

TITLE PAGE

**SURVEY OF CAUSES OF STUDENT'S DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH
LANGUAGE AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN WAMAKKO
L.G.A OF SOKOTO STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATORS**

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to our beloved parents, family and friends.

Acknowledgement

In the Name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Compassionate all praise be to Allah the Lord of the worlds; and prayers and peace be upon prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and His households.

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Certification

This dissertation by Ladan Sani Abubakar (1011403067) and Sadiya Yakubu Tafida (1011403009) has met the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Art in Education English of the Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto and approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

This study is designed to look at causes of student's difficulties in learning English language among senior secondary school students in Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State; Implications for language Educators. The study looks at the difficulties student encounter in the learning of English language and which could be the reason for their lack of proficiency in Oral and written English.

Learning is relatively permanent change in behavior as a result of exposure to condition in the environment. Also learning is an inference from some performance of the organism manifesting change of behavior, change in behavior must be permanent and this implies gain to the organism for his/her survival. However, the concept of learning is the relatively permanent change in behavior or capability that results from experience. It is concerned with relatively stable change that occurs in an individual behavior as a result of interaction with his environment. The reasons that cause student difficulty in English language learning are due to learners, lack of efficiency of the school, and the insufficient parents' promotion of the language. Moreover, Alderman (2004), observes on the students' poor performance in language learning affected from a lack of effort, lack of effective learning strategies, whereas a good language learner is a highly motivated student and a successful user of a large number of different strategies (Trawinski, 2005). So, teachers have to help them improve the motivational belief and language learning strategies in order to find ways that reach to their academic achievement.

English language teaching involves appropriate selection of graded materials which are within the ability level of the students concerned just like any other school subject. It also involves careful preparation of scheme of work and lesson plans with relevant details. The choice of method, techniques and aids must be suitable for the subject (English language).

Methods and techniques refer to the ways of giving information on how to get something or training a student in particular skills which he can then utilize for him or herself. This study is concerned with finding out the causes of student's difficulty in learning English language in areas such as grammar, composition and oral English. The study is to find out measures to develop student language skills so that those difficulties will be minimized and to enable the students to communicate in English, write in it and gain mastery of it.

Teachers of English have to vary their teaching methods bearing in mind that there are individual differences with regards to teaching/learning processes. Some students are slow learners while others are fast learners. The teacher as a result of this has to derive a means of reaching the needs of the students in such situation.

By using a comparative approach of individual students' and to identify the various difficulties that can be important for English language learning, with a view to finding possible solution to the difficulties identified.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This study has been undertaken in order to survey some difficulties senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State face in learning English language and to look at implication for language Educators.

It has been observed that senior secondary school student experience difficulties in areas such as grammar-lexis and structure, composition-letter writing, oral English-comprehension to mention just a few. This could be the reason for very low proficiency in Oral and written English.

1.3. Research Question

The research questions for the study are to examine:

To what extent do:

1. Senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State have difficulties in Grammar.
2. Senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State have difficulties in Composition.
3. Senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State have difficulties in Oral English.

1.4. Objective of the Study

The following are the objective of this research which are to find out what are:

1. Those difficulties in Grammar faced by senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State.
2. Those difficulties in Composition faced by senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State.
3. Those difficulties in Oral English faced by senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be relevant to the government, parents, teachers, language educators and students. It will be relevant to the government in providing a good working atmosphere through good communication skills, direct interpretation and better understanding of the use of language. To the parents, it will be relevant to them in reducing exam failure in their children which leads to school drop out, drug abuse and unemployment. It will be relevant to teachers in making the students understand what they are taught and pass examination effectively which will make parents send more children for effective learning.

It is hoped that the findings of the study will help the language users, journalists, newscasters, and civil servants to have better service delivery as English language is the medium of communication. This is hoped to reduce the difficulties students face in learning English language among students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

1.6. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study is limited to finding out causes of difficulties faced by senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State in areas of grammar, composition and oral English with a view to finding out possible solutions to them. The schools are:

1. Government Day Secondary School Wamakko
2. Government Day Secondary School Dundaye
3. Government Day Secondary School Arkilla
4. Government Technical College Farfaru

5. Government Girls College of Art, Science and Islamic Studies Arkilla
6. Sani Dingyadi Unity Secondary School Farfaru
7. Ahmadu Bello Academy Farfaru

1.8. Operational definition of terms

L1: (Language one) meaning first language or native language, it is the first language acquired by an individual which could be the mother tongue.

L2: (Language two) meaning second language is a language that is not native language of the speaker, but that is used in the locale of the person. In contrast, a foreign language that is learned is an area where that language is not generally spoken.

ESL: meaning English as a second language is a traditional term for the use or study of the English language by non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment. That environment may be a country in which English is the mother tongue or one in which English has an established role.

EFL: English as a foreign language or English as a second language which is used among native speakers

Lingua Franca: also known as a bridge language, common language, trade language or vehicular language, is a language or dialect systematically used to make communication possible between people who do not share a native language or dialect, in particular when it is a third language distinct from both native languages.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELETED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction.

Senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State meet some difficulties and problems through the process of learning the target language (English language). English language deals with Grammar, Composition, Oral English and so on. All these elements are encountered by the students in learning of English language. The senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State English language learners encounter difficulties in making proper use of them. They could not read, write, and speak in English language successfully. This research tries to survey the causes behind that.

