay writing. Uzeogwu's study is related to the current study in that it studied location as a variable as it is with the current study.

In another development, a study with regard to effect of school location, results from Ene (2002) indicated that school location appeared to have a pronounced influence on students' mean achievement in English reading comprehension. The mean achievement scores of urban based students were higher than those from rural schools. Similarly, Ezema (2002) pointed out that

school location as a variable did not favour both urban and rural-based students in the same way. Results indicated that rural based students had more disadvantages than their urban counterparts and suffered a lot of disabilities which the urban-based students did not experience. Ezeama's study is relevant to the present study due to location as a variable of interest which is also of interest in the current study

With regard to school location, Akabogu (2002) in her study indicated that school location had a significant effect on students' achievement in English reading comprehension when exposed to English registers and contextual clues. Also in an earlier study, Umo (2001) revealed that school location was a significant factor on students' overall achievement in Igbo grammar when taught with games. In her study, students in the urban schools achieved higher than those in the rural schools. Studies by Akabogu (2002) and Umo (2001) are related to the current study as focus were on location as variable in the studies as is the case with the current study.

From all the findings of the above studies, it is clear that results are not similar about the effect of location of schools on achievement. Majority have however indicated that location has a significant effect on learning achievement as students in urban areas performed better than rural-based students. The lack of uniformity makes location of school an important variable in the current study on interference of Igala language in the learning of English at the Lower Basic Classes in Kogi East Education Zone.

Summary of Literature Review

In this study, the review covered a wide range of literature under conceptual framework, theoretical framework and empirical studies.

The conceptual framework covered the concept of language and English language respectively. It also touched on mother tongue interference in learning. It is widely acknowledged by the authors reviewed that transfer from L1 to L2 is a natural learning process since local languages and the foreign ones learned in schools do not have the same structures all through. Areas of similarities in L1 and L2 facilitate L2 learning while areas of differences pose problems to L2 learners. Literature review revealed that in learning L2, it is necessary to compare and contrast the L1 of learners with the L2 or target language.

From the conceptual review, it was gathered that mother tongue interference is a problem faced by learners of English as a second language across Nigeria. Interference has constituted difficulties in learning English, the language of instruction in schools, thereby inhibiting academic achievement of learners at all levels.

The theoretical review examined some theories concerning interference in language learning such as contrastive analysis and error analysis. The study also examined theories of learning. They include the cognitive/gestalt theory of learning and conditioning theory of learning. Error analysis is of the assumption that studying learners errors has some major advantages, as it provides data from which inferences about the nature of language learning process can be made. The conditioning theory of learning justified that learning can be conditioned. What is required is the control of the environment or the learning situation.

A good number of empirical studies on L1 interference with L2 learning were reviewed. Among them are studies on mother tongue interference and studies on learners achievement in English. Others are on gender achievement in language, and achievement in language due to location. The empirical studies review indicated that interference of L1 in the learning of English affects learners negatively.

Generally, none of the literature reviewed or any other known to the researcher was on the interference of Igala language in the learning of English language at the Lower Basic Level in Kogi East Education Zone, Kogi State, Nigeria. It is therefore, based on the absence of studies on the interference of Igala language in the learning of English language at the Lower Basic Classes that motivated the researcher into carrying out this study to find out the interference of Igala language in the learning of English language among Lower Basic class pupils.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter dealt with the method of carrying out the present study. It was organized under the following sub-headings: design of the study, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of data collection, and method of data analysis.

Design of the Study

The study employed descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design according to Koul (2011) is aimed at collecting detailed description of existing phenomenon with the intent of employing data to justify current conditions and practices. Similarly, Orodho (2005) affirmed that descriptive survey is the method of collecting information by interviewing or administering questionnaire to a sample of individuals. The design was considered appropriate because the researcher intended to collect and analyse data from group of pupils in determining the interference of Igala language in learning English language at the Lower Basic School Level in Kogi East Education Zone of Kogi State.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Kogi East Education Zone of Kogi State. Kogi East Education Zone comprises nine (9) local government areas which include; Ankpa, Idah, Dekina, Igala-Mela, Omala, Olamaboro, Bassa, Ibaji and Ofu. The zone is located at the Eastern region of Kogi State and it consists of both urban and rural communities. The choice

of Kogi East Education Zone was informed by the fact that Igala language is spoken in the zone, and it is the mother tongue of the people.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all the 17,162 Lower Basic II pupils in public schools in Kogi East Education Zone of Kogi State. The population consisted of 9, 952 males and 7, 210 females, as well as 290 in urban and 260 in rural schools (Kogi State Basic Education Board, Lokoja). (See Appendix F, page 125).

Sample and Sampling Technique

Sample size of 476 Lower Basic II pupils in public schools in Kogi East education zone of Kogi State was used for the study. The sample size comprised of 253 males and 214 females as well as 271 urban school pupils and 205 rural school pupils. Dual stage sampling technique was used to arrive at the sample size. In the first stage, stratified random sampling technique was used to sample two local government areas from both urban and rural areas. At the second stage, simple random sampling technique was used to sample five (5) schools in each of the two (2) local government areas sampled. The number of Lower Basic II pupils in ten (10) public schools sampled constituted the sample size.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was Interview Schedule. The interview questions were developed by the researcher. The instrument was made up of two sections, A and B. Section A sought information on the demographic data of the respondents such as gender and school location. Section B consisted of 50 items which sought the interference of Igala language in learning English language, and was divided into three (3) clusters. Cluster A contained 15 items which sought information on interference of Igala language in learning

English language vowel sounds while cluster B contains 15 items which sought information on interference of Igala language in learning English language consonants sounds. Cluster C had 20 items which sought information on interference of Igala language in learning English language at the aspect of morphology. The instrument was rated on a two point scale of interference (INT) and no interference (NINT) (See Appendix A, page 113).

