LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED PRESCHOOLERS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL APPROACH

BY

ELOM, PHILOMENA NGELE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,
FACULTY OF ARTS,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,
ZARIA, NIGERIA

APRIL, 2019

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED PRESCHOOLERS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL APPROACH

BY

ELOM, PHILOMENA NGELE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE (BA NAU) 2013

P15AREN8024

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TOTHE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS (MA) DEGREE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,
FACULTY OF ARTS,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,
ZARIA, NIGERIA

APRIL, 2019

Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation entitled **"Language Development of Selected Preschoolers: A Cross-Sectional Approach"** has been carried out by me in the Department of English and Literary Studies. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for another degree or diploma at this or any other institution.

Elom, Philomena Ngele ---------- ----------

Name of Student Signature Date

Certification

This dissertation entitled LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED PRESCHOOLERS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL APPROACH by **ELOM,PHILOMENA NGELE**meets the regulations governing the award of Master of Arts Degree in English Language of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

_____ _____

Prof. T. Y. Surakat Date
Chairman, Supervisory Committee

_____ _____

Dr. Jonah Amodu Date
Member, Supervisory Committee

_____ _____

Prof. T. Y. Surakat Date
Head of Department

_____ _____

Prof. A.Z. Abubakar Date
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for good health and general well-being, which were prerequisite for the completion of this study. Also, to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, for her continual intercession in my course and that of my family.

I am deeply thankful to my first dissertation supervisor, Prof T. Y. Surakat, for his expertise and valuable contributions to this work. The door of his office was always open whenever I ran into trouble or had a question about my research. Many a time, we had to modify the topic in order to bring out the best in the research. However, he consistently allowed this research to be my own work and steered me in the right direction. I also thank Dr. Jonah Amodu, my guardian cum second supervisor for his insightful comments and encouragements. I am grateful, Sir, for everything. Besides, the contributions of Dr. Auwal Muhammed are so much appreciated. Even though he wasn't part of the supervisory team, he was always ready to assist in one way or the other. To all the staff of the Department of English and Literary Studies, academic and non-academic alike, of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, thank you for sharing your rich knowledge and experience with me.

To my life-coach, Prof. Joy Chinwe Eyisi, I owe so much to you. Your love for excellence has been my guiding light. I could not have wished for a better adviser and mentor. I am extremely indebted to you.

I am grateful to my parents- Sir Chris Ubochi and Chief (Mrs) Rose Elom who provided the financial, moral and emotional support needed for the completionof this academic

pursuit. My siblings too- Iyke, Bibian, Jessy, Assumpta, Jerry, Chizzy, Amaka and Amy- thank you all for the enthusiasm in providing unfailing supports throughout my period of study.

My special appreciation goes to Mallams Ibrahim Salihu Yusuf and Khalil Sani of the Reference section, Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, for helping me to source for materials, especially when I was stuck in the course of this research.

To the amazing teachers and pupils of Our Lady, Queen of Peace Nursery School, Ahmadu Bello Universityand Rehoboth Academy, Zaria, I appreciate you. The teachers made data collection easier by assisting in various ways. The children's playful nature, though sometimes difficult to control, was a source of joy.

Finally, to Chinedu Osunkwo, the brother and friend I found on my sojourn at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, thank you so much for not losing patience with me, especially in helping me through the rigorous process of data collection. I am grateful.

Without all your contributions, this research work would not have seen the light of the day. Thank you all.

Elom, Philomena Ngele

P15AREN8024

Abstract

Studies in child language indicate that social and environmental conditions affect the rate of language development in children. Most of these researches have been carried out in western countries with different sociolinguistic settings. The few available ones in Nigeria are longitudinal studies where each of the researchers used just one subject, a child, of which it is difficult to generalise their findings with unstudied children. This study is, therefore, a cross-sectional assessment of language development of selected preschool children. The motivation of the research stemmed from observed variation in the language abilities of children and how social variables contribute to this.The research objectives were to investigate the relevance of home and school environment, as well as the roles of age and gender to the pace of language development in children. The research used 12 subjects between 2 and 5 years, from different sociolinguistic environment. The subjects were purposively sampled from two nursery schools: Queen of Peace Nursery School, Ahmadu Bello University and Rehoboth Academy, both in Zaria. The choice of the two schools was based on the perceived wide discrepancy in their condition of learning. Both questionnaire and elicitations were used to gather data. The questionnaire provided demographic information about the subjects. On the other hand, the elicitations involved presenting a collection of objects to the children. Attention was paid to their ability to label the items, their articulation and understanding of the objects. The theory used for data analysis was an eclectic approach, comprising Mentalism and Behaviourism, while Bloom and Lahey (1978)served as a transcription model. With regard to the relevance of home background, it was discovered that whereas linguistic background and occupation of parents can influence the pace of language development in children, it is not the same withparental educational/economic status andthe birth position of children. Data also showed that school environment plays a key role in the rate at which children master language, as certain classroom practices such as imitation, practice and reinforcement make language development faster. This finding supports the behaviourist view that children ‘learn’ language just like any human behaviour, imitating the adults around them. However, some verbal behaviours of the subjects such as the prevalent use of overextension, sound simplification and correct conceptualisation of objectswithout knowledge of their signifiers, showed that language development is much more than imitation, as the children could not have picked such behaviours from adults.This emphasises the mentalist postulate that language development is a maturation process. In addition, the study found that age is a major contributor to linguistic competence in early childhood, while gender has little or no significant effect on the process.

Table of Contents

Cover Page
i
Title Page
ii
Declaration
iii
Certificationiv
Acknowledgements
v
Abstractvii
Table of Contents viii
List of Tables xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background to the Study 1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem 3
1.3 Research Questions 4
1.3 Aim and Objectives 4
1.4 Justification for the Study 5
1.5 Scope and Delimitation 6
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2. 1. Topical Review 7
2. 2. 1 Language Acquisition and Language Learning 7
2. 3. Theories of Language Acquisition 11
2. 3. 1. Behaviourism/Environmentalism 12

2. 3. 2. Mentalism 15

2. 3. 3. Cognitivism 17

2. 3. 4 Social Interactionism 20

2. 4. Stages of Language Development 21

2. 4. 1. The Prelinguistic Stage 22

2. 4. 1. 1. The Birth Cry and other Types of Cry 22

2. 4. 1. 2. Cooing 23

2. 4. 1. 3. Babbling Stage 24

2. 4. 2. The Linguistic Stage 27

2. 4. 2. 1. Holophrastic/One-Word Stage 28

2. 4. 2. 2. Two-Word Stage 30

2. 4. 2. 3. From Telegraphic Speech to Infinity 34

2. 3. Approaches to the Study of Child Language 37

2. 3. 1. Case Study Approach 37

2. 3. 2. Cross-Sectional Approach 38

2. 3. 3. Quantitative Research Technique 39

2. 3. 4. Qualitative Research Technique 40

2. 4. Linguistic Models in the Analysis of Child Language 41

2. 4. 1. Pivot Grammar 41

2. 4. 2. Transformational Generative grammar 43

2.5. Debates on the Effects of Social Factors on Child Language Development 43

2. 6. Review of Empirical Studies 45

2. 6. 1. Some Studies on Language Development in Nigeria 46

2.6. 2 Studies in Western Cultures 52

2. 7. Theoretical Framework/Linguistic Model 63

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Collection Technique 64

3.1.1 Questionnaire 65

3.1.2 Elicitations from the Subjects 65

3.2. Recording Procedures and Duration 65

3. 3 Sources of Data 66

3. 4 Population/Sampling 67

3. 5 Instruments for Data Collection 67

3.6 Transcription and Analysis Procedures 68

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OFDATA AND ANALYSIS

4.1. The Extent of the Relevance of Home Background to Language Development 70

4. 1. 1 Educational/Economic Background and Language Development 70

4. 1. 2 Linguistic Background and Language Development 72

4. 1. 3 Birth-Order and Language Development 74

4. 2 The Roles of Age and Gender in Child Language Development 76

4. 2. 1 Age Variation and Language Development 76

4. 2. 2 Gender and Language Development 77

4. 3 Influence of School Environment on Language Development 78

4. 4. Linguistic Features in Child Language 80

4. 4. 1. Phonological Features 80

4. 4. 2. Morphological Features 84

4. 4. 3. Semantic Features 85

4. 4. 4. Features of Code-Mixing 86

4. 5. Findings 87

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5. 1 Summary 93

5. 2 Conclusion 95

5.3 Limitations of the Study 96

5.4 Suggestion for Further Studies 97

References 99

Appendices107

List of Tables

Table 1: Educational/Economic Background and Language Development71

Table 2: Linguistic Background and Language Development 73

Table 3: Birth-Order and Language Development 75

Table 4: Age Variation and Language Development 77

Table 5: Gender and Language Development 78

Table 6: Queen of Peace Performance79

Table 7: Rehoboth Academy Performance79

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Every child born with normal brain function has the ability to acquire the language of his environment. This is regardless of race, culture or intelligence. Chomsky (1959) attributes this to the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). According to him, cited in Surakat (2001: 22), "a child is programmed to speak a language whether he likes it or not, because a Language Acquisition Device has been inherently 'wired into his brain' from birth". In this view, language resides in a unique mental organ, seen as a 'special gift' to the human species and does not require motivation or the environment to develop. Language development is, therefore, the process in which a child internalises the language of his speech community. This occurs in a sequence of identifiable stages. The child begins from pre-linguistic birth cry, cooing, babbling, then acquires first words, and in just a few months, begins to piece words together into sentences. At the age of four, a normal child has developed the speech pattern similar to that of adults in his speech community. As he goes through these developmental strides, he is not only a source of amusement and delight to his parents but also a source of information.

However, although a child has the inbuilt mechanism to pick up the language of his environment, the contributions of the environment cannot be relegated. This is because the LAD is triggered off by the environment. (Environment includes everything that is outside of the child such as people, culture, topography and so on.) For instance, the environment provides language input for the child to process, and adults' speech to the child helps him with the correct contexts for language usage. Language development,

hence, includes the process and the contributing factors, both internal and external, involved in understanding and producing language during early childhood. Factors such as the Language Acquisition Device, motivation, imitation and practice are considered agents of language development.

It is important to note that overall speech development varies from child to child. Child language researchers ascribe this to the prevailing social and environmental conditions surrounding each child. Thus, factors such as age, sex, birth position, culture, psychological disposition, love and care, economic status, linguistic background, and so on have been assigned to facilitate the rate of language development in children. It is here that the motivation of this research is based on. For instance, the girl child has been said to speak faster than the boy counterpart. Supporters of such position uphold that females are socially conditioned to build connections through talk, and are therefore more used to asking questions and propelling conversation (Encyclopedia of Health, 2017). Children with older siblings have been claimed to possess higher language skills than first-born children due to the quantity of linguistic data available to them, and children exposed to extensive vocabulary and complex grammatical structures more quickly develop language and also have a more accurate syntax than children raised in environments without complex grammar exposed to them.

There are two approaches to the study of child language development: cross-sectional and longitudinal approaches. Cross-sectional method, which this research has adopted, seeks to compare children's linguistic ability at a particular time. Children from different social backgrounds are observed, and inferences about their language development are drown from different language behaviours that are observed. The approach contradicts case

studies/longitudinal methods, which use time as the main variable and try to make an in-depth study of a child or a small group of children in order to understand the process of language development over a long period of time. This research, therefore, examines the contributions of social variables to the language development of selected preschoolers.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Many studies have been conducted over the years in Asia, Europe and America to ascertain the course children follow in internalising their first language. In Africa, and Nigeria in particular, studies in child language are few in number. This is irrespective of the fact that child language study is core to any nation, and inadequate research in the area can result in unnecessary fear among parents in cases of language delay, the adoption of unconformable teaching methods and the introduction of alien language policies in language education. For instance, a mother may be worried and wonder why her child is slow in using language compared to her neighbour's child of the same age. A teacher, ignorant of the background of her pupils/students may use unsuitable teaching techniques in the classroom. This is because research has not made this knowledge available to those concerned. Also worthy of note, is the fact that most of the few studies such as Ndahi (1982), Mamman-Katsina (1992) Onyenobi (1997), Surakat (2001) and Ambrose (2010) are longitudinal/case studies. The problem, however, is the difficulty to use the findings of such studies to generalise what is obtainable in unstudied children except where many case studies produce similar results (Dromi 1987:64).

McCarthy (1940), Lum, Pwell, Trimms and Snow (2007), Dodd, Holm, Huaz and Crosbie (2003) are cross-sectional experimental studies from the Western society. Each of the studies centres on one or few social variables. The present study incorporates many

social factors to uncover their place in the rate of language development in children. Because the previous cross-sectional researches are conducted in Western cultures, there is also need to conduct a local research on the language of children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, in order to find their areas of similarities and dissimilarities, and to compare the findings of earlier cross-sectional studies.

1.3 Research Questions

This study intends to answer the following research questions:

i. To what extent is home environment of relevance to the language development of preschoolers?
ii. What are the roles of age and gender in child language development?
iii. How does the school environment influence the pace of language development in children?
iv. What are the distinctive features of the language of preschool children?

1.4 Aim and Objectives

The study aims to investigate the language development of selected preschool children, using the cross-sectional approach. It is the focus of the researcher to uncover how children of varying social backgrounds comprehend and use language. To realise this aim, the research objectives are to:

i. analyse the extent in which the home background is of relevance to the language development of preschool children;
ii. explore the role of age and gender in child language development;
iii. assess the influence of school environment on the pace of language development in children; and

iv. identify the distinctive features of the language of preschoolers.

1.5 Justification for the Study

This research should be of importance to parents, teachers, government policy makers, communicative linguists, pediatrics and speech pathologists. For parents and guardians, there is need for them to understand the processes and stages of child language development and how children generally use language to express their feelings, ideas and emotions in response to their environment. It further serves as a guide in understanding the speech mannerisms and idiosyncrasies of a child in order to be able to decipher the child's utterances in a given context.

In pedagogy, the study is relevant. There will be less attention on errors committed by children, knowing full well that at the right age, when the children's articulatory organs are properly formed, they will use language as expected, except in a case of language impairment. Knowledge of the phases of language development will help preschool teachers to adjust their teaching methods and materials. Through this study, also, teachers will come to appreciate the contributions of demographics and other social factors in the mastery of English, thereby avoiding unhealthy comparisons among children.

Furthermore, this research is important to language policy makers, who need to know the most effective curriculum to be adopted, as regards language teaching and learning, especially in the area of bilingualism. Finally, paediatrics and communication theorists need this study as the knowledge inherent would be useful in analyzing the linguistic and nonlinguistic devices employed by children to express themselves.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation

Child language development is a very broad area that it will be difficult to cover all aspects in one research. Bearing this in mind, emphasis is made on lexical development. Other aspects of linguistics- such as phonology, morphology and semantics- are secondary in the work and therefore treatedonly where necessary. It is important to note that lexical development covers a wide area too. As such, the present work is specifically limited to the development of objects words, and a little attention on action words. This is because the development of object words is faster and more prominent among preschoolers compared to action, social and modifying words (See Nelson 1973, Dromi 1987 and Ambrose 2010.).

Also, the children selected are between the age of 2 and 5 years. These comprise children from different socio-economic backgrounds. The backgrounds considered are the home, school, age and gender of the subjects. However, home and school environments encompass a wide range of variables, too many for coverage. In line with this, the study considers the subjects' birth position, linguistic background and parental educational cum economic status in relation to home environment, while the school's physical environment and instruction methods are looked at, with regard to school environment. The data are delimited to interactions and elicitations that took place at school between the subjects and the researcher and from the questionnaire distributed to their parents and guardians. Finally, this research covers both language comprehension and production, even though there is more emphasis on the later.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter comprises two major parts: literature review and theoretical framework. Literature review is further divided into topical review and review of empirical studies. In the topical review, issues that are germane and contemporary to the present study are discussed, while the review of empirical studies considers previous related studies in the research area. The second major section, which is concerned with the choice of theoretical framework, looks at the theory adopted for data analysis.

2. 1. Topical Review

This section focuses on the review of topics and concepts that are related to the area of study such as language acquisition and language learning, theories of language acquisition, stages of language development, etc.

2. 2. 1 Language Acquisition and Language Learning

Nobody is formally taught his first language. According to Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2010), "children seem to act as little linguists equipped with a perfect theory of language, which is used to construct the grammar of the language they grow up to hear." Children take up their mother tongue through interactions with their parents and the environment that surround them. Their need to communicate paves the way for language acquisition to take place.

The term language acquisition is used to refer to the assimilation of mother tongue or L1 which is accomplished in the natural environment in which the child lives (Yule, 2014). In other words, a language acquired is the language mastered in a natural way through

direct users or adult users of the language. The language is acquired during childhood. Normally, no formal teaching of the language takes place during acquisition. Chomsky (1959) postulates that language acquisition is made possible by an innate capacity in every human being to acquire language. This explains why Krashen (2010) posits that language acquisition is an unconscious process developed by using language meaningfully. By the time a child is five years old, she can express ideas clearly and almost perfectly from the point of view of language and grammar. Krashen goes on to state that "Though parents never sit with children to explain to them the workings of the language, their utterances show a superb command of intricate rules and patterns that would drive an adult crazy if the child tried to memorize them and use them accurately." This implies that it is through exposure to the language and meaningful communication that a first language is acquired, without the need of systematic study of any kind.

It is important to note that a child can acquire more than one language, although the procedure followed may vary. He may acquire two or more languages at the same time, for example, if raised by parents from different linguistic backgrounds, resulting in simultaneous bilingualism. On the other hand, he may acquire the second language after having considerably mastered the first language, for instance, if the parental tongue is different from the language of the community. This type of bilingualism is called sequential or successive bilingualism.

Although language acquisition is most times associated with first language, an adult can also acquire a second language, especially if he finds himself in the environment of the target language, surrounded by native speakers, and he has no alternative language to use for communication. In this case, he acquires the language naturally without a language

teacher. It is in concert with this that Klein (1986) lists three basic types of language acquisition to include a) First Language Acquisition (FLA), b) Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and c) Re- acquisition. While FLA is the development of first language, that is, the language the child comes in contact with first, after birth; the SLA describes the internalization of a language in addition to one's first language or mother tongue (a case of sequential bilingualism); and re-acquisition is the process where one recovers a lost language, if only because it is not really lost but has become inaccessible (Klein, 1986). Klein adds that re-acquisition is easier for a child than an adult because the adult would have passed the critical period.

Lenneberg (1967) hypothises that first language could be acquired only within a critical period, extending from early infancy until puberty. In its basic form, the critical period hypothesis needs only have consequences for first language acquisition. Nevertheless, Johnson and Newport (1989) observe the need to understand the nature of the critical period, in order to determine whether or not it extends as well as to second language acquisition. If so, it should be the case that young children are better second language learners than adults and should consequently reach higher levels of final proficiency in the second language.

In distinguishing between language acquisition and language learning, Ingram (1975:219) states that "the distinction… lies in the difference between the learning strategies employed by the learner". According to his dichotomy, the child determines his own strategies in acquisition while the teacher imposes those strategies on him when he learns an L2. This suggests that language learning is a formal situation which involves teacher, content, feedback, error correction, rule learning and artificial environment. It introduces

aspects of the content one at a time. Because there is a teacher, the work done in class is mostly grammatically oriented: tenses, rules, multiple choice and exercises.

