PSYCHOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRAINTS IN THE MASTERY OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA

ADEJUWON, REBECCA TITILAYO
Federal University, Lokoja
&
UCHE, MARTINA CHIOMA
Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka

ABSTRACT
The study analyses the psycholinguistic constraints affecting the mastery of English as a second language (ESL) in Nigeria. It particularly examines how the interlanguage phenomenon, fossilization and various affective factors influence the learning processes of second language learners of English. To determine how these constraints contribute to the poor mastery of English language, the study adopts a survey design to gather data. Descriptive statistics, specifically simple percentages, are used to analyze the data collected from the sampled population. The theoretical framework for the study is Stephen Krashen's (1982) Theory of Second Language Acquisition, which consists of five hypotheses and is considered most appropriate for this research. The findings reveal that certain constraints significantly impede the mastery of English as a second, while, to a large extent, some factors facilitate the people's performance in acquiring of English.
Keywords: *psycholinguistic, constraints, ESL, interlanguage, fossilization.*

INTRODUCTION
1.0 Background to the Study
Nigeria as a linguistic pluralistic reality, with over five hundred indigenous languages, has English language; which Oyetade (2002:52) expresses that "on top of the indigenous languages of Nigeria is a superstructure of exoglossic languages, chief among them is the English language". The English language which came into existence in Nigeria as a result of trade and missionary activities from the 16th century through 19th century was imposed as the official language of administration by the colonial masters (Adetugbo, 1978 in Ogunsiji, (2004). This aided its propagation and prominence in the country. The prestigious status accorded the language since and after colonization in Nigeria is highly overbearing. Makinde, (2001), Nnamdi-Eruchalu, (2012), Danladi, (2013), and Olorunsogo, (2019) stress the roles and importance of English language in Nigeria as a whole. It serves as the language of education and administration. It is a means of exploring the world and it serves some other vital economic roles such as providing opportunities for gainful employment. The language also serves as a means of external communication with other countries.

Nigerians have taken English as their second language because it is learned and used extensively in nearly all the domains; despite not being indigenous to Nigeria. This is why Bamisaye, (2004) describes English language in Nigeria as "a legal alien". This language according to Akindele and Adegbite (1999), had been cultivated, redomesticated and indigenized in a socio-cultural milieu.

Nnamdi-Eruachalu, (2012) opines that English language is the only road to achieving development in Nigeria. That is why majority of the leaners strive hard to attain a certain level of competence for proficient performance in the language, and this accounts for some learners' indisputable attitude towards the mastery of the language positively. This notwithstanding, there are some constraints impeding the impressive mastery of the language. Some of these encumbrances include some psycholinguistic aspect of interlanguage, transfer of error(s) from mother-tongue and fossilization. Others are the affective factors that impinge on learning situation.

Schuman (1978 in Croft 1980) identifies several factors such as age, attitude, motivation and anxiety. He maintains that the learners' attitude towards speakers of the second language or target language can either impede or enhance language learning. He reiterates that it is worthy of note that a learner's preference for his own culture over that of a target language's culture can also affect success in second language learning.

1.1 Statement of the Problem
Learning English as a second language (ESL) in Nigeria has become increasingly necessary, given the numerous roles it plays- particularly as a unifying factor (Olorunsogo, 2019). However, competent speakers of the language remain few. Adegbite (2009), claims that about "5-10% are competent, while the majority speak or write it badly". This indicates that the learning experience has not been easy, and the poor performance of the students in the language has remained a major concern for educators and curriculum experts over the years.

This concern is corroborated by the front-page article vivid account from a front page article in The Guardian newspaper of February 19, 2001, cited in Oladapo, (2013), title "World Bank Report Scores Nigerian Graduate Low". The report reveals that poor oral and written communication skills in English are widespread. Since the English language is the primary medium for national development in Nigeria, its failure is arguably a reflection of the broader failure of Nigerian development itself. (Afolayan, 1984, in Jowitt, 1991). Therefore, urgent steps must be taken to address the poor mastery of the language, which has become an essential tool for national development-this forms the main thrust of the present study.

1.2 Aim and Objectives
The main aim of this study is to examine the psycholinguistic phenomena related to the constraints related to the mastery of English as a second language (ESL) in Southwest Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:
I Identify the constraints that impede the effective mastery of ESL in Southwest Nigeria.
ii Investigates the factors that facilitate the learning of ESL in Southwest Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions
i What are the major constraints affecting the learning of ESL in Southwest Nigeria?
ii What factors encourage learners to acquire ESL in Southwest Nigeria?

1.4 Justification of the Study
There have been many research works by renowned scholars on the various factors that can impede or enhance learning ESL in Nigeria. And, a lot of factors have been identified as causes of this abysmal performance in a non-native learning environment. However, none of the works so far has established the intertwining of interlanguage, error(s) fossilization and the affective factors in the learning of ESL. This is worthy of investigation.

1.5 Significance of the Study
It is expected that this study will open up new prospect for teachers and researchers in an L2 learning/teaching process, especially, the teaching and learning of how to overcome the impediments to the learning of ESL, so that neglected areas or areas taken for granted will henceforth be given attention.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation
This study is limited to the western part of Nigeria, specifically Osun State. The population therefore consisted of students, professionals and civil servants from this geopolitical zone. Due to convenience, time and constraints and limited funding, a sample of two hundred (200) participants was drawn from two purposively selected higher institutions in Osun State. These are: College of Education, Osun State University, Ipetu-Ijesha and Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke-both located in the Osun East Senatorial District.