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by giving the instrument to three experts, two in Department of Arts Education (English Language Unit) and one in Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation Unit), Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. The experts were requested to scrutinize the instrument with respect to the clarity of the item statements and whether the items were in line with the purpose of the study. During the validation of the instrument, the phonology and morphology based questions were scrutinized in terms of relevance, content, clarity and difficulty level. The experts' comments, corrections and suggestions helped in modifying the items to suit the problem under investigation (See Appendix K, pg. 168).

Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instrument, the instrument was administered to twenty (20) pupils in Omala local government area who were not part of the sampled schools for the study. The responses obtained were subjected to Kuder-Richardson (K-R) 21 formula to determine the internal consistency and reliability estimate of 0.90 was obtained (See Appendix G, page 126).

Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered to the pupils in the sampled school by the researcher with the help of research assistants. The research assistants were briefed on the modalities of administration of the instrument. During the administration of the instrument, the pupils read out the words in the instrument while the researcher and the researcher assistants listened and identified the interference of Igala language in the pronunciation of the words. Sentences with the use of tense and plural markers were given to be translated into English by the pupils.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using frequencies and percentages in answering all the research questions while the formulated hypotheses were tested using Chi-Square statistic at 0.05 level of significance. 50% bench mark was set for accepting an item as having interference of Igala language in learning English language. In other words, any item that recorded up to 50% will be accepted as having Igala language interference and vice versa.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter presents results of data analysis based on five research questions and two null hypotheses that guided the study. Results are presented separately in tables for five research questions and two tables for the two hypotheses.

Research Question 1

What is the incidence of interference of Igala language in articulating vowel sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes?

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of incidence of interference of Igala language in the production of vowel sounds of English by pupils at Lower Basic Classes

S/N	Item Statement	Interference		Not Interference		Decision
		F	%	F	%	
1	Bad	119	25%	357	75%	NINT
2	Son	476	100%	0	0%	INT
3	Oil	473	99.4%	3	.6%	INT
4	Ear	468	98.3%	8	1.7%	INT
5	Ant	60	12.6%	416	87.4%	NINT
6	Cup	460	96.6%	16	3.4%	INT
7	Cat	62	13%	414	87%	NINT
8	Pot	175	36.8%	301	63.2%	NINT
9	Bird	475	99.8%	1	.2%	INT
10	Cut	456	95.8%	20	4.2%	INT
11	Sit	74	15.5%	402	84.5%	NINT
12	Baby	469	98.5%	7	1.5%	INT
13	Ball	214	45%	262	55%	NINT
14	Boy	453	95.2%	23	4.8%	INT
15	Work	473	99.4%	3	.6%	INT

Result in Table 1 shows that the production of vowel sounds in items 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 14 and 15 had interference percentages of 100%, 99.4%, 98.3%, 96.6%, 99.8%, 95.8%, 98.5%, 95.2% and 99.4% respectively; indicating that the vowel sounds had Igala language

interference. However, vowel sounds in items 1, 5, 7, 8, 11 and 13 had no interference percentages of 75%, 87.4%, 87%, 63.2%, 84.5% and 55% respectively; indicating that the items did not have interference of Igala language in their articulation. Generally, out of 15 items, 9 items had interference of Igala language; this implies that there was interference of Igala language in articulation of vowel sounds of English language at the lower Basic Classes.

Research Question 2

What is the incidence of interference of Igala language in articulating the consonant sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes?

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of incidence of Igala language interference in articulating the consonant sounds of English at Lower Basic Classes

S/N	Item Statement	Interference		No Interference		Decision
		F	%	F	%	
16	Children	123	25.8%	353	74.2%	NINT
17	Lizard	336	70.6%	140	29.4%	INT
18	Mother	473	99.4%	3	.6%	INT
19	Thief	474	99.6%	2	.4%	INT
20	Zebra	330	69.3%	146	30.7%	INT
21	Shoe	326	68.5%	150	31.5%	INT
22	Comb	398	83.6%	78	16.4%	INT
23	Kettle	341	71.6%	135	28.4%	INT
24	Fish	269	56.5%	207	43.5%	INT
25	Bread	466	97.9%	10	2.1%	INT
26	Table	466	97.9%	10	2.1%	INT
27	Shop	269	56.5%	207	43.5%	INT
28	Teach	359	75.4%	117	24.6%	INT
29	Sing	70	14.7%	406	85.3%	NINT
30	Sheep	380	79.8%	96	20.2%	INT

Result in Table2 shows that consonant sounds in items 17-28 and 30 had interference percentages of 70.6%, 99.4%, 99.6%, 69.3%, 68.5%, 83.6%, 71.6%, 56.5%, 97.9%, 97.9%,

56.55, 75.4% and 79.8% respectively; indicating that the consonant sounds had Igala language interference. However, consonant sounds in items 16 and 29 had no interference percentages of 74.2% and 85.3% respectively; indicating that the items did not have interference of Igala language in articulating the consonant sounds of English language. Generally, out of 15 items, 13 items had interference of Igala language; the result indicates that there was interference of Igala language in the production of consonant sounds of English language at the lower Basic Classes.

