

Original Research Article

ASSESSMENT OF FIRST LANGUAGE (L1) USAGE AND ITS EFFECT ON PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE. A CASE STUDY OF LEARNERS AT HO-BANKOE METHODIST PRIMARY SCHOOL

ABSTRACT

Aims: This study explored the influence of first language on pupils' achievement in English language at the Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School

Methodology: In this study, the target populations were students and English teachers at the Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School. 36 students were sampled using stratified sampling and simple random sampling. Five Teachers were sampled using purposive sampling technique. The study used quantitative research approach. Questionnaires were used to collect data from students and teachers. Quantitative data was summarized using descriptive statistics and presented using tables and bar graphs.

Results: The study found out that use of mother tongue had a negative influence in performance of English at the Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School. It emerged from the study that use of mother tongue influences the way students write and pronounce in English, hence negatively influencing the performance of English at the Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School. Among other recommendations, the study recommended that teachers should come up with teaching methods that are interactive in the English curriculum so as to ensure that students are given an opportunity to interact with each other in English.

Keywords: First Language, English Language, Mother Tongue, Ghana

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a set of signals or words that individuals use to communicate their thoughts and feelings to one another (Bonvillain, 2019). It is a method of communication used to communicate information and express desires, thoughts, excitements, amusements, and disappointments (Behrens, 2021). It is a mechanism for fostering logical growth in children. Children use a language that is comfortable for them when they think and speak. It serves as a platform for many various forms of learning (Behrens, 2021).

Language is a vital instrument for facilitating communication between nations, ethnic groups, associations, neighborhoods, and friends (Kramsch, 2014). Language distinguishes mankind from the rest of the animal kingdom and forges close bonds of kinship between individuals. Mother tongue or first language has a significant part in a child's development route or trajectory since it is linked to many areas of a child's growth. Emotional growth is intimately correlated with language acquisition. Since language is used to describe emotions, it is also connected to a child's moral development since children learn right and wrong by listening to what their parents and other adults tell them to do.

One factor that predicts a child's future academic success is whether or not they learn their mother tongue within the first five years of life (Petrovic & Olmstead, 2001). The risk of a child struggling with reading throughout the school is quite high

if they do not have any noticeable speech or language problems. Children's communication skills enable them to relate to and consider their everyday educational experiences to broaden their horizons. Children's intellectual and academic growth is hampered if they cannot communicate well in the classroom.

The benefit of teaching English language in schools in Ghana cannot be over-emphasized as a dominant phenomenon for competent reorientation in other school subjects. Sound values and knowledge acquisition are beneficial for the social, educational, emotional, economic and national development of the nation (Baafi, 2020). The vital role of English language as a school subject focus mainly on its educational quality to the Ghanaian society at large (Anyidoho, 2018). English is the common and official language spoken and universal for all (Rao, 2019). It is the major language of Art, Vocational, and Social sciences. (Carter et al., 2020) elaborate on the advantages of the use of the English language in improving the quality and communication within the ethnic masculine and feminine in Ghanaian society. Perhaps, to improve the quality of reading, spoken and written English language among junior high school pupils. Eventually, the achievement outcome and performance of students in Ghana are very poor due to insufficient time and barriers to communication (Nyarko et al., 2018).

According to studies the obstacles of poor performance among school pupils have comprises in many subject areas of study (Oluwole, 2008; Perez & Alieto, 2018). Some of these areas of study includes: English language, Literature, Mathematics, Vocational, Social sciences and Pure science subjects (Oluwole, 2008; Perez & Alieto, 2018). This poor stage of achievements in many subject areas may be due to lack of foundation in English language at the initial phase that is pre-primary and primary school stage (Boateng, 2019). (Tom-Lawyer & Thomas, 2020) explained more details about the advantages of the use of English language in improving the quality of communication among the different ethnic groups. They further enumerate the need for improving the standard quality of reading spoken and written English language among junior high school students.

There are also many studies on language and communication difficulty which cause poor academic performance (Bretuo, 2021; Karr et al., 2020). (Amua-Sekyi & Nti, 2015) stated that the problems and challenges of poor communication is a serious factor affecting school children in Ghana. The national policy on education has placed much emphasis on English language (Anyidoho, 2018). However, the minimum entry requirement for Ghana institutions of higher learning at least credit at ordinary level. In Ghana system of education, the ministry of education has designed several methods and techniques of teaching students. This could be done by using games, learning with objects, using power point presentation and many more which make learning English very easy (Mensah Hervie, 2018). However, teachers of English language in some junior high school and primary schools use their mother tongue to teach and explain the English language even up to the senior high school level (Nyamekye, 2022).

Researchers elaborate that there should be a constant consideration of language barrier among all communication channels (Isah & Abubakar, 2020). The national policy on education put much emphasizes on reading, spoken, and written English language. Therefore, (Owu-Ewie & Eshun, 2015) suggests the use of English language in the early years of the primary school. They opined that the use of mother tongue in the process of teaching and learning English language at the preparation or foundation stage, does not only help to speak but also to learn and use English as an official language all over the country. According to them, teaching English language at the primary school level plays a vital role in improving the quality and grammar of the child instead using mother tongue to teach pupils at that early stage. Other researchers considered using mother tongue at the early stage will be beneficial which makes learners competent to change and adopt new ways of learning (Bretuo, 2021). No Country can move forward educationally, industrially, economically, technologically without developing strong communication channels. Therefore, this study will investigate first language (L1) usage and its effect on pupils' achievement in English language at Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School

Researchers believe that only the language which teachers and students understand can effectively function as the language of instruction (Bretuo, 2021; Renandya et al., 2018). In fact, only when teachers and students understand the language of instruction are they able to discuss, debate, ask and answer questions, ask for clarification and therefore construct and generate knowledge (Bretuo, 2021). Despite the fact that the educational policies in Ghana insist on the use of English as the language of instruction in schools, studies show that both teachers and students are not competent in the language (Anyidoho, 2018). The teaching and learning process has been gradually deteriorating because of the English language barrier. There could be a link to the barrier of language that leads to poor academic performance in English in schools. Indeed, studies in Ghana show that students' performance in English subject itself is not satisfactory (Akowuah et al., 2018; Kyereko et al., 2022; Nyarko et al., 2018).