2.2. Conceptual Framework.

There are several difficulties that affect the students' learning of English as a foreign or second language (L2) in a nation with a first language (L1) like Nigeria, those factors that cause the difficulties to the students in learning English language are found in many component English language including Grammar, Composition and Oral English. These issues cause students to have difficulties in English language learning. So, this research has a main purpose to survey the causes of students difficulties in learning English language; implication for Educators.

The development in the quality of English language learning has no satisfaction towards the demand of the senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of

Sokoto State. This is because of lack of several factors to support the learning and teaching approaches of English language especially in grammar, Composition, Oral English.

Souvannasy, Masashi, & Yukiko (2008), identified that teaching and learning English language implementation still has shortage of textbooks, unqualified and incompetent English teachers and also unstandardized curriculum. The poor socioeconomic background is one of the factors that make learners to be faced with difficulties in the use of foreign language (Khattaket, 2011).

Mohammad, (2007); conducted investigation on factors that cause language anxiety for English students learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language found difficulties of language learning, difference in learners' and target language culture, the difference in social status of the speakers are the factors that affect to the students' weakness of language learning.

Normazidah, Koo, & Hazita (2012); Trawinski (2005), also presented the factors that impact the English foreign learner (EFL) learners to have poor performance in English language learning are as follows:

1. English is regarded as a difficult subject to learn.
2. Learners' learning depends on the English teacher as authorities.
3. There is a lack of support to use English in the home environment and the community.
4. Learners have insufficient or lack of exposure to the language as there is a limited opportunity to use English outside the classroom.
5. Students have a limitation of vocabulary proficiency as well as English reading materials are not always available.

6. Learners have an unwillingness and lack of motivation to learn English as they do not see the immediate need to use the language.
7. Lack of motivation for learning or the negative attitude towards the target language.

Chang (2010), indicated that reasons that cause student weakness in English language learning are due to learners, lack of efficiency of the school, and the insufficient parents' promotion of the language. Moreover, Alderman (2004), states to the students' poor performance in language learning affected from a lack of effort, lack of effective learning strategies, whereas a good language learner is a highly motivated students and a successful user of a large number of different strategies (Trawinski, 2005). So, teachers have to help them improve the motivational belief and language learning strategies in order to find ways that reach to their academic achievement.

2.2.1 English language

Aremu (2012), Noted that English language is a medium of communication, like any other language of the world. He added that English is the native language of some part of the western world like the Britain (united kingdom), some part of the America (U.S.A) etc. He further described English as one of the most spoken language of the world. Today, English is the lingua franca of Nigeria (official language) as Nigeria was colonized by the British people.

Aliyu (2012), also observed that English language is said to be the language which originates from the British as their native language. It is also recognized by the Americans with the exception of South Americans. At this juncture, English language can be defined as a means of communication adopted to be lingua franca of the British colonized nations and some part of the America. Since independent in Nigeria English is not only used as lingua franca but also the

language of instruction in schools to facilitate learning other subject except the Native language and French language in some schools.

2.2.2. Learning.

Travers (1977), defined learning as relatively permanent change in behavior as a result of exposure to conditions in the environment. Also Mukherjee (1978) is of opinion that learning is an inference from some performance of the organism manifesting change of behaviour. He argued that change in behaviour must be permanent and they do imply gain to the organism for his/her survival.

However, Zand (1980) perceived the concept of learning to be relatively permanent change in behavior or capability that results from experience. He was concerned with relatively stable change that occur in an individual behavior as a result of interaction with his environment. He also noted that all those changes have no connection with the growth process. Hence maturation should not be perceived as learning.

2.2.3. Difficulty

Scott (1980), defined it as “fact or condition of being difficult, degree to which something is difficult, difficulty of a job prevented someone from finishing it on time or something which stand in the way of getting things done”.

2.3. Areas of the Difficulties in Learning English Language.

The English language is one of the most popular language to learn, perhaps the most spoken language around the world is English, and many people choose to learn the language simply to place them in a better position to secure work, educational purpose, or communicate more effectively with more people from around the globe. English might be a popular language to learn, but this does not necessarily means it is a simple language to learn, there are many difficulties students face when learning English language in school. Areas of such difficulties are:

1. Grammar.

Grammar is the system of a language. People sometimes describe grammar as the “rule” of a language; in learning grammar, three areas have to be considered: Grammar as rules, Grammar as form, Grammar as resource. For many second language learners, learning grammar often means learning the rules of grammar and having an intellectual knowledge of grammar. Teachers often believe that this will provide the general basis on which learners can build their knowledge and will be able to use the language effectively.

2. Composition.

Hornby (1998:234) defines composition as a “short piece of writing done as a school or college exercise. The parts of elements of which something is made”.

Gurrey (1975) states that there are six aspects of children’s written works that need attention such as:

- i. Grammatical correction.
- ii. The content and ideas in the written.
- iii. The relevance of ideas to the subject.

- iv. The continuity of language and of thought.
- v. The orderly arrangement of ideas.
- vi. The expression of these ideas.

