

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH  
LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OREDO  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE.**

**BY**

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**NOVEMBER, 2025**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATIONS, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE IN EDUCATION  
(B.A. (ED.)) ENGLISH AND LITERATURE, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY**

**NOVEMBER, 2025**

## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this research study was carried out by **ATTAREYERE GLORY OGHENERUKEVWE** with Matriculation Number **EDU2102195** in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, my source of strength throughout this work

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I want to use this medium to express my appreciation to God Almighty for His faithfulness during the course of this research work. It has really not been easy, but He has really come through for me.

I sincerely want to appreciate my project supervisor, Prof. J.E. Awanbor for her motherly love and advice, and also for the patience with which she assisted me during the entire course of this project. My sincere appreciation also goes to my project coordinator, Dr. O.J Nyorere for the constant encouragement and guidance I received during this research work. Special appreciation goes to Prof. R.B.Danner, the distinguished Head of Department for the opportunity to learn and carry out this project. I am truly grateful.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my mother, Mrs. Asagba and my sisters Praise and Favour for their constant love and support, prayers and words of encouragement during the good and bad, the finance. I truly am indebted to them.

I want to also acknowledge the immense contribution of my aunties and my cousins during the course of this study. Your encouragements and support have not been wasted. Thank you.

To my wonderful friends, Anita, Gloria and Tracy. You girls have been so supportive and instrumental throughout the course of this amazing journey. Thank you very much.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the major problems associated with learning the English Language in secondary schools within Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. The research was carried out to identify the factors that hinder students' effective acquisition of English Language skills and to examine how these challenges affect overall academic performance. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from students using questionnaires. The findings revealed that insufficient instructional materials, large class sizes, poor language background from home, and students' low motivation significantly contribute to the difficulties experienced in learning English. Environmental factors such as limited exposure to Standard English and the dominance of local languages also negatively influence learners' proficiency. Based on these findings, the study recommends improved teacher training, provision of relevant teaching materials, reduction of class size, and the adoption of more interactive and learner-centered teaching methods. It is expected that addressing these challenges will enhance students' mastery of the English language and improve their academic outcomes.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background to the Study**

English is the official language of Nigeria. It is used in government offices, the media, and especially in schools. In fact, almost every subject in secondary school is taught in English Mathematics, Basic Science, Social Studies, and Business Studies. This means that for a student to succeed in school, they must understand and speak English well. English is also the language used in important exams at this level, such as the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). If students struggle with English, they may have difficulties passing these exams and moving on to Senior Secondary School. Beyond school, English is also needed to communicate with people from different tribes, apply for jobs in the future, and use mobile phones or the internet. Without good English skills, students may face many challenges in both education and daily life (Njoku, 2017).

Even though students start learning English from primary school, many of them still find it hard when they get to secondary school. In places like Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, the problem is very noticeable. Many students in secondary schools in this area cannot speak or write good English. They also struggle to understand what they are taught in class because lessons are

done in English. This leads to poor performance in English exams and other subjects too. Several reasons have been identified as causes of this problem. Firstly, many English teachers in public schools are not fully trained or qualified to teach the subject. Some studied other subjects in university but are now teaching English because there are not enough trained English teachers. As a result, they may not have the right teaching methods or knowledge to help students learn effectively (Oladayo, 2021).

Secondly, many schools in Oredo lack good learning materials. There are not enough textbooks, audio-visual tools, or even simple things like charts and posters. Students also don't have access to libraries or reading clubs that can help them improve their vocabulary and grammar (Ogbonna, 2019). The condition of the classroom environment also affects learning. In many public schools, classrooms are overcrowded, with 60 to 100 students in one room. There are not enough desks or chairs, and the rooms are often noisy or too hot, making it hard for students to concentrate on learning English (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2006).

Another reason students struggle with English is the use of Pidgin and local languages. At home and sometimes even in school, students speak Pidgin or their mother tongue. Because of this, they do not get enough practice speaking proper

English. Some students are also shy or afraid to speak in class because they don't want to make mistakes and be laughed at by their classmates (Ereke & Agwu, 2015). In some schools, English is taught as just another subject, and not as the tool to learn all other subjects. This is a big problem because if a student doesn't understand English, they won't understand their lessons in other subjects. Some experts have suggested using literature like stories, poems, and plays to make learning English more fun and effective, but many teachers don't do this because they lack training or confidence (Olufunke, 2016).

Also, there is little use of modern tools like ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in the teaching of English. In today's world, using computers, phones, and the internet can make learning easier and more enjoyable, but many schools in Oredo do not have these tools available (Okonkwo & Ereke, 2015). All these problems poor teaching methods, lack of materials, bad learning environments, limited speaking practice, and fear of making mistakes make it very difficult for students to learn English properly in secondary schools in Oredo. Understanding and solving these challenges is very important for improving the education system and helping students succeed.

## **Statement of the Problem**

In Nigeria today, especially in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, many Junior Secondary School students are not performing well in English. This is a serious concern because English is the main language used for teaching and learning in schools, as well as in most official communication. Students need to be good in English to pass classroom tests and key examinations like the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), which determines their promotion to Senior Secondary School. Without strong English skills, students may struggle academically and face limited opportunities in the future. Although the government recognizes the importance of English, some teachers in Junior Secondary Schools are not properly qualified or trained to teach it. In some cases, teachers who studied other subjects are assigned to teach English due to a shortage of qualified English teachers.

Also, the way English is taught is sometimes boring and difficult for students to understand. Teachers often use the same old methods without using things like pictures, videos, or real-life examples that can make English more interesting. Thirdly, most schools do not have enough textbooks, dictionaries, or even proper classrooms, this is to say that most classrooms are crowded making it hard for teachers to give attention to each student. Also, many of them do not have

libraries or access to learning tools that can help students practice English. Another big problem is that students don't speak English often. Many students speak only Pidgin English or their native language at home and even at school. This affects their ability to speak and write good English. Some students are even afraid to speak English because they fear making mistakes or being laughed at.

