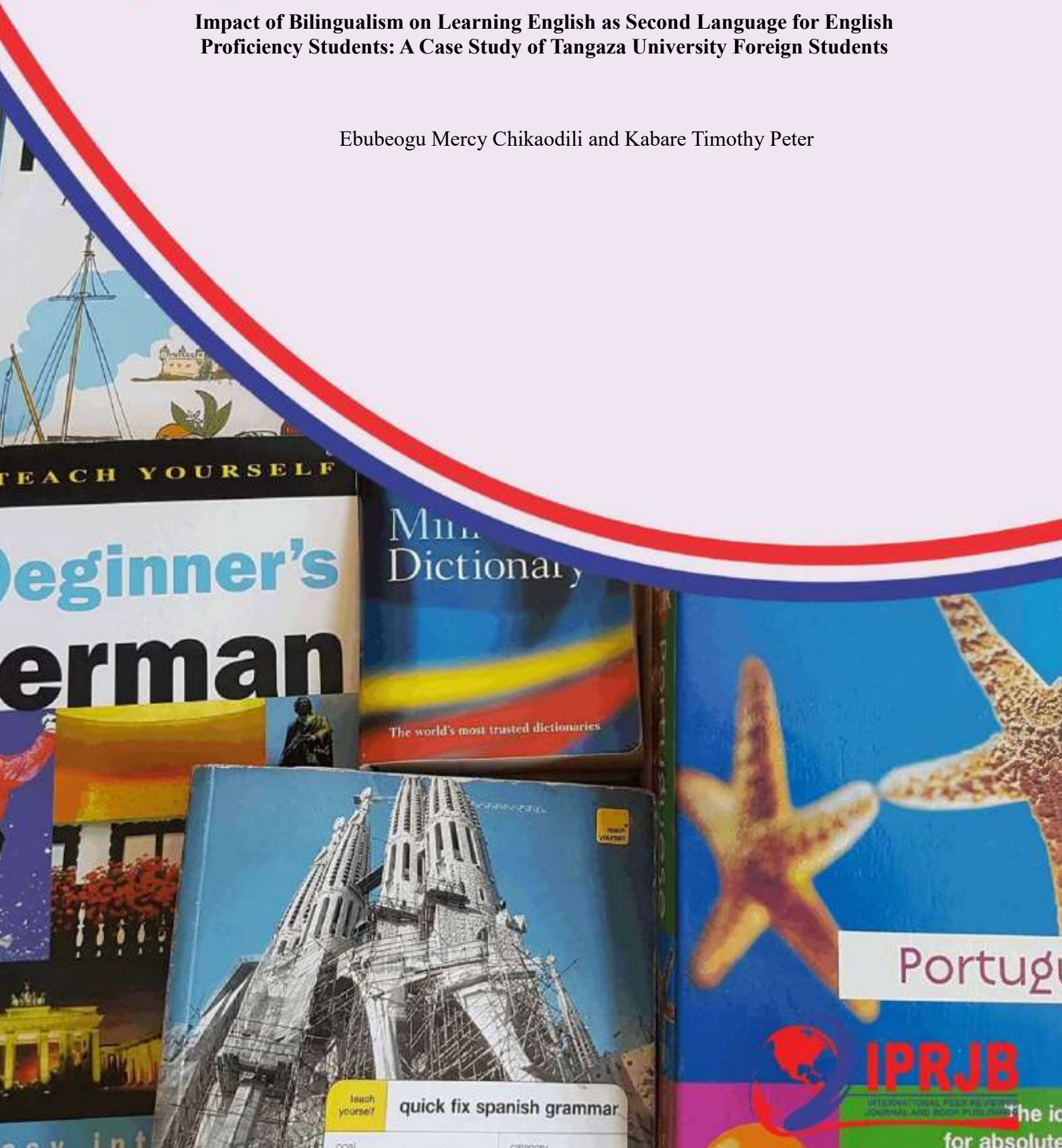


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**Impact of Bilingualism on Learning English as Second Language for English
Proficiency Students: A Case Study of Tangaza University Foreign Students**

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Abstract

Purpose: This research investigated the impact of bilingualism on the acquisition of English as a second language (ESL) among students seeking English proficiency. The primary objectives of the study was to examine the effects of bilingualism on the ESL learning process, identify recurring language transfer patterns resulting from bilingualism in learning ESL and determine effective bilingual strategies for optimizing ESL learning.

Methodology: The research questions guiding the study were: How does bilingualism influence the ESL learning process? What language patterns are transferred due to bilingualism in ESL learning? And what bilingual strategies can enhance ESL learning? The study adopted a qualitative approach, utilizing a case study design to investigate the experiences of English proficiency students at Tangaza University. Convenient sampling methods were employed, and data was collected through structured questionnaires and written compositions on the topic *How I Spent My Last Holiday*. The collected data was analyzed using thematic and content analysis.

Findings: The study findings revealed that bilingualism influenced ESL learning in both positive and negative ways, with recurring language transfer patterns at phonological, morphological, syntactic, and grammatical levels. Effective bilingual strategies, such as consistent practice, immersion, and the use of technological tools, were identified as key to enhancing ESL learning outcomes.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study was guided by Larry Selinker's Language transfer theory (1972), which significantly influenced the field of second language acquisition (SLA). The study recommended more effective teaching methodologies, including tailored instructions, structured writing training, and interactive learning activities, to improve learners' language interaction and usage.

Key words: *English as a Second Language, First Language, Second Language, Language Learning, Language Transfer, Second Language Acquisition*

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INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing interest in bilingualism by researchers. Bilingualism, simply means the ability to use two languages (Valdez and Figueora, 1994). In an increasingly globalized world, where English serves as the lingua franca for international communication, understanding its impact on language learning is crucial. Studies, such as Abu-Rabia and Sanitsky's (2010), highlight that bilingualism positively influences the acquisition of a third language by enhancing phonological and lexical awareness, thus facilitating the learning process. However, a notable research gap persists concerning non-English-speaking university students, who face unique challenges and opportunities due to their diverse linguistic backgrounds and varying levels of English proficiency. This demographic requires focused investigation to address their specific experiences and needs, which may differ markedly from those of other language learners.

At Tangaza University, students hail from various African countries where languages such as French and Portuguese serve as primary mediums of communication. To adapt to the English-medium instruction at the university, these students must achieve a high level of English proficiency. During this process, elements from their first language (L1) often transfer to their target language, resulting in the formation of interlanguage. Edwards (2012) identifies language transfer as a significant aspect of bilingualism's impact on language learning, influenced by numerous factors. One such factor is the linguistic gap or proximity between the native (L1) and (L2) languages. Edwards argues that a narrower linguistic divide facilitates more effective acquisition of the target language, consequently shortening the learning period.

Investigating the interplay between bilingualism and language learning in Tangaza University's bilingual student population could provide valuable insights. Such research can inform educators, enabling them to design effective teaching strategies that support students in achieving their educational goals.

Statement of the Problem

In our contemporary, interconnected and multicultural world, the attainment of English as a second language holds paramount significance, particularly the English proficiency students seeking higher education opportunities at institutions such as Tangaza University. These students often come from diverse linguistic background and possess varying degrees of bilingualism. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effects of bilingualism on learning English as L2 for English proficiency students at Tangaza University. These students come from various regions across Africa where English is not commonly utilized as medium of communication or instruction. They speak French, Portuguese, Amharic among others. Prior to their arrival in Kenya, they had their native language and then little or no knowledge of English language. In Kenya, and specifically, their target university – Tangaza University, English language serves as the primary medium of instruction; therefore, they are expected to learn English language before pursuing their dream course. Studying the effects of bilingualism on these English proficiency students will enlighten us more on the challenges they face and enable the researcher to recommend effective strategies that will facilitate their learning experiences. The result of this research will further benefit all language learning stakeholders in establishing policies that will enhance the students' language learning and acquisition.

Hence, it is crucial to conduct an in-depth analysis of the effects of bilingualism on learning English as L2 for English proficiency students at Tangaza University in order to address this pressing issue. Through this investigation, the research endeavors to fill the existing research

gap by delving into the nuanced impacts of bilingualism on the process of learning English and most importantly to trace how these students transfer language from their L1 to L2, while providing effective strategies that will facilitate learning English as a second language.

Theoretical Framework

The Theoretical Framework

Larry Selinker's language transfer theory (LTT) informed this study. The theory was proposed by Selinker in his influential work titled "interlanguage," published in 1972. Selinker's theories on language transfer (LT) have had a profound impact on the field of the second language acquisition (SLA) and have been extensively cited and studied by researchers in this field. He posits that language learners go through a transitional phase where their language development appears to be a dynamic and evolving process, distinct from their native language and their target language.

Selinker's theory consists of several fundamental components such as fossilization, transfer, and interlanguage (Selinker, 1972). However, this research focused mainly on language transfer in writing and not fossilization or interlanguage. This research analyzed how the English proficiency students transfer L1 to L2 during their learning process.

Fossilization

Fossilization is a central concept in Selinker's theory. It acknowledges that some language learners reach a stage where their language development appears to "freeze," resulting in the persistence of errors or non-native-like language use (Selinker, 1972). This phenomenon can have a profound impact on language proficiency and is a key focus of research in SLA. However, in this research, the researcher focused more on language transfer.