2.0 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework
This part concentrates on literature review and the theoretical framework for the study. In the review of relevant literature, the psycholinguistic concepts hindering the learning of ESL by various scholars were discussed. Also, some concepts which can somehow aid the learning of the second language were looked into.

2.1 Psycholinguistic Concepts in the Learning of English as a Second Language.
There have been various concepts, identified by various scholars in the course of learning an L2; from the psycholinguistic angle. Some of these are discussed below:
Interlanguage (IL): This is a psycholinguistic concept introduced by Selinker (1972). He coined out the word to describe the interim grammar constructed by the (L2) learner on his way to the target language. This concept is very important in the second language with relation to second language acquisition (SLA). According to Wang and Fan

(2020), interlanguage is a "language system between native language and target language used by L2 learners". This system is different from learners' native language and target language in the aspect of phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, culture and communication function. Interlanguage could be seen as the separateness of an L2 learner's system, a system that has a structurally-intermediate status between the native and target language. In the course of L2 learning, learners tend to make some mistakes which are natural procedures of language learning, resulted from a psychological structure latent in the brain, which is activated when one attempts to learn a second language. In consequence, many learners may not achieve the full second language competence. Interlanguage is systematic, but it is also open to changes, which takes place with progress. Selinker (1972) hypothesizes five psycholinguistic processes to shape how learners' create interlanguage. These are native language transfer, overgeneralization of target language rules, transfer of training, strategies of communication, and strategies of learning.

(i) Native Language Transfer: This is one of the psycholinguistic strategies which consists of replicating structures from the learners' first language when they are speaking or writing something in a second language. Karim and Nassaji (2013), opine that learners' native language has a significant influence in second language learning, and the more similar those two languages were, the easier it was for the learner to learn the new language. Taking from Chomskyan's Universal Grammar; that every person has an innate cognitive capacity specialized in language learning, and this cognitive system makes no distinction between learning the person's native or a second language. (Chomsky, 2014). But, the fact that there was evidence of language transfer meant that the process of learning a second language is different from the process of acquiring a native language. Jarvis & Pavlenko, (2008) in Nsengiyumva, Oriikiriza and Nakijoba (2021), claim that there are "full range of ways in which a person's knowledge of one language can affect that person's knowledge and use of another language''. It is thus evident that the two existing language systems will most likely interact and have an effect on each other in the mind of the learner.

(ii) Overgeneralization: Akhmad (2020) argues that "overgeneralization is the phenomenon when one overextends one rule to cover instances". Language learners alike overgeneralize as a natural part of the language acquisition process when they deploy what they already know about a language, and in the process discover its limitations through feedback. For example, this situation may occur when children mention things with their first known-utterances. The children may name 'goat' to refer to all four-legged animal. When a particular form is overgeneralized, errors in language learning take place. Overgeneralization is not only in mis-formation error, but also occurs in addition errors. Examples of overgeneralization include: I hurted myself -overgeneralization of the past tense -ed rule. My friend told me he saw sheeps on his way to school- overgeneralization of the plural+-s rule. We can thus say that overgeneralization is the interlanguage cognition produced in expanding target language rule.

(iii) Transfer of Training: Transfer of training according to Guo (2022), refers to the phenomenon that "L2 learners may have done excessive training on certain interlanguage structures that they cannot successfully continue to develop the new structures". Transfer of training can not only cause errors but also reinforce erroneous forms. Here, it is viable that the ways and materials of training non-target language forms may sometimes result from inappropriate ways of training and teaching materials. For instance, if the teacher or the teaching material emphasizes repeatedly that an adjective plus '-ly' equals an adverb, the learner may very probably overuse the rule and make such sentence as "He treated me friendlyly". The inappropriate or faulty teaching materials are easiest to give birth to incorrect or inappropriate language forms, in some cases. Also, teachers improving the learner's linguistic and intercultural communicative competence and developing their interlanguage towards the target language depend to a great extent on well-trained teachers with fairly high level of the target language. However, most teachers are English learners themselves. Their words often include such non-English forms as linguistic errors or inappropriate expressions. Such teachers may resort to Pidgin when they cannot find the proper English words, or expressions, their non-English forms may be directly transmitted to learners. That is why we sometimes find obvious errors in some textbooks.

(iv) Strategies of Communication: In real communication, learners may sometimes turn to communication strategies, a systematic skill that a speaker resorts to while having difficulties in expression to keep the communication going on (Wang, 2005 in Guo (2022). Unfortunately, Guo, (2022) opines that sometimes such "successful use of communication strategies will prevent acquisition". Hence, for learners to become skillful in making up for lack of linguistic knowledge, they should inculcate the use of various communication strategies, so as to become competent in the target language.

