

## Second Language Acquisition and Mother Tongue Influence on Learners of English Language – A Case Study of El Carmen, Ecuador.

### *Adquisición de un Segundo Idioma e Influencia de la Lengua Materna en los Aprendices del Inglés – Un Estudio de Caso de El Carmen, Ecuador.*

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#### **Abstract**

English language as a means of communication has globally gained ground in almost every sphere of life and society and, as such, has converted to an important language worldwide. The aim of this research work is basically to analyse mother tongue influence (MTI) on the learning of a second language through bibliographical and observational means, and the role it plays on students in El Carmen, whose mother tongue (L1) is Spanish in the process of the learning of English (L2) as a foreign language. A qualitative investigation method permitted the analysis of the oral production of the sample size and relevant bibliography that are related to the topic. The results obtained clearly demonstrated that L1 has influence on the learning of L2. A list of English words were taken into account to show how the Spanish language affects their pronunciation, and also phrases with regards to the use and application of

grammatical rules in both languages. In conclusion, with exposure to audio-visual and written materials in the L2, practice of speaking and correcting mistakes, they gradually learn to replace the L1 sounds and grammar issues with the original sounds and grammar rules of the L2 that they have chosen to learn, in this case, English as a foreign language. **Keywords:** Influence, Learning, Replacement, Foreign language, Mother tongue.

#### **Resumen**

*El idioma inglés como medio de comunicación ha ganado terreno en casi todas las esferas de la vida y la sociedad y como tal, y como tal, se ha convertido en un idioma importante a nivel mundial. El objetivo de este trabajo de investigación es básicamente analizar mediante el método bibliográfico cómo cualquier lengua materna influye en el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua, y a través de técnicas de observación*

identificar las principales formas en la que la lengua materna (L1), en este caso el español, influye en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés (L2) como idioma extranjero en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje de los estudiantes del cantón El Carmen. La metodología de investigación cualitativa aplicada permita analizar la producción verbal de la muestra y las bibliografías relevantes relacionadas al tema. Los resultados obtenidos demuestran que la (L1) tiene influencia sobre el aprendizaje del (L2). Se incluye una lista de errores comunes influenciados por la lengua materna

tanto en pronunciación como en la gramática. Se concluye que, con la persistente exposición a recursos auditivos o audiovisuales, exponerse a materiales escritos o visuales, la práctica y a corregir errores comunes en L2, se aprenden gradualmente a reemplazar los sonidos y reglas gramaticales del L1 con los sonidos originales y las reglas gramaticales de la L2 que han elegido aprender, en este caso, el inglés como idioma extranjero.

**Palabras claves:** Influencia, Aprendizaje, Reemplazo, Lengua extranjera, Lengua materna.

### Introduction

Language is a method of passing across ideas, thoughts and desires by means of gestures and sounds for psychological and physiological co-existence. The aim of teaching/learning English is not to imitate the native speakers or to develop the accents of the British or American; it is to at least get close to a level of being able to use the language and be clearly understood by other speakers and users of same gestures and sounds system irrespective of the part of the globe they hail from. This is because learners and speakers of English exist in almost all the nooks and crannies of all the continents of the world. Even in some very remote conclave and communities where it was not hitherto the mother tongue, thus; it is now seen as a global or universal language. According to Garcia (2013), “this seems to be an incontestable fact, especially if we think about the unprecedented number of English learners across the world, a number that supersedes that of speakers of English as a first language” (p. 114).

Unfortunately, the student community in El Carmen showed a low literacy level or grasp of Spanish as their first language and this fact has made their ability of acquiring a second language even more complex, limited, restricted, and worrisome. This is because they lack the grammatical foundation as a base upon which to stand and develop their skills and abilities in the new language. It has been argued in different quarters that the literacy level of students in their mother tongue assumes a great role in the learning/acquisition of a second/foreign language.