Foppoli (2016) argues that language learning is not communicative. It is the result of direct instruction in the rules of language. In language learning, students have conscious knowledge of the new language and can talk about that knowledge. They can fill in the blanks on a grammar page. However, knowing grammar rules does not necessarily result in good speaking or writing. A student who has memorised the rules of the language may be able to succeed on the standardised text of English language but may not be able to speak or write correctly. Brown (1994: 48) summarises the differences between acquisition and learning thus:

a. L1 acquisition is genetically triggered at the most critical stage of the child's cognitive development, while L2 learning is not genetically triggered in any way unless the child grows up as a bilingual.
b. The 'engine' of language- its syntactic system- is 'informally encapsulated'- which means that children are not even aware of developing a complex, rule-governed, hierarchical system. Most L1 speakers do not even realise this is what they are using. On the other hand, the syntax of the L2 is not acquired unconsciously, or at least not in the way L1 syntax is acquired. Few L2 learners develop the same degree of conscious, rule-governed insight into and use of the L2 which they demonstrate with L1.
c. The L1 is typically acquired at the crucial period of cognitive development; pre-puberty, when L1 and other crucial life-skills are also acquired or learned,

whereas the L2 is not learned as part of the learner's general cognitive development. It is not essential life-skill in the same way that the L1 is.

d. Children never resist L1 acquisition, any more than they resist learning to walk. There is often great conscious resistance to L2 learning.

In as much as the views of these linguists- Chomsky (1959), Lenneberg (1967), Ingram (1975), Klein (1986), Brown (1994), Johnson and Newport (1989), Foppoli (2016)- are important in understanding the respective make-ups of language acquisition and language learning, what they have failed to mention is the fact that acquisition is limited to only speech and comprehension. A child may internalise the language of his immediate environment, but not in the areas of such skills like reading and writing, which are among the four basic language skills. Besides, language acquisition is a continuous process and sometimes converges with learning. For instance, 8 out of the 12 subjects of the current research have English as their first language. This does not stop them from 'learning' the language in the classroom. This makes it difficult to draw a clear dichotomy between acquisition and learning.

2. 3. Theories of Language Acquisition

There are different theoretical approaches that explicate language acquisition. Knudtzon and College (1998) posit that they are based on 'nature versus nurture', that is, the separate influences hereditary and/or environment may have on the language acquirer. These theories range from the behaviourist approach to more recent formal properties of language itself or on the social-communicative functions, which language fulfils in human interaction (Kess, 1985). Each of the theories has its strengths and shortfalls; no theory of language acquisition is perfect as none adequately satisfies all the diverse views

concerning how children pick up their first language. It is usually from the weakness of the previous theory that critics propound a new one, as an attempt to improve on it (Ambrose, 2010). The prominent theories of child language development include: Behaviourism, Mentalism, Cognitivism and Social Interactionism.

2. 3. 1 Behaviourism/Environmentalism

The best known attempt to construct a behaviourist model is B. F. Skinner's *Verbal Behaviour* (1957). Skinner is commonly known for his experiments with animal behaviour (rats), using Skinner boxes. He believes that fundamental learning processes are the same in animals as in man, that is, that one can adequately account for human behaviour by applying principles derived from laboratory work on small animals.

According to Skinner, cited in Ndahi (1982):

> Speech (verbal behaviour) is a motor behaviour which is controlled by its consequences. When consequences are rewarding, behaviour is maintained and increased in strength and frequency; when consequences are punished, or when there is lack of reinforcement entirely, the behaviour is weakened or eventually extinguished.

According to Skinner, the stimulus is the input the child gets from his environment and the response is his output as the verbal utterances/gestures the child produces in a bid to communicate. Thus, skinner sees the environment as responsible for making linguistic impressions on the child as he 'learns' language. Skinner goes on to state that for a child to make such a response in the first place, his first attempts at producing the piece of language will be reinforced.

Surakat (2001) captures the tenets of Behaviourism thus:

> The neonate or new-born child is portrayed by behaviourists as a blank slate or '*tabula- rasa*' (as expressed by John Locke (1632-1704). In other words, the neonate is perceived as a 'pure mind' which has not been 'polluted' or influenced by any external impressions whatsoever. But as the mind matures with age, environmental stimuli prevail on him and he begins to respond or form his own impressions accordingly.

In summary, this school of thought encapsulates all aspects of the physical environments responsible for language behaviour. The proponents- Ivan Pavlov (1927), J. B. Watson (1930), L. Bloomfield (1935) and B. F. Skinner (1957)- give credence to the environment as the foremost catalyst responsible for all learning endeavour, language inclusive. Behaviourists believe that imitation, practice and reinforcement are the critical factors that facilitate language acquisition. While imitation is the attempt the child makes to model after his L1, practice is the contact sounds he mimics to himself on what he hears around him; reinforcement is the rebukes or praises he receives from the adults when he attempts to speak the language (Surakat ibid).

Criticisms against Behaviourism: Behaviourism is criticized for being more mechanistic and at best contributes only to explaining the development of surface structure of the language (Erasmie, 1975). Again, Clark (1975) argues that Behavourism is not a reflexive theory and says nothing on the stages of language development. It is known that at different stages of a child's growth, he tends to change his understanding and use of language. The theory does not account for this capability. Besides, Chomsky points out that not all sets of vocal habits are conditioned by stimuli. We do not say things to people because of past reward. A large proportion of what we say depends on features of situation, the knowledge each conversation partner attributes to the other.

In Stark's (1980) point of view:

> A single emission of response, even if it is reinforced is by no means enough for learning to take place. Only if a response is repeated can it be fully learned. Hence, the strength of learning is measured in terms of the number of times that a response has been made and reinforced. The notion of 'repetition' is therefore extremely important to the behaviourists as far as language acquisition is concerned.

Innatists further contend that reinforcement plays just a passive role in speech development because what is often effectively corrected by parents is either the pronunciation or the content (i.e. the truth value of the utterances of their children. Attempts to correct children's grammar are usually futile. (R. Brown 1973; D. Brown (1980; and Ndahi (1982, cited in Surakat 2001: 25). Besides, Chomsky argues that the linguistic data available to the child are impoverished and not sufficient for a child to inductively arrive at a grammar capable of producing well-formed novel expressions, yet at the same time, not producing ill-formed expressions (Akmajian et al, 2001: 477). Language development in children, according to him, occurs spontaneously and does not require conscious instruction or reinforcement on the part of adults. In a very short period of time, children are able to develop very comprehensive linguistic systems on their own. Consequently, Chomsky notes that although adults often imagine that they are 'teaching' children how to speak, there is no convincing evidence that children need such instructions. As many parents have discovered, the attempts to instruct children in language can produce frustrating results. Consider the illustration below.

Child: I Taked cookie.

Mother: You mean you took a cookie?

Child: Yes, I Taked cookie.

2. 3. 2 Mentalism

This theory is also referred to as Innatism or Rationalism. It contradicts behaviourism at almost every point. Mentalism as postulated by Noam Chomsky (1959) upholds that an individual learns a language because he possesses an inborn capacity which permits him to do so as a normal maturational process. Chomsky states that at least some part of language must be accounted for by special language acquisition mechanism embodying innate knowledge about the general nature of grammar. This knowledge limits the generalizations learners are capable of making about the language they hear. The mechanism that embodies the knowledge is known as Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Exposure to language in the child's environment triggers his innate potential (LAD), setting his language acquisition in motion. In other words, language exposure provides linguistic data for the child's innate mechanism to work so as to discover particular details of his language apart from other human languages.

Marshal (1979) explains that LAD begins its life as a proper subpart of a fertilized egg and ends its major development progression some five to twenty years later. The LAD is an expression used to refer to hypothesized innate gearing towards language. It is an inbuilt mechanism in children which enables them to acquire language at a very fast rate. Other supporters of Chomsky include, *inter alia*, Lenneberg (1967), Brown (1973), and Theovan (1984).

Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures,* which is a reaction against the claims of Behaviourism, avers that certain linguistic structures which children use so accurately must be already imprinted on the child's mind. Chomsky believes that the LAD encodes the major

principles of a language and its grammatical structures into a child's brain. Children have only to learn new vocabulary and apply the syntactic structures from the LAD to form sentences.

Chomsky's theory applies to all languages as they share certain things in common like nouns and verbs, and children appear to be 'hardwired' to acquire grammar. Every language is extremely complex, often with subtle distinctions which even native speakers are not aware of. However, all children, regardless of their intellectual ability, become fluent in their native language within five or six years (aggslanguage.com).

According to Ndahi (1982), the Innatist Theory has been able to address the question of why many elements of language are universal. Several studies have pointed out that children from different cultures express the same basic notions in their first words and phrases. Also, there is enough evidence to support Chomsky's theory of Mentalism. For instance, if an adult deliberately said a grammaticaly incorrect sentence, the child would notice, and children often say things that are ungrammatical, such as 'mama ball', which they could not have learnt passively. Mistakes such as 'I drawed' instead of 'I drew' show they are not learning through imitation alone.

Criticisms against Mentalism

Even though Mentalism/Innatism has been able to explore the unseen and underlying linguistic structures being developed in the child, a major criticism against the its postulations has been on the failure of its profounders to point out the location of the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) in the brain. The theory has also neglected second language acquisition, as its focus is on first language acquisition.

2. 3. 3 Cognitivism

Another theory of language development is Cognitivism. It states that language acquisition is a combination of an experience from the outside and a capacity from within the child. Surakat (2001: 27) explicates it this way:

> From the cognitivist point of view, both Rationalism and Behaviourism are guilty of a static representation of knowledge. Mentalists are static because they depict only what the child or ideal native speaker knows; 'something which is already there in the brain or mind; something internalistic even though it cannot be seen or observed'. Similarly, the behaviourists are static because they overemphasised the role of the environment; 'something out there in the surrounding'-the externalistic notion which does not probe beyond the surface'.

This implies that an adequate theory of language acquisition must concretely link the 'internal' and the 'external' without relegating either to the background. The proponents of Cognitive Theory include Piaget (1959), Sinelair-de-Zwart (1969), Blaine (1971), Bloom (1971), Slobin (1971) and Mc Laughlin (1978). Cognitivism portrays the child as an active participant in the learning process, language inclusive. He learns via interaction with people and objects. "He is not only shaped and moulded by the environment, but he also shapes and moulds it, changing it and, to some extent, controlling it for his use in further learning" (Lindfors, 1980: 109, cited in Surakat 2001: 29). In line with this, Bloom and Lahey (1978) posit that "the child is an active seeker and processor of new information, selectively attending to the environment" (cited in Kabuk, 2016).

Cognitive linguists argue against the view that language is pre-specified, in the sense that grammatical organisation is mapped out by an innate 'blueprint' for grammar and semantic organisation. Piaget (1957), a major proponent of Cognitivism, argues that activities are organised in relation to the environment which coordinates the information

that children receive. Children then progress from trial and error learning to using rudimentary insights in solving simple problems.

Tomasello (2003) addresses the issue of how children acquire the syntax of a language as a reaction against the nativist's theory. He argues that children formulate abstract syntactic generalizations rather late in the learning process (around the age of 4 or 5). According to Tomasello, more abstract constructions, framed in increasingly adult-like and 'syntactic' terms, are progressively formulated through the application of pattern-recognition skills ('analogy') and a kind of statistical analysis of both incoming data and previously acquired constructions, which he calls 'functional distributional analysis'.

Tomasello's theory differs from the Chomskyan approach in three important respects. First, it employs a different conception of linguistic competence and the end state of the learning process. Rather than thinking of competent speakers as representing the rules of grammar in the maximally abstract, simple and elegant format devised by generative linguists, Tomasello conceives of them as employing rules that are not formulated in purely syntactic terms. He adopts a different type of grammar, called 'cognitive-functional grammar' or 'usage-based grammar,' in which rules are stated partly in terms of syntactic categories, but also in semantic terms, that is, in terms of their patterns of use and communicative function.

The second aspect in which Tomasello's approach differs from that of most theorists in the Chomskyan tradition, is in employing a much richer conception of the 'primary linguistic data,' or PLD. In his view, semantic and contextual information is also used by children for the purposes of acquiring grammatical knowledge. He argues that the

sentences available in a child`s environment increases by adopting a more ‘user-friendly’ conception of natural language grammars and by expanding one's conception of the language-relevant information available to children learning language.

Third, in his view, children learn language without the aid of any inborn linguistic information: what children bring to the language learning task — their innate endowment — is not language-specific. Instead, it consists of ‘mind reading,’ together with perceptual and cognitive skills that are employed in other domains as well as language learning. These skills include:

(i) the ability to share attention with others;

(ii) the ability to discern others' intentions (including their communicative intentions);

(iii) the perceptual ability to segment the speech stream into identifiable units at different levels of abstraction; and

(iv) general reasoning skills, such as the ability to recognize patterns of various sorts in the world, the ability to make analogies between patterns that are similar in certain respects, and the ability to perform certain sorts of statistical analysis of these patterns.

The position of cognitivists is that language acquisition is a skill that children acquire just like other skills. They believe that the environment does not only play a key role in language acquisition but also the cognitive abilities of a child are also paramount. So a child is able to ask questions and direct a conversation in the direction he chooses. He is not always receiving from caregivers but is also able to understand the language he hears

around him, process it and decide which way to best use it. The cognitivists propose that children pick from the environment and are able to reason things out in the development of language.

2. 3. 4 Social Interactionism

This theory incorporates nurture arguments in that children can be influenced by the environment as well as the language input children receive from their care givers. Although the theories of Skinner, Chomsky and Piaget are very important in their own contexts, they don't necessarily take into account the fact that children don't encounter language in isolation. The child is a little linguist analysing language from randomly encountered adult utterances. The interaction theory proposes that "language exists for the purpose of communication and can only be learned in the context of interaction with adults and older children" (Mason, 2002). The theory stresses the importance of the environment and culture in which the language is being learned during early childhood development because this social interaction is what first provides the child with the means of making sense of their own behaviour and how they think about the surrounding world. In a nutshell, social interactionism postulates that "the care giver basically provides comprehensible contexts in which the child can acquire language(ibid)." Focus is on the caregiver's attitudes and attentiveness to the child in order to promote productive language habits. The founders of social interactionist theory include Bruner (1983); Gallaway and Richard (1994). According to Bruner, adult 'scaffolding' of the child's attempts to master linguistic communication is an important factor in the developmental process (ibid).

From the discussions above, one can state that the emergence of every language acquisition theory is a rallying cry and reaction against the preceding one. As such, no single theory, as all scientific endeavours, is capable of providing all needed answers to language development in children. Rather, each theory answers part of the basic questions about the linguistic phenomenon. For the behaviourist, the question of how children acquire language in the absence of formal teaching is addressed. The Innatist Theory has been able to address the question of why children regardless of different backgrounds follow a certain procedure in the mastery of their L1; Cognitivism has succeeded in addressing the issue of the relationship between thought and language, while Social Interactionism lays bare the importance of adult speakers to child language development.

2. 4 Stages of Language Development

Children do not wake up one morning with a fully formed grammar in their heads or with all the rules of social and communicative intercourse. The language is acquired through stages and, it is suggested, each stage more closely approximates the grammar of the adult language. Observations of children in different language areas of the world reveal that the stages are similar, possibly universal. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2010) point out that some of the stages last for a short period; others remain longer. Some stages may overlap for a short period, though the transition between stages has often been observed to be quite sudden. The language development of children can be grouped into two broad phases: the prelinguistic and the linguistic.

2. 4. 1 The Prelinguistic Stage

Bloom and Lahey (1982: 2) records that communication is possible even before birth. As early as the 12th week after conception, one can detect signs of unrest in the foetus, following blows or pressure applied to the mother's abdomen. By the 28th week, the foetus is listening to outside noises, such as the mother's heartbeat, intestinal sounds, voice, and cough. Sometimes, the communication can be a two-way street. For instance, mothers often report that their unborn child will kick them if they sit in a particular position. This is often a very successful way of getting the mother to sit in a different position, presumably more comfortable for the foetus (ibid). All this prelinguistic communication is concerned with ante natal. However, from the point of delivery, a neonate's prelinguistic period can be divided into the crying, the cooing and the babbling stages.

2. 4. 1. 1The Birth Cry and Other Types of Cry

The birth cry is an impulsive noise emitted by the neonate after delivery but before the umbilical cord is severed. According to Surakat (2001: 32), a normal child is expected to produce this shrill sound or noise, which has some physiological, biological and social significance. At the crying age which lasts for 8 weeks, the neonate or new born baby uses cries to communicate all forms of need and discomfort. Crystal (1997) avers that at the first few roles of life, a baby's vocal sounds directly reflect its biological state and activities. Breathing, eating, excreting and other bodily actions, concerned with survival, cause a wide range of vegetative noises such as sucking, swallowing, coughing, and burping. States of hunger, pain or discomfort that cause crying and fusing are known as reflective noises. Types of cries can be attributed to these states like the 'hunger cry', 'pain cry', 'fake cry' and 'mad cry' or 'rage cry' (which is produced when something is

taken away from the child. These cries are usually produced from the second week. From the third week, emerges 'fake cry' (when the child simply wants attention) (Surakat, ibid). It is important to note that it is not easy to attribute clearly different meanings to the different cries as studies to do so have proved abortive. For instance, hunger and pain cries tend to merge into a single distress cry, though pain cries are more often much tensed and have a different rhythm. Discomfort cries are usually shorter and occur in brief sequences; vegetative noises are even shorter and contain more consonant-like sounds. Again, Crystal (1997) observes that there is nothing language-specific about these early sounds.

In describing the linguistic features of children cry, Olabukola (2004) states that the gurgles or vegetative sounds produced are both voiced and voiceless consonant-like and vowel-like and are made when the child is either breathing in or out, while Bloom and Lahey (1978: 88) note that the sounds of these various cries usually have the segmental, distinctive features of glottal affricates, glottal fricatives and clicks.

2. 4. 1. 2 Cooing

Cooing, otherwise called happy sound, can be described as the production of clear vowels, often in relative isolation. According to Bloom and Lahey (1978: 27), it first appears when the infant is between 0: 1 and 0: 2. The first cooing sounds are produced, generally when the baby is in a settled state. When the child is between 0: 2 and 0: 6, the nature of cooing gradually changes. Consonant-vowel patterns such as /gu/, /ka/, begin to appear. The variety of sounds infants can produce in early cooing is thought to be limited by the physical configuration of their mouths. Stark (1979) relates these sounds as first produced in pleasurable interaction with an adult or an older child but may subsequently

be elicited in situations that don't involve interaction. These sounds develop alongside crying, gradually becoming more frequent and more varied as the child responds to the mother's smiles and speech. They are quieter, lower pitched and more musical than crying. Cooing or comfort sounds are pre-dominantly vowel-like, though they also involve palatal or velar consonant-like sounds such as /k/. Many also have nasal quality.

Stark (1979) states that when cooing first emerges, it tends to involve single sounds only. Later in this period, cooing sounds are strung together. These strings are not produced in a rhythmical way; there are no clear intonation contours. However, some of these sequences do begin to resemble the syllables of later speech. Then at around four (4) months, the first throaty chuckles and laughs emerge. He also believes that it is during the cooing stage that babies seem to perform the first gross activities required for the production of speech. The tongue begins to move vertically and horizontally, and the vocal cords begin to be used in coordination with it. There is a great deal of lip movement and tongue thrusting, which is thought to be a form of imitation.

