

## **IMPACT OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE (L1) ON ACQUISITION OF SECOND LANGUAGE (L2) AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN JALINGO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE**

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### ***Abstract***

*There is no doubt that children face numerous challenges in acquiring language especially second language. Linguists and researchers in the field of education have divergent opinions concerning the functional role of L1 in acquiring L2. This paper undertakes a cursory look at impact of L1 in acquiring L2 among primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A of Taraba State. Three (3) research questions and hypotheses guided the study and sixty (60) teachers formed the sample size for the study. Language Background Questionnaire was used for data collection. The study revealed that L1 significantly impact on acquisition of L2 in terms of writing ability, reading ability and speaking ability of the pupils in the study area. The paper concluded that L1 is the pivotal pillar for acquiring L2, and it was recommended among others; that government should provide teaching and learning materials in L2 for all primary schools, and that teachers should encourage children to write, read and speak in L2 as much as possible.*

**Keywords:** *Indigenous language, second language, English language, Hausa/Fulani language.*

## **Introduction**

Language is one of the basic tools of identification in any nation, Nigeria inclusive. In other words, language is a vital tool for human communication in any human communities. In support of this, Richards (2010) describes language as the human vocal noise or arbitrary graphic representation of the noise in writing used systematically and conventionally by a speech community for purpose of communication. For Williams (2009), indigenous language (L1) of a child is the part of their personal, social and cultural identity, which brings about the reflection and learning of successful social patterns of acting and speaking. Little wonder, Lotherington cited in Alikali and Lukman (2019) emphasized the significant role of language in developing world where education is considered as competing motives of economic development and cultural maintenance. That is, language is essential for economic and social advancement of people in the developing world. In fact, Otagburuagu (2007) argued that learning of second language (L2) was necessitated by the trade and commerce that characterized colonial period. Put differently, the social and political factors that engendered colonization also served as the primary factor that gives rise to the adoption of English language as L2 in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, etc. The author further argued that multilingualism as well as desire for social integration contributed immensely to the use of L2 in Nigeria (Otagburuagu, 2007).

The statement above explains why English language is the sole official language in some African countries such as Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe; in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Dominica and Barbados, in the Caribbean; and Vanuatu's, Fiji and the Solomon Island in the Pacific (Williams, 2009). Supporting this view, the Encyclopedia Americana, states

that more than half of the world's scientific research and technical journals, as well as newspapers are printed in English. Three fourths of the world's mail is written in English, and English is the language of three fifths of the world's radio station. Campbell (2005) asserts that English is the acceptable medium in the travel industry and in international communication. Simply put, English language is the language of communication between the people with different cultures; and also the language of communication online and e-mail through computers.

Evidently, the importance of L2 to social and national development cannot be understated. However, it has been observed that L1 served as a useful tool for acquisition of L2 so as to solve learning and communication problems. For Brock-Utne (2005), if one wants to overcome poverty, children must be allowed access to knowledge in their L1 at early education. This explains why the Federal Government of Nigeria emphasized that the language of immediate community should be used as a medium of instruction at lower arm of primary education (FGN, 2013). But in spite of this policy, Thondhlana (2012) maintained that L2 'English' remains the 'de facto' language in many Nigerian classrooms from primary to higher education without considering the interference of L1. Needless to say the nature and structure of the native language, cultural environment, age, method of acquisition and the amount of efforts invested are some of the factors that affect the learning and proficiency of a L2.

The assertion above points to experience in L1 as a crucial factor to master, assimilate and internalize the L2. That is, as the children learn L2, they incorporate the L2 linguistic input into their model of the L1. Little wonder, Lado(2008)

maintains that individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture. A second language learner thinks in the L1 and tries to express himself in the L2 which results to conflicts, and this conflict is as a result of the L1 interference. This explains why Verghese (2007) argued that L1 model has a negative effect on the L2 learner in terms of expression. For Bhela cited in Owhoeli (2011), thinking in the L1 structures and speaking in the L2 model is the major challenge for L2 learner. That is, the plight of L2 learner is hinged on the L1 interference while the learners use the L2. In other words, a learner has difficulties in L2 in terms of phonology, vocabulary and grammar due to the interference habits from L1 on L2 (Beardmore, 1982). Interference is the result of old habits of the L1, and must be unlearned before the learning of the new habits of L2 (Dualy, Burt, & Krashen, 1982).