Primary education level is important as it is the transitional stage, during which learners are prepared to join junior high school education, training and thereafter to higher education and to the world of work (Baidoo-Anu & Adomaa Acquah, 2021). The value attached to this level of education is reflected in the attention it receives from the government, parents

and the general public (Asmah et al., 2022). With heavy investment at the primary school level of education by the government, parents and the community, there is expectation of good results from individual students and schools in general (Asmah et al., 2022). Students' achievement at this level is measured using the Basic Education Certification Examination (BECE) results (Ansong et al., 2015). English is a core subject and is considered during the selection of courses in senior high schools and universities, so it needs to be given a lot of attention.

There is a surge in the expansion of primary schools in the country (Aziabah, 2018). Most of the emerging schools are in the rural areas where learners prevalently use mother tongue at home and school. Ho Municipal in the Volta region is not an exception. This prevalence of use of mother tongue especially in day schools is an issue of concern since it is a challenge that influences the performance of English (Getie, 2020). Therefore, there is the need to examine the influence of first language on pupils' achievement in English language. Previous studies have only highlighted mother tongue as a factor affecting performance of English but they have not conducted a study on the use of first language and its influence on performance of English in Ghana (Getie, 2020; Mwakira & Mwangi, 2021). Therefore, this study explored the prevalence of the use of first language (mother tongue), the perception of students on the influence of first language on the performance in English language, the challenges the use of first language bring to students in the process of learning English and measures to curb the use of first language to improve the performance of English at Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research design employed in this study was a descriptive survey, aligning with Sarantakos (2013) framework that connects philosophical assumptions to data collection methods. This quantitative approach facilitated the collection of data through closed-ended questionnaires, allowing for statistical inferences regarding the influence of the Ewe language on pupils' English performance at Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School. The study targeted English teachers and students, with a sample size of 36 pupils selected using Slovin's Formula to ensure credibility and representativeness.

The sampling technique utilized was simple random sampling, enhancing the validity of the findings by ensuring that every student had an equal chance of selection. Data collection involved both primary sources, through questionnaires, and secondary sources, including literature reviews. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was conducted to refine the instrument, ensuring clarity and reliability.

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Version 26, employing descriptive statistics to summarize findings. Ethical considerations were paramount, with adherence to research ethics policy, ensuring participant confidentiality and the right to withdraw. The researchers sent an introductory letter to seek permission from the headmaster of Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School. Then after getting permission the researchers visited the school to deliver the questionnaire to teachers and pupil at an arranged time period. As the researcher deliver the questionnaires, the questionnaire was elaborated to the respondents on the aim of the research and also answer the question that respondents did not understand clearly. The data collection lasted for a period of two weeks.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

This section delves into the background of the participants in terms of gender and age of the participants. It also considers the class of the students and the educational level of teachers and also the length of teaching experience.

Gender Distribution of the Students' Participants

Out of the 36 participants who were involved in filling in the questionnaire majority 20 (56%) were male while 16(44%) were female and therefore both genders were well represented. It was important to find out the gender of the participants for further analysis of the responses; for example, finding the number of boys or girls who felt that use of their mother tongue influences the performance of English. Besides, the school is a mixed school so it was essential to consider the fair distribution of the students' gender. According to Lado (1995) when doing a study on a language both genders have to be considered since they show different characteristics in terms of the use of language.

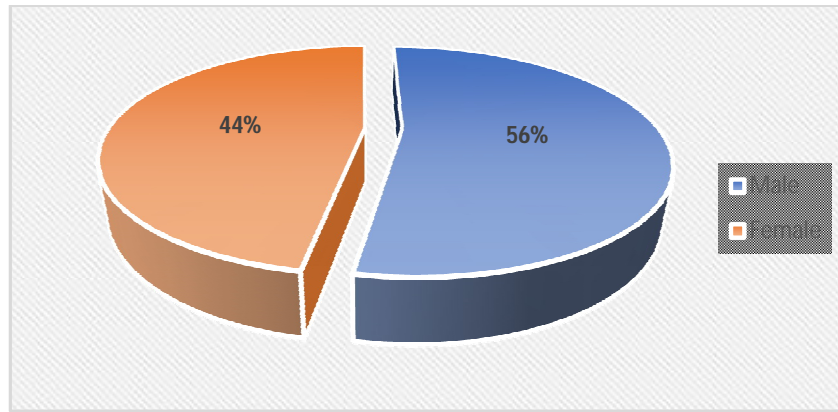


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by gender

Field Survey, 2024

Age Distribution of the Students Participants

The age distribution of participants was considered in an effort to confirm whether the participants are of school age. Figure 2 summarizes the findings.

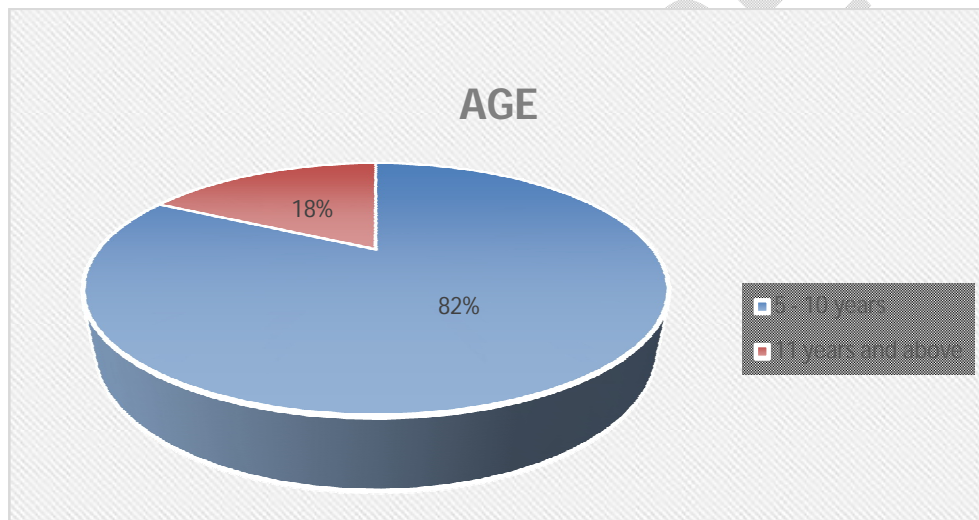


Figure.2: Distribution of respondents by Age

Field Survey, 2024

Figure 2 shows that a majority of the participants 30(83.30%) were in the age between 5 - 10 years while 6(17.70%) were in the age 11 years and above

Class of the Students Participants

Class 6, Class 5 and Class 4 students were considered since they are senior members of the students' fraternity and therefore are believed to have relevant information. Figure 3 below summarizes the data.