English and Spanish are two distinct languages with different operational grammatical structures in practice. This is why learners will always leave given phrases or even whole

sentences meaningless when they try to make literal or word for word translations from one language to the other. This point is further buttressed with points that are raised on the language transfer concept as put forward by Cummins, J. (1979) in his works in this area of study where he clearly stated that what is learnt in the L1 substantially contributes to one's competence in the learning of other languages.

This submission is supported by the assertion of Langston et al. (2013) in their assertion that:

“following the linguistic relativity principle, we hypothesized that the native language of a speaker would affect the attribution of blame, such that levels of responsibility would be assigned differently due to the participant's native language, especially when using non-agentive wording” (p. 411).

Moreira-Aguayo and Venegas-Loor (2020) declares that communicative competencies are characterized as a person's ability to communicate successfully in real-life situations that fall within the domain of foreign language acquisition, such as in English. Communication is an important factor to develop because that is the achievement of learning a language and interacting with speakers of the other language. Ranta (2002) further declares that metalinguistic skills arise as a function of age and it is normal that children start analyzing language (and correcting themselves) as soon as they have established the connections between the symbols of the language and the reality of the environment in which they find themselves.

Students in El Carmen face several problems in the bid to learn English language. One of these problems is seen in their attempt to use English articles. Learning to use English articles by students whose mother tongue is Spanish is undoubtedly one of the most frequent and significant difficulties they encounter. They find it difficult to initially correctly use English articles because of the differences that exist between the article systems in both languages. The Spanish language, to a large extent, has an article system that functions differently; the issue of definiteness and indefiniteness are encoded differently as compared to that of the English language. Other notable differences between both languages are on the issue of placements of the adjectives and nouns in phrases/sentences and that of pronunciations of some words/expressions. These are some of the factors that highlight MTI in learning the L2.

This article is aimed at discussing the mother tongue influence found in students in El Carmen and how to overcome some of the problems encountered. The students, based

on their different backgrounds, were found to have difficulties in the learning process of English as a foreign language. This means the effect of the learners' native language on the learning of a foreign language. Other areas of discrepancies between both languages are on the issue of placements of the adjectives and nouns in expressions and that of pronunciations of some words/expressions. This paper endeavors to look at the aforementioned problems, discuss, explain and analyze them.

Communicative relevance of the English language:

English is undoubtedly the world's second largest most used language. It is the official language in 70 countries around the world and English-speaking countries account for about 40% of the world's Gross National Product which implies its strong economic influence. Its importance and relevance in society cannot be over emphasized, hence; the ever increasing need to learn English apart from the mother tongue as to be able to communicate and effectively relate with people from other parts of the world. Based on the assertions above, and the academic directives of the government as enshrined in the national school curriculum, English as a foreign language is now being taught to children from the primary to the secondary school levels in El Carmen to prepare them to improve their communicative competencies as is now being demanded by our modern-day globalized world. This is all in a bid to enable them be effectively prepared for the present-day exigencies of almost all spheres of human endeavor in which at least the possession of an acceptable level to a good command of the language has become the order of the day ranging from; commercial transactions, travel, international educational projects, scientific programs, job interviews, etc.

Mother tongue influence on English language learners in El Carmen:

This influence tends to disrupt the smoothness, flow and understanding of communication in the L2. It was observed that students in El Carmen are not confident enough and hence, ultimately resort to the use of the mother tongue in expressing their views and opinions for them to be clearly understood rather than formal English. This is owing to a lot of factors that range from shyness, fear, limited exposure and lack of practice amongst others.

Zambrano and Alirio (2001) puts forward thus:

The communicative approach is based on certain objectives and premises to provide support to students in the management of the communicative competencies of the foreign language, facilitate the use of the foreign language in everyday actions to express diverse

personal and intrapersonal information, the provision of adequate feedback and correction of errors according to the needs that arise, the promotion of the learning of the foreign language not only for educational purposes but for foreign language linguistic purposes and finally, the exploration of different teaching methods and techniques that strengthen communicative skills in function and meaningfulness.