2. 4. 1. 3 Babbling Stage

By the time the infant is 0: 6, the happy sounds begin to get yet more complex. Reduplication of syllables occurs such as [papa], [gugu], [kuku]. When this begins to happen, the child is generally said to be in the babbling stage. During this stage, greater numbers of clearly articulated vowels and consonants are formed, and occasionally more complex syllables. It is also during this time that intonation patterns similar to those of adult speech appear (Kaplan and Kaplan 1971, cited in Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2010)).

Ogenyi (2010) notes that babbling is much less varied than the sounds of vocal play in the early parts of this period. A smaller set of sounds are used with greater frequency and stability to produce the *gaga, mama, bababa* and other sequences known as reduplicated babbling (because of the repeated use of the same consonants). Bloom and Lahey (1978:30) record:

> One large-scale series of studies indicate that young infants produce back consonants such as [h, k, g, x] before they produce mid and front consonants. For vowels, they produce front vowels earlier than back vowels. This may seem strange... front vowels such as /i/ are really in the same position in the mouth as back consonants such as /k/…

In babbling, canonical forms are found for the first time. Babbling is characterised by a series of consonant-vowel (cv) syllables in which each syllable is perceived as being similar to every other. Different consonants and vowels within a series are used, and by the use of vowel (v); vowel-consonant (vc), and consonant-vowel-consonant (cvc) syllable in addition to the cv syllable type found exclusively in the reduplicated babbling. In addition, a greater variety of stress pattern and intonation contours are found in this later babbling. The rhythm of the utterance and the syllable length at this point in time resembles speech much more closely in timing than the vocal behaviours found in any previous stage (ibid).

There are, however, at least two different schools of thought concerning babbling. One group posits that babbling is a necessary pre-requisite for normal language acquisition. The sounds produced in this period (apart from the continuing stimulus-controlled cries and gurgles), it is believed, seem to include the sounds of human language. Children at this period are learning to distinguish between the sounds of their language and the sounds which are not part of the language. During the babbling period, children learn to

maintain the ‘right’ sounds and suppress the ‘wrong’ ones. The pitch or intonation contours of infants’ utterances also begin to resemble the intonation contours of sentences spoken by adults at this stage. Yule (2014) points out that the semantically different intonation contours are among the first linguistic contrast that children perceive and produce.

Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (ibid) emphasise on this point more: “One thing is absolutely clear. In order for language to finally develop, the child must receive either auditory input (to develop oral language) or sign language input (for a deaf child to acquire sign language).” With regard to this, Crystal (1997) upholds that the features of babbling are universal. Children, regardless of their language environment, share the same characteristics in their babbling. Hence, it has been argued that the sounds of babbling are not a random selection. Late babbling does show influence in the area of intonation. Most babbling at this stage consists of a small set of sounds very similar to those used in the early language spoken by the child. The brain seems to be controlling the development of babbling and the early speech in a similar way.

The opposing view suggests that there is no link between babbling and spoken language. Or better still, the supporters of this stand consider babbling to be less crucial in language development. Eric Lennerberg reports on a child of 14 months who for medical purposes had been mechanically prevented from making any vocal sounds for six months. Yet, one day after the mechanical restraint was removed, his output was equivalent to what one would expect from a normal 14-month-old child. Most linguists believe that in this babbling period, infants produce a large variety of sounds, many of which do not occur in

the language of the household. For instance, deaf children also babble and it is reported that their babbling up to the age of around six months seems very similar to that of normal children. Non-deaf children born of deaf parents who do not speak also babble. Thus, babbling does not depend on the presence of acoustic, auditory input. The child is imagined to be trying out every possible sound in a random manner, and that babbling would stop before speech began.

On the argument that babbling is a prerequisite to true speech, Oller et al (1976) demonstrate that this view does not hold. They argue that in many cases, babbling continues long after speech begins – sometimes as late as eighteen months. From these arguments, one can say that the role of babbling in the acquisition of oral language is not clearly understood.

2. 4. 2 The Linguistic Stage

There is no clear point or exact age at which one can say without fear of contradiction that true linguistic behaviour emerges, as language development varies among children due to certain factors outside the realm of language. However, the linguistic stage generally follows different phases. Although the age at which each child reaches a certain phase may vary from that of another child, the phases are universal among children. The linguistic stage marks the beginning of true speech in the child. It is the period that the child begins to use language to communicate various needs and intents. The stage compromises the one-word stage/holophrase, the two-word stage/pivot grammar and the telegraphic speech, in that order.

2. 4. 2. 1 Holophrastic/One-Word Stage

The word ‘holo’ comes from a Greek word meaning ‘undivided’, ‘whole’, ‘complete’ while ‘phrase’ stands for ‘a sentence’ or ‘construction’. This implies that holophrase means one word representing a whole sentence or a complete sentence (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams 2010). The one word stage is noticeable between twelve and eighteen months. However, Dromi (1987) states the stage spans between seven to twelve months. Crystal (1997) explains that this is a stage where a child learns to express himself with one word in place of a string of words (sentences), to communicate his intentions, requests and ideas.

In the area of phonology, children sounds comprise universal phonemes like /b/, /m/, /t/, /d/, which are acquired before the language specific ones like /$^{\theta}$/, /$^{\eth}$/. One word utterances are usually at the initial stage, monosyllabic and with the consonant-vowel (or c+v) structure as in *ba*, *wa*, *da*. There are also instances of duplication e.g. *dada, baba, tata*. Consonant clusters and diphthongs are very rare. For example, ‘spoon’ is pronounced ‘poon’ – the initial sibilant sound /s/ is dropped to make articulation easier. In reaction to this, Surakat (2001) points out:

> The substitution of sounds is also a predominant feature of this stage. This is due to maturational factors which make it impossible for young children to coordinate their speech organs for perfect adult-like pronunciation. Therefore, there are instances of simplification, omission, substitution of segmental sounds in holophrastic speech.

Holophrase also contains suprasegmental features like tone, intonation and stress. Even though the child’s prosodic features are not exactly like that of adults, Surakat notes that: i) Children at this stage use intonation to supplement lexico-syntactic information which they lack the maturity to produce; and ii) Nouns, because they carry more stress than any other word class, are dominantly in children’s early lexical development.

Morphologically, words by children at the holophrastic stage do not carry inflections for tense/aspects, plurality, possession, adjectives and so on. Ability for morphological inflections are usually developed at a later syntactic stage. This suggests that children learn simple general structures before complex/complicated ones (McLaughlin 1978: 90).

On vocabulary size, a minimum of 50 words was given by Nelson (1973b) for the holophrastic speech. Dromi (1987: 20), in contrast, claims that an average word lexicon contains 337 different items. In the rate of lexical acquisition, the general trend as observed by Onyenobi (1997) is that at the initial stage of true speech or holophrase, the rate of vocabulary growth is slow, followed by a rapid growth, and then a sudden drop which usually precedes combinatory speech or the two-word stage.

The vocabulary items that dominate this stage are mostly nouns and verbs. Many words that emerge here are tied to the child's immediate environment and are about the 'here' and 'now'. Action words are also part of the child's vocabulary at this stage. Although utterances at this period do not have a distinctive grammatical form, the use of prosody and gesture conveys the force of these sentence types. The semantic features of children's early utterances are over-extension and under-extension. Children in addition to these, make use of idiosyncratic jargons and other paralinguistic features of communication such as gestures, pointing, eye and body movement and so on. According to Surakat, "these are used to complement their scanty single-word verbalisations and to convey the desired or intended message to the listener/co-interlocutor."

2. 4. 2. 2 Two-Word Stage

Some months after the emergence of true speech, the child starts to combine two words at a time even though he still uses holophrastic (one-word) speech in some other contexts. Bloom (1973), cited in Surakat (2005), observes that some children utter sequences of one word in succession before they actively begin to use two-word sentences. Children are known to talk about 'here' and 'now' such that reference is usually made to what they see and do. Hence, sequence of holophrase occurs in a situation where two different words appear in succession within the same speech event. This phenomenon is noticeable about the second half of the second year and it usually serves as an antecedent to productive use of two-word sentences (Surakat, 2005: 42). The prosodic features which characterise successive single-word utterances are (i) each word occurs with a terminal falling pitch contour (ii) there is a relatively equality in stress for each word: and (iii) there are distinct pauses which clearly mark the boundary between the words. Items in successive one-word utterances (SWE) can refer to persons, events, objects and action; and the other of their occurrence is generally unpredictable (ibid: 43).

At the two-word stage, otherwise called pivot grammar, the child begins to display knowledge of grammatical structure by combining two words to form a sentence. Just as in other stages of language development, there is no exact stage that a child must attain before he/she starts making two- word utterances. This is because language development varies among children. However, Yule (2014) posits that a child begins to use two-word utterances around eighteen to twenty months, Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2010) state that pivot grammar starts around the child's second birthday; to Akmajian, Demers, Farmer and Harnish (2001: 477), the stage falls within the second year of a child's life, while Surakat (2001: 44) opines from the eighteenth month to about the twenty fourth

month. It implies that the two-word stage falls roughly between the second half of a child's second birthday and a little into the third year.

It is important to note that what triggers the move from one word to two is entirely unclear. However, it may result in either performance factors, competence factors or even both. The two word stage can be said to begin when two words are combined into a single syntactic construction. It is at this stage that a child 'learning' English begins to use word order- for example, *baby chair, cat run, mommy sock, daddy bag, Babby go,* and so on. This suggests that this stage of linguistic development forms the beginning of a structured language (e.g. subject and predicate), and it is clear that the child is beginning to master the broader grammatical features of the language. In line with this, Akmajian et al (2001: 484) argue that the child begins to express grammatical and conceptual relations. For instance:

Doggy big (declarative)

Where ball (interrogative)

No egg (negative)

More sugar (imperative)

Yule (2014) points out that the adult interpretation of such combination is very tied to the context of their utterance. For instance, the phrase *baby chair* may be taken as an expression of possession (This is baby's chair.), or as a request (Put baby in chair.) depending on different contexts. Whatever it is that the child actually intends to communicate via such expressions, the significant functional consequences are that the adult behaves as if communication has taken place, that is, the child not only produces speech but receives feedback which usually confirms that the utterance 'worked'.

Children at this stage pronounce words in a peculiar way distinct from that of adults. Surakat (2001: 247) is of the view that there is a slight improvement in the pronunciation of the two-word stage when compared with that of holophrastic speech. He also adds that the phoneme inventory as well as vocabulary is improved upon qualitatively and quantitatively. However, phonology at this stage is marked with sound substitutions. For instance, the voiced affricate /dʒ/ is substituted with the voiced alveolar plosive /d/. Hence, *jump*/dʒʌp/ becomes /dʌmp/. Menn (1985), cited in Akmajian et al 2001 explains that her subject (Daniel) replaced initial labial stops with the voiced velar plosive /g/ when the word ended with a velar stop.

Bug /gʌg/

Big /gig/

Bike /gajk/

In consonant cluster with stop, it is observed that children at this stage pronounce the stop alone.

Clean /ki:n/

Tree /ti:/

Stop /tɔp/

Queen /ki:m/

Two-word stage, just as the holophrase, is dominated by content words like nouns, verbs and qualifiers. This notwithstanding, the stage shows evidence of grammatical structure. For example, certain grammatical and conceptual relations ensue- the possessor followed by the possessed: *Baby book. Daddy pant.* Or subject followed by predicate*: car go,*

carriage broke, baby cry. Pivot grammar can also show subject-locative relation, as in *sweater chair* to mean *the sweater is on the chair,* or to show conjunction as in- *sweater and chair.* Akmajian et al (2001: 484) note that there is no negation nor auxiliary verbs. Take for instance: *Baby did notcry* remains *Baby cry*, *Mommy has left* becomes *Mommy go.*

At the morphological level, children at the stage of pivot grammar generally omit inflectional markers for gender, person, number and tense in their speech. Consider the following.

Ada cries. Dada cry.

Two boys two boy

Mommy's sock mommy sock

This idea is supported by Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2010) who claim that during the two-word stage, there are no syntactic or morphological marker; that is, no inflections of number, or person, or tense, and so on. The omission of these inflections shows that the child is being systematic rather than copying.

It is not always possible to determine so precisely the meanings which children attach to the words they use. Just as in one-word stage, Yule (2014) assert that a child at the two-word stage will use *apple* to refer to a number of other rounded objects like tomatoes and balls, but will have no difficulty picking out the apple when asked, from a set of such round objects. This process is called overextension, and the most common pattern is for the child to overextend the meaning of a word on the basis of similarities of shape, sound and size, and to a less extent, of movement and texture (Yule ibid). According to Surakat

(2007: 67), “children at the two-word stage continue to use idiosyncratic features to communicate their ideas, emotions and desires. As a result, adults rely on contextual, nonlinguistic clues to disambiguate children’s two-word expressions”.

2. 4. 2. 3From Telegraphic Speech to Infinity

There doesn’t seem to be any ‘three-word’ sentence stage. When a child starts stringing more than two words together, usually around two (2) years of age, the utterances may be two, three, four, five words or longer. These first utterances of children that are longer than two words have special characteristics. Usually, the small ‘function’ words such as *to, the, can, is*, and so on, are missing; only the words that carry the main message- the content words occur. Children at this stage often sound as if they are reading a Western Union message, which is why such differences are called telegraphic speech (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams 2010). For example

Cat stand up table.	Cat is standing on the table.
What that?	What is that?
Andrew want that.	Andrew wants that/Andrew, what is that?
Cathy build house.	Cathy built a house/ Cathy is building a house.
No sit there.	Don’t sit there.

This means that the child has clearly developed some sentence-building capacity. While this type of telegraph-format speech is being produced, a number of grammatical inflections begin to appear in some of the words (Yule 2014). The child also begins to use negative sentences. At the one-word stage, negation is expressed by single words

with negative meaning such as *no* or *allgone.* But at the two-word stage, these negative words occur at the beginning (or rarely at the end) of expressions- for example, *no, eat, allgone milk.* However, in the telegraphic stage, the negative words begin to occur within expressions, between subject and predicate e.g *Mommy no play.*

Akmajian et al (2001: 485) posit that the telegraphic speech at the initial stage does not have auxiliary verb with the negative- *no*t, unlike in adult speech. As the stage progresses, a wider range of negative auxiliaries begin to appear, and auxiliaries finally begin to appear in positive sentences as well as negative sentences. Thus, it seems that mastery of the system of negation in English is dependent upon, or at least tightly connected with, the mastery of auxiliary verbs. The same connection, according to Akmajian *et al* (2001:485), is found in the development of questions, for auxiliary plays an important role as well.

No hot

Want milk

No daddy hungry

Mommy (wash) jacket

Surakat (2001: 47) asserts that the telegraphic utterances have constituent or syntactic structures similar to those found in adults' sentences. Despite this, telegraphic speech has its own special features. It is mainly made up of content words or lexical items. By implication, telegraphic speech very rarely contains functional words or grammatical items whose meanings are determined by their relationship with content words. No modifiers like articles, determiners nor modal verbs, auxiliary verbs and prepositions. Possessives, inflections like third-person singular and plural markers are omitted also.

Morphologically, there is the phenomenon of overgeneralisation in which the child extends the rule-governed pattern to forms that do not follow the rule. For example, the regular past tense in English is formed by adding the suffix- *ed*to the verb stem: *talk/talked, work/worked, pack/packed.* Consequently, a child at this stage is heard saying: *taked* instead of took, *shotted* for *shot*, etc.

Semantically, Surakat (2007: 63)) is of the view that overextension is rare at the telegraphic speech. This is because the child, unlike in the holophrase and pivot grammar, has acquired enough vocabulary to express meaning better. However, due to the fact that the grammar of a child at this stage has not fully developed, the meanings of his or her utterances still depend largely on context. For instance, the utterance – *no daddy hungry* could mean: *Daddy, I'm not hungry* or *Daddy is not hungry.*

By the age of two and a half, the child's vocabulary is expanding rapidly and the child is actually initiating more talk (Yule, 2014). As the child acquires more and more language, or more closely approximate adult grammar,he/she not only begins to use syntactic or grammatical function words but also acquires the inflectional and derivational morphemes of the language. Eventually, all the other inflectional morphemes are added along with the syntactic rules, and finally, the child's utterances sound like those spoken by adults.

2. 3 Approaches to the Study of Child Language

Different researchers use different approaches in the study of child language. It should be emphasised that no approach is perfect, as they all have their pros and cons.

2. 3. 1 Case Study Approach

Case study, also known as longitudinal study, uses time as the main variable and tries to make an in-depth study of how a phenomenon or small sample changes and fluctuates over time. According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2002: 71), the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit- child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. Cohen and Manion (1995: 106) explain that "the purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomenon that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belong." This means that the case study is ideally suited to the needs and resources of the small scale researcher as it allows focus on just one individual or perhaps a small number of individuals.

The use of case study method in child language study, therefore, involves a deep and long time examination of a child or small group of children in order to determine the process of language development. Blaine (1963), Ndahi (1982), Dromi (1987), Mamman-Katsina (1992) and Surakat (2001) (1982) are case study researches in child language. For instance, Mamman-Katsina's work (1992) is a two-volume doctoral thesis on the speech of a monolingual Nigerian child. The work titled "Language Acquisition Process: A Case Study of Syntactic Development of a Hausa Child" focuses on the acquisition of statements, interrogatives, commands and negatives between the age of 25 and 60 months. The research shows that the child adopted different strategies in expressing these grammatical relations.

Although it has been argued that the findings of case studies are unscientific, Dromi (1987:64) points out that:

> The approach is advocated for studying very complex, context-bounded and highly dynamic processes. Hence, it is a suitable choice in Pedolinguistics because during the early periods of production, the linguistic knowledge of the child changes quickly, and it has been shown that early verbal productions are strongly dependent on their linguistic and non-linguistic contexts.

However, a shortcoming noted about case studies lies in the difficulty to use their findings to generalise unstudied phenomena. Although this type of study offers useful and in-depth information, giving a rich description of an individual, the study may be affected by 'observer bias', that is, the recorder may emphasise some aspects of the person's development and minimise others.

2. 3. 2 Cross-Sectional Approach

Unlike a longitudinal study, a cross-sectional study takes a snapshot of a population at a certain time, allowing conclusions about phenomena across a wide population to be drawn (de Villiers and de Villiers: 1973). Cross-sectional studies make comparisons at a single point in time. Bloom and Lahey (1978) note that in cross-sectional studies, different children are observed at different ages, and inferences about development are drown from different behaviours that are observed. Also, Sambo (2011: 181) has this to say about cross-sectional studies:

> Experiments conducted under strict laboratory conditions, manipulate variables in order to establish cause and effect relations between them. The object of doing so is to allow the scientist to generalise his results and to enable him to predict future occurrences of events given certain conditions.