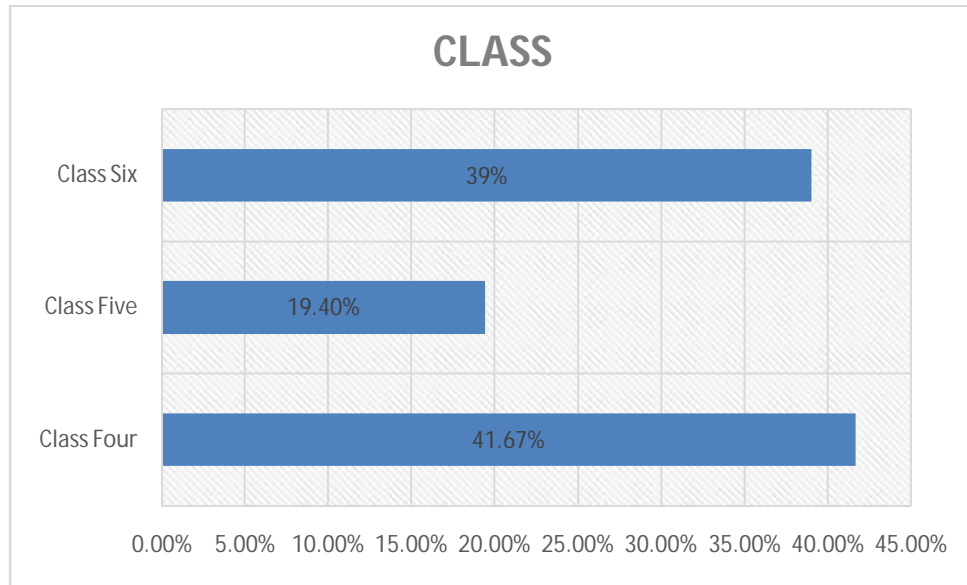


Figure 3: Distribution of respondents by gender

Field Survey, 2024

Figure.3 shows that the Majority 15 (41.67%) of the respondents were in Class 4 followed by 14 (39%) in Class 6 whilst 7 (19.40%) were in Class 5. These findings show that the distribution of the students was even between Class 6, Class 5 and Class 4.

Gender Distribution of English Teachers

The respondents were the total population of English teachers from the school. It was important to ensure balanced views between the two genders. Figure 4 summarizes the gender distribution of English teachers.

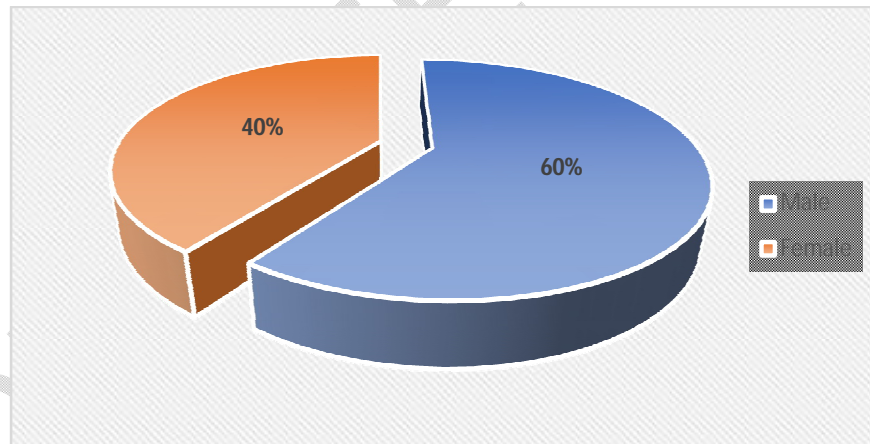


Figure 4: Distribution of teacher respondents by gender

Field Survey, 2024

Figure.4 shows that a majority of the English teachers who participated in this study were males 3 (60%) while 2 (40%) were female. Thus, the two genders are adequately represented.

Educational Level Distribution of English Teachers

Figure 5 summarizes the educational level distribution of English teachers.

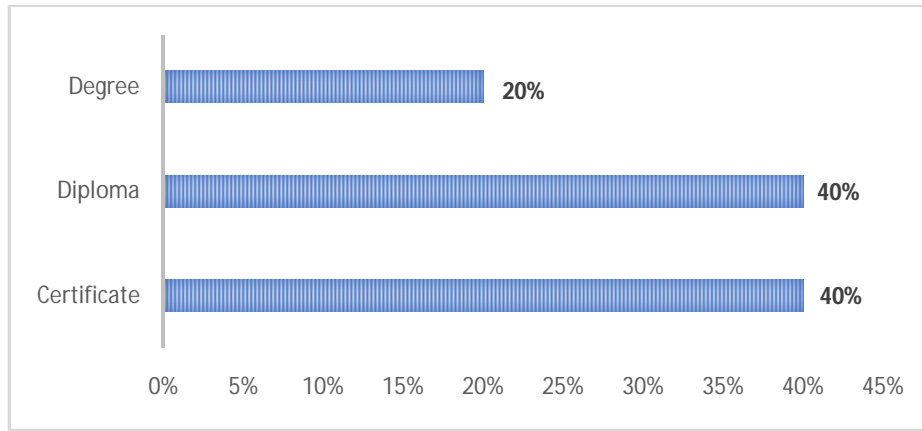


Figure 5: Distribution of teacher respondents by Educational level

Field Survey, 2024

Figure 5 illustrates the breakdown of respondents according to their educational level. The results depict that 2 (40%) of the respondents were certificate holders. 2 (40%) of them were also Diploma holders whilst 1 (20%) of the respondents was a degree holder.

Length of Teaching Experience

The teaching experience was important because the researchers sampled English teachers on the premise that they are rich in information. Table 1 shows the length of teaching experience for English teachers.