Learning English language does not require a student to possess a high intelligence quotient IQ; it rather requires that the student in question should possess a high interest on the subject. Just like every other language, English is also constantly evolving. It is advised that students, with the help of their instructors, continually keep pace with current trends and never relent on continuous practice as it is the most practical way of improving on their language capabilities. It cannot be done overnight but rather, over time. According to Vivanco, 2009, “foreign language and literacy is developed by using it in many different situations, environments, with many different speakers and listeners, and for many purposes” (p. 2).

Furthermore, Meyer mentioned the issue of cultural identity in his work that “The self-identity of a monolingual person is inextricably bound up with their native language (Brown, 2000: 64; Piaseka, in Schweers, 1999). Some students may resent the L2 if they feel it is forced on them, thus raising affective filters. Schweers (1999) believes that in a case where the instructor is a native speaker of the L2, students can better identify with them if the instructor speaks the students’ L1, thus showing that the instructor respects and values the student’s mother tongue. The instructor can also be held as a model of someone who successfully learned another language”.

A lot of foreign language learners unconsciously transfer language rules of their L1 to the L2, word ordering/sequencing and sound system. Heavy MTI occurs when the native language sounds of alphabets, numbers and even words have not yet been completely replaced with the foreign language sounds. This requires time and constant practice to overcome. Just as each language has different alphabets and words, so does each have different sound and pronunciation.

Methodology and Data Analysis

### **Participants**

A sample size of 60 students were randomly selected for this research work made up of 36 females and 24 males, all within the range of 8 to 14 years of age. 10 participants were chosen from 6 educational units (3 primary and 3 secondary schools), all within El

Carmen, a small town in the Manabí province of Ecuador. The time frame for this study was 6 months. All participants are Ecuadorian nationals and were all born in this agrarian town. To ensure objectivity of purpose, within the time of data collection, the selected students were attending between the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Generalized Basic Education (primary) and the first 2 years of secondary education in the Ecuadorian school system.

#### Research instruments and data analysis

The research tools administered for the collection of both oral and written linguistic data were questionnaires (word glossary and a list of short phrases), audio clips and sound recorders. The former was basically to aid the authors' analysis of possible lexical and grammatical flaws while, the later was aimed at facilitating the subsequent replays/reproductions and identification of specific oral production discrepancies between recorded sounds and standard English pronunciation of same words or expressions.

On completion of the data collection stage of the study over time, the authors retired to the language laboratory for further processing and analysis of gathered information in the field. It was at this point, after series of data and sound analysis, that all identified errors in the course of this work were spotted and highlighted.

For the purpose of this research work, the following English language words and sounds were constantly used over time with the students that make up the sample size of this study to verify and confirm the correctness or otherwise of pronunciations among other factors. It was interesting to observe that MTI was very intense and obvious in almost all the pronunciations that were recorded. They were subsequently pronounced as outlined and depicted below;

TABLE 1 - WORD AND SOUND TABLE

<b>Random word list</b>	<b>British sound pattern</b>	<b>North American sound pattern</b>	<b>Recorded learner sound output</b>
Absent	æbsənt	æbsənt	æusənt
Book	bok	bok	bət
Club	klʌb	klʌb	cləd
Cook	kok	kok	cot
Develop	dɪ'veləp	dɪ'veləp	dɪ'veləb
Eight	eɪt	eɪt	eɪch