A cross-sectional study could be experimental or observational. If it is experimental, e.g. laboratory experiment, the settings and props are the same for all subjects. For example, linguistic forms are presented to children and they are asked to respond in some way. On the other hand, if it is observational, the researcher records information about the subjects without manipulating the study environment. For instance, the researcher allows the

children to use language in the natural environment without the researcher presenting a particular linguistic form. The data are collected, comparison made and conclusions drawn (Institute for Work and Health: 2015). Another name for observational research is natural research. Thus, one can say that cross-sectional studies, whether experimental or observational, compare different population groups at a particular point in time.

In sum, cross-sectional experimental studies, in pedolinguistics, seek to explain children's linguistic behaviour by manipulating variables suspected of producing an effect. Examples of cross-sectional child language studies are McCarthy (1940), Nelson (1973), Lum et al (2015). Lum et al's study investigated language skills in groups comprising maltreated and non-maltreated children. Results from the meta analyisis showed that maltreated children demonstrated consistently poorer language skills.

The current study adopts cross-sectional experimental approach as it aims to unearth the discrepancies, in terms of language development, among children of diverge social and linguistic settings.

2. 3. 3Quantitative Research Technique

Measurements tell us how often or how many people behave in a certain way. Quantitative research uses measurable terms to explain a phenomenon. It provides explanation for natural phenomenon. Sambo (2011: 182) avers that the explanation is based on the theories that are generalisations of observations made in controlled laboratory experiments. The explanations also enable the scientist to predict natural phenomena with some degree of certainty.

> The verification of what is learnt from specific experimentation in relation to the general population is an important goal for a quantitative researcher. Accordingly,

> within this research tradition, great efforts are directed towards the development of statistical means for deriving correct inferences about the real world from laboratory results (Hamilton 1981).

Some scholars feel that quantitative experimental methodology has failed to explain human society and human behaviour due to the differences among individuals, societies and cultures. Quantitative study of these human phenomena only gives frequencies of occurrences of certain observable manifestations of the phenomena without explaining why they occur. This explains why Lewis-Beck (1993) states that quantitative studies fail to adequately answer the question of 'why'. To gain adequate understanding of human phenomena, one must study each phenomenon within its natural setting, not in a controlled laboratory setting. Quantitative research depends on the ability to identify a set of variables. It is deductive as it tests theories which have already been proposed.

2. 3. 4 Qualitative Research Technique

Qualitative research is a naturalistic research method which uses human beings rather than statistics as the best instrument for data collection. This is because humans are responsible to the environment and are able to interact with and process data as it is being collected. While quantitative research is based on the assumptions that a theory must be constructed with strong linkage to experimentation, qualitative approaches completely deny the possibility of conducting strict and clean experimentation on questions that are related to human functioning in social environment. In outlining the features of qualitative research, Hoepfl (1997) states:

> Qualitative research uses the natural setting as the sources of the data. The researcher attempts to observe, describe and interpret settings as they are, maintaining what Patton (1990: 55) calls an 'emphatic neutrality'. A qualitative research report is descriptive; it has an interpretative character, aimed at discovering the meaning events have for the individuals who experience them and the interpretations of those meanings by the researcher.

Qualitative research is concerned with the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals producing subjective data. It is an inductive approach in that data are used to develop concepts and theories that help us to understand the social world. In qualitative research, no attempt is made to manipulate the situations under study as in the quantitative research.

These explanations suggest that quantitative research can be aligned with experimental studies while qualitative analysis goes with longitudinal studies.

2. 4. Linguistic Models in the Analysis of Child Language

Just as approaches of child language studies vary, so do linguistic models of analysis. This section discusses Martin Blaine's Pivot Grammar and Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar. Systemic Functional Grammar is another model used by some pedolinguists, although it is not considered necessary in this present research.

2. 4. 1 Pivot Grammar

Pivot grammar is a loose grammar governing two-word utterances in children. It is a common approach to the analysis of two-word utterances in children, popularised by an American linguist, Martin Braine. Braine (1963), aiming to support Noam Chomsky's ideas on Innatism, investigates the syntactic rule that children display and use at the two-word utterance stage. He studied his son and discovered that in early two-word utterances, children employ simple word ordering rules which Braine terms 'pivot' or 'open' grammar. According to Braine, cited in Packer (2001: 5), "…each pair of words selects one from a small set of words- called 'pivot'- that occurs in many utterances; and always in a fixed position (either the first word or the second)." For example, 'Allgone' is

a first-position pivot: *Allgone egg*, *Allgone milk* but not *Egg allgone;* a second-position pivot 'off': *shirt off*, *water off*, etc. According to Braine, the choice of the second word is more 'open', (frequently nouns) and could be used in any position e.g. *Mommy sock, Go mommy.* Aan (2011) states: "the rules of pivot grammar were very simple- in fact, they were reduced to the single rule that an utterance consisted of either an open word, or a pivot word, followed by an open word."

The analyses of children's pivot grammar suggest that their early utterances are not merely random groupings of words. They also imply that children are not imitating the adult speech they hear around them. The behavourists have argued that a child's linguistic behaviour is moulded by external reinforcement (e.g. adult speakers in the speech community), that is, a child 'learning' a language is corrected when 'wrong' and rewarded when 'right', and imitation plays an important role to this effect.

Blaine's Pivot grammar has been widely criticised due to the neglect of meaning (semantics). Bloom (1970), Brown (1973) and Surakat (2007) argue that Braine's pivot or open grammar only looks at syntactic word ordering regardless of the meaning of the utterance. Their studies counter- interact Blaine's claims as children's language are most times context based.

2. 4. 2 Transformational Generative grammar

The profounder of this tenet is Noam Chomsky (1957) who raises his contention to Structuralism that the study of language should not be completely inductive, but should as well be deductive to address certain linguistic issues. His movement has it that in building a theoretical account of grammar, it is interesting to use the competence of a

native speaker of a language to produce an infinite number of sentences from finite set. It is on this notion that we have “deep structure” and “surface structure”. The argument that underlies TGG is that deep structure “declarative sentence” is the type of construction analysed by structuralists while Chomsky on the other hand, argues that deep structure is a finite set and from it, other structures like interrogatives, imperative and so on, come out as the surface structure (Lyons 1981:6).It is interesting to point out that surface structures are the product of deep structure. The surface structures have what is called “Transformational rules”.

Transformational Generative Grammar is useful to this study since it highlights Chomsky’s theory of Mentalism, which is a part of the theoretical framework adopted in the study. Many child language researchers have adopted TGG in their analysis of children speech

2. 5 Debates on the Effects of Social Factors on Child Language Development

Debates abound on the effect of social variables to child language abilities. Factors such as sex, social class, birth-order, age, linguistic background, psychological make-up of the child (that is, whether introvert or extrovert), intelligence quotient,parental education and so on, have been pointed out in the debates. While some child language experts uphold the influenceof these conditions in child language, others find some of the factors irrelevant to the process. It is essential to provide some of the opinions here.

Some pedolinguists recordthat the presence of caregivers facilitates the pace of language development in children. The Motherese theory of language acquisition is the locust of this position. Motherese, also known as infant-directed speech (IDS) or “baby-talk”,

refers to the spontaneous way in which mothers, fathers, and caregivers speak with infants and young children. Snow (1972: 4), in a review of the early literature on motherese observes that "language acquisition is the result of a process of interactionbetween mother and child, which begins early in infancy, to which the child makes as important a contribution as the mother, and which is crucial to … language acquisition". This points out that frequent and rich interactions with caregivers can make language development fast in children. Few experimental findings have sustained this assertion (e.g Saint-Georges et al 2013).

With regard to linguistic background, researchers have noted that children from monolingual homes tend to be faster in the use of language than those from complex linguistic background, such as those whose parents speak two or more languages. For instance, Hart and Risley (1995) note that the language experience of children growing up in linguistically diverse environments is subject to considerable variation, both in terms of input quantity and quality and this factor is predictable of future language abilities.

Research by Stanford psychologists reveals that children of lower income, less-educated parents typically enter school with poorer language skills than their more privileged counterparts. According to their findings, this effect of socioeconomic status manifest quite early in life. By 18 months of age, toddlers from disadvantaged families are already several months behind more advantaged children in language proficiency. However, according to Hoff-Ginsberg (1985), the most relevant component of socioeconomic status for children's language development may be maternal education rather than household income per se. Recent researches have supported Hoff. For instance, Lozada (2012)

posits that ‘relatively uneducated and economically disadvantaged mothers talk less frequently to their children compared with educated and affluent mothers, and correspondingly, children of less educated and less affluent mothers produce less speech’.

These complexities in opinions and findings relating to child language development is the reason why more researches are needed in the area. The purpose of this present research is to lend a voice to the continuous debate on the subject matter. Children from different social backgrounds were sampled to determine the roles of their environments in their mastery of the English language.

2. 6 Review of Empirical Studies

Over the years, researchers have been interested in how children master language. This section examines previous studies conducted on language development, including the longitudinal and cross-sectional studies. The researches are grouped into those conducted in Nigeria and those carried out in Western environment.

2. 6. 1 Some Studies on Language Development in Nigeria

Ndahi (1982), titled “Second Language Development: A Case Study”, is a pioneer child language research in Nigeria. It is a two-volume doctoral thesis. The research is carried out using a Bassa-Nge female child, named Mana. Mana had acquired Hausa and Bassa-Nge before being exposed to the English language. The purpose of the research is to observe her progress in the acquisition of syntactic structures: negatives and interrogatives between the ages of three to five. The research is to determine whether the African child would pass through similar stages with monolingual children acquiring

English negatives/interrogative constructions or pass through similar stages with those described for L2 acquirers who acquire the language in an L2 situation.

The researcher makes her observations in natural contexts, using hand-written diary, audio and video recorders (the three-medial technique). The audio recording is done at weekly intervals lasting for 45-90 minutes per session using a Sanyo radio-cassette recorder, making it 26 hours audio recordings and video recording of 2hours, that is, a total of 28hours spread over 30 weeks. 4,024 utterances are recorded but 611 of questions and 543 of negatives are analysed giving a total of 1,154 utterances.

The study is able to find out that the subject, Mana acquires the Yes-NO questions dominantly compared to other question types. The subject also follows the pattern as other acquirers in her acquisition of Yes-No question. The only difference is that she could use modals at stage 1 and use Hausa tag- 'ko', 'ba' in English sentences. On the acquisition of negatives, Mana develops the use of negatives in the three stages representing four of the five stages of acquisition of negatives by Palermo (1978). Other strategies adopted by the subject are simplification, overgeneralization, language transfer, avoidance, repetition, etc. Finally, the study establishes that L1 and L2 learners adopt similar strategies in acquiring language. Ndahi is able to provide a detailed analysis of how children acquire and use language. Although her research is on syntax, some of her findings such as simplification and language transfer by Mana was also observed in the subjects of this research. This may be due to the fact that the subjects sharing the same age bracket. Over the years, Ndahi's research has aroused interests in CLD studies in Nigeria.

Onyenobi (1997) “Mother-Child Linguistic Interaction: A Study of the Language Development of an 18 Months Old Child” This is also a case study, but on the lexical development of a female second born child (Chi) of a Nigerian couple whose lingua franca is English, because they come from different linguistic backgrounds. Chi’s father is Igbo from Imo state while the mother is Isoko from Delta state.

The study starts in earnest when the child is ten months old and lasts for eight months. The utterances of both mother and child are taped recorded as well as jotted down in a diary during verbal interactions between mother and child in three situations – free play, storytelling and family meals. Based on a naturalistic observation of the subject by her mother and researcher during interactions, the data are restricted to the acquisition of the child’s single word utterances (holophrase). The first fifty words she produced are analysed, and since the focus is on the child’s language development, few of the mother’s utterances are analysed to compute the relationship between mother’s speech and child’s language development.

Objectives of the study are to:

a. ascertain whether language development at one-word stage is uni-dimensional. In other words, does the child acquisition language go through a fixed pattern?
b. assess whether we have sub-development during the one-word stage of the overall language acquisition;
c. uncover and characterize, systematically, the formal functional aspects of the child’s holophrastic speech.; and

d. ascertain whether motherese is modified simultaneously with change in the age and the developing linguistic capabilities of children.

To realise these objectives, the first fifty words understood by Chi are analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Maternal report reveals that comprehension precedes production. Comprehension, much more than production, is an action dominated mode evident in the action-response triggered when the child understands any word. In the case of production also, action – dominated but less obvious; words accompany rather than trigger a response. According to Onyenobi:

> Several action words were specific words associated with games such as animal sounds - 'mee', 'waowao'. This category makes up about 20% of the total action words. About 10% of the action words fall in the category of highly stereo-typed words for games such as the 'beep' for the car's horn. The action words associated with social exchanges (bye bye, n-nite) make up additional 16% of the action words produced. The largest category (30%) is action words which demand action from the mother. Words such as 'see' (asking the mother to look at something), 'put', etc... all serve to initiate actions in the mother rather than to describe or label an action she was doing herself. Examples of this type of use are 'sit' as the child sits down, 'heyo' as she picks up the telephone set, etc. This contrasts sharply with comprehension where, by definition, all action- words serve to imitate some action on the part of the child and thus become labels, to some degree, for the actions she elicited. (70)

Onyenobi's research has been able to lay bare the motherese theory of child language acquisition. Her subject, Chi, shares similar linguistic background with some subjects of the present research even though Chi is younger. Furthermore, the researcher used only diary for documenting the subject's speech, which sometimes is subjective. Our study uses the three-media technique, involving a diary, audio and video recording. This makes the data collected easily verifiable.

Ambrose (2010) "Overextension in Language Development: A Case Study of a Gwong Child:" This is an in-depth study of a monolingual child named Eliza. The aim of the

study is to collect data of a child from rural background whose L1 is a Nigerian indigenous minor language (Gwong) and determine the phonological and lexico-semantic features, with emphasis on the use of overextension. Ambrose had noted that the few existing studies in Nigeria are only in some major languages, hence the need for the study of a Gwong child. The objectives of the research include: to determine the stages of language development which the child passed through; to highlight the word production strategies adopted by the child; to analyse the subject's early lexical items; and to identify and analyse the overextension used by the subject.

The study uses the three-media technique suggested by Ochs and Schieffelin (1979) which involves the use of diary recordings (in which the subject's spontaneous utterances are entered), audio-tape recordings through the use of a micro-cassette tape recorder, and video recordings with the use of a video camera. The video-recordings are done at intervals of six months, starting from the subject's fifteenth months of age.

Ambrose has this to say about his findings:

> Under the category of words used and their semantic development by the subject, the study observes that her most productive words during the one-word stage were names of objects (38.6%). During the two-word stage, she again used the names of objects more, followed by action words than social words. (pg. 97)

This justifies the focus on object nouns in this study, as children develop object nouns faster than other noun forms.

On overextension, it is noted that the subject sometimes employed one word to refer to various syntactic structures- statement, questions, interrogation, etc. For example, the use

of the word ‘go goo’ (ball) in instances of statements, questions, command and so on. (pg. 98)

Ambrose’s research is significant in that it throws light on certain child mannerisms in language development that would benefit parents, teachers, speech pathologists and so on. The study also enlists certain unique features of a Nigerian child who grows up in a rural area and speaks an indigenous language. Since the research is on overextension of words, it is useful to the present research which is directed specifically at investigating how children conceive and use English words.However, the research can be criticised based on the ground that it does not use a specific known analytical model as the researcher provides the subject’s one and two-word stages. Such mode is not systematic.

Kabuk (2016). “Phonological Description of Two-Word Stage: The Case Study of a Nigerian Child.” Based on the premise that research in child language development (CLD) in African countries, and particularly in Nigeria, has not received adequate scholarly attention when compared to the number of researches already carried out in Europe, America and Asia, Kabuk decides to investigate the phonological acquisition of a Nigerian child, with particular reference to the two-word stage. Kabuk’s work is also a longitudinal study aimed at documenting the utterances of the child from 20-24, 32-34 months, and conducting a phonological investigation of phonemic sounds and their articulation processes. The subject, Juju, a niece of the researcher, acquires English alongside Hausa at the same time, although English is the major language of communication while Hausa is used in few instances. This is as a result of the parents being from different linguistic backgrounds but share two common languages – English

and Hausa. She also develops the Nigerian pidgin due to the multilingual nature of her parents' residence.

Kabuk (8) records that the child's holophrase emerges when she is fifteen months, and five months later, pivot grammar started. This can be said to be a little late, especially as Dromi (1987) observes that the one-word stage spans between 7 to 12 months, and Dromi's subject entered holophrase at 10 months. This delay may be due to the multilingual nature of the child's environment.

Kabuk uses the three media technique, involving a Nokia C3 mobile phone for audio recording, a diary for complement sessions and a Samsung Galaxy phone for video recording. The audio recording has 21 sessions of flexible timing, and the video, 2 sessions of 20 minutes each. As for the theoretical framework, the researcher adopts an eclectic model, merging Behaviourism and Innatism. Linguistic theory is also part of the tools used to describe the language of the child. Aspects of phonetics and phonology such as articulatory, experimental and auditory phonetics are used in the data analysis.

Kabuk makes the following findings:

a. The grammatical categories available in the language of the subject are basically content words: noun, verb and qualifiers. Function words such as pronouns, determiners and prepositions are scantily available in the utterances. This is in concert with the findings of Onyenobi (1997) and Ambrose (2010).
b. There is no conscious effort to inflect or derive a word. Utterances that approximate to that are the imitation of inflected or derived words of the adult speakers.

c. There is gross substitution of sounds, substitution of consonant for consonant, vowel for vowel, consonant for vowel and consonant cluster with a single sound.

Kabuk's work, although not on lexical development, is relevant to the present study since lexical and phonological development take place simultaneously.

2. 6. 2 Studies in Western Cultures

There are myriads of studies on child language in America and Europe. Some of the studies have been concerned with how children develop lexical items in their first language. The researchers gather their data either through longitudinal approach or cross-sectional method.

Dodd, Holm, Huaz and Crosbie (2003) is on ''The Phonological Development of British English-Speaking Children.'' The study discusses the effect of age, gender and socio-economic status on speech sound development. Speech samples of 684 children, aged 3;0 and 6;11 years, randomly selected from nurseries and schools in eight different areas throughout the United Kingdom are collected and analysed to obtain normative data. The study finds that older children have more accurate production and fewer error patterns in their speech. There is no gender differences in the younger age groups. However, in the oldest age group, it finds the phonological accuracy measures of girls better than boys. It also find no significant effect of socio-economic status on any of the phonological accuracy measures. These findings contradict McCarthy (1940), whose cross-sectional experimental study establishes that girls develop more rapidly than boys, and the upper class than the lower class. The current study shares some similarity with Dodd et al: they both used the cross-sectional method; the subjects fall within the age bracket, although

some of Dodd's subjects are older, and both studies collected data in schools. However, the number of children studied varies significantly with the later using 12 children, and while Dodd et al focus on phonological development, the present study looks at lexical development. The choice of the sample is intended to make the information gathered manageable since only one researcher is involved.

Bloom (1973).*One Word at a Time: The Use of Single Word Utterances before Syntax.* The purpose of the book, according to Bloom, is "to explain the emergence of grammar by looking at the changes in children's use of single-word utterances in the period of time before they use syntax in their speech" (p. 12). The central issues which Bloom examines concern: (1) children's knowledge of linguistic structure during the one-word period; (2) the strategies which children use in learning the grammar of their language; (3) the religion between conceptual notions encoded in two-word utterances and those encoded in earlier one-word speech; and (4) the nature of development over the one-word stage.