(v) Strategies of L2 Learning: This consist of learners adopting different learning approaches. Some incorrect learning strategies may result in stagnation (fossilization) in the development of some aspect of L2, such as syntactic, lexical, or sociocultural. One such example is the act of simplification, as in "I am clean my room now" instead of "I am cleaning my room now" Selinker thinks that learners' L2 learning strategy is culture bound. Influenced by learners'

culture, L2 learners tend to adopt avoidance and simplification strategies when confronted with difficulties in L2 learning. Learners' long-term use of simplification clauses will eventually lead to fossilization in this aspect.
With Selinker's five hypothesis above, we can deduce that interlanguage is a linguistic system created by L2 learners to assist their L2 acquisition. Rules are created by individual learners, so they are unique for every learner. And, using such self-created rules, can mar the effective competence of L2 learning.

Errors: It is a known fact that language contact is highly complex and dynamic. As such, Owolabi, (2014) validates that "learning or acquiring a second language is not without its own attendant problems, especially when an acquired language and a target language are supposedly required in different domains within the same environment". This assertion shows that language learning, like any other learning process, involves making errors. There are many kinds of errors that may be produced by language learners. For example, there may be spelling errors such as priviledge, arguement, deligent, etc. Grammatical errors such as: I eating biscuits, she have respect, game was begun and so on. According to Keshavarz (2012), errors are classified into four categories, which are: phonological errors, orthographic errors, lexico-semantic errors (errors between words and meanings), and morphological-syntactic errors (errors between word forms and grammar). In addition to the four categories of errors above, Kotsyuk (2015) added several categories of errors namely punctuation errors and style errors. For example: each sentence usually ends with a full stop (.), question mark (?) or exclamatory mark (!). If there is a question sentence with an exclamation point (!), then the sentence has an error in its punctuation. Style errors are those regarding the format that is not appropriate. For example, if there is no space after the comma, e.g. I have novels,drama,and poetry or capital letters e.g. john has many books.

Sources of error are divided into five types, namely interlanguage errors, intralanguage errors, teacher-induced errors, language-learning strategies, and communication strategies. For example, it is quite erroneous to transfer the phonological elements from learner's language. For instance, sound like the voiced labio-dental fricative /v/ in English phoneme is absent in Yoruba phonemes. Hence, Yoruba learners of ESL tends to erroneously substitute it with the voiceless labio-dental fricative/f/. Also, Yoruba speakers of English language are accustomed to saying English words without using stress but tones on syllables because Yoruba language is tonal. Whereas English language is stress-timed and isochronous (Fatunsin 2001).

Touchie, (1986) affirms that researchers in the field of applied linguistics usually distinguish between two types of errors which are Competence errors and Performance errors. According to him, Competence errors are more serious than performance errors since competence errors reflect inadequate learning. Performance errors on the other hand are those errors made by learners when they are tired or hurried. Normally, this type of error is not serious and can be overcome with little effort by the learner.

Fossilization: Selinker and Lamendella (1978 in Han 2015) explicitly defined fossilization as "a permanent cessation of interlanguage learning before the learner has attained target language norms at all levels of linguistic structure and in all discourse domains in spite of the learner's positive ability, opportunity, and motivation to learn and acculturate into target society". This is to show that fossilization is a phenomenon in L2 learning where learners simply become unable to learn the new language beyond what they have already learned. They may never be able to fully grasp all structure and colloquial use of the language. In their mind, the language has fossilized; it cannot evolve into more than what the learners already know. It is a process in which incorrect language becomes a habit and cannot easily be corrected. Fossilization is the final stage of interlanguage, and it is when a form freezes in the state it is in, correct or not.

Some researchers think fossilization has to do with age, while others think it has to do with the brain's inability to separate the L2 from the rules of the native language. Either way, it is an important concept to understand when researching or teaching language. Selinker in Wei (2008), claims that individual fossilization consists of two types, which are: error reappearance, and language competence fossilization.
(i) Error Reappearance: This refers to those interlanguage structures which are presumed to have been corrected yet continue to appear regularly. This resurfacing of errors can be found in the interlanguage of beginners or learners with low proficiency.
(ii) Language Competence Fossilization: Contrary to error reappearance, Selinker, asserts that language competence fossilization refers to the height in the development of L2 learners' phonological, grammatical, lexical and pragmatic

competence. Hence, L2 learners who have been learning an L2 for a long period of time, reaching a relatively high level, are subject to language competence fossilization. Fossilization in L2 acquisition can also be classified into temporary fossilization and permanent fossilization. As the terms suggest, the former is unstable and changeable, while the latter is in a state of stabilization.

Affective Factors: These are other factors that may make or mar the learning of English as a second language in southwest Nigeria. Various scholars from various backgrounds have defined affective factors in different ways other than the scope of this study. O'grady, Archibald and Katamba (2011) claim that "affective factors have to do with the emotional side of learning a second language". There is substance in believing that there can be a great deal at stake emotionally when learning a second language, and it is possible that emotions affect how successful a second language learner could be. Hunchinton and Waters (1989) explain that the importance of the emotional factor is easily seen if we consider the relationship between the cognitive and affective aspects of learners. This affirms that the weight of emotional reaction in L2 learning is the essential foundation for initiation of the cognitive process which cognitive theory explains that learners learn when they actively think of what they are learning. Some of the affective factors as explained by scholars are discussed below.