Research Question 3

What is the incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes?

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes

S/N	Item Statement	Interference		No Interference		Decision
		F	%	F	%	
31		278	58.4%	198	41.6%	INT
32		339	71.2%	137	28.8%	INT
33		475	99.8%	1	.2%	INT
34		463	97.3%	13	2.7%	INT
35		322	67.6%	154	32.4%	INT
36		328	68.9%	148	31.1	INT
37		334	70.2%	142	29.8%	INT
38		171	35.9%	305	64.1%	NINT
39		213	44.7%	263	55.3%	NINT
40		469	98.5%	7	1.5%	INT
41		476	100%	0	0%	INT
42		465	97.7%	11	2.3%	INT
43		476	100%	0	0%	INT
44		156	32.8%	320	67.2%	NINT
45		471	98.9%	5	1.1%	INT
46		476	100%	0	0%	INT
47		475	99.8%	1	.2%	INT
48		218	45.8%	258	54.2%	NINT
49		474	99.6%	2	.4%	INT
50		196	41.2%	280	58.8%	NINT

Result in Table 3 shows that items 31-37, 40-43, 45-47 and 49 had interference percentages of 58.4%, 71.2%, 99.8%, 97.3%, 67.6%, 68.9%, 70.2%, 98.5%, 100.%, 97.7%, 100, 98.9%, 100%, 99.8% and 99.6% respectively; indicating that Igala language interfered in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology for the items. However, items 38, 39, 44 and 50 had no interference percentages of 64.1%, 55.3%, 67.2%, 54.2% and 58.8% respectively; indicating that the items did not have interference of Igala language in English at the level of morphology. Generally, out of 20 items, 15 items had interference of Igala language. The result indicates that there was interference of Igala language in English in the aspect of morphology at the lower Basic Classes.

Research Question 4

What is the influence of gender on the incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils at Lower Basic Classes?

Table 4: Frequency and percentage of influence of gender on incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils

Gender	Interference		No Interference	
	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Male	163	66.8%	81	33.2%
Female	145	62.5%	87	37.5%

Result in Table 4 reveals the influence of gender on interference of Igala language in the English of pupils. From the Table, 163 male pupils representing 66.8% had Igala language interference while 81 pupils representing 32.2% recorded no interference of Igala language in their English. However, 145 female pupils representing 62.5% had Igala

language interference while 87 pupils representing 37.5% recorded no interference of Igala language in their English. The result implies that male pupils had more Igala language interference than their female counterpart in English language at Lower Basic Classes.

Research Question 5

What is the influence of location on the incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils at the Lower Basic Classes?

Table 5: Frequency and percentage of influence of location on the incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils

Location	Interference		No Interference	
	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Urban	134	50.4%	174	49.6%
Rural	132	82.9%	36	17.1%

Result in Table 5 reveals the influence of location on the incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of the pupils. From the Table, 134 urban school pupils representing 50.4% had Igala language interference while 174 urban school pupils representing 49.6% recorded no interference of Igala language. Meanwhile, 132 rural school pupils representing 82.9% had Igala language interference while 36 rural school pupils representing 17.1% recorded no interference of Igala language. The result therefore, indicates that rural school pupils had more Igala language interference than their urban counterpart in English at the Lower Basic Classes.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the interference ratings of male and female Igala learners of English language at the Lower Basic Classes

Table 6: Chi-square interference ratings of male and female Igala learners of English language at Lower Basic Classes

Pupils' Gender	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	.964 ^a	1	.326
Likelihood Ratio	.964	1	.326
Linear-by-Linear Association	.962	1	.327
N of Valid Cases ^b	476		

Result in Table 6 shows that the Chi-Square value of .96 was obtained. This value of Chi-Square is not significant at 0.326. This is because the probability value of 0.326 is higher than the level of significant set at 0.05. That is, ($p = 0.326$; $0.05 < 0.326$). Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. The researcher therefore, concludes that there was no significant difference in the interference ratings of male and female Igala learners of English language at Lower Basic Classes.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the interference ratings of urban and rural Igala learners of English language at the Lower Basic Classes

Table 7: Chi-square interference ratings of urban and rural school Igala learners of English language at Lower Basic Classes

Pupils' Location	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	54.214 ^a	1	.000
Likelihood Ratio	56.925	1	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	54.100	1	.000
N of Valid Cases ^b	476		

Result in Table 7 shows that the Chi-Square value of 54.21 was obtained. This value of Chi-Square is significant at .000. This is because $0.05 > .000$, that is ($p = .000$; $0.05 > .000$). Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected; hence, there is a significant difference in the interference ratings of urban and rural Igala learners of English language at Lower Basic Classes.

Summary of the Findings

Based on the analysis of data in the study, the following findings emerged;

1. There was interference of Igala language in articulating the vowel sounds of English language at the Lower Basic Classes.
2. There was interference of Igala language in articulating the consonant sounds of English language at the Lower Basic Classes.
3. There was interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes.
4. Male pupils had more Igala language interference than their female counterparts in English language at the Lower Basic Classes. Further analysis revealed no significance difference in the interference ratings of male and female Igala learners of English language at Lower Basic Classes.
5. Rural pupils had more Igala language interference than their urban counterparts in English language at the Lower Basic Classes. Further analysis revealed that there was a significant difference in the interference ratings of urban and rural Igala learners of English language at Lower Basic Classes.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This chapter focused on the discussion of the findings of the study, their educational implications and recommendations. Also, this chapter consists of the conclusion, limitations of the study, suggestions for further research and the summary of the study. The discussion of findings was based on the research questions and hypotheses, specifically; the discussion was carried out under the following sub-headings:

- Interference of Igala language in articulating the vowel sounds of English language at the Lower Basic Classes.
- Interference of Igala language in articulating the consonant sounds of English language at the Lower Basic Classes.
- Interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes.
- The influence of gender on interference of Igala language in the English of pupils at the Lower Basic Classes.
- The influence of location on interference of Igala language in the English of pupils at the Lower Basic Classes.