Composition is used in linguistics to refer to a hierarchical mode of linguistic structure in which larger units are composed of smaller unit e.g, the relationship between sentence, clause, phrase, word and morpheme (crystal, 1980:77). It is possible to say that the composition is the production of the potential sources of knowledge about a language, so the students can express thier attitude or opinions by using these units to pass ideas or feelings to the others.

3. Oral English.

The use of English as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) in oral communication is without doubt, one of the most common but highly complex activities necessary to be considered when learning the English language especially because we “live at a time where the ability to speak English fluently has become a must, especially who want to advance in certain field of human endeavor” (Al-Sibai, 2004).

The focus of learning speaking, of course is to improve the oral production of the students. Therefore, language learning activities in the classroom should aim at maximizing individual language use. In the past, oral communication instruction was neglected because of the misconception that oral communication competence develops naturally over time and that the cognitive skills involved in writing automatically transfer to analogous oral communication skills (chaney,1998).

However, Ur(1996) considered speaking as the most important skill among three skills (speaking, reading, writing) because people who know a language are refered to as

speaking of that language. This indicates that using a language is more important than just knowing about it because “there is no point knowing a lot about language if you can not use it” (serivener, 2005).

2.4. Causes of Difficulties in Learning English Language.

There are many causes of student’s difficulties in learning English language among senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of sokoto state; such as the weakness of curriculum design, lack of English teachers, and lack of students’ learning motivation. John & Ehow (2011), stated that the problem of learning English language are derived from many different factors in different environments such as school resources, class size, quality of teacher, and the school attendance of learners.

Murray & Christison (2010), observed that many students think English language is only a school subject and they do not see its significance for their prospective employment to work with multinational or national companies where English is employed. Hutchinson & waters (1991), pointed out that the mismatch between the students’ conceptual or cognitive capacities and the learners’ English proficiency level often cause problems for students because the students’ learning style and teachers’ teaching approach do not match and also the English course does not relate to the students usually have poor strategies and give up easily when they find it as a struggle.

The areas of difficulties of senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of sokoto in learning English language are in grammar, composition and oral English which the researchers find interesting in looking into the causes of the difficulties.

2.4.1. Causes of Difficulties in Learning Grammar

Dekeyser & Sokalski (1996) consider grammatical difficulty in relation to comprehension and production. They argue that some grammar structures are easy to comprehend.

Grammatical difficulty has also been discussed in literature with reference to several other factors including.

1. Inherent complexity of rules.
2. Salience of a grammar form in the input.
3. Communicative force of a grammar form.
4. Input processing strategies in second language learning.
5. Individual differences in language aptitude.

Grammatical difficulty is related to each of these five factors.

- **Inherent complexity of rules.**

It is frequently assumed that grammatical difficulty is in part dependent on the inherent complexity of rules; that is, the more complex the rules of a grammar form are, the more difficult it is for the English language learners to learn.

- **Salience of a grammar form in the input.**

Salience of a grammar form is often discussed with reference to the “accessibility” and “availability” of the target form; the former is primarily contingent upon various linguistic attributes of the form, while the latter concerns the frequency of the form in the input to which learners are exposed.

- **Communicative force of a grammar form.**

Also related to the issue of salience and thus to the discussion of grammatical difficulty is the communicative force of a grammar form. According to Vanpatten (2002), a form has communicative force if it contributes to the meaning of an utterance.

- **Input processing strategies in second language learning.**

Vanpatten (2002), argues that the use of inappropriate psycholinguistic processing strategies in second language learning may also result in increased grammatical difficulty.

- **Individual differences in language aptitude.**

It is assumed that grammatical difficulty is, to some extent, associated with individual difference in language aptitude. This is based on the view that learners with a stronger ability to learn language may be better equipped to deal with grammatical difficulty in the second language than learners with weaker aptitude.

2.4.2. Causes of difficulty in learning composition.

Composition (essay writing) whether it is a narrative, a persuasive piece or research, writing an essay can be challenging. The writing process is often a long road, where students must confront their assumption of who they are as writers. Students face challenges in areas such as.

1. Getting started

Difficulty in starting an essay is often one of the first problem students writers run into. Many students can not write successfully. Saving time by first identifying the

purpose of your writing. Writing down every idea you think of, even if you are certain it will not end up in the essay. Then you can take these materials and find the most important points to address.

2. Voice and Audience

Because academic writing requires an objective, third person voice that fits the formality of an essay could be used. Many students struggle with omitting slang, colloquialisms, and everyday speech patterns.

3. Fear of failure.

Many students struggle with insecurities about their writing abilities. Whether they just do not know how to write or do not like to write or have had negative experience in the past they may be self-conscious about expressing themselves.

4. Citing sources.

Documenting sources through in-text citation and work cited pages is an important convention of academic writing. Unfortunately, confusion about how to cite correctly can result in plagiarism, which is wrong and a punishable act.

2.4.3. Causes of difficulty in learning oral English.

Zhang (2009) argued that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English. Ur (1996), opined there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking, and they are as follows:

1. **Inhibition.** Students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy.
2. **Nothing to say.** Students have no motive to express themselves.
3. **Low or uneven participation.** Only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others very little or not at all.
4. **Mother tongue use.** Learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue.