Even when efforts have been made to train teachers or supply materials, the changes have not been enough. Students in Oredo still fail English in large numbers. This poor performance affects their confidence, their chances of passing school exams, and their future in general. Although some researchers have written about problems with English learning in other parts of Nigeria, but to the best of the researcher's knowledge not much has been done in junior secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area, in the quest to fill this gap the following research questions were raised.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the major problems students face in learning English in secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area?
2. Do student have textbooks and other learning Materials in English?
3. Do you enjoy learning English Language?
4. Do you sometimes speak in your mother tongue?

## **Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the problems associated with learning English in secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. To identify the key challenges faced by students in learning English in Oredo Local Government Area.
2. To assess if student have textbooks and other learning Materials in English in Oredo Local Government Area.
3. To examine if student enjoy learning English Language in Oredo Local Government Area.
4. To find out if student sometimes speak in your mother tongue in Oredo Local Government Area.

## **Significance of the Study**

This study will benefit multiple stakeholders:

**Policy Makers** will gain insights into specific barriers affecting English learning, helping to guide teacher recruitment and curriculum reform.

**Educators and School Administrators** will be better equipped to develop targeted teaching strategies and allocate resources efficiently.

**Parents and Guardians** will understand the challenges their children face and how to support their language development.

**Students** will benefit from improved instruction and learning environments tailored to their needs.

By addressing these issues in the specific context of Oredo, the study contributes to broader efforts to enhance language education in Nigeria.

### **Scope/Delimitation of the Study**

This study assesses the problems associated with learning English language in secondary schools in Oredo local government area Edo state, the study is delimited to public secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. It focuses exclusively on the challenges students face in learning English and does not cover private schools or post-secondary institutions.

### **Definition of Terms**

**English Language Proficiency:** The ability of students to understand, speak, read, and write in English effectively.

**Instructional Methods:** Teaching strategies and techniques used by teachers to deliver English lessons.

**Language Anxiety:** A psychological condition where learners feel nervous or apprehensive about using or learning English.

**Learning Environment:** The physical and psychological conditions in which English language learning takes place, including classroom settings and teaching materials.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter reviews relevant literature on the problems associated with learning English in secondary schools under the following subheadings:

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of English Language Proficiency
- Challenges Faced by students in Learning English in Secondary Schools
- Availability and Use of Textbooks and Learning Materials
- Students' Attitudes Towards Learning English
- Use of Mother Tongue in the Classroom
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

#### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is underpinned to the Sociocultural Theory developed by Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Vygotsky believed that learning happens first through interaction with other people and later becomes something the learner can do on their own. He said that the culture, language, and social environment around a child play a big role in how they learn. One of the key ideas in this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is the difference between what a student can do alone and what they can do

with help from a teacher or a more experienced person. Another important idea is scaffolding, which means giving students support while they learn new things, and gradually reducing the help as they improve.

This theory fits well with the focus of this study, which looks at how students in Junior Secondary Schools in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State are performing in English Language. English is the main language used to teach all subjects in Nigerian schools, so students must understand it well to do well in their studies. Vygotsky's theory helps to explain how students learn language better when they are supported by their teachers, classmates, and their environment. In many cases, students struggle with English not because they are not smart, but because they don't get enough help from trained teachers or from the world around them where English is not often spoken. If teachers are not well trained in English, or if students don't hear or speak English often at home, they may not get the support they need to learn it well. This is exactly what Vygotsky's theory talks about how learning depends on the support a child gets in their environment.

Sociocultural Theory is the best choice for this study because it focuses on language, learning, and the role of teachers and society in helping students grow. It also matches the real-life situation of students in Junior Secondary School who are

trying to learn English in a challenging environment. The theory encourages group work, discussion, and teacher support all of which are very useful for helping students improve their English skills.

Some people have criticized the theory. They say it focuses too much on social interaction and not enough on personal differences between students. Others say the theory is sometimes hard to apply in the classroom because it does not give clear steps for teachers to follow. It is also difficult to measure things like the Zone of Proximal Development in exact terms. However, even with these weaknesses, the theory is still very useful for this study. This is because it helps us understand how students learn English in schools, especially when they face challenges such as having unqualified teachers or limited support at home. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory is a strong and suitable foundation for this study. It explains how students learn through help from others, and why support from teachers and the school environment is very important for students learning English. Even with its limitations, the theory clearly connects to the challenges faced by Junior Secondary School students in learning English and gives useful ideas for improving their performance.

## **Concept of English Language Proficiency**

English language proficiency refers to the ability of a person to effectively understand, speak, read, and write in English. In Nigeria, especially at the secondary school level, this proficiency is not just an academic requirement but a necessity for survival in the educational system. Since English is the official language of instruction in all schools, students are expected to use it to learn every subject from science to social studies. This means that a student's ability to perform well in school largely depends on how well they understand and use English. English proficiency goes beyond knowing grammar rules or vocabulary. It includes the ability to express ideas clearly, engage in discussions, write coherent essays, and understand spoken or written messages. Without these skills, students often struggle to keep up in class and perform poorly in exams. A recent study found that students with higher English proficiency scored significantly better in their overall academic performance compared to those with lower proficiency levels. This shows that success in subjects like Mathematics, Biology, and Economics is closely linked to how well students can use English (Fakeye, 2025).