Definitely, the learners of L2 tend to transfer the forms, meaning and culture of their L1 to the foreign language and culture when attempting to speak, read and write the language. By learning L2 habits, L1 habits are also transferred and then the errors occur (Beebe & Seliger, as cited in Ucheoma, 2011). Similarly Beardmore (1982) suggests that if the learners have difficulty in phonology, vocabulary, inscription, and grammar of L2, they are due to the interference of habits from the L1. Nemati and Taghizade, (2013) point out that very few L2 learners become successful in achieving native speakers level, the majority of L2 learners cannot achieve native speakers' level of ability. That is, the L1 has some negative effects on the L2 acquisition. The influence of L1 seems inevitable on L2 acquisition, as (Lord, 2010) observed that while many studies analyze the effect of L2 acquisition on the L1, very few studies

examine the converse situation. It is against this backdrop, this study examines the impact of indigenous language (where Fulani and Hausa is the L1) on acquisition of second language (English L2) among primary school pupils in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State.

### **Statement of Problem**

There is no doubt that languages impact on each other in one way or the other. Take for instance, when English is considered as the L2, there is inter-lingual interference from L1 (Fulani and Hausa). Of course, the language which a group of people considered to be inhabitants of an area acquire in their early years and which normally becomes their natural instrument of thought and communication may interfere with the L2, and these interferences may manifest itself in any aspect of the language such as phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. As the recent evidence has demonstrated parallel activation of words in both languages, word recognition suggests that acquiring proficiency in a L2 does not imply that the individual has acquired the ability to switch off the influence of the L1. Thus, the extent at which L1 influences on the acquisition of L2 in terms of writing, reading and speaking has become a source of concern to multi-linguistic researchers. In view of the above, this study examines the impact of L1 (Fulani and Hausa) on acquisition of L2 (English) among primary school pupils in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Generally, the study aims at examining the impact of indigenous language (L1) on acquisition of second language (L2) among primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State. Specifically, the study will ascertain:

1. the extent to which the use of indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) writing ability of primary school pupils in the study area.
2. the extent to which the use of indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area.
3. the extent to which the use of indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) speaking ability of primary school pupils in the study area.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) writing ability of primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State?
2. To what extent does indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area?
3. To what extent does indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) speaking ability of primary school pupils in the study area?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between indigenous language (L1) and second language (L2) reading ability of primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State.
2. There is no significant difference between indigenous language (L1) and second language (L2) writing ability of primary school pupils in the study area.

3. There is no significant difference between indigenous language (L1) and second language (L2) speaking ability of primary school pupils in the study area.

### **Review of Related Studies on L2 Acquisition**

Studies have shown that L1 connotes the terms like ‘Mother Tongue’ and ‘First Language’. Perhaps that is why Awoniyi (2010) construes indigenous language as the language used by a group of people considered being the inhabitants of an area, acquiring in their early years and which normally their natural instrument of thought and communication become. For Bamisaye (2009), indigenous language or and mother tongue is the first language (L1) that a child acquired in his/her immediate community as language of the community. The author affirms that L1 is not learnt but acquired, this is because it encodes early concept of the child. Indigenous speakers are regarded as speakers of that very language; whereas a second language is a non-native language that is widely used for the purpose of communication, usually as a medium of education, government, or business. English for example, has foreign language status in Japan, but second language status in Nigeria (Crystal, 2015). This explains why Nutsukpo (2006) construes second language as the language learnt after the indigenous language. That is, it is the language acquired after first language has been acquired. It may be language(s) spoken by other ethnic groups within the country. For instance, if a Yoruba man learns Hausa language, then Hausa becomes his second language. In other words, indigenous language is acquired through total immersion, usually with no formal training with family members and friends as tutors.