2.5. Measures of improve the learning of English language.

English as a language of education and instruction, should be taught with greater consideration. This I mean the instructors of English language in most of the senior secondary schools of Wamakko Local Government Area of sokoto state, should pay greater attention to their student if at all they want their student to come up with a standard English.

Here are some of the measures to improve the learning of English language especially in the component such as grammar, composition and oral English as follows:

1. Motivation for English language learning.

In general, motivation is recognized as one of the most significant factors affecting students' performance in grammar, composition, and oral English learning. Motivation can influence students' freedom, attention, attempt, patience, the frequency of using learning strategies, and their learning success (Zhon 2012). Learners have pleasure for a second or foreign language

learning when they receive motivation, especially internal motivation because it could be well predicted by perceived second language ability and independence (Wu, 2003).

Moreover, if students are strongly motivated, they will enjoy learning the language, need to learn the language and attempt to learn the language (sakiroglu and dikilitas 2012). Motivation has usually been considered to be the key concept in the learning of foreign language (klimova, 2011).

2. Learning strategies

Learning strategies are the method that learners use to obtain information, normally high achievers learners use more learning strategies than lower achieving learners (Dembo, 2004). They can facilitate specific aspects of the learner's competency such as communicative, and individual's emotional state that relate to the learning process (Trawinski, 2005). Students are able to overcome their weakness in some learning styles, especially in grammar, composition and oral English with suitable strategy training, and learning strategies can influence student's learning achievement.

Moreover, learning strategies factors also enhance students to be good learners as Oxford (2011), classifies the characteristics of the good learner that she/he:

1. Is an enthusiastic and accurate guesser;
2. Has a strong drive to communicate;
3. Is uninhabited and ready to make mistakes;
4. Emphasizes on form by looking at patterns and using analysis;
5. Take improvement of all practice opportunities;
6. Monitor his or her own speech and that of other;

7. Pays attention to meaning;

3. Direct method.

This is the most natural method for teaching a foreign language to students. The direct method does need very careful preparation and the beginning stages have to be taken rather slowly but it is worth while in the end; this is to say only English language should be spoken in the classroom.

2.6. Summary and Uniqueness of the Study

It is worthy to note that this work is unique in its own way in terms of the design, population, sample size, location and instrumentation for data collection. The design is survey research design. The population comprises of all public senior secondary school of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State. The sample size comprise of one hundred and fifty eight students which is relatively a large sample size than most of the cited. The location is Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State, the instrument used was adapted. The use of such a large sample and an empirically validated instrument on difficulties influencing learning difficulties in learning English language which provides a more appropriate avenue for generalization of the findings from this research.

2.7. Conclusion.

It is of no use reading, speaking or writing unless we are understood. In order to be understood, we must read, speak or write in the way the language is usually read, spoken or written. There is more to teaching English than knowing how to speak it, and there is more to learning English than just using it.

In conclusion there can only be no difficulties in learning English language if the following can be put into consideration, a sound and good mastery of the subject to be taught by the teacher, good communication skills and clarity of voice should be possessed by the teacher, respect for students being way of tolerating some of their behavior, their learning condition and background. The present work aimed at finding causes of student's difficulties in learning English language among senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of sokoto state; implication for language Educators, and also resolving the above problems through careful observation and recording of students' behavior during some of their lessons and also provide measures to improved the learning of English language.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with methods and procedures to be followed in the study. It will discuss the research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validity and reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

3.1. Research design

The design employed for this study is descriptive research design. It is designed to survey the causes of student's difficulties in learning English language among senior secondary school students in Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State; Implication for language Educators. Nwana (1981), refer to descriptive research as the best method which includes the use of questionnaire or interviews in the collection of data. The researchers used questionnaire to obtain information needed for this study. To identify the strength of the responses to various questions, percentage would be calculated and all the data obtained would be analyzed.

3.2. Population of the Study.

The population of the study comprise of all the public senior secondary schools in Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State with a total of two thousand four hundred and seventeen 2,417 students (Ministry of Education) & (Ministry of Science and Technical Education)' out of

which 1,928 were males and 489 were females. The population of the students is heterogenous in terms of language, religious affiliation and sexes.

Table 3.3.1: depicts the total population of the public senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of sokoto state

S/N	NAME OF SCHOOL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1	GOVERNMENT DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL WAMAKKO	364	NILL	364
2	GOVERNMENT DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL DUNDAYE	121	NILL	121
3	GOVERNMENT DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL ARKILLA	370	302	672
4	GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL COLLEGE FARFARU	252	NILL	252
5	GOVERNMENT COLLEGE OF ART, SCIENCE AND ISLAMIC STUDIES ARKILLA	NILL	187	187
6	SANI DUNGYADI UNITY SCHOOL FARFARU	479	NILL	479
7	AHMADU BELLO ACADAMY FARFAFU	342	NILL	342
TOTAL		1928	489	2417

source:

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Technical Education Sokoto State.

The above schools were under the direct supervision of Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Technical Education respectively.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques.