Table 1: Length of Teaching Experience

Length of Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5 years	2	40%
6-10 years	2	40%
11–15years	1	20%
Total	5	100

Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows that 2 (40%) of English teachers had taught between 1-5 years. A similar number of 2 teachers representing 40% had taught between 6-10 years and only 1 teacher (20%) had taught between 11-15 years.

Prevalence of Use of Mother Tongue

Students' Response to Prevalence of Use of Mother Tongue

Students' participants for this study were examined on the prevalence of the use of mother tongue in school. The respondents were asked the language their teachers of English use. All the 36 (100%) indicated the use English.

Figure 6 below presents a summary on whether teachers of English switch languages during their presentations in the class.

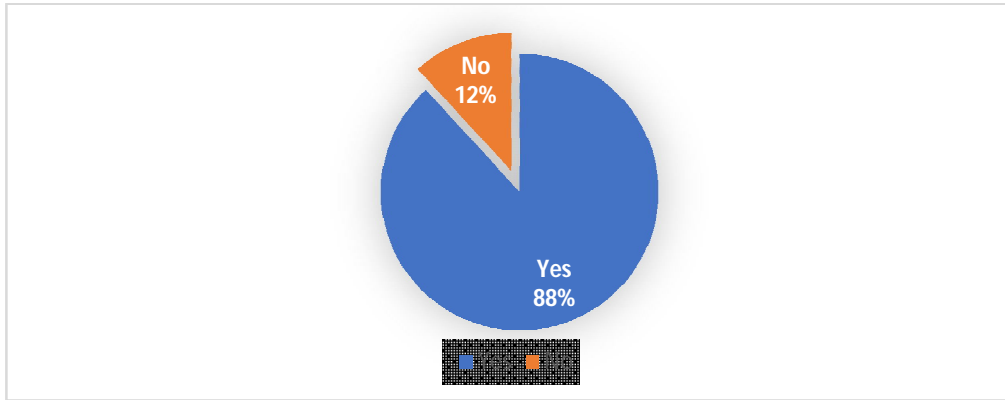


Figure 6: Distribution of respondents on whether teachers of English switch languages during the presentations in the class.

Field Survey, 2024

Figure.6 findings indicated that majority 32(88%%) of the respondents said Yes whilst 4(12%) of them respondents said No.

Figure.7 below presents a summary on how often teachers of English switch languages during their presentations in the class.

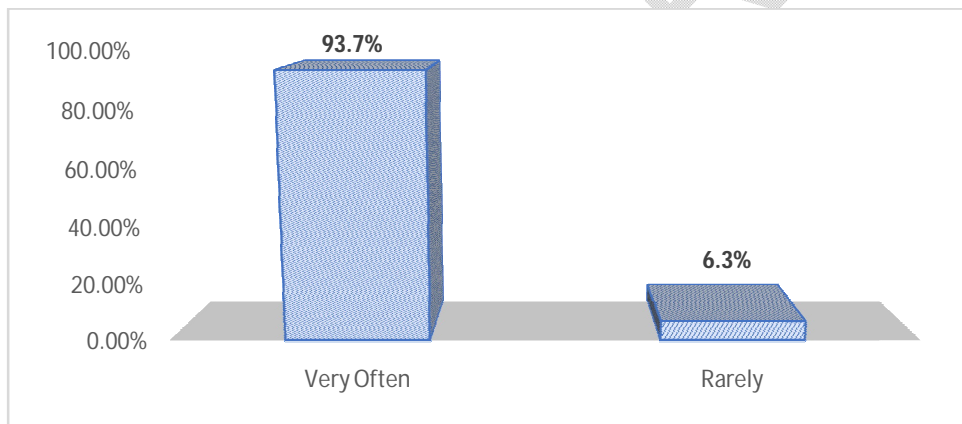


Figure.7: Distribution of respondents on how often teachers of English switch languages during their presentations in the class.

Field Survey, 2024

Out of the 32 respondents who indicated that teachers of English switch languages during their presentations in the class, majority 30(93.7%) of them indicated they switch codes very often whilst 2(6.3%) of them indicated they rarely switch codes when teaching.

Figure 8 below presents a summary on whether students switch languages during communication in school.

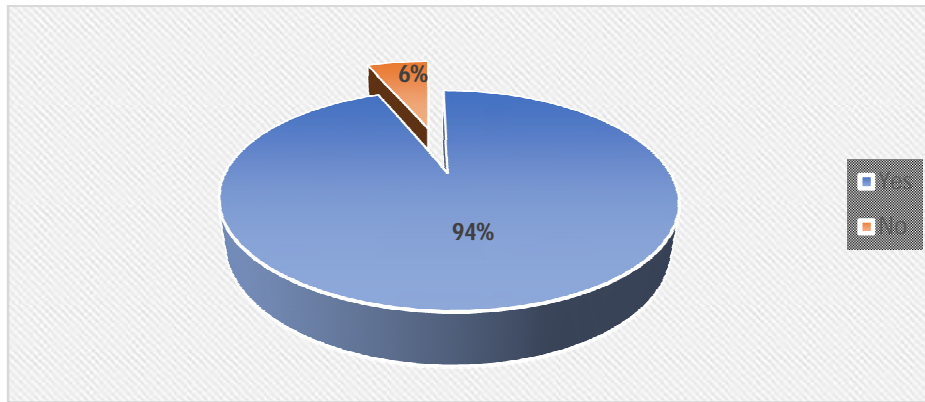


Figure 8: Distribution of respondents on whether students switch languages during communication in school

Field Survey, 2023

Figure 8 findings indicated that majority 34(94.4%%) of the respondents said Yes whilst 2(5.6%) of them respondents said No.

Figure 9 below presents a summary on how often students switch languages during communication in school.