Discussion of Findings

Interference of Igala language in articulating the vowel sounds of English language at the Lower Basic Classes.

Research question 1 found out the frequency and percentage of Igala language interference in articulating the vowel sounds of English language at the Lower Basic Classes.

The result on table 1 indicated that there was interference of Igala language in articulating the vowel sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes. The result revealed that pupils had the phonological problem of using /O/ sound for /ɔ/ and /u/ sound in place of /ʊ/. Also /eer/ was used in place of the sound /i / and /€/ for the sound /ʌ/. /e/ was used in place of the /ɜ:/, while /e/ was used for the sound /ei/. The inability of pupils to articulate accurately the vowel sounds of English supports the poor performance of pupils in English language as shown in the result of the preliminary study carried out by the researcher which pointed out that mother tongue interference could have been responsible for their poor performance in English. This goes to support the views of Nigerians on the decline in the standard of spoken and written English in the country.

The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Afangideh (2005) that the mother tongue of students interferes in learning English language. Findings of this study also agreed with the findings of Ukwuezeh (2008) that the irregularity in English pronunciation affects students greatly. This research is in support of Afangideh (2005) who noted that the second language learner is naturally liable to applying mother tongue patterns and rules to second language learning situations. A comparison of the mother tongue and the target language is important as second language learners and users face difficulties which result from structural differences between their mother tongue and the second language. In a sharp contrast to the English twenty (20) vowels. Omachonu (2000) noted that Igala language functions with a seven (7) vowel system. This makes it imperative for teachers at the Lower Basic Classes to carry out a contrastive analysis of the sounds of English and Igala language in order to determine areas of similarity and differences.

The findings of the study also agreed with Eyisi (2008) who affirmed that mother tongue constitutes a lot of problems to learners in their pronunciation of words. The pronunciation pattern of their native language or mother tongue does interfere greatly with the pronunciation of English words. Some English words have little or no correspondence between the spelling of words and their pronunciation.

Interference of Igala language in articulating the consonant sounds of English language at the Lower Basic Classes

Research question 2 sought to find out the frequency percentage of Igala language interference in learning consonant sounds of English language at the Lower Basic Classes. The result on table 2 showed that there was interference of Igala language in learning consonant sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes. Interference of Igala language occurred as a result of non existence of some consonant sounds of English language in the consonant chart of Igala language (Omachonu, 2000) and the compared charts of Igala and English language (Ikani, 2004). The pupils had the problem of using /t/ sound for /ʔ/ sound, /d/ sound in place of /ð/ and /tʃ/ for /ʃ/ sound.

The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Ukwueze (2008) which revealed that learners have phonological problems of using /t/ sound for /ʔ/ sound, /d/ sound in place of /ð/ and /n/ for /l/.

Interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes.

Research question 3 established that the frequency percentage of Igala language interference in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes. The result on table 3 showed that there was interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in

the aspect of Morphology at the Lower Basic Classes. The result agreed with views of Muhammed (2013) who sees morphology as a branch of linguistics that deals with morphemes and how they operate in the structure of words. The term is used to identify, describe and analyze the structure of morphemes of a given language and other linguistic units such as roots, words, affixes parts of speech, intonations and stress. These units of language as Muhammed noted differ in languages and thus pose problems to second language learners. The morphemes of English and Igala language do not occur in the same way in constructions hence, pupils had problems in writing plural words and past tense markers in English. The morpheme *-s* is a plural marker in English and occurs as a suffix. This is in contrast with the plural markers in Igala language which Atadoga (2011) identified as prefixes. The past tense marker in Igala unlike in English is identified by intonation. This agreed with the views of Muhammed (2013) that intonation and stress are parts of linguistic units by which the structure of morphemes of a given language can be analyzed. These differences in the structures of Igala and English language accounted for the problems faced by the pupils in writing English language words and sentences. This finding agreed with the widely held views that in an attempt for the second language learner to communicate his ideas/feelings, thoughts and attitudes in the new language, he falls back on the language system of his mother tongue (Ikani, 2004; Mahmoud, 2006; Odenyi, 2010).

The influence of gender on interference of Igala language in the English of pupils at the Lower Basic Classes

Research question 4 found out the frequency and percentage of interference of Igala language in English according to gender, while hypothesis 1 determined whether there was significant difference in the interference scores of male and female Igala learners of English language at the Lower Basic Classes. The result on table 4 revealed that female pupils had less

Igala language interference than their male counterparts in English language at the Lower Basic Classes. This finding agreed with the findings of Umo (2001) and Cavanagh, Della and Mollon (2001). The results of their studies revealed that female students achieved higher than males. Cavanagh, Della and Mollon (2001) remarked that studies on gender based education indicated apparent underachievement of male learners. The area in which male learners were said to have underachieved greatly was literacy. They noted that the results from the national English literacy survey in Australia indicated that males consistently performed at a lower level on literacy benchmarks in primary schools compared with girls.