Bloom observes that children's use of words at this stage is accompanied by pointing, imitation, naming of objects and pictures, over and under-extension. For instance, the child would refer any male adult as his 'daddy'. At 18 month, vocabulary spurt occurs, and the child's vocabulary is associated with action (e.g. open, cut), outcomes of actions (e.g. wet, dirty), attributes (e.g. size, colour), organisation, function and context.

Arguing from a Piagetian perspective of cognitive development, Bloom concludes that children know very little about Syntax prior to the use of two-word utterances. She argues that the one-word period is not a unitary stage of development. She also claims that linguistic knowledge depends on prior cognitive achievements, and that these

influence the types of strategies which children adopt in the task of learning syntax. Bloom's work was a reaction against Martin Blaine's Pivot Grammar which postulates that children employ simple word ordering rules which he (Blaine) terms 'pivot' or 'open' grammar at the two-word stage.

Dromi (1987).*Early Lexical Development*. In this book, Dromi reports the results of a detailed study of the early lexical development of her daughter Keren, who acquires Hebrew as her first language. Dromi begins collecting data when Keren is aged 10months, when she produces her first identifiable word; data collection ceases when Keren is just under 18 months old, when she begins to produce two-word utterances with some frequency. Thus, the book focuses upon the child's lexical development during the single-word period.

The data are collected in three ways: using a diary record, audio-recording, and video-recording. The diary record provides the primary data-source for the analyses. One of the disadvantages which are normally associated with parental diaries is that the reliability and validity of the behavioural descriptions which they contain remain unassessed. This is not the case in Dromi's study: using the three different data-sources, she obtains a variety of different reliability and validity measures; these serve to demonstrate that considerable confidence can be placed in the diary data which are collected.

The data are analysed in two different ways. In one set of analyses, Dromi classifies each individual word in Keren's lexicon according to word type; she finds that 59% of Keren's words are object words, 14% are action words, 7% are social words, and 4% modifiers. These figures are within the range of those that have been obtained in previous studies

(e.g. Nelson, 1973). However, of particular interest is Dromi's finding that 16% of Keren's words are indeterminate as far as word type is concerned. These indeterminate cases usually entail the use of individual words in two or more different ways (for example, as both object word and action word, or as both object word and modifier); they tend to occur most frequently early on in the single-word period. In the second set of analyses, Dromi examines the extensional characteristics of each individual word in Keren's lexicon.

She reports that under-extension tends to occur when a word is first acquired; overextension, by contrast, tends to occur much later on in the developmental history of a word, and usually follows a period when the word has already been used correctly by the child. In addition, Dromi reports that some of Keren's words cannot be classified in terms of their extensional characteristics at all. This is because these words are used globally in the context of entire situations, rather than to refer to individual elements (such as objects or actions) within those situations; this seems to occur most frequently early on in the single-word period. Thus, not all words exhibits a simple sequence of under-extension followed by regular extension followed by over-extension; indeed, Dromi identifies 58 different sequences of extensional phenomena in the data from Keren. Dromi uses the findings from these two sets of analyses to argue that the single-word period consists of two phases. During the initial phase, the child uses words loosely to encode general intentions, global situations and inconsistent meanings; hence, during this phase, many of the child's words are of an indeterminate type and are used in the context of whole situations rather than to refer to specific objects, actions or attributes. During the second phase, the child begins to use words consistently in a clearly referential manner to

express comparatively conventional meanings. As Dromi notes, these conclusions are consistent with the theoretical formulations of Nelson & Lucariello (1985). However, it should alsobe noted that in Keren's case, the transition from the first to the second phase is very gradual; thus, there is no evidence from this study to support the idea that, midway through the single-word period, there is a sudden insight into the symbolic properties of words which results in a marked discontinuity in early lexical behaviour.

Because Dromi has recorded and analysed Keren's entire early lexicon, rather than just a portion of it, with considerable methodological care, this book makes a major contribution to our knowledge about children's early lexical development, thus, is of relevance to this research, although the subjects of our study are older than Keren. This will help in making comparison about word usage between the subjects of the two studies.

Pine, (1995) "Variation in Vocabulary Development as a Function of Birth Order." Several researchers have argued for birth-order differences in the rate and style of children's early vocabulary development. However, Pine (1995: 272) argues that "the results of those studies have so far proved inconclusive." It is in line with this that she attempts to examine the question of birth-order differences in children's early vocabulary development by comparing the composition and age of acquisition of the first 50 and 100 words of 9 firstborns and their younger siblings using a longitudinal maternal diary methodology. This means that Pine's approach is different, although the variable (birth-order) she looks at is also incorporated in this study.

Nine firstborn children and their second-born siblings participate in the study. All are from middle-class, English- speaking families, and all are cared for primarily by their mothers, whose educational levels ranged from having left school at age 16 to having completed a university degree. The firstborn children form part of a larger sample that is involved in a study of stylistic variation in early vocabulary development. There are four males and five females in the firstborn group and six males and three females in the second-born group. The age difference between siblings ranges from 18 to 45 months. Mothers are instructed to keep a continuous diary record of the subjects' speech. Child Development Diary records are then collected at monthly intervals. In the case of the firstborn children, this involves a monthly visit to the child's home, during which a 60-min audio- recording is also made. In the case of the second-born children, it involves a monthly telephone call, as the researcher has by this stage moved out of the greater Manchester area.

Pine finds a small but significant birth-order effect for the age at which the 50-word milestone is reached. However, there is no significant difference in age at 100 words, and there is a strong correlation between sibling pairs on both of these measures. As regards qualitative differences, second-borns have a significantly higher percentage of frozen phrases in their first 100 words and a significantly higher percentage of deictic personal pronouns in their first 50 and 100 words. However, no differences are found in the percentage of common nouns at either measurement point. It is argued that, on balance, these results are more consistent with a "different" than a "disadvantaged" view of later-borns' early language, and that those differences that do exist may be due, at least in part,

to the occurrence of a higher degree of observational learning in second-borns' early language acquisition.

Davis, William, Vaughn-Cooke and Wright- Harp (1993).“A Comparison of Lexical Development in a Child with Normal Language Development and in a Child with Language Delay.” The goal of the paper is to investigate and compare lexical development in the language of two Black children-one with language delay and another without language delay. The subjects, A. C. and R. J. are two Black male children from working class backgrounds. Both subjects are 18 months old at the beginning of the study and 23 months at conclusion. The data consist of spontaneous language samples video-taped in the subjects’ homes during informal play activities with friends, siblings and the investigators. A core set of toys is provided to allow for comparability and uniformity of the data; however, the children also are encouraged to play with the toys and objects in their home environment. The recorded data then are extracted and transcribed phonetically and orthographically.

Benedict’s (1979) classification system, which includes four major categories (norminals, action words, modifiers and personal-social words) is utilised in the analysis. The analysis of early lexical development in the subjects is carried out on two levels: the qualitative analysis, which involves determining the number of word types for each subject, and the quantitative analysis, which involves determining the frequency of occurrence of each word.

Davis et al have this to say about their findings:

> Although R. J.‘s acquisition of the lexicon followed the general pattern of development observed for normal children, there was a lag in the overall growth

> of his vocabulary, as indicated by fewer word types produced, when compared to the normal child (A. G.). The gap between his and the normal child's lexicon expanded qualitatively and quantitatively. This findings show language delay, specifically in the area of vocabulary development (1993: 75).

They also observe that the two children's lexicons comprise mostly nominal and action words. Despite the similarity, when comparing the number of nominal types and action word types produced by the subjects, it is readily apparent that there is an immense difference and in the size of the children's lexicons.

An analysis of the Davis et al's type can be extremely useful in the diagnosis and the development of treatment plans for the child with language delay. A comparison of the lexical development of children provides the clinician with the ability to more accurately diagnose and treat the child with language delay.

Walker (2011)researches on "Word Learning Strategies During the One-word Stage: An Analysis of One Child's Vocabulary and Phonology and its Suggestions about How Early Words Are Learnt. An Observation of a 17 Month Old Child who Only has a Few Words". The data is from a child at the age of 1;5, Emma, from Hertfordshire, England. She is the first child of a couple of working-class economic means. Her mother is the primary caregiver, a self-employed dance teacher and her father works in security. Emma has normal hearing and no obvious motor or cognitive deficits.

The data are collected across two home visits over the space of one week. Prior tothe researcher's visit, the mother of the child is asked to keep a notebook of words that the childproduces and their contexts. Additionally, she designs a questionnaire based on the *MacArthurCommunicative Development Inventories* (Fenson et *al.* 1994). The inventories on which questionnaire is based include the most common words produced by

English-speaking children of the subject's age and the questionnaire therefore serves to remind parents of words their child produces. The home observations help the researcher in analysing the child's phonology and the context of the productions, since the inventories do not account for these aspects. During the visits, she observes and makes notes on Emma's speech productions and comprehension and uses a picture book *(First 100 Words)* to track phonology and her mapping of meaning onto words.

The results indicate that Emma is advanced in phonological terms for her age, commanding use of the majority of phonemes normally achieved by 18 months, except the voiceless bilabial oral stop [p]. In addition to these, she produces the voiced velar stop expected at 2 years of age, and the labio-dental fricative expected at 3 years of age. This data is evidence against the theories that suggest there is a universal order of phoneme acquisition. In as much as some phonemes are easier to articulate than others, due to biological development of the vocal chord, etc., individual differences must be taken into account as a big factor in the acquisition. Elements of over-extension are also noted in Emma's words. This is supportive of the claim by Gelman et al. (1998) that children use words in their vocabulary to stand in for unknown terms. For instance, Emma uses 'woof woof' for all animals apart from ducks, for which she has learnt 'quack quack'.

The data Walter collected on Emma is small and so precludes the ability to make universal statements based solely on the results. However, he is able to provide a detailed analysis of individual patterns of development which has shone light on some aspects of single-word productions and the tools by which they are learnt.

Richard (2017): “Individual Differences and Second Language Acquisition among Low-Income Preschoolers” Existing literature has demonstrated associations between motivation, creativity, problem solving, language aptitude and bilingualism; however, the role of social-emotional skills in second language acquisition, particularly in young children, has been understudied. It is in line with this backdrop that Richard goes into: (1) an analysis of demographics and the role individual differences in cognitive/language skills and social-emotional skills play in English language acquisition and (2) the effects of first language proficiency on social-emotional development.

Using a sample (n = 1,501) of diverse low-income preschoolers participating in the Miami School Readiness project, the study aims to illuminate the cognitive/language and social-emotional factors associated with successful second language acquisition during early childhood. Children are assessed in the areas of social-emotional skills and cognitive/language skills at the beginning of their preschool year and then social-emotional skills are assessed again at the end of the year. Finally, English proficiency is assessed a year later at the beginning of their kindergarten year. Multivariate analyses of variance are utilized to explicate the role of individual differences in social-emotional and cognitive/language skills among monolingual English, monolingual Spanish, and bilingual preschoolers.

Findings demonstrate that Spanish-speaking preschoolers with higher levels of social-emotional and cognitive/language skills are more successful in obtaining English proficiency by kindergarten. Results indicate that demographic differences, cognitive and language skills, and social-emotional skills are all significantly related to success in second language acquisition. Further, after controlling for the effects of cognitive and

language abilities and demographic differences, social-emotional skills maintain a significant association with the attainment of English-language proficiency. First language proficiency did not predict children's gains in social-emotional development. Findings suggest that social-emotional skills are a valuable resource for English language learners, specifically in the population of low-income, minority preschoolers. Richard's work is relevant to the present study as it establishes the relationship between social class and mastery of English in early childhood. One of the objectives of this research is to determine the validity of Richard's claim in the Nigerian ethno linguistic context.

In summary, these researches contain rich and interesting data in understanding language development in children. However, most of them are longitudinal researches while the few cross-sectional experimental ones are carried out in Western cultures with different sociolinguistic backgrounds. There is no gainsaying the fact that case studies allow for a thorough study of an individual child or a small population. However, Dromi (1987) observes that their findings cannot be easily generalised except where many case studies produce similar results. It is therefore pertinent to use a different approach, a cross-sectional approach, that its findings are more amenable to generalisation. There is a need to investigate the language of preschool children in Nigeria in order to prove or disprove earlier findings from other cultures. Adopting the cross-sectional method will make it possible for the language of children from different economic background, as well as other socially determining factors, to be compared at a particular time.

2. 7 Theoretical Framework/Linguistic Model

This study adopts an eclectic approach in data analysis. It borrows from both the behaviourist and the mentalist theories to the study of language development. Although many researches indicate that every normal child is born with the ability to acquire and use language (which no finding has disproved), the importance of environment cannot be overlooked. This is because the LAD is only triggered off as a result of an individual's interaction with the world around him. Thus, the child acquires language as a result of his in-built ability and with respect to how the environment in which he grows is responsible for putting the device into action. Jean Aitchison's Stages of Children's Linguistic Development serves as a linguistic model. Aitchison argues that children follow three stages which include labeling, packaging and network building in their linguistic development. Labeling is concerned with linking words to the objects to which they refer, that is, understanding that things can be labeled. Packaging has to do with exploring the labels and to what they can apply. For example, Aitchison avers that over-extension and under-extension occurs in order to eventually understand the range of a word meaning. Network building, on the other hand, considers how children make connections between words, understanding similarities and opposites in meaning. The theory is apt for the study since the aim of the researcher is to investigate preschoolers' lexicon, their understanding and use of words.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is concerned with the 'how' of the research, that is, the instruments and procedures followed for data collection, as well as data sampling, transcription and analysis.

3.1 Data Collection Technique

This study is a cross-sectional assessment of language development of selected preschool children. Data collection involved surveying how some preschoolers internalise words, and how their social background contribute to this. Two nursery schools were used to gather data. The schools were Our Lady Queen of Peace Nursery School, Ahmadu Bello University (sometimes shortened to 'Queen of Peace Nursery School' in this dissertation) and Rehoboth Academy, both in Samaru- Zaria. The choice of the two schools was based on the perceived wide discrepancy in their condition of learning. While Queen of Peace Nursery School has more qualified teachers and better condition of learning, the same cannot be said of Rehoboth Academy (The physical context of the schools are captured in the video attached to this study). Considering this variation, the schools were selected in order to determine how environmental factors underlie the development of linguistic competence in children. Letters were written to the Heads of the nursery schools, seeking permission to use their pupils for the research. The researcher used the three-media technique of Ochs and Schieffelin (1979), cited in Surakat (2001), which involves the use of a diary, audio and video recordings- in the documentation of the subjects' responses.

For data collection, the study made use of questionnaire and elicitations from the subjects.

3.1.1 Questionnaire

30 questionnaire were randomly distributed to parents and guardians of both schools, fifteen for each. All were recovered except two from Rehoboth Academy. The questionnaire contained a total of sixteen questions requesting the demographic information about the children as well as the socioeconomic background of individual family. From the data filled in by parents, the researcher purposively selected six subjects from each school for the study.

3.1.2 Elicitations from the Subjects

Elicitation method was used to gather data, whereby the subjects were presented with the same collection of objects, testing their knowledge of the items, their ability to get the name of the objects and their articulations of the names. The responses of the children were recorded using a smart phone. The researcher ensured that the props were the same for all subjects. To reduce observer's paradox (a situation in which the subjects' outputs are wittingly influenced by the presence of the investigator), the investigator visited the two schools on regular basis for four weeks, prior to the recordings in order to ensure normal behaviour on the part of the participants when the actual data collection processes began.

3.2. Recording Procedures and Duration

Two sessions, for each school, were held with the children during data collection. In the first session, a picture with a collection of items, brought by the researcher from home

was presented to each subject on his/her seat. The picture contained items which children were familiar with and the ones not common to them. This session lasted for 35:00 minutes for Queen of Peace Nursery School subjects and 20:36 minutes for Rehoboth Academy pupils, and the interactions were tape recorded. In the second session, which lasted for 17:40 minutes for Queen of PeaceNursery School and 13:14 minutes for Rehoboth Academy, a picture of items in their respective classes was presented to the children in a group. Subjects were called out to name the objects, one after the other while others watched. Data in this session were both videoed and tape recorded. A friend of the researcher assisted, especially in video recordings. This made data collection less cumbersome. Meanwhile, prior to these two sessions, there was an observatory session in which questions were thrown at the children randomly in class, so as to test their cognitive and linguistic skills. The session served as a pilot study. The findings of the session were not included in data analysis, since the aim was to prepare the subjects.

In the first and second sessions, the children were expected to label the items in the pictures, and sometimes, explain their uses. The purpose of the explanation was to assess the subjects' comprehension of the items. The information from these two sessions were used for the analyses and findings of the research. A total of forty four (44) objects were presented to each subject. Twenty one (21) for the second sessions and twenty three (23) for the last session.

3. 3 Sources of Data

The research made use of both primary and secondary data. The primary data, which is the raw data, came from the subjects, their teachers and the parents/guardians. Apart from personal interactions and elicitations from the subjects, data were drawn from

questionnaire administered to the parents/guardians. Information got from the subjects, parents and teachers constitute the primary data. The research also used rich information in textbooks, journals, seminar papers, internet, etc which comprise the secondary data.

3. 4 Population/Sampling

The population of the study covered children between the ages of 2 and 5 years, from the nursery school in Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Ahmadu Bello University and Rehoboth Academy Zaria. According to Ndahi (1982), this age bracket witnesses true emergence of speech in children, and faster children acquire lexical structures comparable to those of adults. Children of this age are generally imaginative and creative in behavioural performance, language inclusive. The age bracket can be found in Piaget's second intellectual period, which is also the beginning of the intuitive age. Unfortunately, in Africa, they are neglected in child-language research as most studies concentrate on school-age children.

Twelve (12) children were selected, 6 from each school. The restricted population is to make the data manageable for analysis. The sampling was purposively done and strictly based on the information provided by parents in response to the questionnaire. Subjects were chosen with regard to age, gender, birth position and home sociolinguistic information.

3. 5Instruments for Data Collection

The researcher used some devices, materials and techniques to gather data. These included an ASUS smart phone for video tape and audio recording, a note pad (diary) and questionnaire. The video recording partly filled the gap created by the absence of a

language lab, as the physical context and the paralinguistic behaviours of the subjects were captured, making data easily verifiable. The audio recordings of the elicitations and responses from subjects took place during their interactions with the researcher, while unique features of a subject's lexical usage were noted down in the diary to provide an alternative data base.

3.6 Transcription and Analytical Procedures

The tape recordings were transcribed first by the child language investigator, and then by a child language researcher. All speech of the subjects and all speech to the subjects are enclosed in a pair of slash [//], in line with Bloom and Lahey (1978). A slash was also used to mark an utterance boundary. All the subjects were labeled with the initials of their first names, in order to make identification easier. The investigator's questions are indicated by question marks. When a subject is silent to a particular question, a line (____) was used to indicate the silence, while three dashes were used to indicate situations of unintelligible utterance. On the other hand, wrong answers were marked with asterisks (*), while the pair [{}] was used to indicate faulty pronunciation of words. A pair of vertical lines (||) was used to demonstrate cases of code-mixing, and a situation whereby the subjects made use of affixes, such morphological forms were underlined. A pair of bracket [()] was used to enclose the paralinguistic behaviours of both the researcher and the subjects. In order to avoid transcription errors, there were inter-judge validity and reliability tests, in which a pedolinguist helped to cross-check the transcription in line with the recordings. Each subject was identified by the initial of his/her name, together with the initial of his/her school. For example, J represents John;

Q represents Queen of Peace Nursery School. JQ, therefore, means John from Queen of Peace Nursery School. The use of such pseudonyms is for confidential purposes.