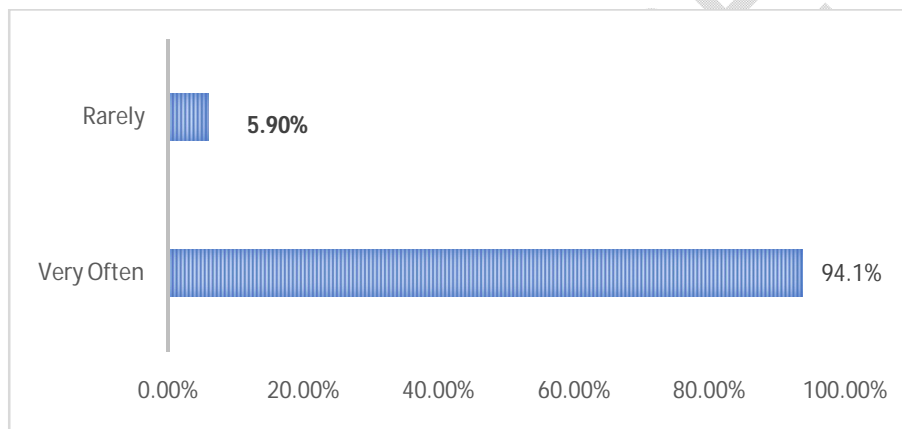


Figure 9: Distribution of respondents on how often students switch languages during communication in school

Field Survey, 2024

Out of the 34 respondents who indicated that they switch languages during communication in school, majority 32(94.1%) of them indicated they switch codes very often whilst 2(5.9%) of them indicated they rarely switch codes when communicating in school.

Figure 10 below presents a summary on how often students speak in their mother tongue when in school.

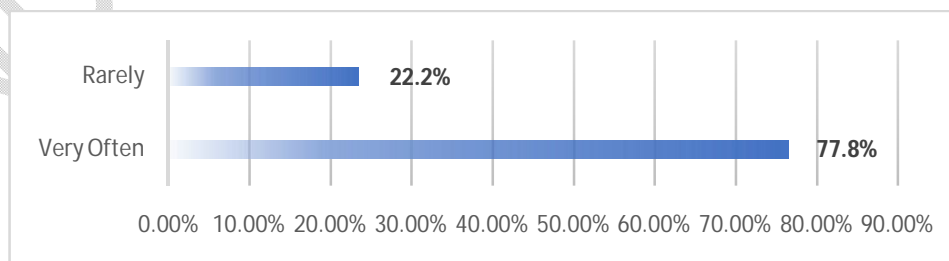


Figure .10: Distribution of respondents on how often students speak in their mother tongue when in school
Field Survey, 2024

From the findings in Figure 10 above, majority 28(77.8%) of the students indicated they speak in their mother tongue when in school very often whilst 8(22.2%) of them indicated they rarely speak in their mother tongue when in school.

Teachers' Responses on Prevalence of Use of Mother Tongue

Teacher' participants for this study were examined on the prevalence of the use of mother tongue in school. Figure 11 below presents a summary on whether teachers speak in their mother tongue in class.

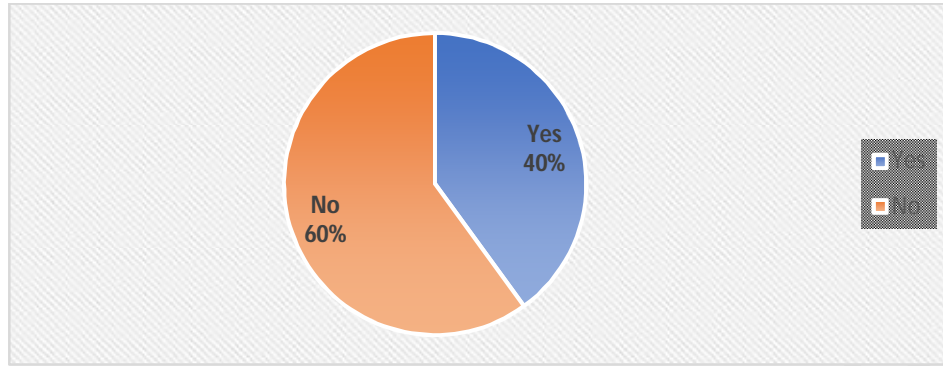


Figure 11: Distribution of respondents on whether they speak in their mother tongue in class

Field Survey, 2024

Figure 11 findings indicated that majority 3(60%) of the respondents said No whilst 2(40%) of them respondents said Yes to speaking in their mother tongue in class. Furthermore, when those who said Yes to speaking in their mother tongue in class during teacher were asked how often they spoke in their mother tongue all of them indicated that they often spoke in mother tongue when teaching.

Figure 12 below presents a summary on whether teachers switch languages during the teaching-learning process.

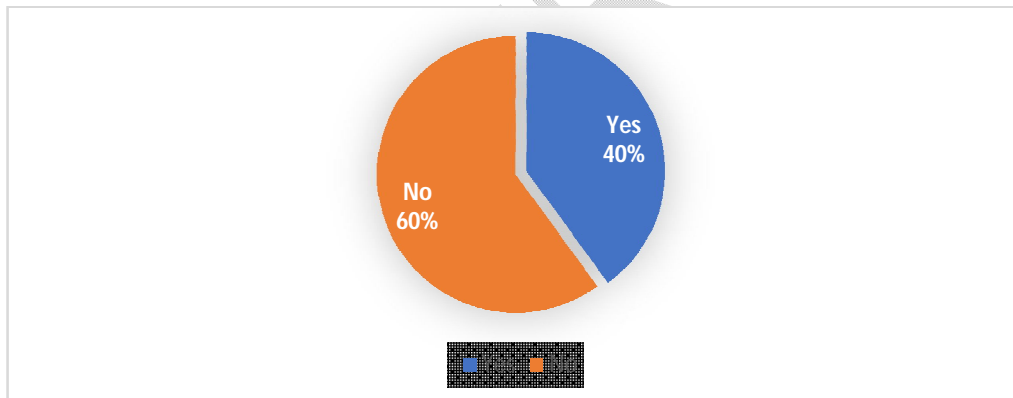


Figure 12: Distribution of respondents on whether teachers switch languages during the teaching-learning process

Field Survey, 2024

Figure 12 findings indicated that majority 3(60%) of the respondents said No whilst 2(40%) of them respondents said Yes to switching languages during the teaching-learning process. Moreover, when those who said Yes to switching languages during the teaching-learning process how often they did that, they indicated that they rarely did that.

Figure 13 below presents a summary of teachers views on whether students speak in their mother tongue in their school.