Transfer

The concept of transfer is another important aspect of Selinker's theory. It refers to the tendency of learners to transfer elements of their L1 into their L2, leading to linguistic interference. This transfer can manifest in various linguistic aspects, including grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary (Karin and Nassaji, 2013). The English proficiency students come from different parts of Africa to learn English and afterwards to pursue their desired discipline. Mastering English as a second language presents numerous hurdles for students, including the challenge of transferring skills from their native language (L1) to English (L2). As learners of English as a second language endeavor for effective communication, they frequently depend on the transfer from their first language (L1) to the target language. Therefore, this study identified the patterns of this transfer among these students. The outcome of this study enabled the researcher to propose practical strategies aimed at enhancing the efficacy of English language acquisition for second language learners.

Interlanguage

Interlanguage is defined as a transitional linguistic system that learners develop while in the process of acquiring (L2), serving as a dynamic intermediary phase, it stands between the learners (L1) and (L2). Interlanguage is characterized by its evolving nature, as learners progress towards higher proficiency in the target language (Selinker, 1972).

Interlanguage theory highlights learners' active construction of a unique linguistic system influenced by various factors such as language input, cognitive processes, and individual differences. As learners engage with the target language, they create hypotheses about its

structure and rules, forming their interlanguage. This process involves error analysis, fossilization, and eventual convergence toward the target language norms (Selinker, 1972).

Understanding interlanguage is crucial for language educators as it sheds light on learners' cognitive processes and developmental stages in SLA. By recognizing the characteristics and challenges of interlanguage, educators can design effective instructional strategies tailored to learners' needs and facilitate their journey toward linguistic proficiency (Ellis, 1994). Therefore, Selinker's Theory of Interlanguage is highly relevant to the research as it provided a framework for understanding the potential challenges and language development patterns of English proficiency students who are bilingual. It helped the researcher to analyze how bilingualism impacts the process of acquiring English as (L2).

In summary, Selinker's Theory of Interlanguage provides a robust theoretical framework for exploring the impacts of bilingualism in the process of learning English as (L2). By employing this framework, this study aimed to gain insights into language development and potential challenges faced by bilingual learners in a university setting and provided effective strategies towards language acquisition.

The study focused on language transfer among the key pillars of the model and did not focus on fossilization and interlanguage. Due to time constraints the researcher would have to develop new matrix in testing fossilization of language whereas interlanguage would require a lot of syntactical structures as evidence of the interplay of languages.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework visually illustrated the intricate relationships among the dependent variables, independent variables and intervening variables. There are basically three variables discussed in the study; they are independent variable which is bilingualism, dependent variables – English proficiency and intervening variables which consist of interlanguage, language transfer and fossilization. These variables are illustrated using the table below.

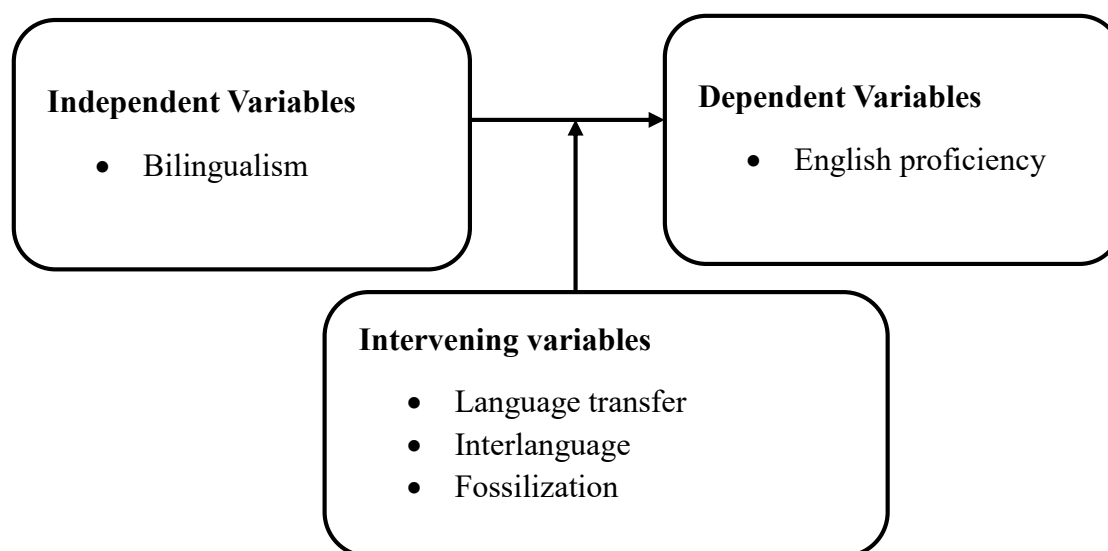


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

LITERATURE REVIEW

The impacts of Bilingualism on Learning English Language

In the context of LL, the term “impact” refers to the influence or effect that various factors or elements have on the process of acquiring, using, and developing language skills. This encompasses the ability to cause changes, inspire actions, or shape perspectives. This can manifest in various ways, for example, in Third Language Acquisition (TLA), the learner’s previous language learning experiences can shape their approach to learning a new language (Cook, 2013). There are many impacts of bilingualism on learning English language, they can be both positive or negative impacts as elaborated below.

Positive Impacts

Bilingualism is said to have positive impacts when it benefits the language learner. When the transfer from L1 to L2 facilitates language acquisition, it is called positive transfer. This often happens when there are minute differences between L1 and L2. Some of these positive impacts are cognitive benefits, transfer of skills, cultural awareness, and code-switching (Bialystok, 2017).

Cognitive Benefits

Bilingual individuals frequently demonstrate augmented cognitive abilities including enhanced problem-solving, multitasking, and improved memory. These cognitive benefits have the potential to facilitate the process of learning a new language, including English. According to Marian and Shook (2012), they argued that bilingualism offers cognitive, neurological, and social advantages across life stages. It enhances information processing, prevents cognitive decline, and improves attention. It is not restricted to early bilinguals; late learners benefit too. Despite language challenges, it fosters metalinguistic awareness, better memory, and creativity. Bialystok (2011), further proves in his research on the benefits of bilingualism that bilingual individuals consistently excel compared to monolinguals in task related to executive control. His findings show that bilingualism has positive impact on the language learner. The enhanced cognitive regulation acquired through bilingualism stands as one among several benefits enjoyed by bilingual individuals. Despite noted language challenges, such as increased naming difficulty, bilingualism is linked to heightened metalinguistic awareness and improved memory, visual-spatial abilities, and even creativity. Additionally, aside these cognitive and neurological advantages, bilingualism provides substantial social benefits. These include the ability to immerse oneself in a culture through its native language and to communicate with individuals who would otherwise be inaccessible due to language barriers (Marian and Shook, 2012).

Transfer of Skills

Knowledge of one language can significantly aid in learning another. Proficiency in one language often allows individual to recognize similarities in structure and vocabulary, facilitating the acquisition of English. The transfer of language skills encompasses cognitive, linguistic, and social dimensions, enabling individual to excel in diverse linguistic context (Cook, 2016).

Bilingual individuals, as noted by Marian and Shook (2012), possess heightened metalinguistic awareness, which enhances their ability to analyse language structures and functions. The awareness simplifies the acquisition of grammatical rules and phonological patterns, as well as

promotes creative thinking and problem-solving. Grosjean (2010) highlights the social advantages of bilingualism, such as increases empathy and cultural sensitivity, which arise from navigating multiple languages and cultural perspectives. These skills improve communication in multicultural environments.

Furthermore, the practical benefits of bilingualism extend to learning new information. Kaushanskaya and Marian (2009) found that bilinguals can more effectively comprehend and retain concepts by associating ideas across languages. By leveraging these cognitive social advantages, bilingual individuals are better equipped to learn and adapt in multilingual settings.

Cultural Awareness

Bilingual individuals often exhibit a heightened awareness of diverse cultures and worldviews, which can enhance their motivation and comprehension of English, a global language steeped in rich cultural context (Byram, 2008). Due to their exposure to multiple languages, they frequently possess a unique advantage in comprehending and embracing diverse cultures. As they navigate between languages, they inherently gain insights into the associated cultures, beliefs, and societal norms. By engaging with different linguistic systems, individuals broaden their perspectives and develop a deeper understanding of various cultural nuances, which positively influences their cultural awareness (Grosjean, 2010).

Language and culture are deeply interconnected, and bilingualism exposes individuals to the intricate relationship between language and societal customs (Cummins, 2000). For instance, in many African countries where English serves as a second language due to colonial influence, learning English has often facilitated an awareness of Western customs, values and societal structures. This cultural insight, derived from historical and linguistic ties, can foster a deeper appreciation and motivation to master English as a tool for global engagement and communication.

Furthermore, the encounter with cultural idioms, expressions and context-specific language imbues bilingual individuals with the ability to interpret and internalize cultural significant meanings. This enriched cultural awareness not only enhances their grasp of English but also fuels a stronger desire to connect with the global community, where English plays a pivotal role.

Code-Switching

Bilinguals often engage in code-switching, which is the practice of alternating between two languages within a single conversation or discourse. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in ESL context, where code-switching can serve as a bridge to integrate English words and or phrases into daily communication more naturally. Research suggests that code-switching fosters linguistic flexibility. Supports effective communication, and even enhances abilities by strengthening executive function (Bialystok, 2011)

In classroom settings, code-switching is frequently observed among ESL learners. For instance, studies by Sert (2005) and Creese & Blackledge (2011)) reveal that students often switch between their native language and English to clarify concepts, facilitate comprehension, or express culturally nuanced ideas. Such practices not only aid in the negotiation of meaning but also reinforce linguistic competence in both languages.