At this juncture, it must be emphasized that L1 paves way for a L2 acquisition among children. That is, indigenous language learnt at home is extremely important and forms the foundation for all later language development. Of course, parents, family members and early childhood professionals are the essential influences on the development and maintenance of the L1. Little, wonder, Clarke (2009) opines that L1 helps the child understand how other languages work. In one side, children who have the opportunity to maintain their L1 can extend their cognitive development in acquiring English as a L2. On the other hand, their level of competence in the L2 could be related to the level of competence they have achieved in L1. Hence, children with a sound knowledge of their L1 will be able to transfer skills from one language to another (Clarke, 2009). That is, Hausa/Fulani languages have a direct influence on acquisition of English language in terms of writing, reading and speaking among primary school pupils in Jalingo.

Based on the above assertion, several studies on L2 acquisition affirms that learning becomes less problematic, if a child masters L1 in the habits of speaking, reading and writing which can be transferred to the learning of the L2. Take for instance, Karim and Nassaji (2013) investigated the L1 transfer in L2 writing among elementary school children in Iran, and they found out that when L2 learners write in L2, their L1 has an effect on their writing. That is, writing in L2 becomes simple for those children who have mastered L1 model. Though, Dulay and Burt (2012) observed that interference results from the old habits (indigenous language) which ought to be unleashed before new habits (second language) could be mastered. But when one is learning a L2, one inevitably uses L1 and that error results from the interference of the L1. The study conducted by Duskoya



(2009) revealed that children tend to master L2 than its perfection. This is hinged on inherent differences in morphology between L1 and L2 where omission of plurals on nouns, lack of subject verb agreement, and adjective disagreement due to L1 influence on L2. The author argued that in some L1 models, the nouns do not distinguish singular and plural, and in some cases the finite verb does not agree with its subject in person and number. These morphological errors are interferences between the terms of L1 on the L2 subsystem.

Apart from morphological errors, the study carried out by Lord (2008) revealed phonological modification of L1 on acquisition of L2. The study used 15 participants (students), they are divided into experimental and control group; English monolinguals and Spanish monolinguals are in the control group and native English speakers with high proficiency in Spanish are in the experimental group. At first, participants filled out a language background questionnaire and also asked for information regarding their language experience and use. After that recording of the tasks and reading out a list of isolated words are continued by them. The monolingual control groups performed tasks in their L1. But experimental group do it in both Spanish and English. The result showed that the effects of L2 interference in L1 are dependent on the level of attention that the participants give to their speech. In other words, phonological awareness promotes reading ability of students in L2 acquisition.

In support of this, Widjaja and Winskel (2014) assessed seventy-three grade one children on phonological awareness, letter knowledge, word and non-word reading skills. The subtests administered were rhyme detection task, a syllable detection task, an onset deletion and a phoneme deletion task. The study discovered that children do not like reading in L2 due to

phonological plight associated with reading in L2. Little wonder, Bhela (2009) affirms that the learners rely on their L1 when they want to produce a response in the L2. A high frequency of errors occurs in L2 when the structures of two languages are different, so it indicates an interference of L1 on L2 (Nemati&Taghizade, 2013).

Similarly, Oller and Tullis(2013) compared processing times of native and non-native readers of English in reading English text. They discovered that non-native readers produced the same number of fixations and regressions as did native readers, but their fixations were much longer. This indicated that bilinguals process more slowly in their L2. In support of this, Marsh and Maki (2016) revealed similar result when measuring the time bilinguals needed to compute answers to simple mathematical problems, they computed much faster in their L1. This shows that children prefer speaking in their L1, which subsequently affects their reading ability in L2.

In fact, the study conducted by Fatemi, Sobhani and Abolhassan (2012) concerning the differences in consonant clusters orally in the L1 and L2 discovered that if the structures of L1 and L2 were different, learners have difficulty in L2 pronunciation because they encountered unfamiliar phonological rules, which prompted by their L1. Simply put, the alphabetic rules, consonant and vowels of L1 come in contact with fluency of L2 pronunciation thereby negatively impacting on children's speaking ability. Perhaps, Idiagboni (2009) was right to have reported that among the three major languages in Nigeria, Hausa seems to pay less attention in speaking Standard English. The author used socio-linguistic approach on the ethno linguistic influence of the Nigerians' attitude towards the English language and revealed that Hausa people regard English language as a

language of Christianity and foreigners who have come to subdue their cultural and religious institutions. He observed that ethnic influences are inevitable as one must recognize the influence of the L1 which serves as the pioneer language thoughts, feels and experience which the English language cannot serve.

