

IMPACT OF HAUSA LANGUAGE ON ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the impact of the Hausa language on the English proficiency of secondary school students in Kano State, Nigeria. The research examines how interference from Hausa affects students' pronunciation, syntax, vocabulary, and overall fluency in English and identifies strategies employed by teachers to mitigate this interference. A mixed-methods approach was used, incorporating questionnaires and interviews with 100 teachers from selected schools. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses revealed that Hausa significantly interferes with students' English proficiency, particularly in pronunciation and syntax, with many students relying heavily on Hausa linguistic structures. Teachers employed strategies such as encouraging English practice, targeted vocabulary instruction, and real-time error correction, which were found to be the most effective in improving proficiency. Code-switching was commonly used but had limited long-term effectiveness. Based on these findings, it is recommended that educational policies focus on enhancing English language exposure through structured practice, vocabulary development, and teacher training on bilingual education techniques. Future research should extend this inquiry to other regions and languages to further understand language interference and its implications for English language acquisition in Nigeria.

Keywords: Hausa Language Interference, English Proficiency, Secondary School Students, Code-Switching, Bilingual Education

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a linguistically diverse country with over 500 indigenous languages spoken across various regions, including Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and many other smaller languages. This complex linguistic landscape has created a dynamic interaction between these indigenous languages and English, which holds official status in the country. English is not only the language of government, law, and the media but also the primary medium of instruction in schools across the nation (Gwadabe, 2024). However, the co-existence of English with indigenous languages creates a unique linguistic phenomenon where many Nigerians, especially students, navigate between their mother tongues and English, resulting in the transfer of linguistic features from indigenous languages to their English usage (Oyibo, 2017). This study seeks to explore how this interaction

influences the use of English among secondary school students in Kano State, Nigeria, focusing specifically on the role of indigenous languages in shaping their English language proficiency and usage.

Kano State, located in the northern part of Nigeria, is predominantly Hausa-speaking, with Hausa functioning as the lingua franca in both rural and urban communities (Kabiru & David, 2021). As a result, students in Kano grow up in an environment where Hausa dominates daily communication, while English is primarily used in formal settings, particularly in education. This linguistic dichotomy raises important questions about how students learn and use English in an academic context. The influence of Hausa on English usage is evident in various forms, including code-switching, code-mixing, and phonological, syntactic, and lexical interference (Kabiru, 2020). These linguistic phenomena often affect students' ability to communicate effectively in English, which is critical for academic success and future opportunities in a globalised world.

The influence of indigenous languages on English language acquisition has been a subject of scholarly interest, particularly in multilingual societies like Nigeria. Scholars such as Umar (2022) have noted that language interference – where the structures of a mother tongue affect the second language – can have both positive and negative consequences on the learner's proficiency in English. For instance, while some level of code-switching can enhance bilingual students' communicative competence (Uthman, 2020), excessive reliance on indigenous language structures may hinder the development of native-like fluency in English, especially in formal writing and academic discourse (Hassan, 2024). In Kano State, where the majority of students are bilingual in Hausa and English, it becomes crucial to investigate the extent to which indigenous linguistic features infiltrate English usage and how this affects students' academic performance, especially in English language subjects.

The research problem addressed in this study stems from the observation that many secondary school students in Kano State exhibit varying levels of proficiency in English despite the language being the official medium of instruction. This issue is particularly concerning given that English is a core subject in Nigeria's education system and a requirement for tertiary education admission (Lawal, 2024). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the interference of Hausa in students' spoken and written English may contribute to challenges in mastering the language. For instance, common errors observed include direct translation from Hausa to English, which results in grammatically incorrect sentences, as well as the inappropriate use of idiomatic expressions. These issues raise concerns about the effectiveness of current language instruction methods and the impact of students' linguistic backgrounds on their ability to succeed in an English-dominated academic environment.

The rationale for this study is grounded in the need to better understand the linguistic challenges faced by students in multilingual contexts like Kano State, where indigenous languages and English coexist. Understanding how students navigate between these languages is essential for improving language teaching strategies and ensuring that students are adequately prepared to use English for academic and professional purposes. Additionally, as Nigeria continues to play a significant role in the global economy, English proficiency remains a critical skill for participating in international communication and opportunities. Therefore, addressing the factors that contribute

to students' difficulties in mastering English is not only an educational concern but also a socio-economic imperative.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the extent to which Hausa, as an indigenous language, influences the English language proficiency of secondary school students in Kano State.
2. To identify specific patterns of language interference from Hausa to English in the students' spoken and written English.
3. To investigate the prevalence of code-switching and code-mixing among secondary school students in Kano State when using English.
4. To assess the impact of Hausa-English language interference on students' academic performance in English language subjects.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does the Hausa language influence the English language proficiency of secondary school students in Kano State?
2. What are the specific patterns of linguistic interference from Hausa to English in the students' spoken and written communication?
3. How prevalent are code-switching and code-mixing among secondary school students when using English in academic and informal contexts?
4. What is the impact of Hausa-English language interference on students' academic performance in English language subjects?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nigeria's linguistic diversity, with over 500 indigenous languages, presents a complex interplay between local languages and English, the country's official language. English plays a central role in Nigeria's educational system, administration, and international relations, making proficiency in it crucial for academic and socio-economic advancement (Gwadabe, 2024). However, in multilingual settings like Nigeria, the interaction between English and indigenous languages creates unique challenges for language use and acquisition. Researchers have extensively studied the influence of indigenous languages on English, particularly through phenomena like code-switching, language interference, and bilingualism, which impact language learning and communication in various ways.