Moreover, code-switching can landscape and support educational practices by providing a scaffold for learners. For example, in multilingual classrooms in South Africa, Probyn (2009)

documented how teachers and students alternated between isiXhosa and English to explain complex scientific concepts, thereby enhancing understanding and participation. Recognising code-switch as a strength highlights the multifaceted benefits of bilingualism in language acquisition and underscores its role as an effective pedagogical tool in ESL education.

Negative Impacts

There are some negative impacts of bilingualism which inhibits language learning. Some of these negative impacts are; interference, vocabulary confusion, accent and language dominance. Aside the above-listed, there are other negative impacts of bilingualism.

Interference

Linguistic interference occurs when features of the (L1) influence the acquisition of the (L2), leading to error and deviations from the target language norms. One notable consequences of interference is the impact on pronunciation. Differences in phonetics systems between the first and second languages may result in mispronunciations, making it challenging for learners to communicate effectively (Saha & Das Mandal, 2016). For example, a study by Johnson (2010) demonstrated that English speakers learning French often struggled with the pronunciation of nasal vowels due to interference from the absence of such sounds in English.

Interference can also manifest in grammatical structures, causing learners to transfer sentence structures, word order, and grammatical rules from their (L1) to (L2). This can result in awkward constructions and grammatical errors (Ellis, 1994). Research by Brown (2002) highlighted that Spanish speaker learning English commonly struggled with the subject-verb agreement due to interference from the Spanish language, which has more flexible word order.

Vocabulary Confusion

Interference may lead to confusion in vocabulary usage, particularly through false cognates - words that appear similar in both languages but carry distinct meanings. These false cognates can serve as a source of lexical errors (Ringbom, 1987). The word “sympathique” in French and “sympathetic” in English look alike but carry distinct meanings, and learners may incorrectly use them interchangeably (Lado, 1957). While the first language can provide a foundation for second language acquisition, interference poses a significant challenge. Bilingual learners might sometimes mix up vocabulary from their native language and English, leading to misunderstandings or miscommunications.

Accent

Accent is simply the distinctive way in which a group or an individual pronounces a language. In second language acquisition, learners often develop an accent influenced by the phonetic characteristics of their L1 (Derwing and Munro, 2015). This accent can impact communication and lead to potential drawbacks in both social and professional contexts. One of the primary negative impacts of a strong accent in the second language is the potential for communication breakdowns. Listeners may struggle to understand the speaker, leading to misunderstandings and reduced effectiveness in conveying intended messages.

Research by Major (2016) suggests that non-native accents can hinder effective communication in professional settings, affecting job performance and advancement opportunities. Individuals with pronounced accents may encounter social stigma and stereotyping, facing negative perception based on their speech patterns. This can lead to bias, discrimination, and social

exclusion, affecting the individual's confidence and willingness to engage in language-related activities (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010).

Accented speech can influence hiring decisions and career advancement. Studies by Cargile et al. (1994) indicates that individuals with strong accents may be perceived as less competent, limiting their employment opportunities and career progression. In educational settings, learners with noticeable accents may experience challenges in language assessments, grading bias, where instructors unconsciously evaluate accented speech less favorably, can impact students' academic performance and hinder their language development (Munro & Derwing, 1995).

While accent is a natural part of language acquisition, its negative impacts on communication, social interactions, and professional opportunities are significant. Understanding and addressing these challenges is crucial for educators, employers, and society as a whole to create inclusive environment that fosters effective communication and support language learners in overcoming the hurdles associated with negative impacts of language transfer.

Patterns of Language Transfer

Language transfer is common phenomena observed in SLA. LT is simply the impact of a learner's L1 on their L2. Various patterns of LT have been identified in the context of learning English as a L2, encompassing transfer phenomenon in both writing and speaking skills (Odlin, 1989). This section provides a synopsis of the principal research conducted on the role of L1 in L2. Fries (1945), a prominent behaviourist, contended that the interference of one's first language poses a significant challenge for individual acquiring a second language. He further emphasizes the crucial role of comparing a learner's (L1) with the (L2), which holds importance for both second language theory and pedagogy.

Patterns in Phonological Transfer

One notable pattern of language transfer occurs in the realm of phonology, where learners tend to carry over the pronunciation patterns of their L1 to L2. For instance, speakers of languages that lack certain sounds may substitute similar sounds from their native language when attempting to produce those sounds in the second language (Major, 2001). Research by Derwing and Munro (2009) suggests that phonological transfer can persist even among advanced learners, impacting their intelligibility and perceived language proficiency.

Phonological transfer has the potential to occur at both segmental and suprasegmental levels. Segmental transfer involves the influence of the consonants and vowels from the native language, while suprasegmental transfer relates to features like stress, intonation, and rhythm (Derwing & Munro, 2009). Research suggests that learners often struggle with suprasegmental features, such as pitch and rhythm patterns, affecting the overall prosody of their speech in the second language.

Phonological transfer is not limited to individual sounds. It can extend to entire phonological categories. For instance, speakers of languages with different vowel systems may carry over the vowel distinctions from their L1 to L2. This impacts the perception and production of vowels in the L2 (Best & Tyler, 2007).

Grammatical Transfer Patterns

Grammatical transfer is another prevalent patterns in SLA. Learners often transfer grammatical structure, word order, and syntactic features from their L1 to the L2. This phenomenon can lead

to the formulation of sentences that reflect the structure of their L1 rather than the target language. For instance, speakers of languages with different word orders, such as SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) versus SOV (Subject-Object-Verb), may struggle with reordering words in accordance with the syntax of the second language (Duffield & White, 1999).

In West Africa, for example, speakers of Yoruba (a predominantly SVO language) learning English may find word order more familiar compared to speakers of East African languages like Swahili, which allow greater syntactic flexibility. Similarly, grammatical transfer can manifest in specific grammatical functions and morphological features. Learners may apply the grammatical rules of their native language to the L2, leading to errors in agreement, tense, and aspect (Duffield & White, 1999). For example, speakers of Hausa, which lacks definite articles, might omit or misuse articles in English sentences, reflecting a transfer of morphosyntactic features.

While these examples, illustrate region-specific tendencies, it is crucial to note that such generalisations may not apply universally, as individual indifferences, language exposure, and educational contexts also play significant roles in grammatical transfer.

Lexical Transfer

Lexical transfer involves the transfer of vocabulary from L1 to L2. While cognates can facilitate vocabulary acquisition, false cognates, words that look similar but have different meanings, can lead to confusion (Ringbom, 1987). For example, the English word, “sympathy” and the Spanish word “simpatia” look alike but have distinctive meanings, representing a lexical challenge for learners (Odlin, 1989).

Lexical transfer can manifest at both semantic and syntactic levels. Learners may transfer the meanings of words directly from their native language to the second language, resulting in semantic transfer errors (Ellis, 1994). For, example, French learners of English might misuse the word “actually” because it resembles the French “actuellement,” which means currently,” rather than “in fact.” similarly, German learners might confuse the English word “gift,” which refers to a present, with the German “Gift,” meaning “poison” (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). these false cognates can lead to communication breakdowns and misunderstandings.

Additionally, syntactic structures associated with particular words may be transferred, influencing sentence construction in the L2 (Cook, 2003). For instance, native speakers of Japanese, where prepositions function differently, might say “enter to the room” instead of “enter the room,” incorrectly inserting a preposition. Similarly, Arabic speakers might omit the definite article in English sentences due to syntactic transfer, as Arabic uses article differently, e.g., “I read the book” (Laufer, 2001).

Furthermore, in semantic field, Spanish speakers might overuse “actual” in phrase like “actual problem,” intending to convey “current problem,” as “actual” in Spanish translates to “current” rather than “real” (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008).

Language Transfer in Syntax

Language transfer in syntactic structures refers to the impact of the learner’s L1 on learning L2. This phenomenon can appear in multiple forms, such as positive transfer, where similarities between L1 and L2 aid learning, and negative transfer, where differences lead to errors. One notable aspect of syntactic transfer is the impact on word order, where speakers of languages with a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) structure, such as Japanese, might struggle with the Subject-

Verb-Object (SVO) structure of English, leading to errors like “She book reads” instead of “she reads a book” (Odlin, 1989). L1 influence can further be seen in the use of articles, where speakers of languages without articles, like Russian, may omit them in English, resulting in sentences like “I saw cat” instead of “I saw a cat” (Jarvis and Pavlenko, 2008).

Additionally, another area of syntactic transfer is the placement of adjectives. In languages where adjectives typically follow nouns, such as in Spanish, learners might produce sentences like “car red” instead of “red car” in English (Ellis, 1994). These patterns illustrate the systematic ways in which L1 syntactic rules can affect L2 acquisition, often requiring targeted instruction to overcome. Therefore, language transfer in syntax is a significant factor in second language acquisition, affecting various elements from word order to article usage and adjective placement. Understanding these patterns helps educators develop more effective teaching strategies to address transfer-related challenges.