English	'ɪŋɡlɪʃ	'ɪŋɡlɪʃ	'ɪŋɡlɪs
Fifteen	fɪf'ti:n	fɪf'ti:n	fɪs'ti:n
Fifty	'fɪftɪ	'fɪftɪ	'fɪstɪ
Iron	'aɪən	'aɪərn	'aɪəron
Job	dʒəʊb	dʒəʊb	dʒəʊv
Jungle	'dʒʌŋɡl	'dʒʌŋɡl	'dʒʌŋɡle
Lab	Læb	Læb	læv
Lava	'lə:və	'lə:və	'lə:bə
Million	'mɪljən	'mɪljən	'mɪljən
Proverb	'prɒvɜ:b	'pra:vɜ:rb	'pra:bɜ:rv
Project	'prɒdʒekt	'pra:dʒekt	'pra:yʒekt
School	sku:l	sku:l	esku:l
Seven	'sevn	'sevn	'sebn
Shake	ʃeɪk	ʃeɪk	cheɪk
Shopping	'ʃɒpɪŋ	'ʃɑ:pɪŋ	'tʃɑ:pɪŋ
Sweep	swi:p	swi:p	eswi:p
Speak	spi:k	spi:k	espi:k
Student	'stju:dnt	'stu:dnt	'estu:dnt
Sure	ʃʊə(r)	ʃʊr	siʊr
Swim	swɪm	swɪm	eswɪm
Umbrella	ʌm'brelə	ʌm'brelə	ʌm'breyə
University	ju:nɪ'vɜ:səti	ju:nɪ'vɜ:rsəti	ju:nɪ'bɜ:rsiti
Whisky	'wɪski	'wɪski	'wɪki
You	ju:	ju:	jiu:
Zero	'ziərəʊ	'zi:roʊ	'ci:roʊ

**Source:** Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. 2015

This list of words above is not all comprising; it is just to mention but a few. Practicing speaking is one of the most fun and practical ways of learning English language. The following are some tips for improving spoken English; being confident and speaking as often as possible to as much people as possible and avoid being shy to make mistakes. The only way to get better is by actually trying to do it.

Another area of MTI between L1 and L2 is in the placements of adjectives and nouns in phrases and sentences. Spanish English language learners tend to make the very common mistake of placing the nouns immediately before the adjective that describe same nouns. E.g., “house big” instead of big house, “cat black” instead of black cat, “woman pretty” instead of pretty woman, etc. This word placement structure is permitted in Spanish grammar but totally wrong in that of English. It is also worthy of note that in some cases, auxiliary verbs are absent in the Spanish grammatical structure but are practically indispensable in that of the English language. In the same vein, Spanish grammar permits the pluralization of adjectives which was noted in the following expressions: “cars news” instead of new cars, “boys tall” instead of tall boys, etc. It is simply known as mother tongue influence. It is always advised to think in “English” and gradually leave out our mother tongue while trying to improve on the L2 skills. It is a recommended way of putting the MTI under check while improving on tone and clarity in the new language that is being learnt.

According to Beckman & Venditti (2010), as cited by Ochagu & Agban (2022):

The terms 'tone and intonation' refer to patterned variation in voiced source pitch that serves to contrast and to organize words and larger utterances. However, the terms are differentiated in typical usage by applying them to different aspects of these linguistic uses of speech. Pitch is defined as the relative height of speech sounds as perceived by a listener and is what we are hearing when we refer to a voice being 'high' and 'low', in speech, is the relative highness or lowness of a tone as perceived by the ear, which depends on the number of vibrations per second produced by the vocal cords. Pitch is the main acoustic correlate of tone and intonation (Britannica.com) the varying Pitch levels throughout an utterance form what we hear as intonation: the “falling” and “rising” of the voice.

The definite article system is yet another area of observable difference. Students of El Carmen encounter problems in their attempt to use English articles with words, in phrases and sentences. It is frequent and significant especially with regards to time and place. Spanish grammatical structure permits the use of the definite article with time, for example, “the last week”, “the last year”, “the last month”, etc. This is not the case in English language. Same is also observed in the case of place where people generally say “the China”, “the Ecuador”, “the Peru”, etc. This article system is also different from what is obtainable in English language where the names of countries or places are just



mentioned without the need for the use of the article. i.e., zero articles are applied; except in cases of making reference to a bigger body that is made up of other smaller units such as is the case with: the African Union, the European Union, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, etc. Isabelli-Garcia and Slough (2012) argue that “a difference between Spanish and English exists with some geographical names; in English the article is omitted before “lake” in “Lake Erie is in the United States” but not in Spanish El lago Earie está en los Estados Unidos” (p. 97).