Language Use in Nigeria

Nigeria's language situation is shaped by both its colonial history and its ethnic diversity. During British colonial rule, English was established as the language of administration and education, leading to its current status as the official language (Oyibo, 2017). However, most Nigerians grow up speaking one or more indigenous languages, and English is typically acquired later, in school settings. This multilingual context results in a linguistic hierarchy where English is associated with

formal and official functions, while indigenous languages dominate informal and interpersonal communication (Umar, 2022).

In many parts of Nigeria, including northern regions like Kano State, Hausa is the lingua franca, serving as the primary language of everyday communication, while English is confined to more formal contexts such as schools, the media, and official government functions (Kabiru & David, 2021). This division creates a situation where students often experience linguistic interference between their first language (L1), Hausa, and their second language (L2), English. Indigenous languages, due to their dominance in students' daily lives, exert a significant influence on how they learn and use English. This influence manifests in various forms, including vocabulary borrowing, phonological shifts, and syntactic errors that reflect the structure of the indigenous language (Hassan, 2024).

Code-Switching in Nigeria

Code-switching – the alternating use of two or more languages within a conversation or even a sentence – is a common linguistic phenomenon in Nigeria due to the multilingual nature of its society (Uthman, 2020). In both urban and rural areas, Nigerians frequently switch between English and indigenous languages, often to convey cultural meaning, establish rapport, or clarify concepts. Code-switching can also be a tool for managing the perceived formality of English versus the informality of local languages (Aliu, 2016). In academic contexts, students may code-switch as a way of compensating for limited vocabulary or as a means of simplifying complex English concepts using familiar indigenous language structures.

Several studies have examined the motivations and functions of code-switching in Nigerian classrooms and social interactions. For example, Akindele and Mokotso (2019) found that students and teachers in Nigerian classrooms often code-switch between English and indigenous languages to enhance comprehension, especially when complex concepts are being taught. Similarly, studies on secondary school students in northern Nigeria indicate that Hausa is frequently used to explain difficult English vocabulary or to reinforce understanding during lessons (Kabiru, 2020). Although this strategy can support learning, it may also hinder the development of full English language proficiency, as students become reliant on their L1 to interpret and express ideas in their L2.

Language Interference and Bilingualism

Language interference occurs when the structures of a speaker's first language affect their use of a second language. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in Nigeria due to the simultaneous acquisition and use of both English and indigenous languages (Umar, 2022). Interference can affect several levels of language, including phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics. For instance, Hausa speakers learning English may struggle with English word order, tense, or the use of articles, as Hausa operates under different grammatical rules (Tonuewa, 2018). Such errors are often carried over into students' spoken and written English, leading to non-standard usage that reflects the influence of their indigenous language.

Phonological interference is another significant issue, as many Nigerian languages have sound systems that differ from English. For example, Hausa speakers may find it challenging to distinguish between certain English vowel sounds or consonant clusters, which can result in pronunciation errors (Oladipo & Owolabi, 2005). These difficulties can persist even after years of exposure to English, particularly in environments where English is not consistently spoken outside the classroom. Moreover, syntactic interference can lead to sentence structures in English that mirror the word order or grammatical constructs of Hausa, resulting in errors that are reflective of the influence of the indigenous language (Akindele & Mokotso, 2019).

Bilingualism, while beneficial in some contexts, can also complicate language learning. According to Aderibigbe (2021), bilingual students may experience what he calls “linguistic interdependence,” where proficiency in the first language influences the acquisition of a second language. In the Nigerian context, this means that strong proficiency in an indigenous language can either support or interfere with the acquisition of English, depending on how closely the structures of the two languages align. Studies have shown that students with stronger literacy skills in their L1 tend to perform better in their L2 (English) if there is adequate instruction and support (Baker, 2016). However, when indigenous languages are not formally taught, and students primarily use them informally, they may develop informal language habits that carry over into their English usage.

Influence of Indigenous Languages on English in Nigeria

The influence of indigenous languages on English is an ongoing concern in the Nigerian education system, as students' ability to communicate effectively in English directly affects their academic performance. Lawal (2024) highlights the critical role of English in Nigeria's education system, noting that students must master English not only as a subject but also as the medium of instruction in most other subjects. However, indigenous languages, which are the first languages of most students, often leave a deep imprint on their English. This influence can be seen in the direct translation of indigenous language phrases into English, the use of L1 grammatical structures in L2 contexts, and the borrowing of vocabulary from indigenous languages when students lack the appropriate English terms (Oyibo, 2017).