Effective LLS that can be used in Language Learning Process for Bilingual Students at Tangaza University

According to Oxford (1990) learning strategies encompass distinct measures employed by the learner to enhance the learning process, rendering it more efficient, expeditious, enjoyable, self-guided, effective, and adaptable to novel circumstances. Every learning process necessitates the adoption of a manner or strategy to accomplish the primary objective of learning. Key aspect of learning process includes determining “what” to use for leaning and understanding “how” to employ it. However, individuals employ numerous and diverse strategies when acquiring a language, with some strategies proving highly beneficial while others lack effectiveness. Learning strategies are processes that directly contribute to learning Hardan (2013).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher adopted qualitative approach. The study targeted 30 students in English proficiency class at Tangaza University. However, only 26 students participated in the research due to their availability. This study employed a convenience sampling method, selecting participants from the target population of English Language learners. This research used questionnaires, and written samples of essay, as data collection instruments. Data was analyzed through Thematic and content analysis. The data was presented in form of Charts and tables.

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Impacts of Bilingualism on Learning ESL

Cognitive and Educational Benefits of Bilingualism

The cognitive advantages of bilingualism are widely documented in the literature, with scholars like Bialystok (2001) and Thomas (2011) noting that bilingual individuals often exhibit superior cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills, and memory retention. These cognitive benefits were also reflected in the responses from learners in this study. One participant stated, *“I find it easier to process information in both languages, especially when I am reading or solving problems in class,”* reflecting the enhanced cognitive processing associated with bilingualism. Similarly, another learner noted, *“When I hear a word in English, I automatically think of its meaning in my mother tongue, which helps me understand things faster.”* This aligns

with Baker's (2011) assertion that bilingual individuals tend to have an enhanced understanding of language structure, which supports easier learning of additional languages.

Communicative Competence and Social Benefits of Bilingualism

In addition to cognitive advantages, bilingualism also enhances communicative competence, as discussed by Canale and Swain (1980), who emphasize the role of language in social interaction. Many learners in this study highlighted the ability to engage more effectively in social interactions, both in academic and non-academic settings. One learner shared, *"Being able to speak English makes it easier for me to interact with my classmates, especially during group projects."* Another participant explained, *"I also feel more confident speaking to my teachers in English, especially when asking questions about the lessons."* These comments reflect the broader social benefits of bilingualism, which allows individuals to communicate with a wider variety of people, both in academic and personal contexts. This is consistent with Cummins' (2000) claim that bilingual individuals often excel academically due to their ability to engage in diverse communicative contexts.

Challenges of Bilingualism: Language Interference and Code-Switching

While bilingualism offers numerous advantages, it also presents challenges, particularly in the form of language interference and code-switching. Several learners mentioned that they struggled with automatically defaulting to their native language when speaking or writing in English, leading to errors in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary choice. One learner said, *"I often find myself using words from my native language when I can't remember the English word, which sometimes makes me sound unsure."* Another stated, *"It's hard for me to keep my sentences in just one language when speaking; I switch between languages, which sometimes confuses my classmates."* These experiences reflect the concerns raised by Kroll and Bialystok (2013), who argue that bilinguals often face cognitive demands when switching between languages, leading to language interference. Grosjean (2010) also notes that code-switching is a common issue among bilinguals, as their minds switch between languages during communication, sometimes resulting in confusion and decreased fluency in one or both languages.

In conclusion, bilingualism significantly impacts the process of learning English as a second language, offering both advantages and challenges. Its cognitive and educational benefits, such as improved problem-solving, memory retention, and flexibility, provide a strong foundation for acquiring additional languages. Socially, bilingualism enhances communicative competence, enabling learners to interact confidently in academic and interpersonal contexts. However, challenges like language interference and code-switching reveal the complexity of managing two linguistic systems. To maximize the benefits of bilingualism, targeted strategies are essential to address these challenges and support learners in improving their English proficiency.

Language Patterns that are transferred due to Bilingualism in ESL Learning

Language transfer is a key phenomenon in bilingual contexts, occurring when learners apply linguistic patterns from their L1 to their L2. While bilingualism enhances cognitive flexibility, it can also create challenges as learners navigate between linguistic systems. This section examines and analyses patterns of language transfer observed in students' essays focusing mainly on phonological, morphological, syntactic, and grammatical aspects. Examples include phoneme substitution, incorrect word formation and issues with sentence structure among

others. Understanding these patterns can help educators develop teaching strategies to address bilingual learners' needs.

Analysis of Students' Written Essays

This section provides an analysis of the students' written essays on the topic "How I Spent My Last Holiday," submitted by 26 respondents from English proficiency students at Tangaza University, across beginners, intermediate, and advanced proficiency levels. These essays were assessed based on levels of language transfer focusing on four levels only, phonology, morphology, syntax, and grammatical level and other several key writing aspects, including title use, coherence, length, cohesion, sentence structure, and overall grammatical accuracy. The following observations summarize the key findings.

Language Transfer at Phonological Level

Phonological mistakes involves errors in sound representation, including vowel sounds, phoneme substitution, additions or subtraction. Bilingual individuals possess a unique repertoire, navigating multiple sound systems and phonological rules. This analysis will identify and explain phonological transfers among the English proficiency students at Tangaza University through the use of their individual essays.

Evidence of Phonological Transfer from Students' Essay

Phonological transfer is a prominent feature observed when ESL learners apply phonological rules or patterns from L1 to L2. Providing the evidence of this transfer from students' essays and analysing it will help the researcher understand patterns of these transfers and make recommendations that will assist the learners. Below are the phonological transfers found in the students' essay.

Table 3: Evidence of Phonological Transfer from Students' Essay

| Level | Evidence of Transfer/ Transcription | Correct Version/ Transcription | Type of Error |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Beginner | | | |
| | Laundy /l'ɔ:ndi/ | laundry /l'ɔ:ndri/ | Phoneme omission |
| | Ressurrection/ rezu'rekʃn/ | resurrection /rezə'rekʃn/ | Phoneme substitution |
| | Cadle /'kædl/ | candle /'kændl/ | Phoneme omission |
| | Mai /mai/ | May /mei/ | Phoneme substitution |
| | Em /em/ | Am /ei'em/ | Phoneme omission |
| | Continuou /kən'tinuəʊ:/ | continue /kən'tinju:/ | Phoneme addition/ substitution |
| | Jus /dʒʌs/ | juice /dʒu:s/ | Phoneme substitution |
| | Avery /'eivri/ | every /'evri/ | Phoneme substitution |
| | Sumday /'sʌmdei/ | Sunday /'sʌndei/ | Phoneme substitution |
| | Momth /mʌmθ/ | month /mʌnθ/ | Phoneme substitution |
| | Commumity /kə'mju:məti/ | community /kə'mju:nəti/ | Phoneme substitution |
| | Balteries /'bæltəriz/ | batteries /'bætəriz/ | Phoneme addition |
| Intermediate | | | |
| | Geil /geil/ | girl /gɜ:l/ | phoneme substitution |
| | Om /ɒm/ | on /ɒn/ | phoneme substitution |
| | Surtarday /'sɜ:tədei/ | Saturday /'sætədei/ | phoneme substitution |
| | Wernsday /'wɜ:nzdei/ | holiday /'hɒlədei/ | phoneme addition/ omission |
| | Fist /fist/ | first /fɜ:st/ | phoneme substitution |
| | Brothe /'brʌθ/ | brother /'brʌðə(r)/ | phoneme addition/ omission |
| | Wit /wit/ | with /wið/ | phoneme substitution |
| | Diuring /daiʊriŋ/ | during /'djʊəriŋ/ | phoneme substitution |
| | Tinme /tainm/ | time /taim/ | phoneme addition |
| | Womderful /'wʌmdəfl/ | wonderful /'wʌndəfl/ | phoneme substitution |
| Advanced | | | |
| | mothing /'mʌθiŋ/ | nothing /'nʌθiŋ/ | phoneme substitution |
| | Food /fu:d/ | good /gʊd/ | phoneme substitution |
| | Exstern /ik'stɜ:n/ | Eastern /'i:stɜ:n/ | phoneme substitution/ Addition |
| | Fruindly /'fru:ndli/ | friendly /'frendli/ | phoneme substitution |
| | Ons /ʌnz/ | ones /'wʌnz/ | phoneme subtraction |
| | Scenic /'si:nɪk/ | science /'saɪəns/ | Phoneme substitution/ subtraction |
| | always /'ɔ:lweɪ/ | always /'ɔ:lweɪz/ | phoneme subtraction |
| | Memony /'meməni/ | memory /'meməri/ | phoneme substitution |
| | Pending /'pendiŋ/ | spending /'spendiŋ/ | phoneme subtraction |
| | Frather /'frʌ:ðə(r)/ | father /'fɑ:ðə(r)/ | phoneme addition |

Analysis of the Identified Language Transfer on Phonological Level**Beginner Level**

In the beginner group, most errors reflect omission, substitutions, and additions of phonemes, which is indicative of interference from the students' first languages (L1). This types of errors can be broadly categorized as follows:

Phoneme Omission: Words like “laundy” for “laundry” and “cadle” for “candle” show a tendency to omit essential consonants, suggesting that the students' L1 may not emphasize final consonant sounds.

Phoneme Substitution: Substitutions such as “ressurrection” for “resurrection” and “avery” for “every” suggest difficulty in distinguishing between similar phonemes like /ei/ and /e/.

These errors might stem from L1 sound systems that do not differentiate as sharply between these phonemes.

Phoneme Addition: In cases like “continuou” for “continue,” students add unnecessary phonemes. This could be due to overcompensation when adjusting to English’s complex syllable structure.