(1) Age: Many researchers and experts agree that younger learners have certain advantages over older learners in language learning. Bista (2011) asserts that "age is one of the most important affective factors in second language learning". However, the view of Ellis, Larsen-Freeman, Mayberry and Lock, (2008) in Bista (2011) that younger children learn L2 easily and quickly in comparison to older children, may not always be true or may not apply in all cases. The relationship between age and success in L2 is linked to Lenneberg's (1967) 'Critical Period Hypothesis' (CPH) cited in Richards and Schmidt (2002). The CPH suggests that a period of time between birth and somewhere around the age, when a child enters a puberty exists in which the learning of L2 can be accomplished more rapidly and easily than post-puberty. This is why Baker, (2010) opines that it is apparent that children are likely to acquire an L2 more successfully than the older learners. However, the research on "aging and learning ability" of Ostward and Williams (1981) in Schleppegrell, (1987) holds a different argument as they demonstrate that the abilities of learning an L2 do not decline with age.

(2) Anxiety: Anxiety as affirmed by Huimin (2003), is a "crucial psychological factor that plays an important affective role in SLA". It is an emotion characterized by an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, often accompanied by nervous behavior. It can be seen as unpleasant feeling of dread over anticipated events. Language anxiety has significantly sparked great concern in the L2 world as Van Aadwerg and Van Aadwerg (1999) say that anxiety is a "psychological state of apprehension, fear or dread without a realistic threat of danger". Looking at anxiety from a language perspective, the essence of ESL anxiety could be viewed as a threat to an individual's self-concept, caused by the inherent limitations of communicating in an imperfectly mastered L2.

(3) Attitudes: Melucci (2004), defines attitude as the "feeling towards a person, thing or issue". She explains that attitude dictates human behaviour. Attitude may either be self-confidence or hostile behaviour towards a particular thing or issue". Attitude is intrinsic and a learner's characteristic trait, that is; the leaner's attitude can make great impact on his success or failure in learning an L2. Adegbite (2009), reiterates that attitude is determined by cognitive, affective and active factors and may influence learners' predisposition to acquire English language.

(4) Motivation: Donyei and Skehan, (2003), Ellis, (2007) and Cook, (2008) promote motivation as the driving force that ignites action towards the attainment of a goal. These scholars is of the opinion that one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of L2 learning is motivation. Thus, motivation provides impetus to initiate learning the ESL, and later gives the driving force that sustain the process. Motivation could either be integrative, or instrumental (Saville-Troike 2006). Integrative motivation as profess by Liuoliene and Metiuniene (2006) is learners' desire to learn more about the cultural community of the target language to make them become a native-like speaker of the L2. While instrumental motivation according to them refers to "learners' desire to learn the target language in order to accomplish some potential gains of L2 proficiency such as to pass an examination or to advance a career". This type of motivation is a sort of utilitarian motivation. There is the need to point out here that both types of motivation are important to learners and should be encouraged, as lack of either may cause problems for the learners.

(5) Affective Filter: This term is used by Krashen (1982) in Krashen (2009), to refer to the complex of negative emotional and motivational factors that may interfere with the reception and processing of comprehensible input. It is an invisible psychological filter that can either facilitate or hinder L2 acquisition. It is worthy of note that learner aspiring to acquire L2 has an invisible filter inside of them; as it plays an important role in the learning of L2. When the filter is high, individuals may experience stress, anxiety and lack of confidence that hinder the mastery of the target language.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework chosen for this study is Krashen's (1982) theory of Second Language Acquisition, because the theory has been extremely influential in L2 instruction. The theory comprises of five hypotheses which are: (i) Acquisition-Learning Distinction Hypothesis; (ii) Natural Order Hypothesis; (iii) Monitor Hypothesis; (iv) Input Hypothesis and (v) Affective Filter Hypothesis.

(i) Acquisition-Learning Distinction Hypothesis: This is seen as an essential component of all the hypotheses in Krashen's theory. Krashen (2009), says there are two ways of developing an L2 which are the "acquired system" and the "learned system. For the acquired system to develop, learners require significant interaction and contact with the L2, even in a non-native environment. This theory claims that the optimal way a language is learned is through natural communication. While the learned system is the product of formal instruction and comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge about the L2 such as for example; knowledge of grammatical rules. Hence, it is important for a learner to develop the acquired system before developing the learned system.

Natural Order Hypothesis: This shows that L2 learners of English language go through predictable stages in their acquisition of linguistic features as Krashen (2009), states that "acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order". This implies that for a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early, others late, regardless of the first language of the learner.

The Monitor Hypothesis This hypothesis suggests that although spontaneous speech originates in the acquired system, what has been learnt may be used as a monitor to edit speech. While acquisition initiates the learner's utterance and fluency in the target language, learning has the function of monitoring or editing the utterance. The monitor's role is to correct deviations from normal speech and to give a speech polished appearance.

The Input Hypothesis: This reflects Krashen's view that L2 learning occurs as a result of exposure to meaningful and varied linguistic input concerned with acquisition and not learning. Escamilla and Grassi, (2003) suggest that teachers should provide the learners with more input so that they may progress beyond the present stage they are. According to this hypothesis, the learners improve and progress along the natural order when they receive a second language "input" that is one step beyond their current status of linguistic competence (i+1). "i" represents the current competence of the learners' current level of English proficiency and "1" represents the next level (Krashen, 2009). For example, if a learner has mastered the present tense, information can be provided in the past tense.