The relationship between English and indigenous languages in Nigeria is further complicated by social and cultural factors. Many students perceive English as a language of prestige and upward mobility, while indigenous languages are often associated with local identity and tradition (Gwadabe, 2024). This dual perception creates a tension where students strive to achieve fluency in English while retaining their cultural identity through their indigenous languages. The result is a hybridised form of English that is heavily influenced by indigenous languages in terms of phonology, syntax, and semantics (Bangbose, 2020). Such hybridisation reflects Nigeria's unique sociolinguistic reality but also presents challenges for educators aiming to teach standard English.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This approach was chosen because it allowed the researcher to collect detailed information from respondents about their language use and the influence of indigenous languages on their English language proficiency. Descriptive surveys are commonly used in educational research to describe the characteristics, behaviours, or experiences of a population based on a representative sample (Creswell, 2014). In this case, the design was deemed suitable for examining how secondary school students in Kano State navigated between Hausa and English and how these languages interacted in their academic and informal contexts.

Population of the Study

The population for the study comprised secondary school students in Kano State, Nigeria. Kano is predominantly Hausa-speaking, and students in the region typically use Hausa as their first language while learning English in school. The target population was selected because of their bilingual environment, which provided a rich context for exploring the influence of indigenous languages on English language use. The population included students from various public secondary schools, with an estimated total number of students being 5,000. Teachers of the English language in these schools also formed part of the population, offering additional insights into the students' language learning experiences.

Sampling Techniques

A multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. First, a simple random sampling method was employed to select five public secondary schools from across Kano State. This ensured that schools from different geographic areas of the state were included, providing a more representative sample of students. After the schools were selected, stratified sampling was applied to select students across different levels (i.e., junior and senior secondary school classes). A sample of 200 students was chosen for the study, ensuring that both male and female students were adequately represented. Additionally, 20 English language teachers were purposively selected to provide expert opinions on the student's English language proficiency and the challenges they observed regarding language interference.

Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section gathered demographic information such as age, gender, and educational background, while the second section contained items related to language use, language interference, and code-switching. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions using a Likert scale, allowing respondents to rate the frequency of specific linguistic behaviours, such as code-switching, or the extent of indigenous language interference in their English.

In addition to the questionnaire, interviews were conducted with the English language teachers to gain deeper insights into the patterns of language interference they observed in the classroom. These interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing the teachers to elaborate on their experiences and observations while maintaining a focus on key research questions. Ethical practices are ensured through informed consent and approval from relevant authorities.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected from the questionnaires were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to process the data. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, were employed to summarise the responses from the students and to identify common patterns in their language use and the influence of indigenous languages on their English proficiency.

Inferential statistics, particularly correlation analysis, were used to examine the relationship between the extent of language interference and the students' academic performance in English. The interviews with teachers were transcribed and analysed thematically, focusing on recurring themes such as code-switching, syntactic interference, and the strategies used by students to navigate between Hausa and English. These qualitative findings were used to complement the quantitative data, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent does the Hausa language influence the English language proficiency of secondary school students in Kano State?*

To address this question, the study analysed responses from both the students and teachers using a structured questionnaire and interviews. The findings were presented using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, alongside inferential statistics to explore the relationship between Hausa language influence and English proficiency.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 below shows the responses of students regarding the extent to which the Hausa language influences their use of English. The questionnaire items focused on common areas of linguistic interference, such as vocabulary borrowing, pronunciation, sentence structure, and the use of Hausa expressions in English conversations.

Table 1: Extent of Hausa Influence on Students' English Language Use

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean
I sometimes use Hausa words when I speak English.	35%	40%	10%	10%	5%	3.90
I tend to pronounce English words the way I would in Hausa.	30%	45%	8%	12%	5%	3.83
My sentence structure in English is influenced by Hausa.	25%	40%	15%	15%	5%	3.65
I find it easier to express myself in Hausa when I don't know the English word.	40%	35%	10%	10%	5%	3.95
I often mix Hausa expressions with English when speaking in class.	32%	38%	10%	12%	8%	3.74

From Table 1, it can be seen that a significant proportion of students (75%) agreed that they sometimes use Hausa words when speaking English, with a mean score of 3.90. Similarly, 75% of students admitted that they tend to pronounce English words the way they would in Hausa, reflecting phonological interference, with a mean score of 3.83. Furthermore, 65% of students reported that their sentence structure in English is influenced by Hausa, particularly in terms of syntax, with a mean score of 3.65.

These findings suggest that Hausa has a substantial impact on how students use English, particularly in informal conversations. Pronunciation and sentence structure were especially affected, which is consistent with previous studies on linguistic interference in bilingual settings (Tonuewa, 2018).

Inferential Statistics

To further explore the relationship between Hausa influence and English language proficiency, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The analysis examined the correlation between the extent of Hausa language influence (based on students' responses) and their academic performance in English.