Common trends in this group point to difficulties with English vowel and consonant distinctions and challenges in mastering more complex sound sequences, likely due to L1 interference.

Intermediate Level

At the intermediate level, phoneme substitution continues to be a dominant error type, but there is also an increase in phoneme addition and reduction:

Phoneme Substitution: Mistakes like “geil” for “girl” and “wernsday” for “Wednesday” reveal the ongoing struggling with English’s unique consonant clusters and vowels. The substitution of vowel sounds such as /ɜ:/ with /ei/ as in “geil” for “girl” suggests that the students’ L1 does not include these vowel distinctions.

Phoneme Addition/Subtraction: Words like “diuring” for “during” demonstrate that students are still grappling with English’s phonological rules, adding sounds where they don’t belong. Conversely, errors like “wit” for “with” indicate difficulty with maintaining English’s complex phoneme combinations, leading to phoneme loss.

Phoneme Reduction: Simplifications like “brothe” for “brother” and “fist” for “first” show that students are streamlining consonant clusters, often due to L1 systems that use simpler syllabic structure.

In this group, there’s evidence of improvement from the beginners, but also of ongoing interference from L1 phonological patterns, particularly in handling complex English sounds and sound combinations.

Advanced Level

At the advanced level, there are still instances of phonological transfer, though less frequent and more nuanced. These errors suggest that while the students have a better grasp of English, occasional L1 influence persists.

Phoneme Substitution: Errors such as “food” for “good” and “mothing” for “nothing” suggest difficulty distinguishing between phonetically close sounds like /f/ and /g/ or /m/ and /n/. These errors may reflect L1 phonologically rules that do not differentiate between certain phoneme.

Phoneme Addition/Subtraction: Examples like “exstern” for “Eastern” indicate an overcompensation in sound production, where students insert extra sounds that are not necessary in English. Meanwhile, cases like “ons” for “ones” reflect phoneme subtraction, potentially due to simplification influence by L1 tendencies.

General Observation on the different learning levels

Across all proficiency levels, certain phonological transfer errors are consistently observed among learners. One common issue is vowel substitution, as English vowel sounds often lack direct equivalents in other languages, leading to frequent replacement of one vowel sound for another. Another recurrent pattern is consonant cluster simplification, particularly among beginners and intermediates where students simplify complex consonant groupings for

example “sumday” for “Sunday”. Phoneme addition and subtraction are also noticeable, especially among advanced learners who may add or omit sounds in their efforts to approximate English words, possibly due to over-correction or simplification. Lastly, phoneme omission is more prevalent among beginners, who often drop certain sounds, likely due to difficulties in fully distinguishing between English phonemes and those in their first language.

Overall, the data indicates that phonological transfer errors are more frequent at the beginner and intermediate level but persist, albeit less commonly, among advanced learners. These errors often reflect L1 interference, particularly in the form of vowel and consonant substitution, addition, and omission. Over time, as learners become more proficient, they develop a greater awareness of English phonological rules, though residual L1 influence remains. This suggests that while increased exposure to English leads to better phonological accuracy, complete mastery of the sound system can take a long time, particularly in the case of bilingual learners who are constantly navigating between two sound systems.

Language Transfer at Morphological Level

This pertains to the impact of a learner’s L1 on the formation and use of morphological structures in the L2 during the process of learning the new language. Morphology concerns the internal structure of words and how they form to convey meaning. The analysis of morphological transfer errors reveals patterns across different proficiency levels among bilingual students.

Evidence of Morphological Transfer from Students’ Essay

Morphological transfer is a notable phenomenon observed when ESL learners apply morphological rules or patterns from their L1 to L2. Presenting evidence of this transfer from students’ essays and analysing it will enable the researcher to identify patterns of these transfers and provide recommendations that will support the learners. Below are the morphological transfers identified in the students’ essay.

Table 4: Evidence of Morphological Transfer

| Level | Evidence of Transfer | Correct Version | Type of Error |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Beginner | | | |
| | Laundy | laundry | omission of morpheme (r) |
| | Ressurrection | resurrection | addition of morphine (s) |
| | Orthers | others | addition of morphine (r) |
| | Cadle | candle | omission of morphine (n) |
| | Sublings | siblings | substitution of morphine (i) |
| | Selfe | self | addition of morphine (e) |
| | Alowed | allowed | omission of morphine (l) |
| | Nape | nap | addition of morphine (e) |
| | School | school | substitution of morphine (h) |
| | Community | community | substitution of morphine (u) |
| | Country | country | substitution of morphine (r) |
| | Avery | every | substitution of morphine (e) |
| | Happyness | happiness | substitution of morphine (i) |
| Intermediate | | | |
| | proclammed | proclaimed | substitution of morphine (i) |
| | Explained | explained | omission of morphine (i) |
| | Additionnally | additionally | addition of morphine (n) |
| | Exercice | exercise | substitution of morphine (s) |
| | Discernement | discernment | addition of morphine (e) |
| | Delicaty | delicacy | substitution of morphine (c) |
| | Magnifique | magnificence | wrong suffix |
| | Sufering | suffering | omission of morphine (f) |
| | Surprised | surprised | addition of morphine (s) |
| | Marning | morning | substitution of morphine (o) |
| | Wit | with | omission of morphine (h) |
| | alway | always | omission of morphine (s) |
| Advanced | | | |
| | Umformed | uninformed | wrong prefix (um) |
| | Unties | aunties | omission of morphine (a) |
| | Discover | discover | wrong prefix (des) |
| | Adpt | adapt | omission of morphine (a) |
| | Residence | residence | substitution of morphine (s) |
| | Reparation | separation | substitution of morphine (s) |
| | Habitas | habitats | omission of morphine (t) |
| | Alread | already | omission of morphine (y) |
| | Verry | very | addition of morphine (r) |
| | Alsence | absence | wrong prefix (al) |
| | Becourse | because | wrong suffix (course) |
| | Sadnen | sadness | wrong suffix (nen) |

Analysis of Language Transfer on Morphological Level**Beginner Level**

In the beginner group, the errors are related to the omission, addition, or substitution of morphemes. These types of errors are indicative of first language (L1) interference in constructing English words.

Omission of Morphemes: Common in words like “laundy” for “laundry” and “cadle” for “candle”, where key morphemes are omitted. These omissions may suggest that the students’ L1 has a simpler morphological structure or lacks that necessary morphemes.

Addition of Morphemes: Errors like “ressurrection” for “resurrection” and “selfe” for “self” suggest unnecessary addition of morphemes. This could be due to over-generalization of English morphological rules or confusion between similar morphemes in English and L1.

Substitution of Morphemes: Examples include “sublings” for “siblings” and “avery” for “every”, where students substitute one morpheme for another. This might be caused by similarities between L1 morphemes and their English equivalents or difficulty in distinguishing similar morphemes in English.

Intermediate Level

In the intermediate group, there is an increase in errors involving wrong suffixes and incorrect morpheme usage, but morpheme omission and substitution remain common:

Substitution of Morphemes: Mistakes like “proclammed” for “proclaimed” and “exercice” for “exercise” reflect ongoing confusion about morpheme usage, possibly because of L1 morphological structure that differ from English.

Omission of Morphemes: In words like “explained” and “suffering,” learners omit important morphemes, which could indicate that their L1 uses fewer morphemes or different word formation processes.

Addition of Morphemes: Errors such as “discernement” for “discernment” show overuse of morphemes, potentially due to misapplication of English morphological rules.

Wrong Suffixes: Cases like “magnifique” for “magnificence” suggest confusion in selecting the correct suffix for English words. This is as a result of French influence. The intermediate students display improvements over beginners but still struggle with the morphological complexity of English, particularly in using correct morphemes.

Advanced Level

Wrong prefixes: Error such as “umformed” for “uninformed” and “discover” for “discover” show confusion over prefix selection. This may be due to the influence of L1 prefix rules or misunderstanding of English morphological patterns.

Omission of Morphemes: Mistakes like “adpt” for “adapt” and “habitas” for “habitats” reveal that even advanced students occasionally drop morphemes, suggesting residual L1 influence.

Addition of Morphemes: In words like “verry” for “very” and “alsence” for “absence”, the addition of morphemes and indicates over-correction or confusion about morpheme doubling in English.

Wrong Suffixes: Errors such as “becourse” for “because” and “sadnen” for “sadness” reflect misapplication of suffix rules, potentially influenced by the structure of the students’ L1.

General Observation

Morphological transfer errors are evident across all proficiency levels, with some patterns recurring consistently. Omission of morpheme is a common error, particularly among beginners, as learners often leave out essential morphemes due to the differences in morphological complexity between English and their L1. In contrast, the addition of

morphemes is frequent among beginners and intermediate learners, suggesting that students overgeneralize English rules or compensate for the absence of similar morphemes in their L1. Substitution of morpheme is another widespread issue, indicating difficulties in distinguishing between similar morphemes or misapplying L1 patterns to English. Among advanced learners, wrong prefixes and suffixes are more prevalent, showing that even at this level, students struggle with mastering English word formation, often replacing English prefixes or suffixes with those from their L1.

Overall, the data indicates that morphological transfer errors are more frequent in beginner and intermediate learners and persist at the advanced level. Errors such as morpheme omission, addition, and substitution reflect the influence of L1 on English word formation. As students advance in proficiency, they gradually reduce these errors, but occasional confusion with English prefixes and suffixes suggests ongoing L1 interference. Over time, increased exposure to English helps mitigate these errors, but full mastery of English morphology is a gradual process.