Affective Filter Hypothesis: This embodies Krashen's view that a number of affective variables play a facilitative role in L2 learning and acquisition. These variables include motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Thomson, (2000) suggests that "learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good image and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in L2 learning. Conversely, low motivation, low self-esteem and debilitating anxiety can combine to raise the affective filter and form a mental block which tends to make learners fossilized in their learning endeavors. This theory has been criticized for its vagueness thereby making empirical testing difficult. Scholars like Escamilla and Grassi (2000), Peregoy (2009) in Govender (2015), Brown (2007), Patten and Williams (2007), amongst others remark that the distinction between acquisition and learning is vague and imprecise, and several of its claim are impossible to verify. That the explicit claim of comprehensible input as the only causative variable in L2 acquisition is faulty, because success in L2 cannot be attributed to input alone, and that the monitor hypothesis fails to completely address the social and psychological aspects of learning an L2. In spite of these criticisms, scholars consider Krashen's theory as one of the most controversial theoretical perspectives in L2 acquisition and learning as corroborated by Patten and Williams (2007) that it is the most ambitious and influential theory in the field of SLA.

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design, with the population drawn from the western part of Nigeria, specifically Osun State. Two higher institutions of learning in Osun State were purposively selected: the College of Education, Osun State University, Ipetu-Ijesha and Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke. Due to time constraints and limited funding, only two hundred (200) respondents were randomly selected respondents from this geopolitical zone. Like most survey studies, this study investigated the current situation by collecting and analyzing data from a small representative portion of the larger population, allowing for generalization of the results. Two research questions aligned with the earlier stated research objectives were addressed, using a questionnaire developed by the researcher with the assistance of two research assistants. The variables considered in the study included age and educational qualification. Virtually all respondents were literate in both English and Yoruba which reflects the common linguistic situation in Western Nigeria.

The instrument for data collection was a twenty-item questionnaire divided into Sections A and B. Section A was designed to collect demographic information, while Section B gathered data on the respondents' language background, their views and opinions regarding the languages spoken in their communities and the challenges they face in mastering English as a Second Language (ESL). Section B also included some open-ended questions that allowed respondents to express their views on specific items. For data analysis, simple percentages and descriptive statistics were employed.

Findings
From the fieldwork, the data gathered were regrouped and then subjected to descriptive statistical analysis to answer the research questions, and the results were discussed below.
The respondents' age ranged between 25 and above 55 years with the young adults (15—24) constituting the highest percentage in the sample. However, a clean break into two generations, that is, youths versus adults, will give us two age groups of 15-34 and 35-55 and above. This shows that the respondents are matured (over the critical age), and intelligent enough to supply the answers correctly.

It was also vividly clear that the respondents' level of literates were high with first and master's degree holders of 146 and 29 constituting 73 and 14.5% respectively. This shows that the majority of the respondents were educated enough to be able to discern the meaning and essence of the study. It was gathered that 159 (79.5%), which were the highest number of the respondents were first exposed to Yoruba language, while 36 (18%) were first exposed to English, with only 5 (2.5%) had Igbo as their first language. They were introduced to the languages at various ages.
It was also cleared that English was introduced to 114 (57%) at home, 52 (26%) had it introduced to them in school, 25 (12.5) had it introduced to them in the environment, while 09 (4.5%) had English introduced to them in the church. What this encapsulated was that nearly all the respondents had English introduced to them in various environments where the indigenous languages are also in use, thus making it possible for interference to set in.
The response for the question frequency of speaking English was both positive and negative as the majority of them-109 (54.5%) regularly use English language as against the 82 (41%) who rarely speak the language. Although, English has an advantage over the indigenous languages since it is more spoken in more domains, still, the tendency towards English does not automatically mean that the speakers are competent in the use of standard English.
It is generally agreed that language contact has direct effect on the communicative competence of the respondents. This is expected with 98 (49%) of the respondents believe they are proficient in spoken English, while 107 (53.5%) believe they are very proficient in written, whereas, 95 (47.5%) and 82 (41%) believe they are rarely proficient in both spoken and written respectively. The disparity in spoken and written is not so wide, still, it shows that majority of the learners of ESL are more comfortable with written.

Contrary to the learners' belief in their proficiency in spoken and written English, their comprehension of English idioms and proverbs revealed otherwise. Only 87 respondents (43.5%), demonstrated understanding, while 95 (47.5%), were rarely proficient, and 18 (9%) gave no response. These responses, suggest that the learners are not culturally inclined toward English. Regarding code-mixing and code-switching, 81 respondents (40.5%) indicated that English is always spoken, alongside indigenous languages. Another 95 (47.5%) admitted to occasionally that they occasionally code-mixing or code-switching 13 (6.5%) claimed they never engage in the practice, and 11 (5.5%) gave no response. This implies that learners are making deliberate efforts to gain mastery of the language. The study also found the evidence of linguistic interference from the learners' first language (L1) on the English, the target language. Specifically, 98 respondents, (49%) reported regular interference, while 81 (40.5%) reported occasional interference. This suggests negative transfer of structural forms and meanings from native language and culture to English may be a significant constraint on learners' full mastery of the language.