A sample is a listed number of elements selected from a population as a representation of the population (Ndagi 1984). The subject of the study were sampled using stratified random

sampling according to the senior secondary schools of Wamakko Local Government Area of sokoto state. However, the schools will all be deliberately selected in order to have an adequate basis for generalization. Then, corresponding to the student’s population in each school, 10% of the students’ population were be drawn through the sample random technique to serve as the sample for the study. To justify this Nwana (2007) maintained that “however there are certain non definitive practice among social research workers that the beginners can adopt..... if a few thousands a 10% sample will do.(see table 3.3.1)

Table 3.3.1: Sample size of senior secondary schools Wamakko

S/N	NAME OF SCHOOL	MALE	SAMPLE	FEMALE	SAMPLE	TOTAL
1	GOVERNMENT DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL WAMAKKO	364	36	NILL	NILL	36
2	GOVERNMENT DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL DUNDAYE	121	12	NILL	NILL	12
3	GOVERNMENT DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL ARKILLA	370	37	302	30	67
4	GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL COLLEGE FARFARU	252	25	NILL	NILL	25
5	GOVERNMENT COLLEGE OF ART, SCIENCE AND ISLAMIC STUDIES ARKILLA	NILL	NILL	187	18	18
6	SANI DUNGYADI UNITY SCHOOL FARFARU	479	47	NILL	NILL	47
7	AHMADU BELLO ACADAMY FARFAFU	342	34	NILL	NILL	34
TOTAL			191		48	239

3.4. Instrumentation.

The research instrument used for collection of data in this study was adapted questionnaire on the research question drawn by the researchers. In the process of collection, the researchers used structured questions in form of questionnaire whereby respondents chose/tick on the available option that were provided and thereafter expressed their opinions based on options provided in the question. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that items of information required from respondent were minimal to enable the respondent to promptly fill and return them. The items were divided into four kinds of difficulties: (10) are related to English language difficulty, (9) are related to grammar difficulty, (7) are related to composition difficulty and (13) are related to oral English difficulty. The closed questionnaire consist of 40 items with two likert scale for replying Agreed (A) & Disagreed (D) See appendix (2).

The reason for the for the adaptation is that, in English language difficulty, some were merged as in the case of item 2 and 10, under grammar difficulty, which were shown to be alike. Likewise, item 11, 16 and 18, also under grammar difficulty, were merged.

Due to the changes made, the researchers conducted a pilot study to ascertain the validity and reliability of the scale. Using a population of 50 senior secondary school students, a test for the measure of stability was conducted. This was done by administrating the instrument to randomly selected senior secondary school students. After an interval of two weeks from the first administration, a second administration of the instrument was carried out with the same students.

3.4.1. Validity of the instrument.

Carroll and Hall (1985 : 123) mention that test is valid when we actually measure what is intended to be measured. Validity is one of the characteristic feature of tests. It is an essential

matter of relevance which means whether the test is relevant to what it claims to measure or not as Valetta (1967) states. Validity in language tests depends on the linguistic content of the test and on the situation or technique used to test this content. By validity it means the degree which the measuring instrument is used in the data collection actually serve the purpose intended, Galadima (2009). The instrument adopted for this research was presented to experts in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto who cross checked the questions and approved them as good enough to solicit information needed for the study.

3.4.2. Pilot test

In order to get whether the items of the closed questionnaire are clear to the students of second year, the questionnaire was introduced to a group of students as a sample consist of 50 students: males and females. The items were administered to them. And after two weeks from the first administration it was re-administrated.

3.4.3. Reliability of instrument.

The instrument adopted for this research was found reliable as it was checked by an experts from the Department of Educational Foundations and confirmed to be worthy enough to seek for information. The researchers also adopted a test and re-test of the instrument and a meaningful reliability index of 0.90 was reached. This shows that the reliability index is good enough for the research.

3.5. Method of Data Collection.

In the process of data collection the researchers in the survey limited the use of questionnaire to the school to be visited the respondent only have to select/tick on it. The

response of the students goes a long way in helping the researchers to identify how student face learning difficulties in English language.

3.6. Method of Data Analysis.

In order to analysis the data collected, techniques of descriptive statistics were used. The techniques include frequency count simple percentages and tables. The frequency count was used to sort out the number of responses on each items of the instrument of data collection. Simple percentages were used to describe the magnitude of a particular response to an item of the questionnaire. In doing this, tables were used to show frequencies and the percentages.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with results which are the interpretation of findings of the study. It contains statistical tests that were selected from descriptive methods and the data obtained was presented in tabular form.

4.2. Analysis of the Research Questions

The analysis of the research questions was made by using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics of the findings of the study were presented in tables 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3.

Research Question One: *To what extent do senior secondary school students of Wamakko*

Local Government Area of Sokoto State have difficulties in grammar?

To answer this research question, an analysis of responses of the sub-section on grammar difficulty of the instrument was done. The ten items were analyzed and presented in table 4.2.1.