Language Transfer at Syntactic Level

Syntactic transfer is a significant phenomenon observed when ESL learners apply syntactic structures or rules of their L1 to L2. English language learners often struggle with syntactic structures, which can hinder effective communication. At syntactic level, language transfer occurs when learners apply L1 syntactic structures, rules, or patterns to L2.

Evidence of Language Transfer at Syntactic Level

Presenting evidence of this transfer from students' essays and analysing it will allow the researcher to identify recurring patterns and understand how L1 influences sentence construction in L2. This analysis can provide insights into common challenges faced by learners and guide the development of strategies to address these issues. Below are the syntactic transfers identified in the students' essays.

Beginner Level

Evidence of Transfer: "They prepared for me the local meals."

Correct Form: They prepared the local meals for me.

Evidence of Transfer: "I was very happy for those days, very glad to be in my family members."

Correct Form: I was very happy during those days, very glad to be with my family members.

Evidence of Transfer: "My last Holiday was in mai 2024, for one week."

Correct Form: My last holiday was in May 2024, for one week.

Evidence of Transfer: "It was a very glad holiday and I made a good experience with my family."

Correct Form: It was a very enjoyable holiday, and I had a good experience with my family.

Evidence of Transfer: "The orthers also shared the situation of typhoons that are becoming more dangerous with global warming."

Corrected Form: The others also shared the situation of typhoons that are becoming more dangerous due to global warming.

Evidence of Transfer: "The clothes were quickly drying and I took advantage of ironing."

Corrected Form: The clothes dried quickly, and I took the opportunity to iron them.

Evidence of Transfer: “It was also a chance to tidy up my room, time to sit outside, review the course and admire the beautiful countryside.”

Corrected Form: It was also a chance to tidy up my room, sit outside, review the course, and admire the beautiful countryside.

Evidence of Transfer: “To conclude this Homework, it was to show that Holiday is important in out life.”

Corrected Form: To conclude this homework, it shows that holidays are important in our lives.

Evidence of Transfer: “Finally, in the evening, as a community, we took advantage of the beautiful Jubile opening prayer time outside.”

Corrected Form: Finally, in the evening, as a community, we took advantage of the beautiful Jubilee opening prayer outside.

Evidence of Transfer: “I was so glad to meet again my family members.”

Corrected Form: I was so glad to meet my family members again.

Evidence of Transfer: “I stayed on the movement of meditation without feeling sleepy.”

Corrected Form: I remained focused during meditation without feeling sleepy.

Intermediate level

Evidence of Transfer: “In this holiday, I participated in a group have helping people who was refuge...”

Corrected Form: During this holiday, I participated in a group that helps people who were refugees.

Evidence of Transfer: “When I woke up I prepared my clothes that I could use in that day.”

Corrected Form: When I woke up, I prepared my clothes for the day.

Evidence of Transfer: “People are sufering because that reality.”

Corrected Form: People are suffering because of that reality.

Evidence of Transfer: “He explained very well about that.”

Corrected Form: He explained that very well.

Evidence of Transfer: “I took lunch with my sisters them.”

Corrected Form: I had lunch with my sisters.

Evidence of Transfer: “In this life, we need of some days to holiday.”

Corrected Form: In this life, we need some days for a holiday.

Evidence of Transfer: “Of course, I’m feeling happy while I heard we want to holiday for some days.”

Corrected Form: Of course, I felt happy when I heard we were going on holiday for some days.

Evidence of Transfer: “They looked happiness to doing their activity.”

Corrected Form: They looked happy doing their activity.

Evidence of Transfer: “Some group had singing exercise, some people had making decoration in church and another people as children played around the church.”

Corrected Form: Some groups were singing, some people were making decoration in the church, and other people, like children, were playing around the church.

Evidence of Transfer: “I thought my holiday on Easter ago was very nice.”

Corrected Form: I thought my holiday during last Easter was very nice.

Evidence of Transfer: “I was in joy.”

Corrected Form: I was filled with joy.

Evidence of Transfer: “So inspite it, I was very happyness because, I made thing that I like to do.”

Corrected Form: In spite of it, I was very happy because because I did things that I liked to do.

Advanced level

Evidence of Transfer: “When I got back, we got together with friends to eat and drink. Also, to give me some good advice.”

Corrected Form: When I got back, we got together with friends to eat, drink, and give me some good advice.

Evidence of Transfer: “I am going to explain to you why was it the saddest but not happiest?”

Corrected Form: I am going to explain to you why it was the saddest but not the happiest.

Evidence of Transfer: “But I was also a happy day because my mother bought for me my favourite phone brand on this day.”

Corrected Form: But it was also a happy day because my mother bought me my favourite phone brand that day.

Evidence of Transfer: “I was pending many times with my grandparents were enjoying too much and we went to the big hotel just to enjoy there.”

Corrected Form: I spent a lot of time with my grandparents, enjoying ourselves, and we went to a big hotel just for fun.

Evidence of Transfer: “I didn’t see any hotel before like that hotel.”

Corrected Form: I had never seen a hotel like that before.

Evidence of Transfer: “I saw that day with my my grandparents.”

Corrected Form: I spent that day with my grandparents.

Evidence of Transfer: “I alread finished prepared my suit cause and I went to buy the ticket the airplane will be take off at 3h 00 pm.”

Corrected Form: I had already finished preparing my suitcase, and I went to buy the ticket. The airplane will take off at 3:00 PM.

Evidence of Transfer: “I think it’s all this things I talked to you about of my holiday.”

Corrected Form: I think that’s all the things I talked to you about regarding my holiday.

Evidence of Transfer: “After go back home where I live. and I start to do another activity like school, job, and. many things that is nesecory in my life.”

Corrected Form: After going back home, I started doing other activities like school, work, and many necessary things in my life.

Evidence of Transfer: “We went to a movie and nearby park.”

Corrected Form: We went to see a movie and to a nearby park.

Evidence of Transfer: “My last holiday on 17th to April 2024 to 10th May 2024 after two years spent to another country.”

Corrected Form: My last holiday was from April 17th, 2024, to May 10th, 2024, after spending two years in another country.

Analysis of the Syntactic Transfer Identified in the Students' Essay

Beginners Level

The beginners show frequent use of direct translations from their native language (L1) to (L2). This leads to word order issues, improper preposition usage, awkward phrasing, and some lexical mistakes. Patterns of syntactic transfer are analysed below.

Pattern of transfer identified:

Word Order. For example, “They prepared for me the local meals” instead of the English convention, “They prepared the local meals for me.” This suggest a different syntactic structure in their L1 that positions indirect object differently.

Prepositions: Mistakes like “I was very happy for those days” instead of “during those days” show direct transformation of prepositions, which may not match English usage.

Verb Tense and Aspect: The learners also struggle with verb tense and aspect, such as in “I made a good experience” instead of “I had a good experience.” The verb choice here points to an L1 influence where “make” is used more commonly in this context.

Intermediate Level

Intermediate learners have a more developed grasp of English. However, they still struggle with direct translations and applying L1 structures to L2. Their errors tend to focus more on agreement, word choice, and awkward phrasing.

Pattern of transfer identified

Prepositions: Similar to the beginners, they misuse prepositions, e.g., “because that reality” instead of “because of that reality.” This might be a direct reflection of L1 syntactic rules where the preposition “of” isn’t necessary.

Verb Forms and Agreement: Errors like “have helping people” instead of “a group that helps people” show an influence from L1 sentence structure, which may use different ways of expressing relative clauses or auxiliary verbs.

Pronoun and Object Confusion: Phrases like “I took lunch with my sisters them” indicate confusion in pronoun usage, likely due to differences in how pronouns are used in L1 versus English.

Advanced level

Advanced learners show more competence with English. However, they still exhibit evidence of transfer in their sentence construction, particularly with complex structures or word order. Patterns identified among advanced level are analysed below.

Pattern of transfer identified

Word Order in Questions and Embedded Clauses: Mistakes such as “why was it the saddest but not happiest?” reflect influence from their L1, where word order might differ from English. They also show difficulty with embedded clauses, suggesting that their L1 has different syntactic rules for forming questions.

Verb Tense and Aspect: Phrases like “I already finished prepared my suit cause” indicate confusion between past perfect and simple past, suggesting that their L1 uses a different approach to expressing past actions.

Article and Preposition Use: Errors such as “We went to a movie and nearby park” show a tendency to omit articles and prepositions, which may not be as prevalent in their L1.

General Observations

Across all levels, students tend to directly translate from their L1 to L2. This is most evident in word order and preposition use. A significant pattern of transfer at the syntactic level involves prepositions and articles, with students often omitting or misusing them based on L1 rules. Even at the advanced level, learners struggle with verb tense and aspect, likely due to differences between the tenses/aspect systems of English and their L1. Errors in word order, especially with indirect objects and embedded clauses, are prominent among all groups, though most frequent at the beginner and intermediate levels.

Implications for Teaching:

This data underscores the importance of targeted teaching to address syntactic issues caused by language transfer. Each level would benefit from specific focus areas: for beginners; word order, prepositions, and verb tense/aspect. Intermediates: Pronouns, relative clauses, and agreement and for Advanced level word order in complex sentences, article use, and nuanced verb tense/aspect handling. Addressing these common transfer issues will help learners transition more smoothly into idiomatic and grammatically accurate English.