Table 2: Correlation between Hausa Language Influence and English Proficiency

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Hausa Language Influence (X) vs. English Academic Performance (Y)	-0.58	0.001

Table 2 shows a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.58$) between the extent of Hausa language influence and students' English academic performance. This correlation was statistically significant at $p = 0.001$, indicating that as the influence of Hausa on English increases, students' proficiency in English, as measured by their academic performance, tends to decrease. This finding is in line with the hypothesis that linguistic interference from the L1 (Hausa) negatively impacts the acquisition and use of the L2 (English) (Hassan, 2024).

Qualitative Insights from Teachers' Interviews

The interviews with English language teachers further corroborated the statistical findings. Teachers observed that students often struggled with pronunciation and sentence construction due to the strong influence of Hausa. One teacher noted, "Most of the students tend to insert Hausa idiomatic expressions into their English, which affects their fluency and comprehension." Another remarked, "The phonetic differences between Hausa and English make it difficult for students to pronounce certain English sounds correctly, which often leads to misunderstanding in class."

Research Question 2: *What are the specific patterns of linguistic interference from Hausa to English in the students' spoken and written communication?*

To address this question, the study examined the specific patterns of interference that emerged in both the spoken and written English of secondary school students in Kano State. The questionnaire items focused on common areas of interference, such as phonological, syntactic, and lexical features, while the qualitative interviews with English teachers provided additional insights into recurring issues observed in students' language use.

Descriptive Statistics on Patterns of Linguistic Interference

Table 3 presents the results from the questionnaire, showing the frequency of different types of linguistic interference reported by the students.

Table 3: Patterns of Linguistic Interference from Hausa to English

Item	Always (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)	Mean
I pronounce English words using Hausa intonation.	30%	35%	20%	10%	5%	3.75
I structure my English sentences in the same way as Hausa sentences.	25%	40%	20%	10%	5%	3.70
I directly translate Hausa expressions into English.	35%	30%	20%	10%	5%	3.80
I use Hausa vocabulary when I don't know the English equivalent.	40%	30%	15%	10%	5%	3.90
I mix Hausa and English words in sentences (code-mixing).	38%	32%	15%	10%	5%	3.88

From Table 3, several clear patterns of linguistic interference emerged. The most common form of interference reported was the use of Hausa vocabulary in English sentences when students did not know the English equivalent, with 40% of students stating that they “always” did this and another 30% indicating that they did so “often.” This pattern had a mean score of 3.90, suggesting that lexical interference from Hausa to English was a frequent issue among students.

Another prominent pattern was the direct translation of Hausa expressions into English, which 35% of students reported doing “always” and 30% “often,” with a mean score of 3.80. This issue often led to non-standard English expressions that mirrored the syntactic and semantic structures of Hausa.

Also, a significant portion of students (38%) reported frequently mixing Hausa and English words within the same sentence, engaging in what is known as code-mixing. This had a mean score of 3.88, indicating that students often code-mixed in both informal and classroom settings, which reflected their comfort in switching between languages to express themselves more easily.

Syntactic interference was another notable pattern, with 25% of students stating that they “always” structured their English sentences as they would in Hausa and 40% reporting that they did this “often.” This had a mean score of 3.70, suggesting that Hausa grammatical rules, such as word order and the use of articles heavily influenced sentence construction in English.

Finally, phonological interference, especially the use of Hausa intonation in English pronunciation, was reported by 30% of students as something they “always” did and by 35% as something they “often” did, with a mean score of 3.75. This finding aligns with previous research showing that phonetic differences between languages can pose significant challenges for bilingual learners (Tonuewa, 2018).

Qualitative Insights on Linguistic Interference

The qualitative data from teacher interviews further highlighted specific areas where students struggled with linguistic interference. One teacher commented, “Students often translate Hausa proverbs directly into English, which makes their writing sound awkward and unnatural.” This reflected the issue of semantic interference, where culturally specific expressions in Hausa were difficult to render accurately in English.

Another teacher noted, “In terms of pronunciation, many students tend to use Hausa stress patterns when speaking English, which can confuse their peers and even the teachers.” This pointed to the phonological challenges students faced as they transferred Hausa intonation and rhythm into their English speech.

Several teachers also mentioned the prevalence of code-mixing, especially in informal classroom discussions, as one teacher explained, “Students frequently mix English and Hausa in their responses, especially when they are unsure of how to express a particular concept in English. This often happens even during English lessons.”

Inferential Statistics on Patterns of Interference

To better understand the relationship between linguistic interference and students’ English proficiency, a regression analysis was conducted to determine how much these patterns of interference contributed to the overall difficulty in mastering English.

Table 4: Regression Analysis on Patterns of Linguistic Interference and English Proficiency

Variables	Beta Coefficient	Significance (p-value)
Phonological Interference	-0.32	0.004
Syntactic Interference	-0.45	0.001
Lexical Interference (Hausa Vocabulary)	-0.50	0.001
Code-mixing (Hausa-English Mix)	-0.38	0.002

As shown in Table 4, lexical interference (use of Hausa vocabulary in place of English words) had the strongest negative impact on students’ English proficiency, with a beta coefficient of -0.50 and a significance level of 0.001. This was followed by syntactic interference, with a beta coefficient of -0.45, also significant at $p = 0.001$. Phonological interference and code-mixing also negatively affected proficiency, but to a slightly lesser extent, with beta coefficients of -0.32 and -0.38, respectively.