For data analysis, the researcher used percentage tables to present the effects of social factors on the subjects' linguistic abilities, while the linguistic features observed in their utterances were described qualitatively.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OFDATA AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the material gathered from questionnaire and audio-visual recordings are presented. The data are subjected to statistical analysis, in order to compare the outputs of the subjects and to assess how the performances are determined by such factors as age, sex, birth position, economic/educational background, linguistic background and school environment. The chapter also considers the features of lexical development in the age bracket covered.

4. 1 The Extent of the Relevance of Home Background to Language Development

4. 1. 1. Educational/Economic Background and Language Development

Table 1

S/N	Name of Subject	Edu. Level of Parent(s)	Occupation of Parent(s)	Score	Percentage (%) Score
1.	FR	No Formal Edu.	Petty Trader	29	65.9
2.	KR	No Formal Edu.	Petty Trader	35	79.54
3.	HR	No Formal Edu.	Petty Trader	13	29.54
4.	FQ	SSCE	Security Staffer	17	38.63
5.	PR	SSCE	Teacher	35	79.54
6.	JR	BSc	Junior Civil Servant	26	59.09
7.	OR	BSc	School Proprietor	38	86.36
8.	LQ	BSc	Junior Civil Servant	23	52.27
9.	SQ	Master's	Senior Civil Servant	23	52.27
10.	AQ	Master's	Senior Civil Servant	36	81.81
11.	GQ	PhD	Lecturer	31	70.45
12.	DQ	Professor	Lecturer	34	77.27

Table 2 indicates no notable difference between subjects from non-educated/low-economic homes and those of them from economically advantaged homes. For instance, FR and KR have illiterate parents but their results of 65.9% and 79.54% respectively are a little above that of JR (59.09%) and DQ (77.27%), who have a BSc holder and a professor as a parent, respectively. Also, within the pupils from educated background, variation is not clear as LQ and SQ performed equally (52.27%), irrespective of the fact that the latter's parent has master's degree and the former's parent has BSc. Both AQ and SQ share similarity in educational background. However, there is wide discrepancy between their results, with AQ scoring 81.81% and SQ scoring 52.27%. Dodd et al (2003) agree with this as they found no significant effects of socio-economic status on any of the phonological accuracy measures, unlike Burt et al (1999) who stated that socio-economic status significantly affected the performance of their subjects.

Again, there seems to be a correlation between the occupation of the subjects' parents and the subjects' language performance. For example, subjects whose parents are teachers, such as PR (79.54%), OR (86.36%), DQ (77.27%) and GQ (70.45%) showed higher knowledge of English than subjects whose parents are not into education. This suggests the fact that teachers, as the beacons of knowledge, consciously or unconsciously influence their children towards faster acquisition rate.

Another point worthy of note on table 2 is that raised by Walker, Greenwood, Hart and Carta (1994) whose results of a large scale observational study of the development of spoken language in young children from high, mid and low socioeconomic status (SES) suggest that children in low-SES environment have slower rates of vocabulary growth associated with lower intelligent quotient when they are 3 years. Their postulation can be

found in the performance of HR and FQ who were able to score just 29.54% and 38.63% respectively. Both subjects, as seen on table 1 are 3 years. While HR has illiterate parents who are petty traders, FQ's mother is a secondary school leaver working as a security staffer.

4. 1. 2 Linguistic Background and Language Development

Table 2

S/N	Name of Subject	Language(s) Used at Home	Language of Highest Proficiency	Score	Percentage Score (%)
1.	GQ	English	English	31	70.45
2.	SQ	English	English	23	52.27
3.	DQ	English	English	34	77.27
4.	OR	English	English	38	86.36
5.	PR	English	English	26	79.54
6.	AQ	Atyap	English	36	81.81
7.	HR	Hausa	Hausa	13	29.54
8.	KR	Hausa	Hausa	35	79.54
9.	FR	Hausa	Hausa	29	65.9
10.	FQ	English &Hausa	English	17	38.63
11.	JR	English & Idoma	English	26	59.09
12.	LQ	English, Idoma &Hausa	English	23	52.27

On table 3, it is shown that 5 subjects use only English at home; 4 only their native language, while 3 subjects use both English and indigenous language(s). From data, it is obvious that children who use English solely at home performed very well just as those

who use their native language solely at home. The only difference among children who speak native language at home can be found in the subject, HR, whose performance is the poorest with 29.54%. This may be due to other factors outside the realm language background, as other subjects from the same background, such as AQ (81.81%), KR (79.54%), and FR (65.9%) performed very well. This result points out that early exposure to mother tongue does not pose a hindrance to a child's mastery of English.

The effect of linguistic background, however, manifests among children from bilingual homes, represented by FQ (38.63%), JR (59.09%) and LQ (52.27%). This may be due to the fact that children from such backgrounds, at preschool age, are still trying to have a grasp of the languages concerned, separately. This is because of the complexity of the linguistic data available to them. Hambly, Wren, Mcleod and Roultone (2013) had observed limited evidence to suggest that bilingual children develop speech at a slower rate than their monolingual peers, although there was evidence for qualitative differences and increased variation in speech production. Their finding is inconsistent with the present one as the subjects from bilingual homes performed less, quantitatively, than the monolingual children. Suffice it to note, from the table, that all the subjects, except FR, HR and KR have the highest competence in English, despite the diversity of their language environment.

4. 1. 3 Birth-Order and Language Development

Table 3

S/N	Name of Subject	Birth-Order	Score	Percentage Score (%)
1.	FQ	1^{st}; - C	17	38.63
2.	AQ	1^{st} + C	36	81.81
3.	DQ	1^{st} + C	34	77.27
4.	LQ	2^{nd} + C	23	52.27
5.	HR	2^{nd} + C	13	29.54
6.	FR	3^{rd} + C	29	65.9
7.	GQ	3^{rd} + C	31	70.45
8.	OR	4^{th} + C	38	86.36
9.	PR	4^{th} + C	35	79.54
10.	SQ	4^{th} + C	23	52.27
11.	JR	4^{th} + C	26	57.09
12.	KR	5^{th} + C	35	79.54

Percentage is determined by: $\frac{\text{Number of labeled objects by a subject}}{\text{Total number of objects (44)}} \times \frac{100}{1}$. The name of each subject is derived from the initial of his/her name and the initial of his/her school.

'C', on this table, represents 'caregiver'; (+) represents presence of caregiver, and (-) represents absence of caregiver

Table 1 displays variation in the birth position of subjects and their corresponding effect on language development. While 3 subjects are first-born, 2 are second-born, 2 also are third-born, 4 and 1 are fourth and fifth-born children respectively. FQ who is a first-born scored 38.63% while HR who is second-born scored 29.54%. AQ, also a first-born child scored 81.81%, while OR, fourth-born, scored 86.36%. This implies that some first-born subjects performed well just as some later-born. Even though mothers (in Lowry 2016) report that their first-borns know and understand more words than their later-born children, the data above contradict this, as there seems no influence of birth order on the

present subjects' performance. This is because the overall language development of second, third and fourth born children is the same as that of the first born. This finding is in line with the observation of Lowry (2016) who stated that "later-born children are not delayed in their language development and first-borns do not have better language skills than their siblings. If at all there are difference at the early stage of language development, this disappears very quickly at later stage." Some child language researchers, on the other hand, posit that later-born children speak faster than first-borns. For instance, Pine's (1995) research found a small but significant birth-order effect for the age at which the 50-word milestone is reached. However, there was no significant difference in age at 100 words. Since the subjects of the present study have all past the age of 50-word milestone, it is quite understandable why there is little or no performance variation, in terms of their birth-order.

Also, the table shows wide variation even within a particular birth position. If we consider fourth-born children, for example, we will observe that SQ, OR, JR and PR made 52.29%, 86.36%, 59.09% and 79.54% respectively. The same differentiation in scores is manifest at other birth position. This discrepancies, again, affirm that birth-order has little or nothing to do with the rate of language development.

4. 2 The Roles of Age and Gender in Child Language Development

4. 2. 1 Age Variation and Language Development

Table 4

S/N	2 yrs.	3 Yrs.	4 Yrs.	5 Yrs.	Score	Percentage Score (%)
1.	SQ				23	52.27
2.		LQ			23	52.27
3.		FQ			17	38.63
4.		GQ			31	70.45
5.		HR			13	29.54
6.			JR		26	59.09
7.			OR		38	86.36
8.			KR		35	79.54
9.			AQ		36	81.81
10.				DQ	34	77.27
11.				FR	29	65.9
12.				PR	35	79.54

Table 4 explicates that age is a major determining factor in children's linguistic performance. Although there is no significant difference at the early stage, that is between 2 and 3 years, there is massive progression at age 4 and 5. As seen from the table, SQ who is 2 years scored 52.27% the same as LQ that is 3 years. She also performed better than FQ and HR, who are 1 year ahead of her in age. Only GQ showed higher linguistic competence than SQ with 70.45%. The outstanding performance of GQ compared to her age mates may be as a result of individual indifferences, or other social

factors other than age. The same can also be said of SQ. However, the effect of age is clearer at 4 and 5 years as the subjects within the age brackets exhibited far more knowledge of English than those of younger age. Burt, Holm and Dodd (1999) while investigating the phonological awareness skills of 4-year-old-British children had noted that older children were more phonologically aware than the younger children. (See also Dodd, Holm, Huaz and Crosbie (2003).

4. 2. 2 Gender and Language Development

Table 5

S/N	Male	Score	Percentage Score (%)	Female	Score	Percentage Score (%)
1.	LQ	23	52.27	SQ	23	52.27
2.	FQ	17	38.63	FR	29	65.9
3.	DQ	34	77.27	HR	13	29.54
4.	OR	38	86.36	GQ	31	70.45
5.	JR	26	59.09	AQ	36	81.81
6.	KR	35	79.54	PR	35	79.54

Table 5 indicates that both boys and girls showed overall similarities in their outputs. While the lowest performance among male subjects is 38.63%, the lowest for females is 29.54%. Also, while a male subject was able to label 38 objects correctly, scoring the highest (86.36%), the highest score from females is 81.81%, indicating a somewhat better performance from males. Irrespective of the highest and lowest scores among subjects, data generally show that there is no significant difference between both genders, with respect to the rate of language development. This is against the view of Warantuti (2011) that “girls are usually more advanced in language development than boys.” (See also

McCarthy 1940; Dodd et al 2003; Markovic 2007). Campbell, Dollaghan, Rockette, et al (2003) cited in Warastuti (ibid) have noted that even though in some aspects of language development, boys might be considered to lag behind or experience more difficulties than girls, they, as a rule, reach the same level of linguistic competence as girls during the preschool stage. This is exemplified in the data on table 5 above.

4. 3 Influence of School Environment on Language Development

Table 6: Queen of Peace

S/N	Name of Subj.	1st Session	Percentage (%)	2nd Session	Percentage (%)
1.	SQ	10	45.45	13	59.09
2.	LQ	9	40.9	14	63.63
3.	FQ	9	40.9	8	36.36
4.	GQ	14	63.63	17	77.27
5.	AQ	15	68.18	21	95.45
6.	DQ	15	68.18	19	86.36
	Total=	72		92	

Table 7: Rehoboth Academy

S/N	Name of Subj.	1st Session	Percentage	2nd Session	Percentage
1.	HR	6	27.27	7	31.81
2.	JR	10	45.45	16	72.72
3.	KR	14	63.63	21	95.45
4.	OR	16	72.72	22	100
5.	FR	9	40.9	20	90.9
6.	PR	15	68.18	20	90.9
	Total=	70		106	

Tables 6 and 7 explicate that the subjects of Queen of Peace and the subjects of Rehoboth Academy performed better in the second session than in the first session. This suggests that children do not find it difficult to label things that are familiar to them. For clarity purposes, in the first session, 22 images brought by the research from home were presented to the children, while in the second session, the subjects were presented with the images found in their classroom, expecting they label them accordingly. From the data, one can see that, for example, LQ scored 40.9% in the first session but improved with 63.63% at the second session. The same applies to AQ who got 68.18% in the first session and 95.45% in the same second session, and FR with 40.9% at the first session and 90.9% in the second interaction with her. The only exception among all the pupils is from FQ who scored 40.9% in the first session and rather regressed to 36.36% in the second session, a case of individual exceptions.

Also glaring is the massive improvement of the pupils of Rehoboth Academy in the second outing. This is regardless of the fact that the pupils have less qualified teachers and poor conducive environment for learning when compared to Our Lady Queen of Peace Nursery School. The rationale behind their outstanding performance can be attributed to classroom practices. Whereas the subjects of Rehoboth Academy are daily taught the letters of alphabet using the images, their fellows in Our Lady Queen of PeaceNursery School are not. As a matter of fact, HR when asked to label an airplane, would say: ‘A is for Airplane.’ The same goes for: ‘Z is for Zebra. While no subject from Our Lady Queen of PeaceNursery School could identify a ‘computer’ and just one person identifying a ‘radio’, the subjects of Rehoboth Academy could label ‘a yatch’, ‘a queen’ and ‘an X-mas tree’. These are the objects none of them has seen in real life situation,

judging from their socio-economic background. Thus, their performance is as a result of imitation and practice, in line with the behaviourists' postulations that children learn language by imitating adults around them and via practice.

From the foregoing, it can be stated that school environment has high influence on language development. In addition, the effects of imitation and practice cannot be overlooked as the pupils who practiced with the pictures in their classroom performed better than those who did not.

4. 4 Linguistic Features in Child Language

4. 4. 1 Phonological Features

Phonologically, the subjects' language is marked by phonemic deletion, substitution and insertion. This is in agreement with the findings of Kabuk who noted "gross substitution of sounds, substitution of consonant for consonant, vowel for vowel, consonant for vowel and consonant cluster with a single sound" (2016).

However, Consonant substitution seemed to be the most common among the subjects studied, as illustrated below.

biro	/baɪrəu/	/baɪjo/	FQ
hand	/hænd/	/man/	FQ
flower	/flauə/	/fyæwa/	GQ
umbrella	/ʌmbrelə/	/ɒmbjeja/	SQ, FQ, GQ
lamp	/læmp/	/jamp/	JR
vase	/va:s/	/vat/	JR
wristwatch	/rɪstwɒtʃ/	/jɪʃwɒ/	GQ, JR

balloon/bəlu:n/	/bæjun/	GQ	
train	/treɪn/	/tɪjen/	JR
zebra	/zɪ:brə; zebrə/	/tɪbya/	JR
glass	/glas/	/gja:ʃ/	GQ
ice-cream	/aɪs-krɪ:m/	/aɪz-krɪm/	OR, JR, PR, KR /

From these data, the subjects substituted the liquids /r and l/ for the semi-vowel or palatal approximant /j/. All the subjects with baby talk (Baby talk is the simplification of sounds by children.) articulated /j/ in place of /r/ and /l/. This implies that the articulation of the semi-vowel is easier than the production of glides. It also shows that certain sounds are easy for children while others are not. This may be due to maturation factor, as regards the articulatory organs.

Also manifest is the substitution of the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ for the voiceless palato-aveolar fricative /ʃ/ as exemplified in:

scissors –	/sɪzəz/	/ʃɪʒɒ/	FQ
seven –	/ʃevn/	/sevn/	GQ
bicycle-	/baɪsɪkl/	/baɪʃikl/	SQ, GQ
glass –	/gla:s/	/gjaʃ/	GQ
spoon –	/spu:n/	/ʃpun/	LQ
umbrella-	/ʌmbrelə/	/ɒmblela/	HR
ice-cream-	/aɪz-krɪm /	/ais-kærɪ:m/	OR

A subject (FQ) interchanged the bilabial nasal /m/ for the glottal fricative /h/ in ‘hand’,while another subject (JR) used the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate /tʃ/ for the

voiced palato-alveolar affricate /ʤ/ in ‘jacket’, and voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ for the voiceless alveolar sibilant /s/ in ‘vase’. LQ, SQ, FQ and GQ also substituted the voiceless dental fricative for the voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ in ‘cloth’. Two subjects, FQ and GQ, pronounced the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/ instead of the voiced form /ʒ/ in /telɪvɪʒn/ ‘television’.

Vowel substitution seems rare with only one case recorded (from KR), with the use of the half open rounded vowel /o/ for the short-back-open vowel /ɒ / in ‘donkey’, just as LQ, SQ, FQ and GQ articulated /o/ in ‘cloth’ /klɒθ/. In places with schwa sound such as: ‘b̲alloon’ /b̲ə̲lu:n/, ‘calculat̲or̲’ /kælkjuleɪt̲ə̲/, ‘umbrell̲a̲’ /ʌmbrel̲ə̲/, the nearest phoneme, like /a/ and /ɒ/, was used instead. The central half open vowel /ʌ/ in ‘c̲u̲p’, ‘u̲mbrella’ was displaced with the half open rounded vowel /o/. In the same vein, the long central vowel /ʒ:/ in ‘bird’ /bʒ:d/ was dropped by the subjects for the half open front vowel /e/.

Generally, it was observed that almost all the subjects interchanged the long vowels- /ɪ:/, /a:/ and /u:/ for their short equivalents- /ɪ/, /a/ and /u/ in words like ‘reading’, ‘glass’ and ‘balloon’, respectively. The same was applicable to diphthongs. The opening diphthong- /eɪ/ in ‘train’, ‘plate’ was replaced with the half open front vowel /e/. Such aspects of sound substitution can be attributed to second language situation as the subjects develop English against the background of indigenous language environment.

There was, as well, the insertion of vowel and consonant sounds as the case may be. This could be found in the words:

chair-	/ʧeə/	/ʧɪj̲e/	FQ
cloth –	/klɒt/	/k̲u̲jot/	SQ, FQ

train –	/treɪn/	/tɻjən/	JR
three-	/Ɵrɪ:/	/tɻrɪ, tɻjɪ/	PR; GQ, JR, KR
tree –	/trɪ:/	/tɻjɪ/	PR
glass –	/gla:s/	/gulæs/	OR
ice-cream –	/aɪs-krɪ:m/	/aɪz-kærɪ:m/	OR
television-	/telɪvɪʒn/	/televɪʃɒn/	FQ, GQ

These substitutions were made in situations of consonant clusters in order to make articulation simpler, and it cuts across all the ages examined.

For sound deletion, which is less frequent, FQ used /mæn/ while SQ articulated /and/ in place of /hænd/ ‘hand’ (the deletion of the last consonant /d/ and the first consonant /h/ respectively) and /ʃɪʒɒ/ for /sɪzəz/ ‘scissors’ (also the deletion of the last consonant /s/). The subject DQ deleted the second syllable in /telɪvɪʒn/ ‘television’, thereby producing /tevɪʃɒn/. Other previous studies also confirm the deletion of difficult sounds by children at early language development (See Ingram 1999).