In the same vein, Odumuh (2007) studied the influence of ethno linguistic on English language usage of Nigerians. He confirmed that these influences affect all levels of linguistic analysis in the areas of writing, reading and speaking. According to him, the speaking problem is the most prevalent for all learners due to interference from L1, which conditioned their ability to pronounce strong sound of a L2. Of course, this is true of an English man learning Hausa or Fulani, as well as a Hausa/Fulani man learning English. One can definitely say that L1 finds its way when a L2 learner tries to speak the target language. In support of this, Ngozi (2011) did a study on the interference of phonology of Igbo language in acquisition of English in Imo state, Nigeria. The study used the oral speech of students in the acquisition of English language and found out that the segmental feature of the students' L1 interfered with their responses to the oral tests. According to her, all the students deviated in pronouncing the English sound segments that were not available in Igbo phonology also constituted pronunciation problems to the students tested. In essence, L1 interferes with virtually all aspects of L2 acquisition process for the second language learners.

## **Research Methodology:**

### **Research Design**

This is a descriptive research design that examines the impact of L1 on acquisition of L2 among primary school pupils in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State.

### **Study Area**

The study covered all the primary schools in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State, where Hausa and Fulani are used as L1 and the medium of communication outside the school environment.

### **Target Population**

The population of this study comprised all primary school teachers in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State. The available data from Taraba Universal Basic Education (TUBEC) shows two hundred and eighty-five (285) serving teachers in Jalingo local government area.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Simple random sampling technique was employed to select six (6) primary schools in Jalingo local government and ten (10) teachers were randomly selected from each of the schools. The total sample size for this study stood at sixty (60) teachers from six (6) primary schools in the study area.

### **Instrumentation**

The Language Background Questionnaire was adopted and cultured to probe into the experiential background of the children concerning their L1 and L2 acquisition (to be completed by teachers). The instrument is titled 'Indigenous and Second Language Acquisition Questionnaire (ISLAQ)' with two sections- A and B. Section A contains demographic data of the respondents while section B seeks opinions of the respondents on the subject matter. On the whole, ISLAQ contains 15 items

structured on a 4-response key Likert-scale type with assigned numeric values respectively (4 - Strongly Agree, 3 - Agree, 2 - Disagree and 1 - Strongly Disagree 1).

### **Validity**

The instrument was face validated by three experts from Faculty of Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo. The three experts were requested to review and scrutinize the various items of the instrument in terms of their clarity, correctness, appropriateness of language, adequacy of items in addressing the research questions and relevance to the study.

### **Reliability**

The instrument reliability coefficient was obtained through pilot-testing of the instrument on five (5) respondents (teachers) in a primary school outside the sampled schools in Jalingo local government area. Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis was employed (*with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences-SPSS*) to determine the reliability coefficient of the research questionnaire, which stood at 0.85%.

### **Procedure for Administration**

Before administering the research instruments, the researcher requested for permission from the respective school authorities in order to make use of their teachers as the research respondents. The research instrument was administered and collected on the same day of the administration.

### **Procedure for Data Analysis**

Mean and Standard Deviation were employed for answering the research questions that guided the study, while T-test was used to test the three null hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. The research questions were accepted with the mean ratings from 2.50 to 3.0 otherwise anything below benchmark of 2.50 was rejected.

## Data Analysis

Out of the sixty (60) questionnaires administered, fifty-six (56) were properly filled and returned. Therefore, the analysis was based on returned questionnaire.

## Descriptive Analysis of Data

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondent by gender

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
Male	23	41.1
Female	33	58.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above provides gender information of the respondents as twenty-three (23) representing forty-one point one percent (41.1%) are male respondents while the remaining thirty-three (33) representing fifty-eight point nine percent (58.9%) are female respondents. Therefore, majority of the respondents are female.