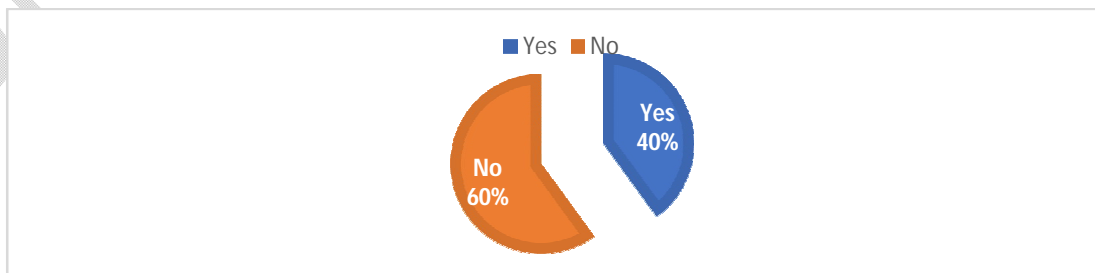


Figure 13: Distribution of respondents on whether students speak in their mother tongue in their school.

Figure 12 findings indicated that majority 3(60%) of the respondents said No whilst 2(40%) of them respondents said Yes to students speaking in their mother tongue in their school. Moreover, when those who said Yes to students speaking in their mother tongue in their school, they indicated that they rarely did that.

Perception of Students and Teachers on the Influence of Mother Tongue on the Performance of English

This section seeks to answer research question two. Research question two sought to find out the perception of students and teachers about the influence of the mother tongue on the performance of English. The respondents were asked questions that aimed to get their perceptions on the influence of the mother tongue on the performance of English.

Perception of Students on the Influence of Mother Tongue on Performance of English

The study sought to find out from students' perception of whether the language used by teachers to converse influences their performance in English. The study also sought to find out from students' perceptions of whether the use of the mother tongue influenced performance in English. Table 2 below summarizes the findings.

Table 2: Students' perception of whether the language used by teachers to converse influences their performance in English

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Teachers' use of their mother tongue Influences students' performance in English.	28(77.6%)	2(5.6%)	0(0%)	4(11.1%)	2(5.6%)	36(100%)
Teachers who use English in conversation with students Influence students' performance in English.	26(72.2%)	4(11.1%)	2(5.6%)	2(5.6%)	2(5.6%)	36(100%)
Teachers always discourage students from conversing in their mother tongue.	28(77.6%)	4(11.1%)	0(0%)	2(5.6%)	2(5.6%)	36(100%)
Teachers' switching of languages in the classroom help in understanding concepts	28(77.6%)	4(11.1%)	0(0%)	2(5.6%)	2(5.6%)	36(100%)
Students who use mother tongue perform poorly in	25(69.44%)	5(14%)	2(5.6%)	2(5.6%)	2(5.6%)	36(100%)

English.

Students who use English perform better in English. 27(75%) 3(8.3%) 2(5.6%) 2(5.6%) 2(5.6%) 36(100%)

The use of the mother tongue does not influence performance in English. 2(5.6%) 2(5.6%) 2(5.6%) 26(72.2%) 4(11.1%) 36(100%)

Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 shows that 28(77.6%) of students strongly agreed that teachers use of mother tongue influences their performance in English while 2(5.6%) agreed. On the other hand, 4(11.1%) strongly disagreed while 2(5.6%) disagreed that use of mother tongue by teachers influences their performance in English.

Besides, 26(72.2%) of students strongly agree and 4(11.1%) agreed that teachers use of English in conversation influences performance in English. On the other hand, 2(5.6%) strongly disagreed and 2(5.6%) disagreed that teachers use of English in conversation influences performance in English. Only 2(5.6%) of the students were undecided.

In addition, 28(77.6%) of the students strongly agree that teachers discourage them from using mother tongue in conversation while 4(11.1%) agree. On the other hand, 2(5.6%) of the students strongly disagree that teachers discourage them from conversing in mother tongue while 2(5.6%) disagree.

Moreover, 28(77.6%) of the students strongly agree that teachers switching of language help them to understand concepts while 4(11.1%) agree. However, 2(5.6%) strongly disagree that teachers switching of language help them in understanding concepts while 2(5.6%) also disagree.

Likewise, 25(69.44%) of students strongly agreed and 5(14%) agreed that use of mother tongue lead to poor performance of English. On the other hand, 2(5.6%) of the students strongly disagreed that use of mother tongue lead to poor performance in English whereas 2(5.6%) disagreed. Only 2(5.6%) of the students were undecided.

Table 2 also indicates that 27(75%) of students strongly agreed that students who use English in their conversation perform better in English while 3(8.3%) agreed. On the contrary, 2(5.6%) of the students strongly disagreed that students who use English in conversation perform better while 2(5.6%) disagreed. Only 2(5.6%) of the students were undecided.

Finally, 26(72.2%) strongly disagreed to the question that use of mother tongue does not influence performance of English while 4(11.1%) disagreed. On the contrary, 2(5.6%) strongly agreed that the use of mother tongue does not influence their performance in English while 2(5.6%) agreed. Only 2(5.6%) were undecided. Therefore, a total of 26(72.2%) of students strongly disagreed and disagreed to the question that use of mother does not influence performance of English. This implies that use of mother tongue influences performance of English in Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School.

Perception of Teachers on the influence of Mother Tongue on Performance in English

Teachers further responded to questions that required their response on perception of influence of mother tongue on performance of English. Table3 summarizes the findings.

Table 3: Perception of Teachers on the influence of Mother Tongue on Performance in English

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Students who use their mother tongue perform poorly in English	2(40%)	2(40%)	0(0%)	1(20%)	0(0%)	5(100%)
Students who use English perform	3(60)	2(40%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(100%)

better in English.

Use of mother tongue influences their performance of English.	4(80%)	1(20%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(100%)
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Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows that 2(40%) of the teachers strongly agree that students who use mother tongue perform poorly in English whereas 2(40%) agree. On the contrary, 1(20%) of the teachers disagreed that students who use mother tongue perform poorly in English. None of the teachers either strongly disagreed or was undecided. Furthermore, a majority of teachers, 3(60%) strongly agreed that students who use English in conversation perform better in English while 2(40%) agreed. Table 3 also shows that 4(80%) of teachers strongly agree that the use of mother tongue influences performance of English while 1(20%) agree. None of the teachers strongly disagreed, disagreed or was undecided.