All the phonological deviations indicate that the subject’s articulatory organs have not fully matured to take up adult-like production. It is in line with this that Ingram (1999; 94) states that ‘children and adults have phonological systems of the same type. The characteristics of the child’s phonological system, however, will lack the more complex properties of the adult language. The child builds up structure using the basic and simplest of the mechanisms available.’

4. 4. 2 Morphological Features

Kabuk (2016) had stated that her subject, Juju found compound words difficult to articulate, and thus simplified them based on her ability to manipulate her organs of speech (22). This applied to the present subjects.Many of them preferred simple words to complex words as shown below:

eye glasses – glass

whiteboard – board

Wristwatch – watch (except Derick who called it fully, and Jeremiah who articulated it /jɪʃwɒ/

flower vase – vase

television – TV

X-mas tree – X-mas

pressing iron – iron

There is also the presence of inflectional affixes, although the subjects are inconsistent in their usage. For instance, Kamilu and Othnile could use ‘onions’ for ‘onions’, but use ‘shoe’ for ‘shoes’. This may have resulted from non-mastery of the language. However, all the subjects of Our Lady Queen of PeaceNursery School omitted the plural suffix in ‘shoes’, while PR and FR of Rehoboth Academy articulated them correctly and consistently.

For subjects like SQ, FQ and HR, there was no indication of the presence of inflection in speech. This could be due to age (in the case of SQ) and language deficiency (in the case of FQ and HR). Also noted is the presence of progressive verb form, which most of the children used accurately and consistently, including SQ who omitted plural markers. It therefore suggests that the acquisition of progressive suffix is faster than that of plural

suffixes. This finding contradicts Kabuk's claim that "there is no conscious effort to inflect or derive a word. Utterances that approximate to that are the imitation of inflected or derived words of the adult speakers" (ibid). The researcher deliberately avoided the use of affixes in order not to influence the subjects' outputs.

4. 3. 3 Semantic Features

In the area of meaning, the subjects' speech was marked heavily with overextension and mildly under-extension. By overextension, it is meant "the use of a word for a broader range of referent than is conventional in adult" (Surakat 2005: 148), while in under-extension, the child uses a word in a narrow sense. For instance, about 95% of the subjects identified a "whiteboard" as a "television", probably because of its flat surface. The same goes for "computer" which 80% of Our Lady Queen of PeaceNursery School subjects called "television". "Hamburger" was labelled "bread" or "cake" by those who made efforts to name it, and "earth" was called "ball" because of its round shape. This is in line with the mentalist view that language development is far beyond imitation, reinforcement and practice, as the subjects couldn't have heard such utterances from adults around them. It also shows that language development is a maturational process, and children gradually assimilate language through trial and error, made possible by the inbuilt mental organ, LAD.

Other cases of overextension include:

Book- Bible (PR and OR)

water bottle- water (SQ)

scissors – razor (DQ)

flower- leaf (OR)

flower- plant (PR)

tree- flower (SQ and GQ)

whiteboard – cartoon (probably associated to television) (FQ)

bicycle- motor (FQ)

This finding is in concert with that of some researchers whose subjects used overextension extensively (See Bloom 1973, Gelmanet et al 1998; Surakat 2005, and Walker 2011). However, Surakat recorded that the phenomenon became almost non-existent by the 36th month (which is exactly at the third year) of his subject, Baba. This is not the case with the subjects studied, as PR and DQ could not discern a "computer" from a "television" at 5 years, despite the fact that they hail from educated homes. Also, FQ, (3:09years) was unable to label "pen" and "pencil" correctly, having mixed the two together. This is in line with Anglin's set of systematic experiments which showed that "children exhibit individual differences in the extent to which their words manifest overextension…." (1977)

Under-extension was less common among the pupils. This explains why the phenomenon has received far less attention than overextension (See Dromi 1987: 39). It was seen in the use of 'parrot' for 'bird' (KR and OR), and "razor" for "scissors" (DQ).

4. 4. 4 Features of Code-Mixing

The subjects came from varied linguistic environment. While some used English at home (e.g QS, QG, QD and RO), some used only their native language (e.g QA, RH, RK and RF), and others used both native code and English (LQ and FQ, and JR). Consequently, it was natural that elements of code-mixing were observed in the language of some of the

subjects, especially those in the last group. In fact, for HR and FR, some of the questions thrown at them had to be translated into Hausa. Some of the words the pupils code-mixed are:

bird– *tatabara* (HR)

tree-*bishiya* (HR and FR)

bicycle – *keke* (HR)

balloon– *bolombolo* (FR)

cat – *binyenwu* (LQ)

When HR was asked what we used *keke* for, her response was *a tuka* (for driving). Hamly et al (2013) and Surakat (2001) found a similar case of code-mixing in their subjects, while examining the influence of bilingualism on speech production. It is important to note that the items the children labeled in their native tongue were among the collection the researcher brought from home. Thus, none of the items in the class was labeled in their indigenous languages. This could be that the school environment has made the subjects to acquire the English signifiers of the items in class. Consequently, the impact of school environment in language development cannot be relegated.

4. 5 FINDINGS

This research has been able to establish the following:

Finding One: The Extent of the Relevance of Home Background to the Language Development of Preschoolers

- As regards the effect of parental education and economic background on language development, there was no notable difference between subjects from non-

educated/low-income homes and those of them from economically advantaged homes, as the overall performance of the subjects was the same.

- There seems to be a correlation between the occupation of the subjects' parents and the subjects' language performance. For example, subjects whose parents are teachers and educationists showed high knowledge of English, the least score among them being 70.45%. This suggests the fact that teachers as the beacons of knowledge consciously or unconsciously influence their children towards faster acquisition rate. In this area, home environment contributes to the rate of language development.
- The research establishes that children who used their mother tongue, solely, at home performed very well just as those who used English at home, suggesting that early exposure to mother tongue does not hinder competence in English. However, children from bilingual and trilingual homes showed slower rate of acquisition.
- The study found no influence of birth order on the subjects' performance. This is because the overall language development of later-born was the same as that of the first born. This finding is in line with the observation of Lowry (2016) who states that "later-born children are not delayed in their language development and first born children do not have better language skills than their siblings." This means that home environment, in relation to birth order, has no relevance to the language development of preschool children.

Finding Two: The Roles of Age and Gender in Child Language Development

- In the research, we discovered that age is a major determining factor in children's linguistic performance. Although there was no significant difference between the subjects at the early stage, that is, between 2 and 3 years, there was a massive progression at age 4 and 5. All the children of 4 or 5 years performed very well, the least score being 65.9%.
- In line with Walker, Greenwood, Hart and Carta (1994), it was discovered that children from low-socioeconomic environment have slower rates of vocabulary growth associated with lower intelligent quotient when they are 3 years. This was exemplified in the performance of HR and FQ, who scored 29.54% and 38.63% respectively.
    - There is no significance difference between both genders in the rate of language development. This is against the postulate of some researches that girls are more advanced in language development than boys.

Finding Three: The Influence of School Environment on the Pace of Language Development of Preschoolers

- This study established that school environment has a great influence on the mastery of language, as the subjects' performance was determined by classroom practices such as imitation, reinforcement and imitation.
- In addition, the effects of imitation and practice cannot be overlooked as the pupils who practiced with the pictures in their classroom performed better than those who did not. While Our Lady Queen of PeaceNursery School children scored 92 in the second session, the subjects of Rehoboth Academy scored 106, even though the former have more qualified teachers and better condition for learning. This supports the behaviourist's view that children learn a language by

imitating the adults around them, and through regular practice. However, the common use of overextension in the subjects' speech shows that language development is beyond imitation and practice, as they couldn't have heard such utterances from adults around them. This supports the mentalist argument that language development is a maturational process.

Finding Four: Linguistic Features of Child Language

- Phonologically, the subjects' language was marked by phonemic deletion, substitution and insertion. This is in agreement with the findings of Kabuk (2016) and Dodd et al (2003) who noted gross substitution of sounds, substitution of consonant for consonant, vowel for vowel, consonant for vowel and consonant cluster with a single sound. Consonant substitution seemed to be the most common among the subjects studied. Many of the subjects interchanged liquids in words like 'glass', 'umbrella' and 'train' for the palatal semi-vowel /j/. This phenomenon shows that certain sounds are easy for children while others are not. The substitution was also manifest in areas of consonant clusters. It also discovered that baby talk is more prevalent in 2 and 3 years than in later years. However, the factor of individuality was noted. For instance, while FQ, JR and GQ showed high level of simplification in their articulation of words, SQ and LQ showed less manifestation. This is regardless of the fact that SQ, 2 years old, is the youngest of all the subjects.
- There is limited evidence to suggest that baby talk is attributable to the economic or educational background of the child. This is because, GQ, although has PhD holders as parents and uses English predominantly at home has more

phonological difficulties than LQ who comes from a multilingual home and whose parents are junior civil servants. Again, JR is 4 years old and comes from an educated background. However, his baby talk seems to be at the same level with that of FQ who is 3 years and from a lesser economic home.

- Morphologically, many of the subjects preferred simple words to complex words. For instance, ‘watch’ was preferred to ‘wristwatch’. There was also the presence of inflectional affixes, although the subjects were inconsistent in their usage. For few subjects, such as SQ and FQ, there was no presence of inflections, which can be attributed to maturation and language deficiency respectively.Also noted is the affixation of progressive suffix on verbs, which most of the children used accurately and consistently in words like ‘driving’, ‘reading’, including SQ who omitted plural markers. This suggests that the development of progressive suffix is faster than that of plural markers.
- In the area of meaning, the subjects’ speech was marked heavily with overextension. This cuts across all the ages studied. However, the children exhibited individual differences in the extent to which their words manifested overextension. For example, while most of the subjects of Our Lady Queen of PeaceNursery School labeled ‘whiteboard’- ‘television’, some subjects of Rehoboth Academy labeled it correctly. This may be as a result of individual differences such as intelligent quotient, as none of the schools studied uses that type of white board.
- Elements of code-mixing were observed in the language of children from bilingual background, as well as from those who used only native language at

home. Utterances such as *bishiya*, *tatabara*, *keke*, etc are elements of code-mixing found in the subjects' speech. However, there were exceptions as some subjects from the same background did not exhibit the phenomenon.

- The study reaffirms earlier studies that comprehension precedes production. Many of the subjects lacked the names of the items they were expected to label. But they were able to describe or point at the items correctly. For instance, SQ could not label a 'trumpet'. However, she described it thus: /ʃiŋiŋ ʃɒŋ/ *singing song*. This suggests that she understands the concept even though she has not developed it signifier.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5. 1 Summary

Extensive research in pedolinguistics indicate that social factors such as age, gender, socio-economic status and so on, affect the rate of language development in children. Most of these research have been carried out in western countries with different sociolinguistic settings. The few available ones in Nigeria have been longitudinal studies of single subjects, of which their findings cannot be generalised. This present research is, therefore, necessary owing to the special need to investigate the language of children across a wide range of background and population in order to ascertain their areas of similarity and differentiation, and to prove or disapprove earlier findings. Specifically, the research was intended to examinethe contributions of nature versus nurture towards effective language development, as well as to identify the linguistic features of preschooler language.

The research used 12 subjects between 2 and 5 years, from different sociolinguistic environment. The children were purposively sampled from two nursery schools: Our Lady Queen of Peace Nursery School, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Rehoboth Academy, Zaria. Both questionnaire and elicitations were used to gather data. While the questionnaire provided the demographic details of the subjects, elicitations were used to gather linguistic data from the subjects. The elicitations involved presenting a collection of objects to the children in order to test their knowledge of the items as well as their ability to label them. Two sessions were held with the pupils. In the first, a photo of 22 images brought by the researcher from home were presented to the children, while in the

second session, the subjects were presented with the images found in their classroom, expecting they label them accordingly. The three-media technique of Ochs and Schieffelin (1979) was used to collect information from the subjects. It involved the use of diary, audio recording and video-taping.

The research established thatlinguistic background and occupation of parents, with respect to home background, can influence the pace of language development in children. This is not the case with the birth position of children and the educational/economic status of their parents. Of importance to note is the fact that children from bilingual homes were a bit slow in mastery of English compared to those from monolingual homes, irrespective of whether the language used at home is English or a native language. With regard to the influence of school environment on child language development, data showed that school environment plays a key role, as certain classroom practices such as imitation, practice and reinforcement make language development faster. This supports the behaviourist view that children 'learn' language just like any human behaviour, imitating the adults around them. However, some verbal behaviours of the subjects such as the prevalent use of overextension, sound simplification and correct conceptualisation of objectswithout knowledge of their signifiers, showed that language development is much more than imitation, as the children could not have picked such behaviours from adults. This agrees with the mentalist postulate that language development is a maturation process. In addition, the study found that age is a major contributor to linguistic competence in early childhood, while gender has little or significant effect on the process. Linguistic elements found in the subjects' utterances were sound substitution, affixation, overextension and code-mixing. However, the level of these features differ from child to

child, sometimes beyond the social factors considered in the research. Finally, the research confirms the postulations of some scholars that comprehension precedes production in language development, as many of the pupils understood some of the items presented to them even though they lacked the correct signifiers for such items.

5. 2 Conclusion

From the discussions and findings of this research, it is clear that language development is more complex than one could think. The same can be said of the contributions of social variables on child language. Whereas one would expect the education and economic status of parents to significantly contribute to the language development of their offspring, this was not the case with the subjects studied. Furthermore, many of the children made good use of inflections in their speech, although older researches posit that such morphemes are not common within the age bracket under consideration.

Furthermore, it seems that wide range of social variables, many not considered in this research, play crucial roles inchild language development. While we may look at environmental factors such as sex, social class, birth-order, age, linguistic background and school environment, other conditions such as the psychological make-up of the child (that is, whether introvert and extrovert), intelligence quotient and the amount cum quality of linguistic data available to the child may influencethe child's language. Richard (2017) summarises that demographic differences, cognitive skills, and social emotional skills are all significantly related to success in language development. With these points noted, it becomes clear that hasty generalisations and conclusions should be avoided with respect to child language development. Rather, the uniqueness of every

child should always be seen as a priority. The findings of the research also point out that the method adopted by the teacher in the classroom can either make or mar effective pedagogy, language development inclusive.

This study would be relevant to parents, educationists, speech pathologists, pediatrics, and language policy makers. It provides a means of understanding the place of demographics in language development and how children generally use language to express their feelings, ideas and emotions. This helps to alleviate unnecessary fear among parents and teachers, curb the adoption of alien policies into our language policies, and reduce unnecessary comparison of children's language abilities.

5. 3 Limitations of the Study

Even though the researcher has tried as much as possible to ensure objectivity and qualitative data and procedures in this study, it is modest to state that the research is not perfect, which may be due to the following limitations:

1. The first problem encountered was on the selection of the schools of study. Four schools the researcher approached turned down the proposal due to security and confidential issues. This, to a point, demoralised the researcher. However, after much persistence, there was a headway with other options.
2. Most cross-sectional studies are experimental in nature, making use of language laboratory. This helps to ensure systematic and verifiable results. The absence of language lab in the study location made data collection and transcription cumbersome. This is because some of the subjects were not audible in their utterances, and it was difficult to transcribe their information accurately. Many a

time, the researcher had to replay the audio record of some subjects' as many times as possible so as to transcribe accurately.

3. The video recording is only able to show, briefly, the school environment of the children as the management of the schools, especially Our Lady Queen of Peace Nursery School, had reservations about videoing their pupils. This was after much persuasion by the research and a colleague she went with. There is no doubt that a longer time of recording would have provided a clearer view of the interactions between the researcher and the subjects.
4. Problems of Recording: On two occasions, during one of the sessions, the researcher put on the recording device. At the end of the session, to her utmost disappointment, it was discovered that the recording was not complete due to inadequate space in the android phone used for recording. After the hard lesson, the researcher had to involve the assistance of a colleague.
5. Storage and Safety of Data: At a point, the researcher lost the raw data gathered from the subjects after transcription. This was as a result of the sudden breakdown of her laptop. The pain of the setback notwithstanding, the researcher went back to the sampled schools to gather new data. However, at the end, the data turned out better and richer than the previous.

5. 4 Suggestion for Further Studies

It remains a challenge for child language researchers, especially those in Nigeria, to tackle some questions raised by the current research such as why progressive morphemes are mastered faster than plural affixes; why some children exhibit more baby talk than others; why some children from low socio-economic homes who have illiterate parents

and use native languages at home would possess higher competence in English than those who are more advantaged in these areas, and why certain children code-mix in their utterances while others they share the same linguistic background with do not display such phenomenon.