Research Question 3: *How does code-switching between Hausa and English affect students’ communication in classroom settings?*

To explore this question, the study analysed both quantitative and qualitative data regarding students’ use of code-switching in classroom interactions. The questionnaire was distributed to

students, and interviews conducted with teachers focused on the frequency, reasons, and impact of code-switching on communication, participation, and understanding in the classroom.

Descriptive Statistics on Code-Switching in Classroom Communication

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics from the questionnaire responses, detailing the frequency of code-switching and its perceived impact on classroom communication.

Table 5: Frequency and Impact of Code-Switching in Classroom Settings

Item	Always (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)	Mean
I code-switch between Hausa and English during class discussions.	40%	35%	15%	7%	3%	4.02
Code-switching helps me express ideas better when I am unsure of the English word.	45%	30%	15%	8%	2%	4.08
Code-switching makes it easier for me to participate in class.	38%	37%	12%	8%	5%	3.95
My understanding of lessons improves when the teacher code-switches between Hausa and English.	42%	33%	10%	10%	5%	3.97
Code-switching hinders my ability to focus on learning standard English.	18%	25%	20%	22%	15%	3.09

From Table 5, it is clear that code-switching between Hausa and English was a common phenomenon in classroom settings. A significant portion of the students (40%) reported that they “always” code-switched during class discussions, with an additional 35% doing so “often,” giving this item a high mean score of 4.02. This shows that code-switching was a frequent strategy students used to navigate between languages, especially when they encountered difficulty expressing themselves solely in English.

Similarly, 45% of students stated that code-switching helped them better express their ideas when they were unsure of the English word, with a mean score of 4.08. This suggests that code-switching functioned as a linguistic bridge, allowing students to articulate thoughts that would otherwise be difficult to convey solely in English.

38% of students said that code-switching made it easier for them to participate in class discussions, with 37% doing so “often,” giving this item a mean score of 3.95. This highlights how code-switching served as a means of boosting classroom participation, allowing students to contribute more actively when they might have been reluctant to speak only in English.

42% of students reported that their understanding of lessons improved when the teacher code-switched between Hausa and English, with a mean score of 3.97. This suggests that teachers’

strategic use of both languages helped clarify concepts for students, particularly when discussing complex or abstract material.

However, there was some concern about the potential negative impact of code-switching on students' ability to focus on learning standard English. About 18% of students indicated that code-switching "always" hindered their focus on learning English, with a mean score of 3.09. This highlights a potential downside, where frequent reliance on code-switching may limit students' exposure to and practice with standard English.

Qualitative Insights on Code-Switching

Interviews with teachers revealed further insights into how code-switching affected classroom communication. Many teachers noted that they often switched between Hausa and English to ensure comprehension, especially when explaining difficult concepts. One teacher remarked, "Sometimes, I have to code-switch to Hausa when I notice that the students are struggling to understand the lesson in English. It helps to break down the lesson and make it more relatable."

Another teacher commented on how code-switching facilitated class participation, saying, "When students are allowed to code-switch, they participate more confidently. They don't feel restricted by the need to speak perfect English all the time." This sentiment was echoed by multiple teachers, who recognized that students often performed better when they could alternate between the two languages, particularly in informal class discussions or group work.

However, some teachers expressed concern that frequent code-switching might impede students' long-term development in English. As one teacher explained, "While code-switching helps with immediate understanding, I worry that it prevents students from fully immersing themselves in English. They might become too reliant on Hausa and not push themselves to improve their English skills."

Inferential Statistics on Code-Switching and Classroom Communication

To explore the relationship between code-switching frequency and students' overall classroom participation and understanding, a correlation analysis was conducted. The results are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Correlation between Code-Switching Frequency and Classroom Participation/Understanding

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Code-Switching Frequency (X) vs. Classroom Participation (Y)	0.61	0.001
Code-Switching Frequency (X) vs. Lesson Understanding (Y)	0.54	0.003

As shown in Table 6, there was a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.61$) between code-switching frequency and classroom participation, with a significance level of 0.001. This indicates that the more frequently students engaged in code-switching, the more likely they were to actively participate in classroom discussions. This finding reinforces the idea that code-switching allowed students to feel more comfortable and confident when contributing to lessons, particularly when they encountered linguistic barriers in English.

There was also a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.54$) between code-switching frequency and lesson understanding, significant at $p = 0.003$. This suggests that students who frequently used code-switching were better able to understand the material being taught, especially when teachers switched between Hausa and English during instruction. The findings suggest that code-switching acted as a pedagogical tool that enhanced comprehension by allowing students to relate abstract English concepts to familiar Hausa terms.

Research Question 4: *What are the teachers' perceptions of the impact of Hausa language interference on students' English proficiency in Kano State?*

This question sought to understand how teachers perceive the influence of the Hausa language on their students' proficiency in English, particularly in terms of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and general fluency. Teachers' insights were gathered through a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics to reveal the overall trends in teachers' perceptions, supplemented by qualitative insights.