Table 4.2.1: grammar difficulties in learning English language

		Responses				
		Agreed		Disagreed		
s/n	Items	Freq	%	freq	%	total
1	I have difficulties in learning grammar	210	88	29	12	239
2	I can not make good sentence	198	83	41	17	239
3	I can not spell some words	205	86	34	14	239
4	Rules of grammar are ambiguous	200	84	39	16	239
5	I do not know the meaning of some words	186	78	53	22	239
6	I am not interested in learning grammar	161	67	78	33	239
7	Students are very poor in grammar usage	170	71	69	29	239
8	Grammar is difficult to learn	189	79	50	21	239
9	I am not interested in reading	92	38	147	62	239
10	Reading of some words are difficult to me	152	64	87	36	239

From the analysis in table 4.2.1. it can be seen that item 1 in table 4.2.1 indicates that majority of the participants (88%) agreed that they have difficulties in learning grammar. This indicates that there is learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 2 in table 4.2.1 shows that majority of the participants (83%) agreed that they can not make good sentences. This indicates learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 3 in table 4.2.1 indicates that majority of the participants (86%) agreed that they can not spell some words. This influences the learning

difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 4 in table 4.2.1 shows that majority of the participants (84%) agreed that rules of grammar are ambiguous which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 5 in table 4.2.1 indicates that majority of the participants (78%) agreed that they do not know the meaning of some words which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 6 in table 4.2.1 shows that majority of the participants (67%) agreed that they are not interested in learning grammar which influences the learning difficulties of english language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 7 in table 4.2.1 shows that majority of the participants (71%) agreed that students are very poor in grammar usage which influence the learning difficulties of english language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 8 in table 4.2.1 indicates that majority of the participants (79%) agreed that grammar is difficult to learn which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 9 in table 4.2.1 shows that majority of the participants (62%) disagreed that they are not interested in reading, which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 10 in table 4.2.1 shows that majority of the participants (64%) agreed that reading of some words are difficult to them which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. The findings in table 4.2.1 therefore shows that nine out of ten items were agreed by the majority of the students. This implies that grammar difficulty

influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State.

Research Question Two: *To what extent do senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State have difficulties in composition?*

To answer this research question an analysis of responses of the sub-section on composition difficulties of the instrument was done. The seven items were analyzed and presented in table 4.2.2.

Table 4.2.2: Composition difficulties in learning English language

		Responses				
		Agreed		Disagreed		
s/n	Items	freq	%	freq	%	total
1	I have difficulties in learning composition	199	83	40	17	239
2	I am good in writing	81	34	158	66	239
3	Spelling of some words are not clear to me	161	67	78	33	239
4	I have no idea on how to write a composition	204	85	35	15	239
5	Composition is difficult to learn	173	72	66	28	239
6	I am not interested in learning composition	151	63	88	37	239
7	It is not clear when the teacher reads	149	62	90	38	239

From the analysis in table 4.2.2, it can be seen that item 1 in table 4.2.2 indicates that majority of the participants (83%) agreed that they have difficulties in learning composition.

Item 2 in table 4.2.2 shows that majority of the participants (66%) disagreed that they are good in writing. Item 3 in table 4.2.2 indicates that majority of the participants (67%) agreed that spelling of some words are difficult to them which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 4 in table 4.2.2 indicates that majority of the participants (85%) agreed that they have no idea on how to write a composition which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 5 in table 4.2.2 shows that majority of the participants (72%) agreed that composition is difficult to learn which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 6 in table 4.2.2 indicates that majority of the participants (63%) agreed that they are not interested in learning composition which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 7 in table 4.2.2 shows that majority of the participants (62%) agreed that it is not clear when the teacher read. The findings in table 4.2.2 therefore show that six out of seven difficulties were agreed by the majority of the participants as composition difficulties influencing the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State.

Research Question Three: *To what extent do senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State have difficulties in oral english?*

To answer this research question an analysis of responses of the sub-section on oral english difficulties of the instrument was done. The thirteen items were analyzed and presented in Table 4.2.3

Table 4.2.3: Oral English difficulties in learning English language

		Responses				
		Agreed		Disagreed		
s/n	Items	freq	%	freq	%	total
1	I have difficulties in Oral English	208	87	31	13	239
2	I can speak English fluently	58	24	181	76	239
3	I have a strong Hausa accent	184	77	55	23	239
4	The teachers encourage students in group discussion	67	28	172	72	239
5	Style of English differ from Hausa	201	84	38	16	239
6	Students do not practice to speak English language with English native speakers	168	70	71	30	239
7	I am not interested in speaking English	160	67	79	33	239
8	Speaking English is difficult	142	59	97	41	239
9	I am afraid of making mistakes when I speak English	192	80	47	20	239
10	I am shy of speaking English because of my Hausa accent	195	82	44	18	239
11	I can not pronounce some words in English	178	74	61	26	237
12	The teachers do not pronounce some of the words correctly	145	61	94	39	239
13	Students imitate teacher's bad pronunciation	139	58	100	42	239

From the analysis in table 4.2.3, it can be seen that item 1 in table, majority of the participants (87%) agreed that they have difficulties in oral English which affects the learning of English language among senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State. Item 2 in table 4.2.3 indicates that majority of the participants (76%) disagreed that they can speak English fluently which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 3 in table 4.2.3 shows that the majority of the participants (77%) agreed that they have a strong Hausa accent which influences the learning difficulties of english language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 4 in table 4.2.3 indicates that majority of the participants (72%) disagreed that the teacher encourage students in group discussion which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 5 in table 4.2.3 shows that majority of the participants (84%) agreed that style of English language differ from Hausa which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 6 in table 4.2.3 indicates that majority of the participants (70%) agreed that students do not practice to speak English language with English native speakers influence the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 7 in table 4.2.3 indicates that majority of the participants (67%) agreed that they are not interested in speaking English which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 8 in table 4.2.3 shows that majority of the participants (59%) agreed that speaking English is difficult which influence the learning difficulties of English language among senior

secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 9 in the table 4.2.3 indicates that majority of the participants (80%) agreed that they are afraid of making mistakes when they speak English which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 10 in table 4.2.3 shows that majority of the participants (82%) agreed that they are shy of speaking English because of their Hausa accent which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 11 in table 4.2.3 indicates that majority of the participants (74%) agreed that they can not pronounce some words in English language which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 12 in table 4.2.3 shows that majority of the participants (61%) agreed that the teacher do not pronounce some words correctly which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Item 13 in table 4.2.3 indicates that majority of the participants (58%) agreed that students imitates teacher's bad pronunciation which influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. The findings in table 4.2.3 therefore shows that eleven out of thirteen items were agreed by the participants as oral English difficulties influencing the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State.