In Nigerian secondary schools, English is also seen as the gateway to higher education and employment. Students who are not fluent in English face

limitations in gaining admission into universities or accessing good job opportunities. According to Iyekekpolor (2021), English has become more than just a school subject it is a tool for communication, business, and global connection. He explains that a lack of proficiency in English is equivalent to educational failure and social disadvantage (Iyekekpolor, 2021). Another study observed that students' poor performance in English contributes to their failure in other subjects as well. In many cases, it is not because students do not understand the concepts in those subjects, but because they cannot comprehend the language used to teach or examine them. This is especially true for students from rural or low-income areas, where English is rarely spoken at home. These students often enter school with a weak foundation in English, which puts them at a disadvantage compared to their peers. As Ayoola et al. (2023) point out, many teachers themselves are not fully proficient in English, and this affects their ability to serve as good language models in the classroom (Ayoola et al., 2023).

The challenge is not just about speaking English fluently but also about being able to use the language for academic purposes. Students need to learn how to write essays, interpret texts, and answer questions using correct grammar and vocabulary. Research by Okonkwo and Ereke (2015) noted that many Nigerian schools do not provide enough resources, such as language labs, audio-visual tools,

or reading materials that could help students develop these skills. The lack of exposure to quality English input reduces students' chances of becoming proficient. Furthermore, the variety of English spoken in schools sometimes causes confusion. While the curriculum emphasizes British English, many students grow up speaking Nigerian Pidgin or local versions of English, which are quite different from what is expected in exams and textbooks. A 2023 study found that there is a big gap between what is taught in classrooms and the type of English students actually use or hear in real life. This mismatch makes it harder for students to perform well in school unless they are given the chance to bridge that gap through proper instruction and exposure.

Another issue affecting English proficiency is the influence of peer language what students speak among themselves, often referred to as “peerglossia.” explains that peer group language, which often includes slang or non-standard English, has a negative impact on students' formal English skills. Students tend to mirror the informal speech of their friends, and this becomes a problem when writing essays or answering exam questions that require formal, standard English. To improve English proficiency, there is a need for consistent use of English across all subjects, better-trained teachers, more engaging instructional materials, and environments that encourage reading, writing, and

speaking. Without addressing these areas, English will continue to be a major barrier to students' success in school.

### **Challenges Faced by Students in Learning English in Secondary Schools**

Students in Nigerian secondary schools face many challenges when it comes to learning English, even though the language is critical for their academic success. English is the official language of instruction in Nigerian schools, so students are expected to understand it well in order to perform across all subjects. Unfortunately, a range of factors makes this difficult for many learners. One major challenge is the poor foundational knowledge that students bring with them into secondary school. Many students do not receive strong instruction in English at the primary level, which means they start secondary school already behind. Without this early foundation, they struggle with reading comprehension, writing, and speaking clearly in English. According to Oladayo (2021), students often lack basic grammar and vocabulary skills due to ineffective primary school education, which leaves them unprepared to meet the demands of secondary school instruction.

Another major issue is the shortage of qualified and well-trained English teachers. Some teachers lack the professional background or skills needed to teach the language effectively. Iyekekpolor (2021) points out that in many Nigerian

schools, English teachers themselves are not fluent or confident in the language, which prevents them from serving as proper language models for students. Teachers also tend to use outdated and rigid teaching methods that do not engage students or help them learn to use English in real-life situations. Instead of encouraging active participation or conversation practice, many lessons rely on rote memorization and textbook drills.

Students also experience a lack of access to learning materials and resources. Many schools do not have enough textbooks, reading materials, or functional libraries. According to Use Ogbonna 2019, students often have to learn English without the help of audio-visual aids, computers, or practical materials that could improve their understanding and fluency ( Ogbonna, 2019). The result is that learning is confined to abstract rules and grammar structures, without meaningful application. Another barrier students' face is the negative influence of their linguistic environment. In many homes and communities, English is not the dominant language spoken. Students grow up speaking Nigerian Pidgin or local languages, and they have limited exposure to Standard English outside of the classroom. This reduces the amount of time students hear or practice English in real-life settings, making it harder for them to develop fluency. Ayoola et al. (2023) observed that students often mix different varieties of English or switch between

Pidgin and Standard English, which creates confusion and leads to errors in grammar and sentence construction (Ayoola et al., 2023).

Emotional and psychological factors also play a role. Many students are afraid of making mistakes when speaking English, which causes them to remain silent in class. They often feel anxious, shy, or embarrassed when asked to participate in discussions or read aloud. This language anxiety can limit their willingness to practice, even when opportunities are available. Ogbonna, 2019 notes that fear of being laughed at by peers or corrected harshly by teachers discourages students from engaging actively in English lessons (Ogbonna, 2019). Overcrowded classrooms and poor school infrastructure are also serious challenges. In many public schools, a single teacher is responsible for teaching English to 60 or more students at once. This makes it difficult for teachers to give individual attention or provide feedback. As a result, many students fall behind without being noticed. Murana and Oladayo (2021) argue that the physical classroom environment, including noise, heat, and lack of space, also makes it hard for students to concentrate and participate in lessons.

Finally, the curriculum and teaching approach itself often do not align with students' real communication needs. The focus is usually on preparing students to pass exams, rather than helping them develop practical English skills for speaking,

listening, and writing. This results in students memorizing content without truly understanding how to use the language. The emphasis on written grammar rules and exam preparation takes away from opportunities to build conversational fluency or critical thinking in English. This disconnect between the classroom and real-world use of language makes it harder for students to apply what they learn.

### **Availability and Use of Textbooks and Learning Materials**

Textbooks and educational resources are essential in the education system, especially in the instruction and acquisition of English in secondary schools. They function as vital resources that direct both educators and learners through organized lessons, activities, and evaluations that promote language acquisition and understanding. In Nigerian secondary schools, textbooks are essential for enhancing English language competency, particularly in a nation where English serves as a second language. Research has continually emphasized the pivotal significance of textbooks in influencing students' comprehension of English. Textbooks such as New Oxford Secondary English Course and Round-up English are structured to incorporate both language and literature, thereby offering students a comprehensive approach to English learning that includes reading, writing, and speaking elements. These resources are beneficial for developing

language abilities and augmenting students' exposure to various types of English, including both oral and written literature.