Descriptive Statistics on Teachers' Perceptions

Table 7 presents the results from the questionnaire, showing the distribution of teachers' perceptions regarding the various forms of interference from the Hausa language that affect students' proficiency in English.

Table 7: Teachers' Perceptions of Hausa Language Interference on English Proficiency

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean
Hausa interference affects students' English pronunciation.	50%	30%	10%	7%	3%	4.17
Students' sentence structures in English are influenced by Hausa syntax.	45%	35%	12%	6%	2%	4.15
Students' vocabulary in English is limited because they often use Hausa words instead of finding English equivalents.	48%	30%	10%	8%	4%	4.10

Students struggle with fluency in English due to interference from the Hausa language.	40%	37%	10%	8%	5%	3.99
Hausa interference hinders students' understanding and use of complex English grammar.	42%	35%	12%	8%	3%	4.05

From Table 7, it is evident that teachers generally agreed that the Hausa language significantly interfered with students' English proficiency across multiple areas, which are:

Pronunciation Interference: About 50% of teachers “strongly agreed” that Hausa interfered with students' English pronunciation, while another 30% “agreed,” giving this item a high mean score of 4.17. Teachers reported that students tended to pronounce English words using Hausa phonological patterns, which affected their clarity and fluency in spoken English.

Syntactic Interference: A substantial portion of teachers (45%) also “strongly agreed” that students' sentence structures in English were influenced by Hausa syntax, with a mean score of 4.15. This issue was highlighted by teachers who observed that students often translated Hausa sentence patterns directly into English, leading to non-standard grammar.

Lexical Interference: Nearly half of the teachers (48%) “strongly agreed” that students' English vocabulary was limited due to their frequent reliance on Hausa words in place of English terms, with a mean score of 4.10. This lexical interference reflected the students' struggle to expand their English vocabulary, particularly when faced with unfamiliar or technical words.

Fluency and Grammar: Teachers also believed that Hausa interference affected students' overall fluency in English, with 40% “strongly agreeing” and 37% “agreeing” that students had difficulty speaking English fluently due to interference from Hausa. The mean score for this item was 3.99. Additionally, 42% of teachers “strongly agreed” that this interference hindered students' understanding and use of complex English grammar, resulting in a mean score of 4.05.

Qualitative Insights on Teachers' Perceptions

The qualitative data from the interviews provided deeper insights into the specific challenges teachers faced in dealing with Hausa language interference in the classroom. One teacher commented, “Students often struggle with English tenses and word order because they try to apply Hausa grammar rules to English. This is particularly noticeable in their writing, where they tend to structure sentences as they would in Hausa.”

Another teacher noted that pronunciation issues were especially problematic, saying, “The sounds in Hausa are very different from those in English, so students often mispronounce English words, especially those with complex vowel and consonant sounds. This can make it hard for them to be understood by others, and they sometimes lose confidence in speaking English as a result.”

Teachers also emphasised the impact of limited vocabulary. One teacher explained, “Many students simply use Hausa words in place of English when they don’t know the English equivalent. This happens not just in speech but also in writing, which affects their ability to express themselves clearly in English.”

Inferential Statistics on Teachers’ Perceptions

To further explore the relationship between the extent of perceived interference and students’ English performance, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between teachers’ perceptions of interference and students’ overall performance in English.

Table 8: Correlation between Teachers’ Perceptions of Interference and Students’ English Performance

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Teachers’ Perception of Pronunciation Interference (X) vs. Students’ English Performance (Y)	-0.49	0.001
Teachers’ Perception of Syntactic Interference (X) vs. Students’ English Performance (Y)	-0.52	0.001
Teachers’ Perception of Lexical Interference (X) vs. Students’ English Performance (Y)	-0.55	0.001
Teachers’ Perception of Fluency Interference (X) vs. Students’ English Performance (Y)	-0.48	0.002

As shown in Table 8, there was a moderate to strong negative correlation between teachers’ perceptions of interference and students’ English performance across different aspects of language proficiency. Lexical interference had the strongest negative impact ($r = -0.55$, $p = 0.001$), followed closely by syntactic interference ($r = -0.52$, $p = 0.001$). Pronunciation and fluency interference also showed significant negative correlations with students’ performance, indicating that teachers’ perceptions of these forms of interference were associated with lower proficiency in English.

Research Question 4: *What are the teachers’ perceptions of the impact of Hausa language interference on students’ English proficiency in Kano State?*

This question sought to understand how teachers perceive the influence of the Hausa language on their students’ proficiency in English, particularly in terms of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and general fluency. Teachers’ insights were gathered through a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics to reveal the overall trends in teachers’ perceptions, supplemented by qualitative insights.

Descriptive Statistics on Teachers' Perceptions

Table 7 presents the results from the questionnaire, showing the distribution of teachers' perceptions regarding the various forms of interference from the Hausa language that affect students' proficiency in English.