The errors that were identified in the course of this work are basically classified into the following:

#### Contextual errors

These are the identified cases in which different English words are used out of grammatical contexts in sentences, possibly because they sound similar to their Spanish counterparts. For example, the case of “incidencia” incidence used in place of effects, “estimado” estimated used in place of esteemed, “atender” attend used in place of assist, “asistir” assist used in place of attend, “instancia” instance used in place of moment or situation, “libreria” a library used in place of a book store, etc. The use of the aforementioned words in English by a considerable number of native Spanish speakers are often times confused and; thus, used out of context to represent words or situations that they represent in their L1. This reflected incompetence on the part of some of the English language teachers that work with the sampled students with regards to their choice of words and usage in the language classrooms while working with these students because, according to (Meneses, (2011)., “when studying languages people are mostly concerned about orthographical issues, grammatical correctness, and syntactical issues but are not sufficiently aware of crucial aspects like cultural equivalence or language transfer influences, knowledge in these areas will allow them to deal with the real meaning of the words, looking beyond the words itself, but centered on the communicative purposes”.

#### Syntactic errors

This is as a result of the observed difficulty for the students to easily conform to and utilize the English syntax. This is probably as a result of the mother tongue influence. For example, an expression like “cómo está?”, “how is you?” shows an error of agreement which translates to a syntactic error because of the erroneous use of the auxiliary “is” instead of “are”. Going by the words of Vasquez (2009), “in concrete terms, the child

used both the English form in Spanish (which was always ungrammatical in Spanish) and the Spanish form in English (which was pragmatically inappropriate in English)”.

#### Morphological errors

This was demonstrated in the pluralization of adjectives. For instance: prettys, bigs, beautifuls, intelligents, wides, olds, etc. It was further observed that these language learners have problems in understanding that it is not all English nouns attain their plural forms by adding the morpheme “s” at the end of the noun, for example, “fishes”, “advices” and “furnitures”. This is an indication that these students possess a problem of over-generalization and incomplete knowledge and application of grammar rules or conditions under which these rules are applied in practice.

#### Phonological errors

This has to do with the issue of wrong pronunciations as depicted in the table above. These errors could probably be attributed to the lack of constant practice by the students, especially in the area of speaking or oral production of the target language. Another aspect of this error was identified in situations where the students spell out words based on the way the words sound, “laf” as laugh, “laif” as life, “laik” as like, etc.

#### Merits of the mother tongue

According to Phindane, Pule. (2020):

The positive arguments for using L1 in a L2 classroom Authors like Deller and Rinvoluceri (2002), Briggs (2001); Galali and Cinkara (2017) believe that L1 play an important role in second language learning in a classroom. According to Seftiawan (2018), mother tongue can help six-year-old learners to study second language and master vocabularies through translation. Hanáková and Metruk (2017) observed that L1 can also be used to explain a certain vocabulary, grammar, instructions, organisation purposes and to monitor learners’ comprehension. This view is also shared by Alshehri (2017) who observed that L1 in a second language classroom develops good rapport with students.

Certain idiomatic expressions in the L2 can best be taught and understood by students by making comparisons with those that exist in the mother tongue. Otherwise, students will misunderstand the idioms and the teacher’s objective of sending his/her message across in English might not be achieved. There might be some English words which cannot be understood by the students irrespective of whatever teaching technique the teacher applies. In such cases, the use of the mother tongue does the magic.