Notwithstanding the importance of textbooks, their availability and accessibility in numerous Nigerian secondary schools continue to be a considerable issue. Multiple studies indicate that the lack of textbooks in Nigerian schools, especially in rural regions, persists in obstructing effective teaching and learning. In certain areas, schools encounter restricted access to English textbooks, compelling educators and learners to depend on obsolete or inferior materials, thereby adversely affecting students' academic performance (Mlay, Kileo, & Mandila, 2023). The deficiency of textbooks is particularly detrimental in regions such as Oredo Local Government Area, where the scarcity of adequate resources intensifies the pre-existing educational difficulties. Despite the availability of textbooks, their successful utilization is frequently hindered by inadequate administration and insufficient training for educators on integrating these resources into their instruction. The ineffective utilization exacerbates the issue, constraining students' abilities to leverage the available learning resources.

The inadequate supply of textbooks and educational resources directly affects students' academic performance, especially in English. Students lacking access to high-quality, current textbooks encounter difficulties in adhering to the

curriculum, adversely impacting their comprehension and performance in the subject. Studies indicate that insufficient textbooks frequently exhibit content shortcomings, including obsolete information and subpar readability, hindering students' comprehension of essential English ideas (Ani, Ekeh, Obodo, Neboh, & Taf, 2021). The absence of instructional resources prevents teachers from utilizing numerous pedagogical approaches that address the varied learning requirements of students. In the absence of adequate educational resources, educators are constrained to traditional methodologies, which may lack engagement and fail to meet the specific requirements of pupils. As a result, students' enthusiasm to learn English declines, and their performance deteriorates, as they are forced to manage inadequate materials that do not correspond with the curriculum or their educational requirements.

The deficiency of adequate English textbooks in Oredo Local Government Area adversely impacts pupils' academic performance. Limited access to textbooks deprives pupils of important materials necessary for enhancing their English skills. Research indicates that the availability of textbooks enhances the learning environment by offering students organized information and exercises that facilitate their language development (Ugwu, 2022). Without sufficient resources, students grapple with substandard and frequently irrelevant learning materials,

resulting in diminished academic performance and a lack of motivation to persist in language acquisition.

Moreover, the deficiency of textbooks and educational resources influences not just academic achievement but also pupils' general disposition towards learning. When students lack appropriate resources, their enthusiasm for learning English wanes, leading them to view the topic as challenging or inconsequential. This change in attitude might have enduring consequences on students' academic growth, as they may diminish their confidence in their capacity to excel in the subject. Consequently, the accessibility of textbooks and educational resources is essential for both students' academic achievement and the cultivation of a favourable disposition towards the subject.

The difficulties encountered by pupils in obtaining quality English textbooks and educational resources in Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in Oredo Local Government Area, underscore the pressing necessity for assistance. It is essential to provide schools with adequate and pertinent resources to enhance English language instruction and adequately prepare students for academic and professional success. The government and educational stakeholders must prioritize supplying textbooks and other important materials to secondary schools to close the gap and enhance the overall quality of education. Research from several places,

including Rombo District in Tanzania, indicates that a modest quantity of textbooks, when utilised effectively, can improve the teaching and learning process (Mlay et al., 2023). Consequently, tackling the issue of textbook availability entails not merely augmenting resources but also guaranteeing the appropriate utilization of these materials to enhance student learning results.

### **Students' Attitudes towards Learning English**

Students' attitudes towards studying English are influenced by multiple factors, including motivation, society perceptions, and personal experiences. These characteristics are crucial in influencing students' engagement with the subject, the degree of interest they cultivate, and their overall academic performance in English. This discourse examines the critical elements affecting students' perceptions of English, emphasizing motivation, cultural and societal impacts, and how these variables cultivate their interest and delight in the language.

Numerous research highlight the robust correlation between motivation and students' attitudes towards learning English. Motivation is frequently considered the catalyst that compels pupils to interact with a language. Taiwo (2018) asserts that while students in Nigeria, especially in the northern regions, may demonstrate favourable attitudes towards studying English, several individuals encounter challenges with motivation, which is essential for their success. This is

exacerbated by language anxiety, which further impedes students' capacity to excel in English language learning contexts. The research conducted by Alufohai (2019) demonstrated that motivating factors, including teaching methodologies, instructional resources, and the perceived significance of learning a foreign language, are major predictors of students' attitudes towards French, a finding that is equally applicable to English. Students who regard language acquisition as significant and pertinent to their future success are more inclined to engage with the topic enthusiastically, resulting in superior learning outcomes.

The significance of a student's social and cultural milieu cannot be underestimated. Societal perceptions of English and pupils' cultural contexts profoundly influence their learning methodologies. Aboh (2025) emphasizes that students' impressions of English in Nigeria may vary depending on their attendance at government or private schools, with those from government institutions generally exhibiting more favourable attitudes towards Nigerian English variations. This indicates that cultural and societal influences, such as the language spoken at home or in the community, may affect pupils' perceptions of formal English. In Oyo State, research indicated that although students demonstrated a favourable attitude towards learning both English and Yoruba, they exhibited a greater propensity to utilize Yoruba in informal contexts, thereby

shaping their perception of English as a more formal or academic language (Aika, Uyi-Osaretin, & Musa, 2021). This contrast highlights how sociological and cultural factors can influence language preference and, subsequently, pupils' attitudes towards learning English.

