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**The Effect of Mother-Tongue Interference on the Learning of English
Language among Junior Secondary School Students in Ekiti State, Nigeria**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of mother-tongue interference on the learning of English Language among Junior Secondary School students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was guided by a quantitative approach. A total of two hundred (200) respondents were randomly selected from nine public secondary schools within the study area. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire developed on a four-point Likert scale. The instrument was validated by experts and its reliability was established using the test-retest method, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.65. Descriptive statistics (mean and percentage) were employed to answer the three research questions, while chi-square inferential statistics were used to test the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that mother-tongue interference significantly affects students' mastery of English Language in areas such as fluency, pronunciation, grammatical structure, vocabulary usage and writing skills, with mean ratings ranging from 2.70 to 3.01. Students also reported notable difficulties in grammar, comprehension of complex vocabulary, interpretation of idiomatic expressions and academic writing due to mother-tongue interference, with mean scores ranging between 2.62 and 3.01. The chi-square analysis indicated a significant relationship between the level of mother-tongue interference and students' mastery of English Language ($\chi^2 = 53.031$, $df = 9$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, a significant relationship was found between mother-tongue interference and students' academic performance in English Language ($\chi^2 = 13.653$, $df = 9$, $p < 0.05$). The study concludes that mother-tongue interference constitutes a major impediment to effective English Language learning and academic performance among secondary school students in Ekiti State. It therefore recommends the adoption of targeted instructional strategies, professional development for teachers, and culturally responsive teaching practices to mitigate the effects of language interference and enhance students' proficiency in English Language.

Keywords: Academic performance; English Language learning; Language transfer; Study
Mother-tongue interference; Secondary school students.

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