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondent based on pupils writing, reading and speaking ability in second language

<b>Languages</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
Indigenous Language	35	62.5
Second Language	21	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above reveals the writing, reading and speaking ability in both L1 and L2 among primary school pupils in all the sampled schools in the study area. Based on the table, thirty-five (35) respondents with sixty-two point five percent (62.5%) affirmed that pupils in their school could write, read and speak L1 while the remaining twenty-one (21) respondents indicating thirty-seven point five percent (37.5%) agreed that pupils in their school could write, read and speak L2. Therefore, the respondents revealed that majority of pupils prefer L1 in terms of writing, reading and speaking to L2.

### Research Questions

**RQ 1:** To what extent does L1 impact L2 writing ability of primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State?

**Table 3:** Mean ratings of respondents with regard to the extent at which L1 impact L2 writing ability of primary school pupils in the study area .

S/N	Items on L2 Writing Ability	Valid N=56	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	L1 helps in developing writing ability of children in L2.	56	2.589	1.108	Accepted
2.	The learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1.	56	2.643	1.017	Accepted
3.	Writing in L2 is dependent on mastery knowledge of learner in L1.	56	2.786	1.928	Accepted

4.	Pupils in my class find it difficult to write in L2 than L1.	56	2.554	1.025	Accepted
5.	Pupils in my class prefer to write in L1.	56	2.518	1.128	Accepted
<b>Grand Total Mean</b>			<b>6.545</b>	<b>1.241</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Table 3above reveals the opinions of respondents on the impact of L1 on L2 in relation to writing ability of primary school pupils. Based on the table, the mean scores of respondents- 2.589, 2.643, 2.786, 2.554 and 2.518 with their corresponding standard deviation for items 1 - 5 seem to be within the criterion mean of 2.50 – 3.49 for acceptance level.

The results from the table indicated that majority of the respondents affirmed that L1 impacts L2 writing ability of primary school pupils in the study area. The results revealed that L1 helps in developing writing ability of children in L2, learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1, writing in L2 is dependent on mastery knowledge in L1, children find it difficult to write in L2 than L1 as well as children prefer to write in L1 with mean scores of 2.589, 2.643, 2.786, 2.554 and 2.518 respectively explicate the influence of L1 on writing ability of children in L2.

**RQ 2:** To what extent does L1 impact L2 reading ability of primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State?

**Table 4:** Mean ratings of respondents with regard to the extent at whichL1 impact L2reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area



S/N	Items on L2 Writing Ability	Valid N=56	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
6.	The difference in vowel pronunciation affects L2 learner in reading English.	56	3.179	4.169	Accepted
7.	The learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1.	56	2.643	1.017	Accepted
8.	The difference in constant pronunciation affects L2 learner in reading English.	56	2.568	1.999	Accepted
9.	Pupils in my class find it difficult to read in L2 than L1.	56	2.554	1.025	Accepted
10.	Pupils in my class prefer to read in L1.	56	2.518	1.128	Accepted
<b>Total Grand Mean</b>			<b>2.692</b>	<b>1.868</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

The table above indicates the opinions of respondents on the impact of L1 on L2 in relation to reading ability of primary school pupils. Based on the table, the mean scores of respondents- 3.179, 2.643, 2.568, 2.554 and 2.518 with their corresponding standard deviation for items 6 - 10 seem to be within the criterion mean of 2.50 – 3.49 for acceptance level.

The results from the table indicated that majority of the respondents affirmed that L1 impacts L2 reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area. The results revealed that difference in vowel pronunciation, learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1, difference in constant pronunciation, children find it difficult to read in L2 than L1 as well as children prefer to read in L1 with mean scores of 3.179, 2.643, 2.568, 2.554 and 2.518 respectively elucidate the influence of L1 on reading ability of children in L2.

**RQ 3:** To what extent does L1 impact L2 speaking ability of primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State?