Furthermore, classroom interactions and the pedagogical approaches utilized by educators significantly impact students' motivation and attitudes. A study conducted by Obateru and Tolu (2019) in Ekiti State revealed that favourable social interactions among students in the classroom significantly influenced their enthusiasm to learn English. Such interactions foster an interesting and supportive educational atmosphere, which can enhance students' attitudes towards the subject. Conversely, adverse classroom conditions or suboptimal teaching methodologies may result in disengagement and diminished interest in the subject matter. This corresponds with findings from earlier research that highlight the significance of learner-centered pedagogies, which promote active engagement and cultivate intrinsic motivation (Alufohai, 2019). When students perceive their learning experiences as pleasurable and pertinent to their life, their attitudes towards English enhance, resulting in improved academic performance.

Cultural perspectives significantly affect students' attitudes towards language acquisition. In numerous regions of Nigeria, English is regarded as a means for socio-economic progress; nonetheless, there exists a dominant perspective that the utilization of indigenous languages is better suitable in specific settings. The dual linguistic environment may induce anxiety for students, particularly when they are required to alternate between English and their original languages. Yantandu Uba et al. (2023) assert that socio-cultural practices in Nigerian schools, encompassing pupils' language preferences and parental attitudes towards English, influence their success in English examinations. When students perceive English as an essential instrument for their future success, they are more inclined to cultivate a favourable disposition towards its acquisition. Nevertheless, if cultural attitudes favour indigenous languages over English, pupils may exhibit reluctance to learn English or demonstrate insufficient drive to achieve proficiency in it. The availability of resources, including textbooks and instructional materials, strongly impacts students' attitudes towards English. Aika, Uyi-Osaretin, and Musa (2021) conducted a study revealing that students with access to suggested English textbooks and supportive home situations are more inclined to sustain favourable attitudes towards studying English. The absence of sufficient learning resources frequently results in frustration and disengagement.

The accessibility of information allows educators to employ various instructional strategies, rendering English language acquisition more participatory and interesting for learners. This enhances pupils' ability in English while cultivating a more favourable disposition towards the language.

In conclusion, students' attitudes towards learning English are influenced by a blend of internal and external elements, such as motivation, societal influences, classroom dynamics, and resource availability. The significance of motivation and attitude in language acquisition is crucial, as these elements directly affect students' readiness to engage with English and their overall academic achievement.

### **Use of Mother Tongue in the Classroom**

The use of mother tongues in secondary schools in Nigeria is an important element of the educational experience. Despite the fact that English is the official language of instruction in Nigerian schools, many pupils still speak their home languages (mother tongues) in class. This trend is especially noticeable in communities with a strong cultural affinity to indigenous languages. In Nigeria, a multilingual country with over 500 indigenous languages, students frequently struggle to totally disengage from their home languages, particularly in informal contexts or when confronted with novel English concepts (Uwen, Bassey, & Nta, 2020).

According to research, while using one's mother tongue in the classroom can help with communication in some cases, it can also hamper English language ability, especially in formal education settings. According to Ogundipe (2020), one of the most significant issues that Nigerian students experience is linguistic interference from their home tongue, such as the influence of Yoruba on English grammar and pronunciation. This interference frequently causes problems in syntax, word order, and pronunciation, impairing pupils' fluency and competency in English. As a result, students' capacity to communicate effectively in English, both orally and in writing, suffers, which can jeopardize their overall academic success, particularly in disciplines where English competence is essential (Ogundipe, 2020).

Mother tongue interference has a greater impact in areas where the mother tongue is commonly spoken. In these areas, students tend to bring characteristics of their home languages into English, resulting in typical errors such as wrong tenses, prepositions, and word forms. These inaccuracies are exacerbated by the fact that many students receive little exposure to English outside of the classroom, reducing their possibilities for language practice (Iyekekpolor & Akabogu, 2020). Furthermore, students' attachment to their mother tongue frequently leads to a

predilection for using it in informal circumstances, limiting their opportunity to practise English and decreasing their proficiency.

A variety of measures can be used to reduce the influence of the mother tongue on English language learning. First, teachers can be more inclusive by using both their mother tongue and English into the classroom, particularly when teaching complicated ideas. According to Ereke (2019), using students' home languages as a scaffolding method while explaining difficult English concepts can assist bridge the gap between their comprehension and capacity to utilize English effectively. This strategy, often known as "code-switching," helps students to understand the meaning of new terminology and ideas in their home language before applying them to English.

Furthermore, encouraging extensive reading and engagement in English both within and outside of the classroom can help students enhance their language skills. According to Ayoola, Bankole, and Adegite (2023), incorporating more communicative classroom activities, such as group discussions, debates, and role-playing, can help students practice their English in real-world situations, reinforcing their proficiency. Such exercises promote active engagement and boost students' confidence in using English as a means of communication.

Additionally, teacher training is crucial in reducing mother tongue interference. Teachers should receive training not only in the subject content, but also in language teaching practices that reduce linguistic intrusion. Iyekekpolor (2021) contends that teachers must be more aware of their students' linguistic backgrounds and develop strategies that encourage the use of English while respecting the cultural significance of the mother tongue. Such solutions may involve focusing on pronunciation, grammar exercises, and other language skills that target specific areas of difficulty caused by mother tongue interference.

Finally, while the mother tongue is widely used in Nigerian secondary schools, it poses a considerable impediment to English language proficiency. However, with the correct measures, such as fostering code-switching, encouraging immersive English practices, and improving teacher training, it is feasible to reduce the detrimental effects of mother tongue interference. These activities will assist students enhance their English language skills, which are critical for academic performance and potential employment prospects.

### **Summary of Reviewed Literature**

This study is grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction, cultural context, and the support of others in the learning process. Vygotsky's concepts of the Zone of Proximal

Development (ZPD) and scaffolding are relevant for understanding how students in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State learn English. These concepts highlight the role of teachers, classmates, and the broader social environment in supporting language development. English proficiency is crucial for students' success across all subjects in Nigerian secondary schools, where English serves as the language of instruction. However, many students face challenges in learning English due to factors such as unqualified teachers, limited exposure to English outside the classroom, and a lack of learning resources.