Language Transfer at Grammatical Level

Language transfer at the grammatical level among English proficiency students refers to the influence of their L1 grammar on their learning and use of English grammar (L2). This influence can bring about miscommunication and confusion. Grammatical errors found in the students' essays are stated below.

Evidence of Language Transfer at Grammatical Level

Beginner Level

Evidence of Transfer: “My mother and sublings had very happy also to saw me.”

Corrected Form: My mother and siblings were very happy to see me.

Evidence of Transfer: “At 10 minutes to 2 em, my mother decided for us to go Took a little nape and their we accepted and we were to sleep.”

Corrected Form: At 10 minutes to 2 a.m., my mother decided for us to take a little nap, and we accepted and went to sleep.

Evidence of Transfer: “They was happy to saw me, me too.”

Corrected Form: They were happy to see me, and I was too.

Evidence of Transfer: “It welcoming me with joy and I was too very glad to find them.”

Corrected Form: They welcomed me with joy, and I was very glad to see them again.

Evidence of Transfer: “After our talk, everyone went for others activities.”

Corrected Form: After our talk, everyone went for other activities.

Evidence of Transfer: “As weather was fine, I took again opportunity to sit on a bench outside and read a book entitled “the power of the word of God.”

Corrected Form: As the weather was fine, I took the opportunity again to sit on a bench outside and read a book titled “The Power of the Word of God.”

Evidence of Transfer: “I was joyful because, more than two years ago I missed my parents, sisters and brothers.”

Corrected Form: I was joyful because I hadn’t seen my parents, sisters, and brothers in more than two years.

Evidence of Transfer: “I was very happy they were kind with me.”

Corrected Form: I was very happy because they were kind to me.

Evidence of Transfer: “The day ago id an one hour of meditation.”

Corrected form: The day before, I did one hour meditation.

Evidence of Transfer: “To finish each I find time to read, do research and then I rest to regain me strength.”

Corrected Form: To finish each day, I find time to read, do research, and then I rest to regain my strength.

Intermediate Level

Evidence of Transfer: “So I runned to a shop for buying unit and I checked my result.”

Corrected Form: So I ran to a shop to buy a unit and checked my result.

Evidence of Transfer: “After that, I prepared me.”

Corrected Form: After that, I prepared myself.

Evidence of Transfer: “I took lunch with my sisters them.”

Corrected Form: I had lunch with my sisters.

Evidence of Transfer: “In this life, we need of some days to holiday.”

Corrected Form: In this life, we need some days for a holiday.

Evidence of Transfer: “As a student who learnig English at Tangaza University.”

Corrected Form: As a student who is learning English at Tangaza University.

Evidence of Transfer: “I didn’t tired because the group of singer who sing very well and then the group of dancer too.”

Corrected Form: I wasn't tired because the group of singers sang very well, and the group of dancers too.

Evidence of Transfer: "I thought they do it form their hearts."

Corrected Form: I thought they did it from their hearts.

Evidence of Transfer: "As a community, we had making a party for celebrated Easter."

Corrected Form: As a community, we made a party for celebrating Easter.

Evidence of Transfer: "I truly happy spent my last holiday."

Corrected Form: I was truly happy to spend my last holiday.

Evidence of Transfer: "I was in Congo for doing my Novitiate."

Corrected Form: I was in Congo to do my Novitiate.

Evidence of Transfer: "...my Easter it was wonderful..."

Corrected Form: ...my Easter was wonderful...

Advanced Level

Evidence of Transfer: "I spent my last holiday in my Country. D.R.C."

Corrected Form: I spent my last holiday in my country, D.R.C.

Evidence of Transfer: "My brother came the last day that I was spending there."

Corrected Form: My brother came on the last day I was spending there.

Evidence of Transfer: "We talked about everything and mothing without repetition."

Corrected Form: We talked about everything without repeating ourselves.

Evidence of Transfer: "But in the evening one of my sister borrowed me her own."

Corrected Form: But in the evening, one of my sisters lent me her own.

Evidence of Transfer: "My last holiday on 17th to April 2024 to 10th May 2024 after two years spent to another country."

Corrected Form: My last holiday was from April 17th, 2024, to May 10th, 2024, after spending two years in another country.

Evidence of Transfer: "I think it's all this things I talked to you about of my holiday."

Corrected Form: I think that's all the things I talked to you about regarding my holiday.

Analysis of Language Transfer on Grammatical Level

The data on language transfer at the grammatical level among English learners reveals how native language (L1) grammar influences the learner's English (L2) writing, leading to consistent grammatical errors. These errors vary across proficiency levels - beginner, intermediate, and advanced - illustrating the scope of language transfer and the specific challenges learners face.

Beginner Level

At the beginner level, students exhibit frequent subject-verb agreement issues and challenges with verb forms, stemming from direct translation of L1 structures. For example, sentences like "They was happy to saw me" reveal incorrect verb conjugation and misuse of verb tenses. The

students uses “was” instead of “were” and “saw” instead of “see,” likely mirroring how past tense is structured in their L1. Other errors, such as “After our talk, everyone went for others activities” show confusion with plurals and articles. The learner omits the appropriate article and misuses the plural form of “other,” which could be due to differences in how plural and articles function in their native language. Additionally, phrases like “The day ago I did an hour of meditation” suggest confusion with time expressions and word order, common errors when learners try to map L1 expressions onto English.

Intermediate Level

Intermediate learners demonstrate more developed grammatical skills, yet still make mistakes that indicate persistent L1 influence. Errors such as “So I runned to a shop for buying unit” show an over-generalization of past tense formation, suggesting a misunderstanding of irregular verbs. Similarly, “I prepared me” shows difficulties with reflexive pronouns, likely influenced by L1 structures that handle reflexive actions differently. Another recurring issue is article misuse, as seen in “in this life, we need of some days to holiday,” where “of” is inserted unnecessarily, reflecting the learner’s L1 grammatical patterns. Sentences like “As a community, we had making a party for celebrated Easter” also demonstrate incorrect use of auxiliary verbs, where L1 might not differentiate between progressive and simple past tense as English does.

Advanced level

Advanced learners make fewer grammatical errors, yet language transfer remains evident in subtle ways. For example, sentences like “My brother came the last day that I was spending there” show minor preposition omissions, a common transfer issue even at advanced levels. Errors such as “one of my sister borrowed me her own” reveal confusion between verbs like “borrow” and “lend,” reflecting a difference in how these concepts are expressed in their native language. Additionally, the learner’s sentence “My last holiday 17th to April 2024 to 10th May 2024” demonstrates persistent challenges with prepositions and time expression, indicating L1 interference in constructing time phrases. While these errors are less frequent, they highlight that even at advanced levels, learners may struggle with more complex grammatical forms.

Key Observations across Levels

Errors like “They was happy” among beginners show difficulty with subject-verb agreement, which may not align with how it functions in L1. Across levels, learners struggle with verb forms, especially irregular verbs and tenses, often leading to over-generalization or incorrect usage. Learners frequently omit or misuse articles and prepositions, suggesting that their L1 either lacks these grammatically features or uses them differently. Misuse of pronouns and reflexive forms, like “I prepared me,” reflect differences in how these grammatical structures are expressed in L1.

Implications for Teaching:

Targeted grammar instruction addressing these common transfer issues would greatly benefit learners. Beginners should focus on subject-verb agreement and proper verb usage, while intermediate learners need more guidance on irregular verb forms, article usage, and reflexive pronouns. Advanced learners would benefit from refining their use of prepositions, articles, and complex verb tenses, ensuring that fully mastery the subtleties of English grammar. By addressing these areas, learners can overcome the influence of L1 on their English grammar and achieve greater fluency and accuracy in their writing.

General Observations in the Students Essay

Title use: Out of the 26 essays, only 7 students (26.9%) included a title as distributed as follows: 1 out of 8 (12.5%) of the beginners provided a title and I quote - *“Importance of Holiday over the weekends”*. 1 out of 11 (9.1%) among the intermediates provided a title written as *“=About my Easter=”*, and 5 out of 7 (71.4%) Advanced learners provided titles as follows, *“How I spent my last holiday”*, *“How I spent my last Holiday.”*, *“How I spent my last holiday?”* *“How I spent my last holiday”*, *Ho I spent my last holiday.”* The lower occurrence of titles among beginners and intermediate suggests that their L1 may not emphasis formal essay structuring as strongly as English does, leading to the omission of titles. Advanced learners, likely more immersed in English academic conventions, display greater awareness of this structural requirement.

Coherence: This is simply the logical flow and organization of ideas in the writing. Out of the 26 essays, 12 students (46.2%) managed to maintain coherence: 4 out of 8 (50%) beginners showed coherence in their essay, 5 out of 11 (45.5%) among the intermediates showed coherence in their essay and 3 out of 7 (42.9%) among the advance level showed coherence in their essays. The mixed coherence performance across levels may reflect differences in how ideas are organised in students’ L1 versus English. In some languages, narrative structures and transitions may differ, which can affect how ideas are linked logically in English. Beginners and intermediates, still heavily influenced by L1, might struggle more with logical progression, while advanced students show improvement, though challenges remain.