Demerits of the mother tongue:

Going by the assertions of Phindane, Pule. (2020):

The negative arguments against using L1 in a L2 classroom. Regardless of many advantages of using L1 in the L2 classroom there are also some disadvantages of using or overusing L1 in the classroom that may happen. According to Auerbach (1993:5) ‘the more the learners are exposed to English, the more quickly they will learn’, and for them to be able to learn it, they should be ‘forced to use it’. Cook (2001) identifies two reasons for those who support only L2 use in L2 classes. Firstly, the L2 learning process is like the process of L1 learning. Secondly, Cook (2001) states that the acquisition processes of L1 and L2 are completely separate.

The under listed are some of the disadvantages of the mother tongue in the learning process of a target language:

Every L1 has its laid-out grammar structures which, in most cases, differ from those of the L2. As such, learners would not be able to do word for word translations because there are no exact equivalents of English language in the mother tongue. The sentence patterns of English are often times quite different. By extension, the articles, propositions and demonstratives of the mother tongue are differently used in the English language.

Shy students will always prefer to express themselves in their L1 to ensure being clearly understood. This sudden switch from L2 to L1 was noted to be sometimes unintentional. The flow of the language acquisition process could be cut or somehow interrupted by the use of the mother tongue in conversations amongst peers.

Tips on reducing mother tongue influence on L2 learners:

Linguists have found MTI to influence the learning of English in different manners depending on the L1 in question. According to Sriprahba (2015), every language affects English differently, so we can't simply list out all the common mistakes if one starts learning a local language, one will find oneself understanding mother tongue influence a lot more, and one will be able to correct it far more easily. As mentioned earlier different languages affect English learning in a different way. For some, sentence word order can be a problem for others, sound articulation and placement of primary stress can be a difficult task.

Building a habit of reading books in the target language will gradually help learners increase their word bank/vocabulary and, by implication, help to suppress MTI.

The constant practice of pronouncing words and sentences in front of the mirror will, not only enhance our pronunciation, but will also increase the confidence level in speaking without MTI. Recording one's own voice and taking note to make necessary corrections will definitely help overcome MTI.

The regular use of a few tongue twisters in the target language goes a long way to improve our pronunciation. The habit of watching and listening to television and radio channels respectively in the target language is undoubtedly a great way of sharpening our communicative skills in the L2. Try to develop spontaneity while speaking and consciously limit or completely avoid the use of fillers such as: ummm, ehhh, ahhh, uhhh, etc. Try to closely relate and interact with people that speak the language and, in the language, to practice and improve pronunciation.

Pedagogical interventions in the language classroom:

Going by the words of Robinson (2015) "acquiring literacy in the mother tongue is educationally and pedagogically sound, but what is there to read? This is a common cry in literacy programs, both from learners and instructors. Often materials are limited to literacy primers and other learning materials, as well as functional booklets on development topics. This dilemma emerges from a heavy emphasis on literacy as reading and a neglect of literacy as writing. Unless speakers of a local language write creatively it is unlikely that there will be much of interest to read" (p. 6).

Furthermore, Gooding de Palacios (2020) asserts that the communicative approach to language acquisition deploys many types of activities that are interactive, motivating, and projected in the development of communicative functions while being playful to release tensions, get out of the routine and worries, hence, making the process entertaining and fun classes, etc.

Bilingual models and practices vary and so do their results, but what they have in common is their use of the mother tongue at least in the early years so that students can acquire and develop literacy skills in addition to understanding and participating in the language classroom. The role of mother tongue also depends on the teaching methods a teacher applies in the classroom. Larsen-Freeman (2000) supports the role of the mother tongue in the classroom procedures and summarizes the role of L1 in various English language teaching methods as follows:

Grammar Translation method: The meaning of words and expressions in the target language is made clear by translations using the students' native language. Direct method

and Audio-lingual method: The students' native language should not be used in the classroom because it is thought that it will interfere with the students' attempts to master the target language. Communicative Language Teaching: This advocates that a judicious use of the students' native language is permitted in communicative language teaching. The conception in this study is that whatever the case of the level of L1 use in the language classroom may be, it would basically be dependent on the educational objective that is being pursued. To this effect,

Meyer (2008) states as follows:

“Even in the case of linguistically homogeneous classes, there is still controversy over L1 use. Students need exposure to the L2. In many cases the only exposure the students may get is in the classroom; therefore, shouldn't the instructor speak only the L2? That depends on what the purpose of the language class is. Is it a class full of novice learners of the L2? Is it a class of students preparing for a stay abroad? Is it a class of students training to become translators/interpreters?” (p. 147).