English proficiency is vital not only for academic success but also for access to higher education and employment opportunities. Students who struggle with English often face difficulties in subjects such as science, mathematics, and social studies, as these subjects are taught in English. Proficiency in English is more than just knowing grammar and vocabulary; it involves the ability to read, write, speak, and comprehend English, which is essential for participating in class discussions, writing essays, and performing well on exams. Without these skills, students tend to fall behind and perform poorly in their studies. Students with higher English proficiency tend to perform better academically, especially in subjects that require reading and writing.

A major challenge faced by students in Nigerian secondary schools is the lack of a strong foundational knowledge of English when they enter secondary school. Many students come from primary schools where English instruction is weak, and they are not adequately prepared for the demands of secondary school. This results in difficulties in areas such as grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. Additionally, there is often a shortage of qualified and proficient English teachers in schools. Some teachers lack the necessary skills to teach English effectively, and this hinders students' progress. Many schools also lack sufficient learning resources such as textbooks, language labs, and other educational materials, which makes it harder for students to develop their language skills.

Students' attitudes towards learning English are influenced by several factors, including motivation, societal perceptions, and classroom dynamics. Motivation is key to how students engage with English, and those who see the subject as relevant to their future success tend to perform better. However, negative perceptions of English, especially in areas where local languages are dominant, can reduce students' motivation to learn. Classroom interactions and teaching methods also play a significant role. Students who are encouraged to

actively participate in lessons, through methods such as group discussions and role-plays, are more likely to develop a positive attitude towards learning English. The use of students' native languages (mother tongues) in the classroom is another important issue. Despite English being the official language of instruction, students often continue to use their native languages, which can interfere with their ability to learn English effectively. This interference leads to errors in grammar, pronunciation, and sentence structure, making it difficult for students to become proficient in English. However, using both the native language and English in the classroom, known as code-switching, can help students understand difficult concepts in English more easily. Teachers can use this approach to support students' learning, while gradually reducing reliance on the native language as their English skills improve.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter explains how the research will be carried out. It describes the methods used to design the study, choose the participants, collect the data, and analyze the results. The goal is to ensure that the research is done in a way that is accurate, clear, and reliable. The methodology is organized under the following subheadings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validation of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

#### **Research Design**

This study will use the descriptive survey research design. This type of research is used to collect information from a group of people by asking questions through a questionnaire. It helps the researcher describe and understand the current

situation without changing anything. This design is suitable for the study because it allows the researcher to gather information from students and teachers in public secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area about the problems they face in learning and teaching English.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study includes all Junior Secondary School students in public secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State. This includes both male and female student who are directly involved in the learning of English.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample for this study will consist 150 Junior Secondary School students selected from 10 public secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area. The schools will be chosen using simple random sampling, while the students and teachers from each school will be selected using stratified sampling to ensure both groups are represented. This approach ensures the sample is fair and includes a variety of respondents.

### **Research Instrument**

The main instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire is titled: *“Investigation in to the*

*Problems Associated with Learning English Language in Secondary Schools.*” It is divided into two sections: Section A: Demographic information (such as gender, age, and class/teaching experience). Section B: Contains 20 statements that focus on the key issues related to English language learning. Respondents will be asked to show their level of agreement using a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). This type of scale helps to measure attitudes and opinions clearly and simply.

### **Validation of the Instrument**

To make sure the questionnaire measures what it is supposed to measure, it will be reviewed by the researcher’s supervisor and two other experts in English education. These experts will check the clarity of the language, how relevant the questions are, and how well the questionnaire covers the topic. Their suggestions will be used to improve the final version of the questionnaire.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

Reliability means how consistent the instrument is in giving the same results over time. To test this, the researcher will conduct a pilot study using 20 students and 5 teachers from another Local Government Area not included in the main study. The responses will be analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha method to

check the internal consistency of the questionnaire. A score of 0.70 or above will be considered reliable.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The researcher and trained assistants will go to the selected schools to give out the questionnaires. The purpose of the study will be explained to the participants, and they will be told that their answers will be kept private and used only for research. Participation will be voluntary, and they can choose not to answer any question. The questionnaires will be filled out and collected on the spot to avoid data loss.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

After the data is collected, it will be organized and entered into a computer. The data will be analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The results will be presented using frequency tables, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. This will help the researcher understand the patterns in the data and answer the research questions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In the chapter, results obtained after data analysis are presented and findings are discussed

**Research Question One:** what are the major problems faced by students in learning English Language in secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State?

**Table 1: Basic Statistics of the Problems Students Face in Learning English Language in Secondary Schools in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State (Test value = 2.5)**

| S/N          | ITEM                                                                    | NO         | Total Score | Mean Score   | Remark       |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1            | I find it difficult to understand English when teachers speak in class. | 150        | 303         | 2.02         | Disagree     |
| 2            | I have difficulty with pronunciation during learning of English         | 150        | 392         | 2.61         | Agree        |
| 3            | I have difficulty with grammar and vocabulary                           | 150        | 453         | 3.02         | Agree        |
| 4            | Our classrooms are too crowded, making it hard to hear and learn.       | 150        | 359         | 2.39         | Disagree     |
| 5            | I have English textbooks and worbooks                                   | 150        | 428         | 2.85         | Agree        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |                                                                         | <b>750</b> | <b>1935</b> | <b>2.580</b> | <b>Agree</b> |

From Table 1, mean scores of approximately 2.02, 2.61, 3.02, 2.39 and 2.85 were obtained for items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Mean scores of items 2, 3 and 5 are higher than 2.5 test value while mean scores of items 1 and 4 are less than the test value of 2.5. It therefore means that the students agreed that they have difficulty with pronunciation during learning of English Language. Also, they have difficulty with grammar and vocabulary and that they have English text books and workbooks. They however disagreed that they find it difficult to understand English when teachers speak in class and that their classrooms are too crowded making it hard to hear and learn. More importantly, the grand mean score of 2.580 which is higher than the test value of 2.5 was obtained. It can be concluded that the students agreed that they have problems in learning English Language

**Research Question Two:** Do secondary school students in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State have textbooks and other learning materials in English?