As evident from the data gathered, only few of the respondents, 26 (13%) understand the word 'interlanguage' majority of the respondents 113 (56.5%), claimed never to have heard the word, while many 61 (30.5%) gave no response. The implication of this is that, even though the respondents were aware that there are impediments in attaining a native-like status in their learning of English, they seemed not to know the basic constraint, resulting from the negatixxxve transfer from their first language, catapulting in errors and other constraints hindering the mastery of their ESL. An open-ended question asked the respondents to justify the word 'interlanguage' in their learning of ESL. Interestingly, the few respondents who affirmed the word opined that interlanguage was like an imported language which was neither a first language of a learner nor the target language, but stands in between the two languages. The preponderance

affirmation of the respondents regarding making error(s) in the target language materialized with 106 (53%) of 'Yes', 46 (23%) 'No' and 48 (24%) 'No Response', this painted the gloomy picture of incompetence in the use of English. Hence, led to another question to know whether the error(s) can be rectified. 109 (54.5%) had no response, 75 (37.5%) gave positive answer, while 16 (8%) gave negative response. The indifferent response gave by the majority might be attributed to their lackadaisical attitude towards the mastery of the target language, while the positive response was ascribed to the readiness of the few to achieve the native-like competence in ESL. On fossilization, 122 (61%) showed their cluelessness of the word, 62 (31%) agreed that the word exists while 16 (08%) gave no response. The respondents very well knew that they were unable to achieve their desired language competence in English because of certain development of an approximate system, which was revealed from the open-ended question on "how has fossilization affect their mastery of ESL?"

Research question 1: What are the constraints in the learning of English as a second language in southwest Nigeria?
From the findings of this study, it is quite obvious that learning a second language has been challenging especially if it is being learnt after the system of one's language has been mastered in early childhood. This is because once the habits of the native language are fully ingrained; breaking the habits has not always been an easy task. Mastering ESL in the southwest Nigeria is faced with so many challenges. The data gathered shows quite numbers of constraints militating against the mastery of ESL. These constraints have debilitating effect on learners' progress in second language acquisition/learning. To start with is the phonetics/phonological difficulties as seen from the data analyzed with 98 (49%). This is why Owolabi (2014), agrees that "the transfer of the indigenous language pronunciation to English in some words leads to inappropriate pronunciation". Grammatical and discourse constraints could be deduced from the table with 37 (18.5%) and 26 (13%) respectively. Transferring of the native language's structural components to the target language breeds interlanguage, which, researchers have discovered learners eventually develop as they try to master the target language (Wang and Fan 2020, Nsengiyumva, Oriikiriza and Nakijoba 2021, and Guo 2022). Also, from the data, the percentage of the respondents who agreed to be prone to errors are greater with 106 (53%), against 46 (23%) and 48 (24%) of No and No response respectively. The respondents explained that they believed their errors can be remedied if they work more on their interlanguage and communication strategies. Some who understand fossilization expressed their views that they could still overcome their fossilized status, if they were able to follow the rules of the standard English, and strive towards the native-like status. This is to substantiate Ananda's (2023) notion that temporary fossilization can be overcome effectively with both positive and negative cognitive feedback. Speech in human communication remains sacrosanct".

Research question 2: What factors motivate learners to learn English as a second language in southwest Nigeria?
From the data, a substantial number of the respondents agreed that there are both positive and negative affective factors influencing the learning of ESL. With 131 (65.5%) of affirmation, age and motivation seem to play important roles in the acquisition of ESL. For other factors like anxiety and attitude, it was gathered from the study that they can influence the learning of ESL, depending on the attitude posed by the learner. If the attitude is positive, learning ESL will be positive, while if the attitude to learning is negative, learning may be difficult. Same goes to anxiety, if the level of the learners' anxiety is high, learning of ESL may be difficult, but if the anxiety is low, the level of mastery the second language will be high. Anxiety here can be seen as one of Krashen's (1982) affective filter, which is a negative emotional factor that may interfere with the reception and processing of comprehensible input, since it can be said to be an invisible psychological filter that hinders second language learning.

Conclusion and Recommendations
 Whenever there is language in contact, there bounds to be so many obstacles, and from the foregoing, it was apparent that while acquiring English as a second language, there exists many hindrances to its mastery. Therefore, based on the results of the findings, it is concluded that there are psycholinguistic factors that hampered effective learning of ESL in southwest Nigeria. This was based on the fact that, interlanguage which is a linguistic system developed by a learner targeting ESL is one of the factors. While to a large extent, age, attitude, anxiety and motivation are part of the affective factors facilitating or hindering the learning of ESL, depending on the personality of the learner. This is to buttress Gianfranco's (2015) assertion that personality traits could inhibit or favour second language learning.
It is thus recommended that learners of ESL in Southwest Nigeria need to identify the type of errors always made in their utterances and written, and look for a fluent speaker, native-like speaker or native speaker of English language, who will aid in correcting those errors. Since practice makes one to be perfect, the learners should strive to use the corrected words to create sample words, phrases and sentences following the rules of the target language. By doing

this, the fossilized errors transferred from the learners' linguistic armory would be eliminated. This would enable them to overcome the notion of interlangugae, and achieve a native-like proficiency. Also, learners should strive hard to inoculate positive attitude, for the negative affective filter to be lowered considerably.

References

Adegbite, W. (2009). Psycholinguistics of English language in Nigeria. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.