**Table 5:** Mean ratings of respondents with regard to the extent at which L1 impact L2 speaking ability of primary school pupils in the study area

S/N/items on L2 Writing Ability		Valid N=56	<u>    </u> X	SD	Remark
11.	The unfamiliar phonological rules of L2 affect second language learners in speaking fluently.	56	2.541	1.952	Accepted
12.	The learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1.	56	2.643	1.017	Accepted
13.	L1 model conditions the ability of learners to pronounce strong sound in L2.	56	2.621	1.896	Accepted

14.	Pupils in my class find it difficult to speak in L2 than L1.	56	2.554	1.025	Accepted
15.	Pupils in my class prefer to speak in L1.	56	2.518	1.128	Accepted
<b>Total Grand Mean</b>			<b>2.575</b>	<b>1.403</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

From table 5 above, all respondents bear their minds on the impact of L1 on L2 in relation to speaking ability of primary school pupils. Based on the table, the mean scores of respondents- 2.541, 2.643, 2.621, 2.554 and 2.518 with their corresponding standard deviation for items 11 - 15 seem to be within the criterion mean of 2.50 – 3.49 for acceptance level.

The results from the table indicated that highest number of respondents agreed that L1 impacts L2 speaking ability of primary school pupils in the study area. The results revealed that unfamiliar phonological rules of L2 affect children, learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1, L1 model conditions the ability of learners to pronounce strong sound in L2, children find it difficult to speak in L2 than L1 as well as children prefer to speak in L1 with mean scores of 2.541, 2.643, 2.621, 2.554 and 2.518 respectively clarify the influence of L1 on speaking ability of children in L2.

### Summary and Discussion of Results

The results of data collected were discussed below:

The results of this study revealed significant difference between the reading ability of children in L1 and L2. In fact, L1 significantly impact L2 reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area. This is supported by Clarke (2009) who

submitted that children with a sound knowledge of L1 will be able to transfer skills from one language to another. Also, Karim and Nassaji (2013) investigated the indigenous language transfer in L2 writing, and they found out that writing in L2 becomes simple for those children who have mastered L1 model. The study conducted by Duskoya (2009) revealed that children tend to use L2 without mastering it. This is hinged on inherent differences in morphology between L1 and L2 where omission of plurals on nouns, lack of subject verb agreement, and adjective disagreement due to L1 influence on L2. These morphological errors are interferences between the terms of L1 on the L2 subsystem.

In the same vein, the findings revealed significant difference between the reading ability of children in L1 and L2. Needless to L1 significantly impact L2 reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area. This is in agreement with Lord (2008) who underscored phonological modification of L1 on acquisition of L2, which showed that the effects of L2 interference in L1 are dependent on the level of attention that the participants give to their speech. In other words, phonological awareness promotes reading ability of students in second language acquisition. The study by Widjaja and Winskel (2014) on children phonological awareness, letter knowledge, word and non-word reading skills discovered that children do not like reading in second language due to phonological plight associated with reading in second language. Perhaps Bhela (2009) was right to have concluded that children rely on L1 when they want to produce a response in the L2.

Lastly, this study revealed significant difference between the reading ability of children in L1 and L2. Put differently, L1 significantly impact L2 reading ability of primary school pupils

in the study area. Thus L1 interferes with virtually all aspects of L2 acquisition process for the second language learners. In other words, the alphabetic rules, consonant and vowels of L1 come in contact with fluency of L2 pronunciation thereby negatively impacting on children's speaking ability.

### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, this paper underscored the significant role of L1 in acquiring L2 among primary school pupils in the study area. It could be said that in learning L2, L1 helps in coordinating appropriate intervention programmes with minimal errors for L2 learners thereby providing them a strong foundation they need to build L2 and a higher level of proficiency in L2. To this end, L1 is essential for acquiring L2 among children. In addendum, L1 helps to improve writing, reading and speaking ability of these children as shown in this study. That is, L1 builds communication skills and vocabulary level among primary school pupils in Taraba State in general and Jalingo Local Government Area in particular.

### **Recommendations**

Based on this study, the following recommendations are made;

- There is the need for training and retraining of primary school teachers in teaching languages in general and L2 in particular.
- Also, teachers are expected to encourage children to write, read and speak in L2 as much as they can.
- Parents are expected to play a complimentary role by encouraging children in the use of L2 even at home at the expense of L1 with a view to improving their proficiency.

- Finally, only the experienced teachers should be allowed to teach all our indigenous languages so as to inculcate L1 model necessary for learning other languages.

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