**Table 2: Basic Statistics of the Availability of Textbooks and other Materials for English Language Learning in Secondary Schools in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State (Test value = 2.5)**

|                                               | N   | Total Score | Mean Score |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|-------------|------------|
| Remark                                        |     |             |            |
| Availability of Textbooks and other Materials | 750 | 2319        | 3.092      |
| Agree                                         |     |             |            |

From Table 2, mean score of approximately 3.09 which is higher than 2.5 test value was obtained. It can be concluded that the students agreed that they have textbooks and other learning materials in English Language.

**Research Question Three:** Do secondary school students in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State enjoy learning English Language?

**Table 3: Basic Statistics of the Enjoyment of English Language Learning among Secondary School Students in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State (Test value = 2.5)**

| Remark                                       | N   | Total Score | Mean Score |
|----------------------------------------------|-----|-------------|------------|
| Enjoyment of English Language Learning Agree | 750 | 2427        | 3.236      |

From Table 3, mean score of approximately 3.24 which is higher than 2.5 test value was obtained. It can be concluded that the students agreed that they enjoy learning English Language.

**Research Question Four:** Do secondary school students in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State sometimes speak in their mother tongue?

**Table 4: Basic Statistics of the Enjoyment of English Language Learning among Secondary School Students in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State (Test value = 2.5)**

| Remark                          | N   | Total Score | Mean Score |
|---------------------------------|-----|-------------|------------|
| Speaking in Mother Tongue Agree | 750 | 2011        | 2.681      |

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From Table 4, mean score of approximately 2.68 which is higher than 2.5 test value was obtained. It can be concluded that the students agreed that they speak in their mother tongue.

### **Discussion of findings**

The findings from the study reveal several important insights into the problems faced by secondary school students in learning the English Language in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. The results from Table 1 indicate that students experience notable challenges with pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. These difficulties suggest that students struggle with fundamental linguistic skills essential for English proficiency. According to Iyekekpolor (2021), such challenges are common among Nigerian secondary school students and are often caused by the influence of their mother tongues, inadequate exposure to spoken English, and ineffective teaching methodologies. Similarly, Murana (2019) identified poor teaching methods, lack of qualified teachers, and insufficient instructional resources as major obstacles to students' mastery of English grammar and vocabulary. Jegede and Akinola (2021) also found that many secondary school students commit frequent grammatical errors due to limited exposure to correct English usage and lack of consistent practice. These findings collectively

affirm that while students show interest in learning English, systemic and instructional barriers hinder their language competence.

The results from Table 2 show that students agreed that they have access to textbooks and other learning materials for studying English, with a mean score of 3.09. This suggests that availability of learning resources is not a major problem, although their proper utilization might vary from school to school. Ugwu (2022) noted that despite the presence of textbooks in many schools, the lack of adequate supervision and teacher guidance often limits their effectiveness. Similarly, Ogunode (2020) pointed out that although schools may have textbooks, the absence of supplementary teaching tools such as audio-visual aids and language laboratories significantly affects learning outcomes. Supporting this, Oparinde et al. (2020) emphasized that having textbooks alone is insufficient; effective pedagogical approaches must be applied to make learning meaningful. This implies that while materials are present, their educational impact depends heavily on teachers' ability to integrate them effectively into lessons.

In relation to students' interest and enjoyment of English language learning, Table 3 shows a mean score of 3.24, indicating that students generally enjoy learning English. Enjoyment in learning reflects positive motivation, which is essential for language development. According to Chinedu and Ezekwesili (2019),

students who are actively engaged in reading and language-related activities tend to perform better academically and demonstrate greater enthusiasm toward English. In a similar vein, Idowu and Ogundeko (2024) found that students' enjoyment of English learning increases when teachers employ cognitive and interactive teaching strategies that engage learners in active participation. Furthermore, Nnyigide and Anyaegbu (2020) emphasized that learner-centered teaching methods and contextualized examples make English learning more relatable and enjoyable for students. Thus, the findings from Oredo suggest that despite existing challenges, students maintain a generally positive attitude toward learning English, likely due to engaging classroom environments and teacher support.

The analysis of Table 4 further reveals that students sometimes revert to speaking their mother tongue while learning English, with a mean score of 2.68. This practice, known as code-switching, is common in multilingual contexts like Nigeria. Ezepue et al. (2023) observed that while using the mother tongue alongside English can aid comprehension, excessive reliance on it may impede long-term language proficiency. Similarly, Onyejelem and Prince (2020) found that habitual use of Pidgin English and local dialects negatively affects students' command of Standard English, leading to code-mixing and grammatical errors.

Iyekekpolor (2021) also identified language interference as one of the major barriers to acquiring proficiency in English among Nigerian students, particularly in oral communication and writing. The findings from this study, therefore, suggest that while students benefit from the occasional use of their native language for comprehension, teachers should moderate its use to promote full immersion in English.