Akhmad, F. (2020) Error Analysis on the Students' Construction of English Irregular Plural Nouns. New Language Dimensions. 1(2) pp79-87. DOI - 10.26740/j.v2n2.

Akindele, F. and Adegbite, W. (2005). The sociology and politics of English language in Nigeria. Ile-Ife: OAU Press.

Ananda, A. T. (2023). Students' strategy to overcome temporary fossilization in second language acquisition. Icon Proceeding vol 2, pp 18-21.

Baker, C. (2010). Foundation of bilingual education and bilingualism. Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters. Web, retrieved from

Bamisaye, T.O. (2004). The English language in Nigeria. Lagos: King Julius Educational Publishers, pp 38.

Bista, K.K. (2011). Age as an affective factor in second language acquisition. Troy University. Web, retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov> on 07/03/2024.

Cook, V. (2008). Second language learning and second language teaching, 4th edition, United Kingdom: Hodder Education. Web, retrieved on 04/03/2024.

Croft, K. (1980). Readings on English as a second language. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Winthrope Publishers.

Dada, S.A. (2007). Language contact and language conflict: A case of Yoruba-English Bilinguals. Kansa Working Paper in Linguistics. Vol. 29, pp 85-113.

Danladi, O. (2013). Language policy: Nigeria and the role of English language in the 21st century. European Scientific Journal. 9(17), pp1-21.

Donyei, Z. & Skehan, P. (2003). Individual differences in second language learning. In Doughty, C.J. & Long, M.H. (ed). The handbook of second language acquisition. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 589-630.

Ellis, R. (2000). Second language acquisition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Escamilla, K. & Grassi, E. (2000). A brief description of second language acquisition. Web, retrieved from https://.researchgate.net>publication on 08/03/2024.

Fatusin, S.A. (2001). An introduction to the phonetics and phonology of English. Lagos: Greenfield Publishers, pp83

Foyewa, R.A. (2020). A review of the status of English language in the Nigerian school system. International Journal of English Language Teaching, 8(6), pp 63-69.

Gianfranco, C. (2015). How does personality affect foreign language learning? The Language Gym. Web, retrieved from https://gianfrancoconti.wordpress.com on 08/03/2024.

Govender, R. (2015). Factors that affect foundation phase English second language learners' reading reading and writing skills. Unpublished Mphil Thesis, University of South Africa.

Guo, Q. (2022). Interlanguage and Its Implications to Second Language Teaching and Learning Pacific International Journal 5(4) pp 8-14. DOI:10.55014/pij.v5i4.223

Han, Z. (2004). Fossilization in Adult Second Language Acquisition, Multilingual Matters: United Kingdom. Web, retrieved from https://englishcoachonline.com/blog/fossilization-in-second-language-acquisition/ on 5th March, 2024.

Huimin, Z. (2008). Speaking anxiety in the classroom: Getting students to talk. Modern English Teacher Journal. 7(2) 33-42.

Jowitt, D. (1991). Nigerian English usage: An introduction. Ikeja: Longman (Nig) Limited, pp 25.

Karim, K., & Nassaji, H. (2013). First Language Transfer in Second Language Writing: An Examination of Current Research. Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 1(1), 117-134.

Keshavarz, H.M. (2012). Contrastive analysis and error analysis. New ed. Tehran: Rahamana Press, pp 89. Retrieved from SCRIBD on 07/03/2024.

Kotsyuk, L. (2015). English language error analysis of the written texts produced by Ukrainian learners. Cognitive Studies. Vol. 15, pp 389-395. Retrieved from https://researchgate.net. Doi-1011649cs2015027.

Krashen, S. D. (2009). Principles and practice in second language acquisition. Web, retrieved from www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principlesandpractice on 05/03/2024.

Melucci, J.N. (2004). Psychology age easy way. Hauppage: Baron's Educational Series

Liuoliene, A. & Metiuniene, R. (2006). Second language motivation. Santalka Filologija Edukologija, pp 93-98. Web, retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com>pii on 06/03/2024.

Makinde, O.O. (2001). Students' attitudes towards the use of library resources as determinants of the performance in English language in selected state schools in Lagos State. Ibadan: Franco-Ola Printers.

Nnamdi-Eruchalu, G.I. (2012). The place of English language in the development of Nigeria. The Nigerian Academic Forum, 22 (1), pp 1-7.

Nsengyumva, D.S., Oriikiriza, C.and Nakijoba, S. (2021). Cross-linguistic transfer and language proficiency in the multilingual education system of Burundi: What has existing literature so far discovered? Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 5(2), pp 387-389. Doi: http://de.doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v5i2.770

O'grady, W., Archilbard, J. & Katamba, F. (2011). Contemporary linguistics: An introduction, 2nd ed. England: Pearson Education Limited, pp 416.

Ogunsiji, A. (2004). Developing the basic language skills for communicative competence in learners of English as a second language in Nigeria. Ibadan: Journal of English studies, 1, p 19-34

Oladapo, O.O. (2013). The use of computerized concordance application in the teaching of English language in Osun State Junior Secondary Schools. Unpublished Master's Thesis, O.A.U. Ile-Ife.

Olorunsogo, D. (2019). The sociolinguistic factors that determine the status and use of English language in Nigeria. Web, retrieved from www.wordpress.com on 07/03/2024.