To answer hypothesis 1, results on table 6 showed that there was no significant difference in male and female proportions between the interference scores of Igala learners of English language at the Lower Basic Classes. The null hypothesis therefore, was not rejected. This finding disagreed with the findings of Azikiwe (2005) on gender influence on language behaviour in Nigeria. In the research, thirty one works on the influence of gender on language achievement were reviewed.

Influence of location on interference of Igala language in the English of pupils at the Lower Basic Classes.

Research question 5 found out the frequency of interference of Igala language in English according to location, as hypothesis 2 determined whether there was significant difference in the interference scores of urban and rural Igala learners of English language at the Lower Basic Classes. The result on table 5 revealed that urban pupils had less Igala language interference than their rural counterparts in English language at the Lower Basic Classes. Pupils in urban schools in Kogi East Education Zone are exposed to English language in many ways such as the television, radio, people of other ethnic groups with who they communicate in English and so on,

while pupils in the rural areas have only the mother tongue. The finding of this study agreed with the findings of (Ene, 2002; Ezema, 2002; Akabogu 2002 and Umo, 2001) who in their studies results revealed that school location as a variable did not favour both urban and rural based students in the same way.

To determine the significant difference in the interference scores of urban and rural Igala learners of English at the Lower Basic Classes ñ hypothesis 2, results on table 7 showed that there was significant difference in urban and rural proportions between the interference scores of Igala learners of English. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The findings disagreed with Uzoegwu (2004) who studied the effect of co-operative learning method on achievement of senior secondary two students, and results indicated that school location was not a significant factor on students' achievement in easy writing. It however agreed with Akabogu (2002) who studied the effect of school location on students' achievement in English reading comprehension and found that students in urban schools achieved higher than those in the rural schools.

Conclusion

Given the findings of this study, the following conclusions were reached. Mother tongue interference is a phenomenon that greatly affects the learning of English language among pupils of the Lower Basic Classes. The contrastive analysis of the mother tongue and the second language at the levels of phonology, morphology, syntax and so on is imperative in order to determine areas that pose learning problems to learners of second language. There was interference of Igala language in articulating the vowel and consonant sounds of English. Igala language interfered in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology of English at the Lower Basic Classes. The male pupils had more Igala language interference than their female

counterparts in English language at the Lower Basic Classes. Pupils in the rural areas had more Igala language interference than the pupils in urban areas in English language.

Gender and location had influence on the performance of pupils in English Language at the Lower Basic Classes. While there was no significant difference in male and female proportions in the interference scores of pupils, there was significant difference in urban and rural proportions between the interference scores of pupils in English at the Lower Basic Classes.

Educational Implications

The findings of this study have relevant implications for second language teaching in education. One of the findings of this study is that the mother tongue of pupils interfered in articulating the vowel sounds of English. The implication of this finding is that teachers at the Lower Basic Classes level need to carry out analysis of phonological errors committed by pupils in order to have focus on the particular language items on which contrastive analysis of the mother tongue and English could be done. This will allow for emphasis to be placed on the areas of differences where pupils face problems in articulating the sounds of English.

Another finding of the study revealed that pupils have problems of articulating some consonant sounds of English language as mother tongue interference occur in their efforts to pronounce some words. The implication of this is that teachers at this level of education need to identify areas of differences in the consonant sounds of the Igala language and English language. More attention should be given to such areas of differences while teaching in order to help the pupils learn better.

A finding of the study was that at the level of morphology, the pupils were unable to use some of the plural and past tense markers correctly. The educational implication of this finding is

that teachers need to intensify the use of exercises and substitution tables in teaching which can lead to positive outcome.

This study also revealed that female pupils had less mother tongue interference than the male pupil in learning English language. The implication of this is that teachers should put in extra efforts by ensure that the both male and female pupils are carried along in the teaching process.

The finding of this study is that there was significant difference in urban and rural proportions between the interference scores of pupils. Pupils in urban schools had less mother tongue interference in English than pupils in rural schools. The implication of this finding is that teachers in rural schools need to be monitored through regular inspection of lessons and lesson plan, as well as ensuring that the necessary instructional materials are used in teaching.

The above findings have certain curriculum implications as it is imperative that teachers, textbook writers, school inspectors, administrators, curriculum designers and all those who are interested in improving the learning of English in Kogi East Education Zone, recognize the influence of Igala language in learning English. Therefore, there should exist government effort or policy through the local government education authorities to encourage teachers at the Lower Basic Classes, to carry out systematic description of Igala language spoken in Kogi East Education Zone. Such description will prove as valuable information for curriculum planners, textbook writers and classroom teachers in the provision of relevant materials and exercises to cater for local needs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, and their educational implications, the following recommendations were made:

1. Curriculum planners and textbook writers should make use of works on Igala language in developing English language syllabus and textbooks. Emphasis should be on contrasts between Igala and English language. Textbook writers should make provision for meeting the language needs of Igala pupils. This should be done by including items relevant to pupils in their environment.
2. The language teacher at the Lower Basic level should highlight and stress points of differences in mother tongue and English especially in phonology, morphology and so on, so that learners can distinguish between them in order to minimize interference.
3. To curb interference of Igala language and facilitate recognition and recall, identical elements and features of the rules of mother tongue and English should be grouped and taught together, the points of differences should be highlighted and emphasized so that pupils can differentiate them in usage.
4. It is strongly recommended that the use of modern methods of language teaching and learning through drills be adopted by teachers for effectiveness and overcoming interference problems encountered by pupils.
5. Specifically, Kogi State Government should use the findings of this study to improve on learning materials in schools at the Lower Basic Level in Kogi East Education Zone in order to curb interference problems. The State Ministry of Education and Local Government Education Authorities should organize seminars/workshops and conferences on the effects of mother tongue interference in learning English and teachers should be encouraged in carrying out a contrastive analysis of mother tongue and English language.
6. Male and female pupils should be exposed to all the strategies employed to de-emphasize mother tongue interference in learning English without discrimination since the result of

the study has shown no significance difference in proportions between their interference scores.