Challenges Brought About by Use of Mother Tongue

Students' Responses on Challenges Brought About by Use of Mother Tongue

This section seeks to answer research question three which sought to find out challenges brought about by use of mother tongue. Table 4 summarizes responses on challenges brought about by the use of mother tongue.

Table 4: Students' Responses on Challenges Brought About by Use of Mother Tongue

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Use of mother tongue influences the way you write in English	28(77.8%)	2(5.6%)	0(0%)	4(11.1%)	2(5.6%)	36(100%)
Use of mother tongue influences the way you pronounce in English.	28(77.8%)	2(5.6%)	2(5.6%)	2(5.6%)	2(5.6%)	36(100%)
The language you think in influence the way you write in English.	30(83.3%)	4(11.1%)	0(0%)	2(5.6%)	0(0%)	36(100%)

Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 above showed that 28(77.8%) of the students strongly agreed that the use of mother tongue influenced the way they write in English whereas 2(5.6%) agreed. On the contrary, 4(11.1%) of the students strongly disagreed and 2(5.6%) disagreed that the use of mother tongue influenced the way they write in English. Furthermore, a majority of students 28(77.8%) strongly agreed that the use of mother tongue influenced the way they pronounce in English while 2(5.6%) agreed. On the contrary, 2(5.6%) of the students strongly disagreed and 2(5.6%) also disagreed that the use of mother tongue influenced their pronunciation. Table 5 also shows that 30(83.3%) of students strongly agreed that the language students think in influence how they write while 4(11.1%) agreed. On the contrary, 2(5.6%) of them strongly disagreed.

Teachers' Responses on Challenges Brought About by Use of Mother Tongue

This section seeks to answer research question four which sought to figure out challenges brought about by use of mother tongue. Table.5 summarizes responses of teachers on challenges brought about by the use of mother tongue.

Table.5: Teachers' Responses on Challenges Brought About by Use of Mother Tongue

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Use of mother tongue influences the way students write in English	2(40%)	2(40%)	0(0%)	1(20%)	0(0%)	5(100%)
Use of mother tongue influences the way students pronounce in English.	3(60%)	2(40%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(100%)
The language you think in influence the way you write in English.	3(60%)	2(40%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(100%)

Field Survey, 2024

Table.5 above shows that 2(40%) of the teachers strongly agree that the use of mother tongue influenced the way they write in English whereas 2(40%) agree. On the contrary, 1(20%) of the teachers disagreed that the use of mother tongue influenced the way they write in English. Therefore, a total of 80% of the teachers agreed and strongly agreed that the use of mother tongue influenced the way they write in English.

Furthermore, a majority of teachers, 3(60%) strongly agreed that the use of mother tongue influenced the way they pronounce in English while 2(40%) agreed. This shows that a total of 100% of teachers strongly agreed and agreed that the use of mother tongue influenced their pronunciation. Table 5 also shows that 3(60%) of teachers strongly agree that the language students think in influence how they write while 2(40%) agree. This shows that a total of 100% of teachers strongly agreed and agreed that the language students think in influence how they write.

Measures to be Taken to Curb Use of Mother Tongue

This section seeks to answer research question four in which the study sought to find out the measures taken to curb the use of mother tongue in schools. Therefore, questions that were asked provided the investigation with information regarding measures taken to curb use of mother tongue. In retrospect, identification of measures taken to curb use of mother tongue confirms that use of mother tongue is a challenge in the context under study.

Students' Responses on Measures Taken to Curb Use of Mother Tongue

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
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My school has rules and regulations on language.	27(75%)	5(13.5%)	2(5.5%)	2(5.5%)	0(0%)	36(100%)	Some questions that assisted the researchers to find out the measures taken to curb use of mother tongue were asked. Their responses
The rules and regulations on language prohibits students from speaking in mother tongue.	29(80.5%)	5(13.8%)	2(5.5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	36(100%)	
Students who speak mother tongue punished.	27(75%)	5(13.5%)	0(0%)	2(5.5%)	2(5.5%)	36(100%)	
Students who speak in English are rewarded.	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(13.5%)	28(77.8%)	3(8.3%)	36(100%)	

es are summarized in Table.6.

Table.6: Students' Responses on Measures Taken to Curb Use of Mother Tongue Field Survey, 2024

Table.6 shows that majority 27(75%) of students responded by strongly agreeing that their schools had a language policy while 5(13.5%) agreed. On the contrary, 2(5.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that their schools have rules and regulations on language. Only 2(5.5%) were undecided. Availability of a language policy is one of the measures taken by school to curb the high prevalence of use of mother tongue in Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School.

The study further wanted to find out whether a Language Policy prohibits students from speaking in mother tongue. Table.6 shows that majority 29(80.5%) of the students strongly agreed that the rules and regulations on language prohibits students from speaking in mother tongue whilst 5(13.8%) agreed. Only 2(5.5%) of the respondents were undecided. This shows that a language policy plays an important role in prohibiting students from speaking in mother tongue.

Furthermore, majority 27(75%) of the students strongly agreed that they were punished whenever they used mother tongue in school while 5(13.5%) agreed. On the contrary, 2(5.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and also 2(5.5%) also disagreed. Also, Table.6 also show that majority 28(77.8%) of the students strongly disagreed that students who speak in English are rewarded whilst 3(8.3%) disagreed. Only 5(13.5%) of them were undecided. These findings indicate that students are punished often and rarely rewarded.

Teachers' Responses on Measures Taken to Curb Use of Mother Tongue

Moreover, teachers responded to questions that required them to bring out measures that should be taken to curb use of mother tongue. Table 7 summarizes the findings.

Table 7: Teachers' Responses on Measures Taken to Curb Use of Mother Tongue

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
My school have a language policy.	2(40%)	3(60%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(100%)
The language policy prohibits students from speaking in mother tongue.	2(40%)	3(60%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(100%)
Students who speak mother tongue are	3(60%)	2(40%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(100%)

punished.

Students who speak in English are rewarded.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	3(60%)	2(40%)	5(100%)
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Field Survey, 2024

Table 7 shows that majority 3(60%) of teachers responded by agreeing that their schools had a language policy while 2(40%) strongly agreed. This finding indicates that availability of a language policy is one of the measures taken by school to curb the high prevalence of use of mother tongue in Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School.