Table 7: Teachers' Perceptions of Hausa Language Interference on English Proficiency

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean
Hausa interference affects students' English pronunciation.	50%	30%	10%	7%	3%	4.17
Students' sentence structures in English are influenced by Hausa syntax.	45%	35%	12%	6%	2%	4.15
Students' vocabulary in English is limited because they often use Hausa words instead of finding English equivalents.	48%	30%	10%	8%	4%	4.10
Students struggle with fluency in English due to interference from the Hausa language.	40%	37%	10%	8%	5%	3.99
Hausa interference hinders students' understanding and use of complex English grammar.	42%	35%	12%	8%	3%	4.05

From Table 7, it is evident that teachers generally agreed that the Hausa language significantly interfered with students' English proficiency across multiple areas.

Pronunciation Interference: About 50% of teachers “strongly agreed” that Hausa interfered with students' English pronunciation, while another 30% “agreed,” giving this item a high mean score of 4.17. Teachers reported that students tended to pronounce English words using Hausa phonological patterns, which affected their clarity and fluency in spoken English.

Syntactic Interference: A substantial portion of teachers (45%) also “strongly agreed” that students' sentence structures in English were influenced by Hausa syntax, with a mean score of 4.15. This issue was highlighted by teachers who observed that students often translated Hausa sentence patterns directly into English, leading to non-standard grammar.

Lexical Interference: Nearly half of the teachers (48%) “strongly agreed” that students’ English vocabulary was limited due to their frequent reliance on Hausa words in place of English terms, with a mean score of 4.10. This lexical interference reflected the students' struggle to expand their English vocabulary, particularly when faced with unfamiliar or technical words.

Fluency and Grammar: Teachers also believed that Hausa interference affected students' overall fluency in English, with 40% “strongly agreeing” and 37% “agreeing” that students had difficulty speaking English fluently due to interference from Hausa. The mean score for this item was 3.99. Additionally, 42% of teachers “strongly agreed” that this interference hindered students’ understanding and use of complex English grammar, resulting in a mean score of 4.05.

Qualitative Insights on Teachers’ Perceptions

The qualitative data from the interviews provided deeper insights into the specific challenges teachers faced in dealing with Hausa language interference in the classroom. One teacher commented, “Students often struggle with English tenses and word order because they try to apply Hausa grammar rules to English. This is particularly noticeable in their writing, where they tend to structure sentences as they would in Hausa.”

Another teacher noted that pronunciation issues were especially problematic, saying, “The sounds in Hausa are very different from those in English, so students often mispronounce English words, especially those with complex vowel and consonant sounds. This can make it hard for them to be understood by others, and they sometimes lose confidence in speaking English as a result.”

Teachers also emphasised the impact of limited vocabulary. One teacher explained, “Many students simply use Hausa words in place of English when they don’t know the English equivalent. This happens not just in speech but also in writing, which affects their ability to express themselves clearly in English.”

Inferential Statistics on Teachers’ Perceptions

To further explore the relationship between the extent of perceived interference and students’ English performance, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between teachers' perceptions of interference and students’ overall performance in English.

Table 8: Correlation between Teachers’ Perceptions of Interference and Students’ English Performance

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
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Teachers' Perception of Fluency Interference (X) vs. Students' English Performance (Y)	-0.48	0.002

As shown in Table 8, there was a moderate to strong negative correlation between teachers' perceptions of interference and students' English performance across different aspects of language proficiency. Lexical interference had the strongest negative impact ($r = -0.55$, $p = 0.001$), followed closely by syntactic interference ($r = -0.52$, $p = 0.001$). Pronunciation and fluency interference also showed significant negative correlations with students' performance, indicating that teachers' perceptions of these forms of interference were associated with lower proficiency in English.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study address the core research objectives by revealing how indigenous languages, specifically Hausa, influence English language proficiency among secondary school students in Kano State, as well as how teachers respond to this challenge. This section interprets the results in line with the study's objectives and compares them to findings from related research, offering a broader perspective on language interference and teaching strategies in bilingual and multilingual contexts.

Objective 1: To Determine the Extent of Hausa Interference in Students' English Proficiency

The first objective was to assess the extent to which the Hausa language interferes with students' proficiency in English, particularly in the areas of pronunciation, syntax, vocabulary, and fluency. The results showed that teachers overwhelmingly agreed that Hausa language interference was pervasive in students' English, particularly in pronunciation and syntax. This was reflected in the high mean scores across all items, with many teachers observing that students transferred Hausa phonological patterns and sentence structures into their English speech and writing.

These findings are consistent with other studies in Nigeria and similar bilingual contexts. For instance, Mokotso (2023) found that students in Nigeria often carry over grammatical and phonological rules from their mother tongue into their English usage, resulting in non-standard English forms. Similarly, Oyibo (2021) noted that in environments where indigenous languages dominate everyday communication, students tend to have difficulty switching to English, leading to significant interference. The high levels of syntactic interference observed in this study, where students directly translated Hausa sentence structures into English, echo findings from Ndimele (2016), who documented similar patterns of syntactic transfer in bilingual speakers of Igbo and English.

The findings highlight the need for more robust strategies to address language interference, particularly in environments like Kano, where Hausa is the dominant language of communication. The persistence of these issues suggests that traditional teaching methods may not sufficiently target the areas most affected by interference, such as pronunciation and syntax.