4.3 Summary of Major Findings

The study is titled survey of causes of student's difficulties in learning English language among senior secondary school students in Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State: implications for language educators. The study reveals that

- i. Grammar difficulties such as ambiguous rules, meaning of words, understanding structures of sentences influence learning difficulties of english language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State.
- ii. Composition difficulties such as lack of reading and writing materials, bad spelling of words, lack of self expression influence the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State.
- iii. Oral English difficulties such as inability to pronounce phonemes correctly, lack of interest in speaking English, fear of committing errors in speaking influence the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State.

4.4 Discussion of Research Findings

Several difficulties have been observed to have influence the learning difficulties of english language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Difficulties observed in this study, grammar difficulties, composition difficulties, oral English difficulties to find out to what extend do the difficulties influence the learning difficulties of english language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local

Government Area Sokoto State. In this section of the research the data presented and interpreted was be further discussed.

In table 4.2.1, the result presented showed that grammar difficulties influence the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Dekeyser & Sokalski (1996) agreed that grammatical difficulty in relation to comprehension and production. They argue that some grammar structures are not easy to comprehend. The difficulties include ambiguous rules, meaning of words, understanding structures of sentences.

Students has to learn grammar in order to overcome difficulties in English language, by knowing the rules of English language, understanding words meaning and structures of a sentence so they could be useful in the society in which they live and communicate effectively.

In table 4.2.2, the findings shows that composition difficulties such as lack of reading and writing materials, bad spelling of words, lack of self expression influence the learning difficulties of english language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Alderman (2004), agreed that the students' poor performance in composition learning affected from a lack of effort, lack of effective learning strategies, lack of reading and writing materials. Composition difficulties such as lack of reading and writing materials, do not know what to write, bad spelling of words, appeal to most senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State.

Most of the participants upon which the study was conducted believed that having no idea on how to write a composition, spelling errors during writing are what expression influence

the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State.

In table 4.2.3, the findings showed that oral English difficulties such as inability to pronounce phonemes correctly, lack of interest in speaking English, fear of committing errors in speaking influence the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students, Wamakko Local Government Area Sokoto State. Ur (1996), agreed that there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking, and they are as follows:

1. **Inhibition.** Students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy.
2. **Nothing to say.** Students have no motive to express themselves.
3. **Low or uneven participation.** Only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others very little or not at all.
4. **Mother tongue use.** Learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue.

Majority of the participants maintained that having confidence in speaking, encouraging the students in group discussion, allow student to have freedom of speech, lets the students contribute in class and ask question will influence them to learn English language

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter consists to summary of the study, conclusion, implication of the study and suggestion for further studies.

5.2. Summary of the study

Chapter one of this works was the introduction that dealt with the background to the study, what prompted the study, research questions, and objectives of the study, where the study was carried out, the scope and delimitation of the study. In the background, there was an overview of English language learning. As well as causes of students difficulties in learning English language. Chapter two reviewed literature related to the study. It consists of the conceptual framework, areas of difficulties in learning English language, causes of difficulties in learning English language, causes of student difficulties in learning grammar, causes of student difficulties in learning composition, causes of student difficulties in learning oral English, measures for improving the learning of English language. Other influential difficulties in learning English language were also reviewed as well as uniqueness of the study identified.

Chapter three dealt with the methodology by which the study was carried out. It included research design employed for the study, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, method of data collection and technique used in analyzing the data. Chapter four dealt with data presentation, analysis and discussion. It essentially involved interpretation of the findings of the study. The final part of work consisted of the summary of all the chapters of

the study which gave a brief highlight on all the chapters of the study, followed by conclusions and recommendations. Also highlighted were implications for language educators.

5.3. Conclusion

This study was conducted at the time when senior secondary schools of wamakko local government area of sokoto state were facing the challenge of having students who have difficulties in learning English language. Hence, at the initial stage, most of them were not motivated. Some took it as a challenge and perform well while others graduate without learning the proper usage of reading, speaking and writing in English language or even become drop-outs. This is not good for the future of education in Nigeria.