The study further wanted to found out whether a Language Policy prohibits students from speaking in mother tongue. Table 7 showed that majority 3(60%) of the teachers agreed that the rules and regulations on language prohibits students from speaking in mother tongue whilst 2(40%) strongly agreed. This shows that a language policy plays an important role in prohibiting students from speaking in mother tongue.

Furthermore, majority 3(60%) of the teachers strongly disagreed that students who speak in English are rewarded whilst 2(40%) disagreed. These findings indicate that students are rarely rewarded.

Discussion

The findings indicate that 88.2% of students indicated that English teachers at Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School switch languages during the presentations in the class. This indicates a high prevalence of code switching by English teachers. The switching of language by the teachers means that they shift to a language that is more familiar to students, that is, mother tongue. Since code switching encourages tolerance of use of mother tongue as Kamisah (2009) puts it, an 88.2% prevalence of code switching by English teachers thus indicates a high prevalence of use of mother tongue. According to Kamisah (2009) code switching leads to tolerance in use of mother tongue, then the findings herein shows that there is a high prevalence of use of mother tongue by students of Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School.

A total of 82.4% strongly agreed and agreed that teachers' use of mother tongue influences performance of English. These findings show that performance of English is influenced when teachers use mother tongue. This agrees with Setati et al (2002) who argues that when a teacher uses mother tongue or code switches in class the student may understand or access meaning at the expense of linguistic grammatical concepts, thus influencing performance of English. Teachers' use of mother tongue leads to persistence of errors that come from first language (mother tongue) shown through direct translation; this has adverse influences performance of English.

A total of 150(88.3%) of the students strongly agree and agree. It can therefore be concluded that students perceive that use of English in conversations by teachers eventually influences the performance in English. Kamano (2011) studied the influence of instructional language choice on secondary school students on performance in English and concurs that speaking skills using language of instruction both by teachers and students have an impact on classroom participation and thus performance of English.

A total of 88.2% of the students strongly agreed and agreed that teachers discourage them from conversing in mother tongue. Thus, these findings show that teachers discourage students from using mother tongue since they believe that mother tongue influences negatively the performance of English. This concurs with Hasindu (2011) who found out that classroom talk was encouraged in English because the policy in majority of the schools is that students must communicate in English. This is so because teachers believe that when students use English in communication their performance of English will improve.

Although majority of students agree that code switching enable them to understand meaning of contents, it distorts learners understanding of grammar. These findings concur with Desoyo et al (2021) who argues that code switching influences learner understanding of content, however they understand meaning in expense of grammar and thus this influences their performance in English. A total of 120(70.7%) strongly agreed and agreed that use of mother tongue lead to poor performance of English. These findings concur with Alkhudiry (2020) who argue that use of mother tongue lead to poor performance of English due to errors created as a result of using mother tongue. Thus, use of mother tongue negatively influences the performance of English.

A total of 150(88.3%) of the students strongly agreed and agreed that students who converse in English perform better in English. These findings imply that use of English in conversation enhance performance of English. These findings agree with Mwangi (2009) who argues that children who use English in conversation perform better in English as a subject. He also urges parents to encourage their children to speak in English while at home and school since students who use

English perform better in English. Having found out in research question one that the prevalence of use of mother tongue is high in Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School, this explains why students perform poorly in English in Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School. Thus, use of mother tongue influences performance of English adversely.

A total of 80% of the teachers agreed and strongly agreed that students who use mother tongue in school perform poorly in English. These findings imply that use of mother tongue has a negative influence on performance of English. This also agrees with Hasindu (2011) who argues that poor performance in English is as a result of students' use of mother tongue during conversation. Thus, the poor performance of English in Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School can be attributed to high prevalence of use of mother tongue.

A total of 100% of teachers strongly agreed and agreed that students who converse in English perform better in English. These findings concur with Mwangi (2009) who argues that poor performance in English is as a result of students using their mother tongue during conversations; he discourages use of mother tongue and encourages use of English in conversations. Thus, Ho-Bankoe Methodist Primary School have to encourage the use of English in their schools.

The findings also confirm that indeed use of mother tongue influences the performance of English. This also concurs with Gacheche (2010) who affirms that indeed poor performance in English was attributed to the use of mother tongue as a language of communication in school. Therefore, a total of 140(82.4%) of the teachers agreed and strongly agreed that the use of mother tongue influenced the way they write in English. This concurs with Alkhudiry (2020) who argues that writing errors in second language are as a result of use of mother tongue.

The findings also indicated that a total of 82.4% of students strongly agreed and agreed that the use of mother tongue influenced their pronunciation. These findings tend to agree with Lompart and Reinisch (2019) who argues that students tend to hear and produce all speech sounds in terms of phonological system of their own language. Basically, when students use mother tongue they become unfamiliar with pronunciation of English words and sounds in English. The findings also indicated that a total of 94.2% of students strongly agreed and agreed that the language students think in influence how they write. Alkhudiry (2020) acknowledges that errors in second language are as a result of mother tongue.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the study highlighted the significant prevalence of mother tongue use among students, which adversely affects their performance in English. Both students and teachers recognize the negative impact of this linguistic behavior, particularly in areas such as pronunciation, writing, and overall communication skills. The challenges posed by mother tongue usage underscore the need for a strategic approach to language instruction within the school environment.

To enhance English proficiency, it is essential to implement effective language policies that discourage the use of mother tongues while promoting English. Establishing a reward and punishment system can motivate students to engage more with the English language, fostering a culture of communication that prioritizes English over their native languages. Furthermore, teachers must embody positive attitudes towards English, serving as role models and encouraging students through interactive teaching methods that facilitate English conversations.

Revamping extracurricular activities, such as debating clubs, can also create a competitive atmosphere that nurtures English usage. Additionally, collaboration between headteachers and parents is crucial in supporting students' language development at home. By equipping teachers with innovative strategies and resources, the school can create a conducive environment for language learning, ultimately leading to improved English performance among students.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, participant's written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The researchers addressed ethical issues related to this study. The respondents were assured of confidentiality of the information they provided. They were also assured of anonymity if the information given was to be quoted in the study or elsewhere. The respondents were given the opportunity to indicate their willingness to participate in the study or not. Official permission was also sought from the headmaster of the school investigated. The respondents were also

encouraged to ask questions, seek clarification of questions they do not understand, and provide responses that are as honest as possible.

COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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