Owolabi, D. (2014). Language pattern of Yoruba-English teenage school going bilinguals in southwest Nigeria: Impact on the English language and suggestions for language planning. Journal of Advances in Linguistics. 1(1), pp 23-33.

Oyetade, S.O. (2002). Language policy and planning in Nigeria. *Research in African Languages and Linguistics*, Vol 6, pp51-66.

Richards, J. and Schimdt, R. (2002). Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics. 3rd ed. New York: Pearson Education.

Rodriguez, C.D. & Higgens, K. (2005). Preschool children with developmental delays and limited English proficiency. ProQuest Education Journals, 40(4), pp. 236-242. Web, retrieved from www.sagepub.com>doi>abs on 06/03/2024.

Saville-Troke, M. (2006). Introducing second language acquisition. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thomson, C. (2000). Stephen Krashen's multiple hypotheses. In Inglis M., Thomson C. & Macdonald, A. Language learning and teaching. Piertermaritzburg: University of Natal Press. Web, retrieved from www.hamline.edu>DownloadAsset on 07/03/2024.

Touchie, H. Y. (1986). Second language learning errors their types, causes and treatments. JALT Journal, Volume 8 (I) pp 75-80.

Van Aardweg, E.M. & Van Aardweg, E.D. (1999). Psychology of education: A dictionary for students. 2nd ed. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Van-Patten, B. & Williams, J. (2007). Dynamic systems in second language learning. Bilingualism: Language and Cognition. 10(1), pp 47-49. Web, retrieved from https://scholar.google.com on 07/03/2024.

Wang, X and Fan, L. (2020). An Analysis of Interlanguage Features and English Learning Journal of Higher Education Research 1(1) DOI:10.32629/jher.v1i1.126

Wei, X. (2008). Implication of IL fossilization in second language acquisition. English Language Teaching 1(1), pp 127-131. Retrieved from www.ccse.net.org/journalhtml on 06/03/2024.

The table below shows respondents' answers to the items in the questionnaire.

4.1 Section A: Demographic Information

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age in Percentage

Respondents' Ages	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and above
Number and %	103(51.5)	47(43.5)	21(10.5)	18 (09)	11 (5.5)

Table 2: Respondents Educational Qualification in Percentage

Educational Qualification	Secondary	Diploma	First Degree	Master's Degree & above

Number and %	11 (5.5)	14 (7)	146 (73)	29 (14.5)

Table 3: Respondents' Responses on First Language Exposure

First language exposed to	English	Hausa	Igbo	Yoruba	Others
Number and %	36 (18)	-	5 (2.5)	159 (79.5)	-

Table 4: Respondents' Responses on Age of Exposure to English Language

Age of Exposure to English	2-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	No response
Number and %	146 (73)	30 (15)	00	00	24 (12)

Table 5: Respondents' Response to Place of First exposure To English Language

Place of First Exposure to English	Home	School	Environment	Church	Others
Number and %	114(57)	52 (26)	25 (12.5)	09 (4.5)	00

Table 6: Respondents' Response to Frequency of Speaking English

How frequently do you speak English?	Regularly	Rarely	Never	No response
Number and %	109 (54.5)	82 (41)	01 (0.5)	08 (04)

Table 7: Respondents' Responses to Proficiency in Oral and Written and Comprehension in Idioms/Proverbs in English

Oral communication proficiency in English	Very proficient	Rarely proficient	Not proficient	No response
Number and %	98 (49)	95 (47.5)	00	07 (3.5)
Written communication proficiency in English	107 (53.5)	82 (41)	00	11 (5.5)
Comprehension of English idioms/proverbs	87 (43.5)	95 (47.5)	00	18 (09)
Code-mixing and code-switching with English	**Often** 81 (40.5)	**Occasionally** 95 (47.5)	**Never** 13 (6.5)	**No response** 11 (5.5)
Interference of L1 with English	98 (49)	81 (40.5)	05 (2.5)	16 (08)

Table 9: Respondents' Perception on their Areas of Difficulty in English

Which area of English do you find difficult?	Phonetics/ Phonology	Lexis	Syntax/ Grammar	Semantics	Discourse
Number and %	98 (49)	21 (10.5)	37 (18.5)	18 (9)	26 (13)

Table 10: Respondents Perception to the Psycholinguistic Factors in the Mastery of ESL

Have you heard of Interlanguage?	Somehow	Never	No Response
Number and %	26 (13)	113 (56.5)	61 (30.5)
Do you make error(s) in spoken and written English?	**Yes**	**No**	**No Response**
Number and %	106 (53)	46 (23)	48 (24)
Can your error(s) be remedied?	75 (37.5)	16 (8)	109 (54.5)
Do you understand the word fossilization?	62 (31)	122 (61)	16 (08)
Age and motivation are important factors in the learning of ESL	131 (65.5)	56 (28)	13 (6.5)
Anxiety and attitude can influence the learning of ESL affective factor	138 (69)	58 (29)	04 (2)

Open-Ended Questions
13 How can you justify the word 'interlanguage in your learning of ESL?
15 Can your errors be remedied?
17 How has fossilization affect your mastery of ESL? Give your view(s).
20 In your words, explain the effect of anxiety and attitude in ESL learning.