The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the study:

- i. Teacher's ability to teach effectively, qualitative and competent teacher with interest, self efficacy and teaching skill influences the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students.
- ii. Grammar difficulties such as ambiguous rules, meaning of words, understanding structure of sentence influence the students in learning of English language.
- iii. Composition difficulties such as lack of reading and writing materials, bad spelling of words, lack of expression influence the students in learning of English language.
- iv. Oral English difficulties such as inability to pronounce phonemes correctly, lack of interest in speaking English, fear of committing errors in speaking influence the students in learning of English language.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Schools should try and make the speaking, writing and reading in English language effective to all students. This will motivate and influence the students in learning of English language.
- ii. The Federal Government as well as the state government should try to effect some excellent policies designed to make learning of English language attractive. This will help in influencing the students in learning of English language.
- iii. Motivation and freedom of speech should be provided to the students to function well in learning English language.
- iv. Teachers should improve their teaching strategies to cause an effective learning to the students which will help in effective learning of English language.

5.5. Implications of the study for language educators

The findings of the study among other things revealed difficulties influencing learning of English language among senior secondary school students in Wamakko Local Government Area of sokoto state. This will enable students to have proper usage and of the language.

Although, grammar difficulties, composition difficulties and oral English difficulties were found to be strong enough to influence the learning difficulties of English language among senior secondary school students of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

Language educators can improve in understanding structures of a sentence, meaning of words and proper usage of the words, writing skills, spelling of words correctly, good expression of oneself in writing, speaking skills of the student, correct pronunciation of words and being competent to speak in English without fear or being shy of making mistakes.

Language educators should give courage and motivate learners having pleasure for a second or foreign language learning when they receive motivation, especially internal motivation because it could be well predicted by perceived second language ability and independence. Moreover, if language educators are strongly motivated, they will enjoy learning language, need to learn the language and attempt to learn the language. Motivation has usually been considered to be the key concept in the learning of foreign language.

Language educators should help in improving the learning strategies (the method that learners use to obtain information, normally high achievers learners use more learning strategies than lower achieving learners). They can facilitate specific aspects of the learner's competency such as communicative, and individual's emotional state that relate to the learning process. Language educators should be able to help learners overcome their weakness in some learning styles, especially in grammar, composition and oral English with suitable strategy training, and learning strategies can influence student's learning achievement.

It is hoped that the findings of the study will help the language users, journalist, news casters, and civil servants to have better service delivery as English language is the medium of communication. This is hoped to reduce the difficulties students face in learning English language among students of Wamakko Local Government Area of sokoto state.

5.6. Suggestions for further studies.

The following are areas suggested for further studies:

- i. It is suggested that a thorough work on survey of causes of student's difficulties in learning English language among senior secondary school students in Sokoto State: implications language for educators. Be carried out
- ii. Factors causing students low English language learning: a case study in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.
- iii. Speaking difficulties encountered by young primary school language learners and possible ways of resolving them.
- iv. Problems facing secondary school students in learning English language among students of Ribah local government area of kebbi state.

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APPENDIX I

USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY SOKOTO, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION.

QUESTIONNAIRE

This is a questionnaire prepared by students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Department of Educational Foundation, in the quest to carry out research on “Survey of causes of student’s difficulties in learning English language, among senior secondary school students of Wamakko L.G.A of sokoto state; Implication for Educators”. It is in view of this that we urge you to fill in the information there in as appropriate to the best of your ability as your response will be treated with confidence.

Please fill-in the details below and then start. Do not hesitate to ask for clarification on anything you are not clear about.

SECTION A: Personal Data:

1. Name of school:
2. Class:
3. Sex: Male[] Female[]
4. Age: 12-14[] 15-18[] 19-22[] 23 and above[]
5. Religion: Islam[] Christianity[] others[]
6. Tribe:
7. Marital Status: Single[] Married[] Divorced[]

SECTION B: Tick [] Appropriate column by the right under the scale

1= Strongly Disagree (SD)

2= Disagreed (D)

3= Agreed (A)

4= Strongly Agreed (SA)

s/n	Items	A	D
	English language difficulties		
1	Family background influenced on using English language as everyday life communication		
2	Personality of the teacher is weak		
3	Lack of English background knowledge		
4	Changing of teacher disturbs my understanding		
5	The English teachers are no well trained		
6	I can not understand the teacher because of his/her strong Hausa accent		
7	Lack of using instructional material		
8	English language is difficult to learn		
9	I am not interested in learning English language		
10	English teachers encourage us to ask questions		
	Grammar difficulties		
11	I have difficulties in learning grammar		
12	I can not make good sentences		
13	I can not spell of some words		
14	Rules of grammar are ambiguous		
15	I do not know the meaning of some words		
16	I am not interested in learning grammar		
17	Students are very poor in grammar usage		
18	Grammar is difficult to learn		
19	I am not interested in reading		

20	Reading of some words are difficult to me		
21	Composition difficulties		
22	I have difficulties in learning composition		
23	I am good in writing		
24	Spelling of some words are not clear to me		
25	I have no idea on how to write a composition		
25	Composition is difficult to learn		
27	I am not interested in learning composition		
28	It is not clear when the teachers read		
	Oral English difficulties		
29	I have difficulties in oral English		
30	I can speak English fluently		
31	I have strong Hausa accent		
32	The teachers encourage students in group discussion		
33	Style of English differ from Hausa		
34	Students do not practice to speak English language with English native speakers		
35	I am not interested in speaking English		
36	Speaking English is difficult		
37	I an afraid of making mistakes when I speak English		
38	I am shy of speaking English because of my Hausa accent		
39	The teachers do not pronounce some words correctly		
40	Students imitates teacher's bad pronunciation		