7. Extra time should be allocated to pupils in the rural areas by the school authorities. This is by way of engaging them in extra-curricular activities such as watching plays, films and cartoons in English language for more exposure to the language. The rural schools should therefore be provided with adequate facilities and teaching aids such as visual and audio-visual materials.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations may have influenced this study.

Some of the Lower Basic Class teachers used as research assistants for the study were affected by mother tongue interference which could have introduced some errors into the results of the study.

In the course of administering the test items, pupils were delayed to late in the afternoon. They were exhausted, and this could have affected their responses.

Suggestions for Further Research

The present study has focused on interference of mother tongue in learning English language. In the light of its findings, the following are suggested as possible areas for further research:

1. This study should be replicated in all Lower Basic Classes in the 9 Local Government Areas of Kogi East to find out whether it would yield a different result.
2. A similar study should be carried out on interference of mother tongue on grammar and syntax of English language.
3. This study could be replicated using Upper Basic Class Level.

4. The study could also be replicated using age and educational status of parents as variables.

Summary of the Study

English language is indispensable as it is the official language in Nigeria. It is the language of education. In spite of these, many learners of the language from Basic School Pupils to students at other levels perform poorly in the language due to many factors. One of such factors is interference of mother tongue in learning English by second language learners. This has led to the search for appropriate measures and steps that will help improve learner's achievement in English. Consequently, this study found out the interference of Igala language in the phonology and morphology of English language. Five research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Related literature was reviewed.

The review looked at the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, while also exploring empirical studies that were related to the study. The study employed the descriptive survey design. A comparison of the phonology and morphology of Igala and English revealed areas of differences which constituted problems for learners. Dual stage sampling technique was used to arrive at the sample size. The stratified random sampling technique was used to sample two local government areas. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample five (5) schools in each of the two local government areas sampled. The class teachers were trained and used as research assistants.

The instrument used for data collection was a-50 item Incidence of Interference Test (IOIT) developed by the researcher. It comprised pronunciation and translation exercises. A reliability index of 0.90 of the instrument was obtained. The data collected from the study were analyzed through the use of frequencies and percentage as well as Pearson Chi-Square.

The results of the study showed that there was Igala language interference in the English of pupils at the Lower Basic Classes. The findings revealed that female pupils performed better than the males. Similarly, pupils attending schools in the urban areas performed better than their counterparts attending schools in the rural areas. There was significant difference in urban and rural proportions between their interference scores. Recommendations were made based on the findings. The major recommendation was that curriculum planners and textbook writers should re-design the Basic Education Syllabus and textbooks by making use of works done on Igala language and using items relevant to pupils in their environment. This will go a long way in enhancing their achievement in learning English language thereby improving the quality of the products of the Basic Education programme. The limitation of the study was given as well as suggestions for further research with consideration for other variables.

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APPENDIX A:

Interview Schedule Questions

SECTION A: Personal Data of Respondent

Name of School: _____

Class: _____

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

Local: Urban ☐ Rural ☐

SECTION B:

Cluster A

Interference of Igala language in articulating English vowel sounds at the Lower

Basic Classes.

Read out the following words:

S/N	ITEM	INT	NINT
1.	Bad		
2.	Son		
3.	Oil		
4.	Ear		
5.	Ant		
6.	Cup		
7.	Cat		
8.	Pot		
9.	Bird		
10.	Cut		
11.	Sit		
12.	Baby		
13.	Ball		
14.	Boy		
15.	Work		

INT = Interference

NINT = No Interference

Cluster B

Interference of Igala language in articulating English consonant sounds at the Lower Basic Classes.

Read out the following words

NO	ITEM	INT	NINT
16.	Children		
17.	Lizard		
18.	Mother		
19.	Thief		
20.	Zebra		
21.	Shoe		
22.	Comb		
23.	Kettle		
24.	Fish		
25.	Bread		
26.	Table		
27.	Shop		
28.	Teach		
29.	Sing		
30.	Sheep		

Cluster C

Interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes.

Write the following in English language

NO	ITEM	INT	NINT
31.	àmábia ny		
32.	àmikpa fufu		
33.	àm g d kpa		
34.	àmim t kekele		
35.	àm takada wà		
36.	àm wo dudu		
37.	àmunyi elile		
38.	àmákpiti wewe		
39.	àmuchu yoyo		
40.	uj nwu riny		
41.	àwa ch iyá onal		
42.	omi álo ti àjà		
43.	Ali ch uk l ny		
44.	Ele à rule		
45.	Abo hi uj nwu wà		
46.	Okolo r ib lu		
47.	maye à kéli y ny		
48.	Eke à gwé amucha		
49.	Arom lé ul ti ida		
50.	Alime à gbáné		

APPENDIX B:

Answers

Cluster A

Interference of Igala language in articulating English language vowel sounds at the Lower Basic Classes.