Essay length: Regarding adherence to the required length of one and half pages, 16 students (61.5%) met the requirement. For beginners, 4 out of 8 (50%), 7 out of 11 intermediates (63.6%) and 5 out of 7 (71.4%) among the advanced level met the required length. The challenge for beginners to meet the required length may be due to limited vocabulary and syntactic structures in English, leading to shorter essays. In contrast, advanced students, having acquired more robust linguistic tools, can elaborate on ideas more effectively. The brevity observed in beginner essays could reflect an L1 tendency to prioritize conciseness while English often favors more detailed explanations.

Paragraphing: Paragraphing was another aspect of writing that varied significantly. A total of 7 students (26.9%) did not paragraph their essays: among the beginners, 3 out of 8 (37.5)% did not paragraph their work. 1 out of 11 (9.1%) among the intermediate did not paragraph and 3 out 7 (42.9%) among the advanced learners did not paragraph their work. The high rate of paragraphing issues among beginners and advanced learners suggest potential transfer from L1 writing conventions, where paragraph breaks may follow different rules or conventions. Beginners, still relying on L1 structures, may not fully grasp the paragraphing norms in English, while advanced students might still retain some L1 tendencies, particularly when the L1 uses less frequent paragraph breaks.

Writing Mechanics (Cohesion, Sentence Structure, Punctuation, and Capitalization): Across all proficiency levels, there were widespread issues with writing mechanics. The students struggled with linking ideas, as there was little or no proper use of conjunction. For example: *“my day was organised as follows: prayer plus mass, breakfast after mass, housework, laundry.* These issues likely stem from the influence of students’ L1 grammatical rules and punctuation systems. For example, language that do not use punctuation marks as extensively as English or have different syntactic rules may contribute to the presence of run-

on sentences and fragmented structures in their English writing. Additionally, capitalization rules vary across languages, which could explain the inconsistencies in capitalization.

In conclusion, the essays reflect varying degrees of language transfer, with learners at different proficiency levels exhibiting patterns in their writing that can be traced back to their L1. As learners progress, they adopt more of conventions of English writing, though traces of their native language structures remain evident.

Strategies for Overcoming Challenges in Bilingual Language Learning

To mitigate the challenges of bilingualism, learners shared a variety of strategies that were consistent with suggestions in the literature. Many participants emphasized the importance of consistent language practice through media, such as watching English-language movies or listening to podcasts. One learner explained, *"I watch English TV shows and listen to English podcasts. It helps me understand how words are used in different contexts."* Another participant mentioned, *"I also try to read more in English, even if I don't fully understand, because it helps me pick up new words."* These practices support Vandergrift's (2013) claim that exposure to authentic language materials helps improve proficiency. Additionally, learners mentioned using language learning apps like Duolingo, which they found useful for reinforcing vocabulary and grammar skills. As one learner shared, *"I use Duolingo every day. It helps me practice vocabulary, and I like how it teaches me new words."* This aligns with Godwin-Jones (2018), who notes the increasing popularity and effectiveness of mobile-assisted language learning tools in enhancing language acquisition. Furthermore, the use of immersive language experiences, such as engaging with English-speaking environments, was frequently mentioned as a helpful strategy. One learner shared, *"I try to speak English with my friends, even outside of class, because I believe it helps me get better."* This supports Ellis's (2008) concept of language immersion as a powerful tool for accelerating language learning.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This research was conducted at Tangaza University among students of English proficiency at three different levels. These levels include beginner, intermediate, and advanced level. The study aimed to analyse the impacts of bilingualism on learning English as a second language (ESL), identify patterns of language transfer due to bilingualism, and explore bilingual strategies that can enhance ESL learning.

A qualitative approach was adopted, employing a case study design to investigate the experiences of these students. Convenient sampling methods were utilized, and data was collected through structured questionnaires and written composition on the topic *How I Spent My Last Holiday*. The collected data was analyzed using thematic and content analysis techniques, and the findings were presented using charts and tables.

Conclusion

Bilingualism offers significant cognitive and social benefits for learners of English as a second language. Cognitively, bilingual learners often exhibit enhanced problem-solving skills and the ability to draw connections between languages. For example, they frequently use their L1 to better understand vocabulary or concepts in English, which aids in comprehension and retention. Socially, bilingualism improves communicative competence, enabling learners to interact more confidently in diverse social and academic settings. However, challenges such as

language interference and code-switching are common. These issues can manifest in errors related to syntax, grammar, morphology, and phonology, as learners navigate the complexities of their L1 and L2.

Furthermore, language transfer significantly influences ESL learning, with varying effects observed across phonology, morphology, syntax, and grammar. Phonological transfer often results in sound representation errors, such as omissions, substitutions, and additions, reflecting L1 influence. While these errors decrease with proficiency, they can persist subtly even among advanced learners. Morphological transfer poses challenges like morpheme omissions, substitutions, and incorrect usage of prefixes and suffixes, as learners attempt to map L1 morphological structure onto English. Syntactic transfer, on the other hand, leads to word order issues, prepositions misuse, and awkward phrasing, especially when learners directly translate from their L1 to English. Advanced learners demonstrate better control but may still struggle with complex syntactic structures. Grammatical transfer in another critical area, where difficulties with subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and article usage often arise, influenced by the grammatical conventions of the learner's L1.

Moreover, in ESL writing, learners face various challenges depending on their proficiency level. Beginners and intermediate learners often omit titles and struggle with maintaining coherence in their writing. Advanced learners, while more aware of English conventions, still face challenges in mastering nuances. Issues such as improper paraphrasing, cohesion, and capitalisation are indicative of L1 writing norms affecting ESL writing. These challenges diminishes as proficiency increases, but the progression requires targeted efforts. Advanced learners, despite making fewer errors, continue to encounter difficulties in adhering to complex English writing rules.

Additionally, several strategies can enhance ESL learning for bilinguals. Consistent practice, particularly through exposure to English media like movies, podcasts, and books, helps learners understand contextual usage and expand their vocabulary. Language learning apps such as Duolingo offer effective reinforcement of grammar and vocabulary skills. Immersion in English-speaking environments also accelerates fluency and improves contextual understanding.

Finally, to support bilingual learners effectively, teaching strategies must be tailored to address specific transfer issues at different proficiency levels. Beginners benefit from focused guidance on basic grammar and phonological distinctions. Intermediate learners require support in refining syntax and managing irregular forms, while advanced learners need help mastering complex structures and nuanced language use. Recognizing the influence of learners' L1 is crucial, as cultural sensitivity and comparative teaching methods can bridge gaps and facilitate more effective learning. Tailored instruction and an understanding of bilingualism's role in ESL acquisition are key to optimizing teaching outcomes.

Recommendation

The study came up with the following recommendation for consideration. First, to enhance the learning experience for bilingual English learners, it is essential to implement targeted instructional strategies tailored to proficiency levels. Beginners should focus on mastering subject-verb agreement, distinguishing phonological differences, and using basic grammar structures correctly. Intermediate learners require an emphasis on syntax refinement, handling irregular verb forms, and improving coherence in essay writing. For advanced learners, instruction should address complex sentence construction, advanced grammar forms, and

proper use of articles and prepositions. This will enable learners be grounded in the grammar of the language.

Secondly, structured writing must also be promoted by training learners on essay organization, including the use of titles, logical paraphrasing, and cohesive idea flow. Workshops on writing mechanics such as punctuation, capitalization, and cohesion can further improve clarity and professionalism in their work. This approach will improve their writing skills and aid them in their syntactical structures. However, simple sentences to begin before they get to complex sentence structures for communication while expressing themselves whether verbatim or in writing.

Thirdly, to mitigate language transfer effects, lessons should compare English with learners' native languages to address common phonological, morphological, and syntactic errors. Providing targeted feedback and encouraging self-monitoring can help learners minimize these interference. Technological tools like language learning apps (e.g., Duolingo, Grammarly) are valuable for reinforcing grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation skills. Additionally, digital platforms for collaborative writing and peer reviews can foster skill development. Immersion in English is critical for progress. Learners should engage with English media such as podcasts, movies, and books to enhance their exposure to the language. Conversational practice groups and language clubs can also promote consistent and active use of English in real-life contexts. Addressing writing challenges is equally important. Additional support should be provided for learners struggling with coherence, essay length, and paragraphing. Providing examples of well-structured essays and guiding learners in analysing these models can be highly effective. This approach will aid in eradicating simple common mistakes in pronunciation, writing and negative language transfer.

Last but not least, the cognitive and social benefits of bilingualism should be leveraged to teach advanced language skills. Activities that utilize problem-solving and cognitive flexibility can help learners engage with the material more effectively. Highlighting the social advantages of bilingualism can also boost motivation and participation. Continuous assessment and feedback are necessary for sustained progress. Regular evaluations of grammar, syntax, and essay structure should be conducted, with detailed feedback to address recurring issues and guide improvement. These strategies collectively address the needs of bilingual learners, enabling them to overcome challenges and achieve fluency and proficiency in English. This strategy will aid the learner to gain element of automaticity and avoid minor mistakes.

In summary, tutors to tailor make instruction on proficiency levels to ensure that learners build strong foundation before progressing in the learning stages. This targeted approach prevent common issues from compounding as learners advance. Addressing language interference is critical for bilingual students. While it requires specialised input, it directly affects learners ability to transfer languages and use English. Using bilingual strengths for instance, problem-solving and cognitive flexibility is a long term investment in their engagement and advanced skills. Also exposure to authentic English context promotes practical language use and fluency and finally regular evaluation with actionable feedback ensures learners stay on track.

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