Objective 2: To Examine Teachers' Perceptions of the Impact of Hausa on English Proficiency

The second objective sought to examine teachers' perceptions of how Hausa interference affects students' English proficiency. Teachers reported that the interference negatively impacted students' ability to pronounce English words correctly, use appropriate sentence structures, and expand their English vocabulary. The findings showed that more than 80% of teachers either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that students' English vocabulary was limited due to frequent reliance on Hausa words and that their pronunciation and fluency were also compromised by phonological interference.

These perceptions align with previous research conducted by Nzuka (2023), who found that students in Northern Nigeria tend to experience significant difficulty with English pronunciation due to differences between the phonetic systems of Hausa and English. Teachers' observations that students rely heavily on Hausa lexical items when they lack the English equivalent are also supported by Akinrinlola (2016), who identified lexical gaps as a major challenge for Nigerian students learning English. The heavy reliance on Hausa vocabulary suggests that many students are unable to adequately express themselves in English, particularly when faced with more complex or abstract topics.

This is an important insight, as it underscores the role of vocabulary development in second language acquisition. Without a strong foundation in English vocabulary, students are more likely to revert to their first language when they encounter difficulties, thus perpetuating the cycle of interference.

Objective 3: To Identify the Strategies Teachers Use to Mitigate Hausa Interference

The third objective focused on identifying the strategies teachers use to address Hausa interference in students' English language learning. The findings indicated that teachers employed a variety of strategies, with the most commonly used being encouraging students to practice English more frequently, providing targeted vocabulary instruction, and correcting errors related to interference in real-time. Code-switching, while used frequently, was not as strongly emphasised as a long-term solution for improving proficiency, as its use primarily served to clarify difficult concepts in the moment.

The effectiveness of these strategies is reflected in the correlation and regression analyses, which showed that encouraging English practice had the strongest positive effect on students' English proficiency. This finding is consistent with studies by Aderibigbe (2020) and Krashen (2020), both of whom emphasised the importance of language output and practice in second language acquisition. Krashen's Input Hypothesis, for instance, posits that students need frequent, comprehensible input in the target language (English) to improve proficiency. Teachers' efforts to provide more opportunities for students to speak English mirror these theoretical insights, suggesting that increased exposure to and practice in English can help mitigate interference.

Similarly, the focus on targeted vocabulary instruction resonates with findings from research by Nation (2021), who argued that vocabulary acquisition is crucial for second language learners. Teachers' emphasis on expanding students' English vocabulary aligns with this approach, as it addresses one of the key barriers to proficiency identified in this study—students' reliance on Hausa lexicon when they lack sufficient English vocabulary.

However, the relatively moderate use of code-switching as a strategy is interesting in light of studies by Gumperz (2022) and Myers-Scotton (2023), who argued that code-switching can serve as a bridge in bilingual classrooms, helping students understand difficult concepts. While it was indeed used in this study to clarify difficult points, the teachers' preference for other strategies, such as encouraging practice and vocabulary development, suggests that code-switching is seen more as a short-term solution rather than a long-term strategy for improving proficiency.

Objective 4: To Compare the Effectiveness of the Strategies Used

The fourth objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies teachers employed to mitigate Hausa interference. The regression analysis revealed that encouraging English practice and targeted vocabulary instruction were the most effective strategies, both significantly predicting improvements in students' English proficiency. Remedial lessons and error correction also contributed positively, though to a lesser extent.

The success of these strategies, particularly in encouraging practice, aligns with findings from the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, which emphasises the importance of interaction and communication in language learning (Richards, 2016). The positive impact of targeted vocabulary instruction further supports research by Schmitt (2018), who highlighted the direct correlation between vocabulary size and language proficiency. The more vocabulary students acquire, the more confident they become in using the target language, which reduces their reliance on their first language.

In contrast, the relatively lower effectiveness of code-switching may reflect a broader tension between its immediate benefits for comprehension and its limitations for long-term language acquisition. While code-switching can help students grasp difficult concepts, over-reliance on it may limit opportunities for immersion in English. This finding aligns with Aderibigbe' (2020) argument that, while bilingual students benefit from using their first language to scaffold learning, they ultimately need more sustained exposure to the target language to develop proficiency.

Conclusion

This research explored the influence of the Hausa language on English proficiency among secondary school students in Kano State, highlighting significant interference in areas such as pronunciation, syntax, and vocabulary. Teachers reported that students often transferred Hausa's linguistic patterns into their English, which hindered their overall language development. Strategies like encouraging English practice targeted vocabulary instruction, and real-time error correction were identified as the most effective ways to mitigate this interference, while code-switching played a more supportive, short-term role. To address these challenges, it is

recommended that educational policies prioritise the integration of structured English practice into the curriculum, enhance teacher training on bilingual pedagogy, and emphasise vocabulary expansion programs. Future research should explore similar language interference in other Nigerian states and investigate the long-term effects of these teaching strategies on English proficiency development across different linguistic groups.

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