- | | |
|-----------|---------|
| (1) Bad | /bæd/ |
| (2) Son | /sʌn/ |
| (3) Oil | /ɔɪl/ |
| (4) Ear | /i r/ |
| (5) Ant | /ænt/ |
| (6)) Cup | /cʌp/ |
| (7) Cat | /cæt/ |
| (8) Pot | /pɒt/ |
| (9) Bird | /bɜ:rd/ |
| (10) Cut | /kʌt/ |
| (11) Sit | /sit/ |
| (12) baby | /beibi/ |
| (13) Ball | /bɔl/ |
| (14) Boy | /bɔi/ |
| (15) Work | /wɜ:rk/ |

Correctly pronounced word earns 3 marks while the one pronounced wrongly earns 2 marks.

Cluster B

Interference of Igala language in articulating English language consonant sounds at the Lower Basic Classes.

(16) Children	/tʃildren/
(17) Lizard	/liz rd/
(18) Mother	/mʌð r/
(19) Thief	/ i:f/
(20) Zebra	/zebr /
(21) Shoe	/ʃu:/
(22) Comb	/k um/
(23) Kettle	/ketl/
(24) Fish	/fiʃ/
(25) Bread	/bred/
(26) Table	/teibl/
(27) Shop	/ʃɒp/
(28) Teach	/ti:tʃ/
(29) Sheep	/ʃi:p/
(30) Church	/ tʃɜ:tʃ/

Any word pronounced correctly earns 3 marks while a word pronounced wrongly earns 2 marks.

Cluster C

Interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes.

- (31) Good dogs
- (32) White bags
- (33) Ripe bananas
- (34) Little Children
- (35) Many books
- (36) Black goats
- (37) Big houses
- (38) Many ants
- (39) Big yams
- (40) Delicious food
- (41) We played yesterday
- (42) I am going to the market
- (43) Ali worked well
- (44) Ele is running
- (45) Abo cooked for us
- (46) Okolo played ball.
- (47) Omaye sings well
- (48) Eke is washing the pots
- (49) Arome walked to Ida
- (50) Alime is sweeping.

Phrases or sentences correctly translated into English earn 3 marks each, while those wrongly translated earn 2 marks each.

APPENDIX C

Department of Arts Education,
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka.
9/8/2017

VALIDATION OF INSTRUMENT

Dear Validator,

I am a Ph.D student of the above named university, soliciting for your expert comments on the above subject matter.

See attached:

- a. Title page of the Study
- b. Purpose of the Study
- c. Research Questions
- d. Hypotheses and
- e. Instrument for data collection

You are please requested to validate the attachment by:

- a. Examining the structure of the sentences
- b. Examining the extent to which the instrument is adequate in achieving the purpose of the study.

Thank You.

Habiba Oma Alhassan

(Ph.D Student)

**INTERFERENCE OF IGALA LANGUAGE IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT
THE LOWER BASIC SCHOOL LEVEL IN KOGI EAST EDUCATION ZONE, KOGI
STATE, NIGERIA**

Ph.D PROPOSAL

BY

ALHASSAN, HABIBA OMA

PG/Ph.D/13/65410

**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS EDUCATION
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NUSKKA**

SUPERVISOR: PROF. (MRS.) UJU UMO

APRIL, 2017.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the interference of Igala language in the learning of English language at the Lower Basic School level. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Find out incidence of interference of Igala language in articulating the vowel sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes.
2. Find out incidence of interference of Igala language in articulating the consonant sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes.
3. Find out incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes.
4. Determine the influence of gender on incidence of interference of Igala language in the learning of English at the Lower Basic Classes.
5. Determine the influence of location on incidence of interference of Igala language in the learning of English at the Lower Basic Classes.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

- (1) What is the incidence of interference of Igala language in articulating the vowel sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes?
- (2) What is the incidence of Igala language interference in articulating the consonant sounds of English at the Lower Basic Classes?
- (3) What is the incidence of interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes?
- (4) What is the influence of gender on incidence of interference of Igala language in learning English at the Lower Basic Classes?

- (5) What is the influence of location on incidence of interference of Igala language in learning English at the Lower Basic Classes?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₁: There is no significant difference in the interference ratings of male and female Igala learners of English language at the Lower Basic Classes.

H₂: There is no significant difference in the interference ratings of urban and rural Igala learners of English language at the Lower Basic Classes.

APPENDIX E:

Result of preliminary study of the performance of pupils at the Lower Basic Two Classes in
English Language in Ankpa Local Government Area, Kogi State.

S/N	School	No. of Pupils in Class	No. that Passed	No. that Failed	Percentage Pass
1.	L.G.E.A. School, Ajobe	15	7	8	46%
2.	L.G.E.A. School, Ojelanyi	23	10	13	43%
3.	L.G.E.A. School Owelle, Ankpa	15	6	8	40%
4.	L.G.E.A./RCM School ãBö Ankpa	21	8	13	38%
5.	Yanape school, Ankpa	21	8	12	38%
6.	L.G.E.A. School, Onupi	22	8	14	36%
7.	L.G.E.A. School, Okaba	17	6	11	35%
8.	L.G.E.A./RCMSchool ãCö Ankpa	20	7	13	35%
9.	L.G.E.A. Central School, Ankpa	12	3	9	25%
10.	L.G.E.A./RCM School ãAö Ankpa	16	3	13	18%