### Discussion

This study perceives literacy to be the formal learning of how to read and write. When learners go on to expand their abilities in two or more language throughout their early school years, they tend to achieve a deeper understanding of language and how to use same effectively in communication. This is so, especially when they are literate enough in both languages and, are able to compare and contrast the ways in which their two languages organize reality. As such, bilingual children have been said to develop more flexibility in their thinking as an outcome of being able to process information through the perspective of two different languages. Rogers (2008) calls learning, i.e., conscious learning, and Rojo (2009) terms it schooled literacy. Accordingly, the operational definition of literacy will be that of the instrument that is judged suitable to asses literacy conceived as the formal learning of reading/writing, which defines reading literacy as “the capacity to understand, use and reflect on written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society”. This is crucial in the achievement of expected success in L2 students.

According to Cuartas (2014), “beyond the taken-for-granted assumptions regarding its use, I found that the selective use of L1 could actually be beneficial for L2 learning”. More so, well equipped and functional language laboratories should be put in place in

schools to encourage students have the opportunity of practicing their speaking to improve on their oral production of the target language.

In the same vein, having understood that mother tongue influence could negatively impact on the learning process of a new language if not put under check; even though the use of the L1 is seen as indispensable at certain points of the language learning process to ensure the understanding of given cases of study by the students, concerted efforts should be made by all concerned at gradually reducing the use of the mother tongue in the teaching/learning process of the L2. This is because the only way to get better in the target language is by actually doing it. This implies that continuous practice is paramount. This is intended to align students on the issue of speech and sound patterns in the target language.

It was possible to establish in this work that many students of foreign languages unconsciously transfer the grammar rules from their L1 to the L2, the order/sequencing of words and sound pattern/system. Heavy MTI occurs when the native language sounds of alphabets, numbers, and even words have not yet been completely replaced with those of the foreign language sounds. This takes time and constant practice to overcome. Just as each language has different alphabets and words, each also has different sounds and pronunciations. Manjula, (2022) asserts that:

Poor pronunciation not only leads to misunderstanding but also creates negative impression and confusion. Learners with bad pronunciation are judged as lack of knowledge, incompetent and they will be misunderstood. There are several factors that influence pronunciation such as native language interference, amount of exposure, phonetic ability, cultural and educational back ground and motivation. Of all the influences the influence of native language is the most inhibiting and inherent factor that manifest in the form of mispronunciation.

### **Conclusions**

Literacy development involves learning a great deal of content as well as developing the skills necessary to deal with the newly acquired content. Children need to learn to understand the shape of letters, how they sound, how they are written, and sometimes using different alphabets. Through this activity, which typically starts in preschool or within the home environment, children begin to understand that language is a system made of arbitrary symbols, and that each language has its own structure.

They also learn to distinguish different sounds, developing language-specific phonemic knowledge and the ability to identify rhymes or similarities of various kinds, both in the sound and the meaning of the words they encounter. Bilingual children develop vocabulary in both languages simultaneously, while they also develop the necessary skills to speak to others in both languages. These skills include the strategies that allow children to identify when they should use one language over another, with whom, and in which context.

In compendium, efforts should be directed at all means of making these young learners use the target language in practice as this is the only practical means of timely identifying and consciously eliminating mother tongue influence on the effective and efficient learning of English as a second or foreign language.

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