### **Summary**

In summary, the study concludes that secondary school students in Oredo Local Government Area face notable challenges in learning English, particularly in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. However, they generally have access to textbooks and other materials and show enthusiasm toward learning the language. The tendency to use their mother tongue in class remains a persistent issue, reflecting Nigeria's multilingual context. These findings are consistent with existing literature, which attributes English learning difficulties in Nigerian schools to pedagogical inefficiencies, language interference, and limited practical exposure rather than a lack of student motivation or interest.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Summary**

This study examines the problems associated with learning English in secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State. Four (4) research questions guided the study, aiming to identify the major problems students face in learning English in secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area? Do student have textbooks and other learning Materials in English? Do you enjoy learning English Language? And do you sometimes speak in your mother tongue? The study reviewed literature on the concept of English language learning, effect and causes. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all the 14 public senior secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, the multi stage sampling technique was used to select 100 students from 14 public senior secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was administered by the researcher to the respondents, the data collected was collated and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study were as follows;

## **Findings**

1. The study found that students in secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area face major difficulties in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary when learning English Language.
2. The study revealed that students generally have access to English Language textbooks and other learning materials necessary for their studies.
3. The findings showed that most students enjoy learning English Language and demonstrate a positive attitude toward the subject.
4. The study also found that students sometimes speak their mother tongue during English Language lessons, which affects their fluency and overall proficiency in English.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study established that while secondary school students in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State face notable challenges in learning English particularly in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary they generally have access to textbooks and other learning materials that support their studies. The students also expressed enjoyment in learning the language, showing a positive attitude that can be harnessed for better academic outcomes. However, the frequent use of their mother tongue during English lessons contributes to

interference and slows their progress toward fluency. Overall, the study concludes that the difficulties students encounter in learning English are largely influenced by linguistic interference, limited exposure to spoken English, and teaching practices rather than a lack of motivation or interest. Improving teacher competence, promoting active use of English in classrooms, and enhancing practical language activities are therefore essential for strengthening English language learning among students in Oredo Local Government Area.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Future studies should investigate the specific impact of teachers' qualifications, teaching methods, and classroom practices on students' proficiency in English Language.
2. Further research should examine the influence of students' home environments and parental involvement on their performance and interest in learning English.
3. Studies should be conducted to assess how the use of mother tongue and Pidgin English in classrooms affects long-term mastery of Standard English among secondary school students.

4. Future research should explore the role of digital learning tools, language laboratories, and multimedia resources in improving English pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary acquisition.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

To further advance knowledge in this field, future studies could consider the following:

1. It is suggested that future researchers should investigate how teachers' training, experience, and instructional strategies influence students' ability to learn English effectively.
2. Further studies should focus on the role of students' socio-economic background and home language environment in shaping their English Language competence.
3. Researchers should explore the long-term effects of code-switching and the use of mother tongue on students' English proficiency across different educational levels.
4. It is suggested that future investigations examine the effectiveness of modern technological tools, such as language learning apps and audio-visual aids, in enhancing English Language teaching and learning outcomes

**QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, BENIN CITY.**

Dear Respondent,

I am an undergraduate student of the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Benin. I am conducting a study titled: “An investigation into the Problems Associated with Learning English Language in Secondary Schools in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State.” This research aims to find out the common challenges students face in learning English in public secondary schools. Please be honest in your responses. All information you provide will be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes. Your participation is voluntary. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

***(ATTAREYERE GLORY)***

## SECTION A – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please tick (✓) the appropriate options.

### S/N Demographic Variable Response Options

- 1 Gender Male ( ) Female ( )
- 2 Age \_\_\_\_\_ years
- 3 Class JSS1 ( ) JSS2 ( ) JSS3 ( )

## SECTION B

Key: SA = Strongly Agree | A = Agree | D = Disagree | SD = Strongly Disagree

| S/N | Items                                                                                                      | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|----|
|     | <b>What are the Major Problems you Face in Learning English in Schools in Oredo Local Government Area?</b> |    |   |   |    |
| 1   | I find it difficult to understand English when teachers speak in class.                                    |    |   |   |    |
| 2   | I have difficulty with pronunciation during learning of English                                            |    |   |   |    |
| 3   | I have difficulty with grammar and vocabulary                                                              |    |   |   |    |
| 4   | Our classrooms are too crowded, making it hard to hear and learn.                                          |    |   |   |    |
| 5   | I have English textbooks and workbooks                                                                     |    |   |   |    |

| S/N | Items                                                                       | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|----|
|     | <b>Do student have textbooks and other learning Materials in English?</b>   |    |   |   |    |
| 6   | I have access to textbooks in English                                       |    |   |   |    |
| 7   | The quality of English-language textbooks provided is good.                 |    |   |   |    |
| 8   | I have enough learning materials in English to fully understand the subject |    |   |   |    |
| 9   | The English-language textbooks provided are easy to understand.             |    |   |   |    |
| 10  | The English textbooks I have are appropriate for my understanding.          |    |   |   |    |
|     | <b>Do you enjoy learning English Language</b>                               |    |   |   |    |
| 11  | I find English language lessons interesting.                                |    |   |   |    |
| 12  | I feel motivated to improve my English                                      |    |   |   |    |
| 13  | I feel confident using English in daily conversations.                      |    |   |   |    |
| 14  | I enjoy speaking English all the time                                       |    |   |   |    |
| 15  | I find reading English texts enjoyable.                                     |    |   |   |    |

| S/N | Items                                                                       | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|----|
|     | <b>Do you sometimes speak in your mother tongue?</b>                        |    |   |   |    |
| 16  | I prefer to speak in my mother tongue when I'm with my friends.             |    |   |   |    |
| 17  | I find it easier to express myself in my mother tongue than in English.     |    |   |   |    |
| 18  | I use my mother tongue when I am unsure of how to say something in English. |    |   |   |    |
| 19  | I often switch to my mother tongue when I am talking to family members.     |    |   |   |    |
| 20  | I feel comfortable using my mother tongue                                   |    |   |   |    |

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