APPENDIX F:
Population of the Study

S/N	L.G.A.	NO. OF SCHOOLS	NO. OF PUPILS	MALE	FEMALE
1.	Ankpa	80	2,200	1,300	900
2.	Dekina	85	2, 560	1, 540	1, 020
3.	Olamaboro	60	2, 050	1, 200	850
4.	Omala	55	1, 850	1, 020	830
5.	Ofu	50	880	1, 050	830
6.	Idah	60	2, 512	1, 412	1, 100
7.	Igalamela	55	1, 300	780	520
8.	Ibaji	50	1, 580	850	730
9.	Bassa	50	1, 430	800	530
Total	9	550	17, 162	9, 952	7, 210

APPENDIX H
LETTER OF REQUEST TO USE SCHOOL

Department of Arts Education,
Faculty of Education,
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka.
6th September, 2017.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a Ph.D student of the Department of Arts Education, of the above university. I intend to carry out a research on the interference of Igala language in learning English language at the lower Basic Level in Kogi East Education Zone, in pursuance of this research objective, your maximum co-operation is required to make this research worthwhile.

The information is for the consumption of the researcher, and hence, the result will not in anyway, be used against you.

Yours faithfully,

Alhassan, Habiba Oma

APPENDIX K

VALIDATED INSTRUMENT BY EXPERTS

Interview Schedule Questions

SECTION A: Personal Data of Respondent

Name of School: _____

Class: _____

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

Local: Urban ☐ Rural ☐

SECTION B:

Cluster A

Interference of Igala language in articulating English vowel sounds at the Lower

Basic Classes.

Read out the following words:

S/N	ITEM	INT	NINT
16.	Bad		
17.	Son		
18.	Oil		
19.	Ear		
20.	Ant		
21.	Cup		
22.	Cat		
23.	Pot		
24.	Bird		
25.	Cut		
26.	Sit		
27.	Baby		
28.	Ball		
29.	Boy		
30.	Work		

INT = Interference

NINT = No Interference

Cluster B

Interference of Igala language in articulating English consonant sounds at the
Lower Basic Classes.

Read out the following words

NO	ITEM	INT	NINT
16.	Children		
17.	Lizard		
18.	Mother		
19.	Thief		
20.	Zebra		
21.	Shoe		
22.	Comb		
23.	Kettle		
24.	Fish		
25.	Bread		
26.	Table		
27.	Shop		
28.	Teach		
29.	Sing		
30.	Sheep		

Cluster C

Interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes.

Write the following in English language

NO	ITEM	INT	NINT
31.	àmábia ny		
32.	àmikpa fufu		
33.	àm g d kpa		
34.	àmim t kekele		
35.	àm takada wà		
36.	àm wo dudu		
37.	àmunyi elile		
38.	àmákpiti wewe		
39.	àmuchu yoyo		
40.	uj nwu riny		
41.	àwa ch iyá onal		
42.	omi álo ti àjà		
43.	Ali ch uk l ny		
44.	Ele à rule		
45.	Abo hi uj nwu wà		
46.	Okolo r ib lu		
47.	maye à kéli y ny		
48.	Eke à gwé amucha		
49.	Arom lé ul ti ida		
50.	Alime à gbáné		

Answers

Cluster A

Interference of Igala language in articulating English language vowel sounds at the Lower Basic Classes.

(51)	Bad	/bæd/
(52)	Son	/sʌn/
(53)	Oil	/ɔil/
(54)	Ear	/i r/
(55)	Ant	/ænt/
(56)	) Cup	/cʌp/
(57)	Cat	/cæt/
(58)	Pot	/pɒt/
(59)	Bird	/bɜ:rd/
(60)	Cut	/kʌt/
(61)	Sit	/sit/
(62)	baby	/beibi/
(63)	Ball	/bɔl/
(64)	Boy	/bɔi/
(65)	Work	/wɜ:rk/

Correctly pronounced word earns 3 marks while the one pronounced wrongly earns 2 marks.

Cluster B

Interference of Igala language in articulating English language consonant sounds at the Lower Basic Classes.

(66) Children	/tʃɪldrən/
(67) Lizard	/lɪzəd/
(68) Mother	/mʌðər/
(69) Thief	/i:f/
(70) Zebra	/zebr /
(71) Shoe	/ʃu:/
(72) Comb	/kʌm/
(73) Kettle	/kɛtl/
(74) Fish	/fɪʃ/
(75) Bread	/bred/
(76) Table	/teɪbl/
(77) Shop	/ʃɒp/
(78) Teach	/ti:tʃ/
(79) Sheep	/ʃi:p/
(80) Church	/tʃɜ:tʃ/

Any word pronounced correctly earns 3 marks while a word pronounced wrongly earns 2 marks.

Cluster C

Interference of Igala language in the English of pupils in the aspect of morphology at the Lower Basic Classes.

- (81) Good dogs
- (82) White bags
- (83) Ripe bananas
- (84) Little Children
- (85) Many books
- (86) Black goats
- (87) Big houses
- (88) Many ants
- (89) Big yams
- (90) Delicious food
- (91) We played yesterday
- (92) I am going to the market
- (93) Ali worked well
- (94) Ele is running
- (95) Abo cooked for us
- (96) Okolo played ball.
- (97) Omaye sings well
- (98) Eke is washing the pots
- (99) Arome walked to Ida
- (100) Alime is sweeping.

Phrases or sentences correctly translated into English earn 3 marks each, while those wrongly translated earn 2 marks each.