REFERENCES

Akmajian, A., Demers, R. A. and Harnish, R. M. (2001). *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication*. Cambridge: MIT Press

Ambrose, M. J. (2010). "Over-extension in Language Development. A Case Study of Gwong Child." An M. A. Thesis Submitted to the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Anglin, J. M. (1977). *Word, Object and Conceptual Development.* New York: Norton

Asher, R. E. (1979). "Language Acquisition in Children" in *Encyclopedia of Language andLinguistics.* Oxford: Pergamon Press

Berko, J. (1958). "The Child's Learning of English Morphology" *Word* 14, 150-177

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C. and Tight, M. (2002). *How to Research* (2nd Ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press

Bloom, L. (1976). *One Word at a Time: The Use of Single- Word Utterances before Syntax*. The Hague: Mouton

_____and Lahey, M. (1978). *Language Development and Language Disorders*. New York: John Wiley

Bolinger, D. (1975). *Aspects of Language*. New York: Harcouth Brace Jovanovich, Inc

Bord, E., Edquist, G., Reinholdson, A., Risberg, A. and McAllister, B. (2007). "Speech and Language Development in a Population of Swedish Hearing-Impaired Pre-school Children: A Cross-sectional Study" *International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology* Vol. 71 (7), 1061-1077

Blaine, M. D. S. (1963a). "On Learning the Grammatical Order of Words." *Psychological Review*. 70, 323- 348

_____ (1963)."The Ontogeny of English Phrase Structures: The First Phase" *Language*. New York: Academic Press

Brown, R. (1964). "The Acquisition of Syntax" in U. Bellugi & R. Brown (Eds.). *The Acquisition of Language. Monograph of the Society for Research in Child Development*. 29, No. 1, 43-71

_____ (1968). "The Development of Wh-Questions in child in Child Speech," *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour*. Englewood Cliffs; New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc

_____ (1973). *A First Language*: *The Early Stages.* Cambridge. MA: Harvard University Press

_____, & Fraser, C. (1963). "The Acquisition of Syntax" In C. N. Coler and B. Musgrave (Eds.). *Verbal Behaviour and Verbal Learning: Problems and Processes*. New York: McGrawHill pp. 158- 201

Bruner, J. (1983). *Child's Talk: Learning to Use Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Burt, L., Holm, A. and Dodd, B. (1999). ''Phonological Awareness Skills of 4-Year-Old-British Children : An Assessment and Developmental Data''. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders* Jan ; 48 (1) 1-24

Campbell, T. F., Dollaghan, C. A., Rockette, H. E., Paradise J. L., Feldman, H. M., Shriberg, L. D., Sabo, D. L. and Kurs-Lasky M. (2003). "Risk Factors for Speech Delay of Unknown Origin in 3-Year-Old Children" *Language Development* Vol.74, No. 2 346-357

Carroll, J. B. (1971). "Development of Native Language Skills beyond the Early Years" in Carroll E. Reed (ed.) *The Learning of Language.* New York: Appleton-Century-crofts

Caselli, M. C. et al (1995). "A Cross-Linguistic Study of Early Lexical Development." Cognitive Development. Vol. 10 (2), 159-199

Cazden, C. B. (1968). "The Acquisition of Noun and Verb Inflections" *Child Development* 39, 433-448

Chomsky, N. (1959). "A Review of B. F. Skinner's Verbal Behaviour." *Language* 35, 1, 26-58

Chomsky, C. (1997). *The Acquisition of Syntax in Children from 5 to 10.* Cambridge: MIT Press

Clark, E. V. (1993). *The Lexicon in Acquisition.* Cambridge: CUP

Clark, R. , Hutchenson, S. & Van Buren, P. (1994). "Comprehension and Production in Language Acquisition." *Journal of Linguistics* 10, 39-54

Clark, H. H. & Clark, E. V. (1977). *Psychology and Language: An Introduction to Psycholinguistics.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc

Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1995). Research Methods in Education (4th Ed.). London: Routledge

Cook, V. J. (1973). "The Comparison of Language Development in native children and Foreign Adults". *IRAL* 11, 1, 13-28

_____ (1978). "Second Language Learning: A Psycholinguistic Perspective" *Language Teaching and Linguistics: Abstracts*. Vol. 11, No 2; pp. 73-85

Crystal, D. (1997). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language (2nd Ed.).* Cambridge: CUP

Dale, P. S. (1970). Language Development: Structure and Function. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston

Davis, P. A., William, J. A., Vaughn-Cooke A. F. and Wright- Harp, W. (1993). "A Comparison of Lexical Development in a Child with Normal Language Development and in a Child with Language Delay" *National Student Speech Language Hearing Association Journal,* Vol 20, 73-77

de Bot, K. and Kroll, J. F. (2004). "Psycholinguistics" in Schmitt, Nobert (Ed.) *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics*. London: Hodder Education

de Villiers, J. and de Villiers, P. (Eds.) (1973). "A Cross-Sectional Study of the Acquisition of Grammatical Morphemes in Child Speech" *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 2, 3, 267-278

Dodd, B., Holm, A., Hua, Z. and Crosbie, S. (2003). ''Phonological Development: A normative Study of British English-Speaking Children'' *Clin Linguist Phon*. Dec; 17 (8) 617-43

Dromi, E. (1987). *Early Lexical Development*. Cambridge: CUP

Erasmie, T. (1975). *Language Development and Social Influence*. Esselte Studium: Scandinavian University Books

Fillmore, L. W. (1979). "Individual Differences in L2 Acquisition" In C. Fillmore, D. Kempler, and W. S-Y, Wang (Eds.) *Individual Differences in Language Ability and LanguageBehaviour*. London: Academic Press

Fisher, M. S. (1932). "Language Patterns of Pre-School Children" *The Journal of Experimental Education* Vol 1 (2). tandfonline.com. Retrieved on 20 February, 2017

Forster, S. H. (1990). *The Communicative Competence of Young Children: A Modular Approach,* London: Longman (5th Impression)

Fromkin, V., Rodman, R. and Hyams N. (2010). *An Introduction to Language* (9th Ed). Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning

_____ _____ _____ (2007). *An Introduction to Language* (8th Ed.). New York: Thomson Wadsworth

Gallaway, C. and Richard, B. J. 1994). *Input and Interaction in Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Greene, G. (1984). *The Development of the Language Arts from Birth through Elementary School*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Professional Educators Publications, inc.

Hambly, A., Wren, Y., Mcleod, S. and Roulstone, S. (2013). ‘‘The Influence of Bilingualism on Speech Production: A Systematic Review’’ *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders* Jan ; 48 (1) 1-24

Hamilton, D. (1981). “Doing Justice in Evaluation Research” in W. W. Welch (Ed.) *Case Study Methodology in Educational Evaluation*. Proceedings of the Minnesota Evaluation Conference

Hart, B. and Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Company

Hoff, E. (2001). *Language Development*. Stamford: Thomson Learning

Hoff-Ginsberg, E. (1985). “Some Contributions of Mothers’ Speech to their Children’s Syntactic Growth.” *Journal of Child Language Development.* Vol. 12, 367-385

Ingram, D. (1975). “The Acquisition of Questions and its Relation to Cognitive Development in Normal and Linguistically Deviant Children: A Pilot Study.” *Word*, 27, N0 1-2-3 pp. 119-124

_____ (1999). ‘‘Phonological Acquisition’’ in Martyn Barrell’s *The Development ofLanguage*. London: Psychology Press

Ingram, E. (1975). ‘Psychology and Language Learning” in J. B. Allen and S. Pitcorder (Eds.) *Papers in Applied Linguistics*

Johnson, J. S. and Newport, E. C. (1989). “Critical Period Effects in Second Language Learning: The Influence of Maturational State on the Acquisition of English as a Second Language.” *Cognitive Pychology* Vol. 21 (1): 60-99

Kabuk, M. H. (2016). “Phonological Description of the Two- Word Stage: The Study of a Nigerian Child.” A Seminar

Kess, J. F. (1993). *Psycholinguistics: Psychology, Linguistics and the Study of Natural Language.* Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company

Klein, W. (1986). *Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Krashen, S. D. (1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press

Lenneberg, E. H. (1967). *The Biological Foundation of Language.* New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.

Lewis-Beck, M. (Ed.) (1993). *Experimental Design and Methods*. London: Sage

Li, P., Zhao, X., MacWhinney, B. (2007). "Dynamic Self-Organisation and Early Lexical Development in Children" *Cognitive Science* Vol. 31, 581-612

Lindfors, J. W. (1980). *Children's Language and Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J. Prentice

Marchman, V. and Bates, E. (1994). "Continuity in Lexical and Morphological Development: A Test of the Critical Mass Hypothesis." *Journal of Child Language Development* Vol. 21 (2). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Markovic, I. (2007) "Gender Differences in Children's Language" ANNALES ser.hist.sociol Vol. 17, No. 1

Marshal, J. C. (1979). "Language Acquisition in a Biological Frame of Reference. In P. Fletcher and M. S. Garman *Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: CUP

Mason, T. (2002). "Learning Language." Lecture Presented in Didactives of English. Universite of Versailles, St. Quentin, Versailles, France, France

McCarthy, D. A. (1940). *The Language Development of the Preschool Child*. Oxford: Univ Minnesota Press

McLaughlin, B. (1984). *Second Language Acquisition in Childhood*: *Preschool Children*, Vol. 1. Hillshale, New Jersey: Erlbaum

McNeil, D. (1966). "Developmental Psycholinguistics" in F. Smith & G. A. Miller (Eds.) *The Genesis of Language. A Psycholinguistic Approach.* Cambridge: MIT Press

_____ (1968). "On Theories of Language Acquisition" in T. R. Dixon and D. L. Horton (Eds.) *Verbal Behaviour and General Behaviour Theory*. Englehood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall

_____ (1970). *The Acquisition of Language: The Study of Developmental Psycholinguistic.* New York: Harper and Row Publishers

Ndahi, K. S. (1982). "Second Language Acquisition in Childhood. A Case Study." A PhD Thesis Submitted to the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Ogenyi, L. G. (2010). Language Acquisition and Language Learning: An Overview". *Journal of Nigerian Languages and Culture,* Vol. 12, No 1. 25-36

Onyenobi, E. I. (1997). "Mother- Child Linguistic Interaction: A Study of the Language Development (Lexical) of an 18 Months Old Child." An MA Thesis Submitted to the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Piaget, J. (1959). *The Child's Conception of the World*. Great Britain: The Chaucer's Press

_____(1962). *The Language and Thought of the Child.* New York: Basic Books

_____ (2008). *The Language and Thought of the Child*. Godberg Press

Pine, J. M. (1995). Variation in Vocabulary Development as a Function of Birth Order. *Child Development* Vol. 66. No 1 272-281

Reich, P. A. (1986). *Language Development*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall

Richard, Erin (2017). "Individual Differences and Second Language Acquisition and Low-Income Preschoolers." A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Mason University, Fairfax, VA

Saint-Georges, C., Chetouani, M., Cassel, R., Apicella, F., Mahdhaoui, A., et al (2013). "Motherese in Interatction: At the Cross-Road of Emotion and Cognition? (A Systemic Review)". PLoS ONE 8(10): e78103

Sambo, A. A. (2011). Research Methods in Education. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd.

Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal Behaviour*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc

Slobin, D. I. (1971). "Developmental Psycholinguistics" in W. O. Dingwall (Ed.), *A Survey ofLinguistic Science*. College Park, Md., Univ. of Maryland Linguistic Programme

Snow (1972). "Mother's Speech to Children Learning Language". *Child Dev* 43: 549-565. doi:10.2307/1127555.

Stark, E. R. (1979). "Stages of Speech Development in the First Year of Life" In G. H. Yeni-Konishian, et al. *Child Phonology* Vol. 1. London: Academic Press, Inc

Surakat, T. Y. (2001). "Code Mixing in the Language Development of a Bilingual Nigerian Child: A Case Study." A PhD Thesis Submitted to the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

_____ (2005). "Overextension in the Early Vocabulary of a Bilingual Child" Paper Presented at the 14th World Congress of Applied Linguists (AILA 2005), University of Wisconsin, Madison- USA

_____2007). "Categorical Overextension in the Speech of a Trilingual Child") *Zaria Journal of Liberal Arts (ZAJOLA).* Vol. 1, pg. 20-22

_____ (2008). "Child Language Research in Nigeria: The State of the Art" *Zaria Journal of Liberal Arts (ZAJOLA),* Vol. 2 351-365

Tomasello, M. (2003) *Constructing a Language: A usage- based theory of Language Acquisition.* Massachusetts : Harvard University Press.

Warastuti, R. D. (2011). "Gender Differences in Children Language Acquisition and Language Development" 222 Musawa Vol.3 No2, 221-234

Yule, G. (2014). *The Study of Language* (5th Ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Yusuf, M. A. (1984). "The Phonological Development of Children: A Case Study of a Hausa Child". Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Bayero University, Kano

Webliography

Aan, S. "Using Pivot Grammar in Children Language". Educentika.blogspot.com.ng. Retrieved on 5 March 2017

Aitchison, J. (1997). "Humans Mop up Words Like Sponges" *The Language Web.* Retrieved on 3 July 2017

"Caring for your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age" (2009) in *American Academy of Pediatrics* online

Clark, E. V. (2001). "Morphology in Language Acquisition" in Spencer, A. and Zwicky, A. M. *The Handbook of Morphology*. Blackwell Reference Online. www.blackwellreference.com. Retrieves on 21 February 2017

Cooper, T. (2014). "Baby Talk: The Importance of Babbling" scottishbooktrust.com. Retrieved on 7 December 2018

Encyclopedia of Children Health. "Language Development in Children" Retrieved on 2 February 2017

Foppoli, Julio (2016). "Language Acquisition and Learning." www.esaudio.net. Retrieved on 2 February, 2017

Ginsborg, J. (2014). The Effects of Socio-economic Status on Children's Language Acquisition and Use" https://www.researchgate.net Retrieved on 7 October 2017

Lowry L. , (2016). "Do Second and Third-born Children Really Talk Late? The Effects of Birth Order on Language Development" www.hanen.org Retrieved on 7 October 2017

Lozada, C. P. (2018). ''Language Acquisition- The Basic Components of Human Language, Methods for Studying Human Language''

http//education.stateuniversity.com/pages/21553/Language-Acquisition.html''>Language Acquisition- The Basic Components

Packer (2001). "Two-Word Utterances" Retrieved on 2 February 2017

Walker, D., Greenwood C. Hart, B., and Carta, J. (1994). "Prediction of School Outcomes Based on Early Language Production and Socioeconomic Factors" Child Development. Vol. 65, No. 2. Children and Poverty 606-621

DATA TRANSCRIPTION

SESSION ONE

Interactions with the subjects in this session are concerned with the ability to label things that the researcher brought from home. The process involved meeting each subject with a picture collection of items. Attention was paid to the child's ability to name accurately, understand the concepts as well as his/her articulation.

In this data transcription 'Investigator' is represented with I; the initial of the subjects are used, for instance, 'J' for John. This is followed by the initial of the school of the subject, where 'Q' represents Queen of Peace Nursery School and 'R' represents Rehoboth Academy. Thus, JQ designates 'John from Queen of Peace Nursery School'. In cases of wrong pronunciation, the correct forms are provided at the right hand side.

QUEEN OF PEACE NURSERY SCHOOL

Interactions with SQ

I: /SQ how are you?/
SQ: /Fine/
I: (Points at the image of an apple.) /Do you know what this is?/
SQ: /{jeʃ}/ /jes/
I: /What is it?/
SQ: /apple/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
SQ: _____
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
SQ: /cat/
I: (shows her a cup) / What is this called SQ?/
SQ: /for drinking water/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
SQ: _____

I: (points at an image of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
SQ: /{gjaʃɪʃ}/ /gla:sis/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows her a human hand)
SQ: /{and}/ /hænd/
I: /How many fingers are in the hand?/
SQ: /- - -/
I: (shows her the picture of a rugby ball) /what about this?/
SQ: /- - -/
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
SQ: /car/
I: /What do we use car for?/
SQ: /for driving/
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
SQ: */TV/
I: (Shows a picture of hamburger) /Do you know what this is?/
SQ: _____
I: /What is it?/ (shows a picture of balloon)
SQ: */car/
I: /Is this car?/ /Show me a balloon)
SQ: (points at balloon)
I: /How many balloons are there?/
SQ: /- - -/
I: (Shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
SQ: /- - -/
I: (shows a picture of a bird)
SQ: */fish/
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
SQ: /pencil/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of 7)
SQ: *(A)
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
SQ: *{fawa}/ /flauə/
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
SQ: /{ʃiŋiŋ ʃɒŋ}/ /siŋiŋ sɒŋ/
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
SQ: */ball/
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
SQ: /{baɪʃɪkl}/ /baɪsɪkl/
I: /What do we use bicycle for?/
SQ: /for driving/
I: (shows her a photo of a book) /What of this?/
SQ: /Bible/

Interactions with Louis

I: (Points at the image of an apple.) /What is this LQ?/
LQ: /apple/

I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
LQ: */butterfly/
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
LQ: |binyanwu| (cat in Hausa)
I: (shows him a cup) /What is this called?/
LQ: /cup/
I: /What do we use cup for?/
LQ: /for drinking water/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
LQ: _____
I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
LQ: /eye glass/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows him a human hand)
LQ: /hand/
I: /How many fingers are there?/ /Counts the fingers/
LQ: /five fingers/
I: (shows him the picture of a rugby ball)
LQ: _____
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
LQ: /car/
I: /What do we use car for?/
LQ: /for driving/
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
LQ: */television/
I: (pointing at hamburger) /What about this one?/
LQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of balloon)
LQ: /balloon/
I: /How many balloons?/
LQ: */five balloon/(s)
I: (points at a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
LQ: */ʤɒg/
I: /What do we use it for?/
LQ: /for open it/
I: /What do you say is the name again?/
LQ: /I don't know this thing/
I: (shows a picture of a bird)
LQ: /{bed}/ /bʒ:d/
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
LQ: /pencil/ (shows his pencil/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of 7)
LQ: /I don't know this one/
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
LQ: _____
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
LQ: _____

I: /Show me a trumpet/
LQ: /points at earth/
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
LQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
LQ: /bicycle/
I: /What do we use bicycle for?/
LQ: /for driving/
I: (shows him a photo of a book) /Do you know this one?/
LQ: /Bible/

Interactions with FQ

I: (points at the image of an apple.) /Do you know what this is called?/
FQ: /apple/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
FQ: /{fawa}/ /flauə/
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
FQ: /- - -/
I: (shows him a cup) / What is this called FQ?/
FQ: /cup/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
FQ: */cap/
I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
FQ: _____
I: /What of this one?/ (shows him a human hand)
FQ: /{man}/ /hænd/
I: /Show me your 'man'/
FQ: (lifts his hand up)
I: (shows him the picture of a rugby ball)
FQ: /- - -/
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
FQ: /motor car/
I: /What do we use car for?/
FQ: /- - -/
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
FQ: */cartoon/
I: /what about this?/
FQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of balloon) /What is this?/
FQ: /- - -/
I: /Show me balloon/
FQ: (points at balloon)
I: /How many balloons are there?/
FQ: /- - -/
I: (shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
FQ: _____

I: (shows a picture of a bird) /What is this?/
FQ: _____
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
FQ: */colour/ (Probably, he meant crayon for colouring/
I: /Show me a pencil/
FQ: _____
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of 7)
FQ: */apple/
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
FQ: _____
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
FQ: _____
I: /Show me a trumpet/
FQ: (points at earth)
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
FQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
FQ: */motor/
I: (shows him a photo of a book) /What is it?/
F: /book/

Interactions with GQ

I: (Points at the image of an apple.) /What is this GQ?/
GQ: /apple/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
GQ: /fujawa/ /flauə/
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
GQ: /cat/
I: (shows her a cup) / What is this called?/
GQ: /cup/
I: /What do we use cup for?/
GQ: /(for) drɪŋɪŋ (water)/ /…drɪŋkɪŋ…/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
GQ: */cap/
I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
GQ: /{aɪ gjaʃ}/ /…gla:s/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows her a human hand)
GQ: /{and}/
I: /How many fingers are there in the hand?/
GQ: /five finger/
I: (shows her the picture of a rugby ball)
GQ: /ball/
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
GQ: /car/
I: /What do we use car for?/
GQ: /for driving/

I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
GQ: */television/
I: (points at the photo of hamburger) /What do we call this?/
GQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of balloon)
GQ: /bajun/ /bəlu:n/
I: /How many balloons?
GQ: /tiyi bajun/ /Ɵrɪ: bəlu:n/
I: (shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
GQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of a bird)
GQ: /{bed}/ /bʒ:d/
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
GQ: /penʃl/ /pensl/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of 7)
GQ: /ʃevn/ /sevn/
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
GQ: */{fyawa}/ /flauə/
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
GQ: _____
I: /What do we use it for?/
GQ: /incomprehensible sound/
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
GQ: /shun/ sun
I: /Where do we see sun?/
GQ: /outside/
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
GQ: /baɪʃɪkl/ / baɪsɪkl/
I: (shows her a photo of a book) /What is this one?/
GQ: /book/
I: /What type of book is it?/
GQ: /Bible/

Interactions with AQ

I: (Points at the image of an apple.) /What is this called AQ?/
AQ: * /tomatoes/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
AQ: /flower/
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
AQ: _____
I: (shows her a cup) / What about this?/
AQ: /cup/
I: (What do we use cup for?/
AQ: /for drink/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
AQ: */bread/

I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
AQ: /glass/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows her a human hand)
AQ: /hand/
I: (shows the picture of a rugby ball)
AQ: /ball/
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
AQ: /car/
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
AQ: */television/
I: (shows a picture of hamburger) /What do we call this?/
AQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of balloon)
AQ: /balloon/
I: (Shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
AQ: /box/
I: (shows a picture of a bird)
AQ: /{bed}/ /bʒ:d/
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
AQ: /pencil/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of 7)
AQ: /seven/
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
AQ: /tree/
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
AQ: _____
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
AQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
AQ: /bicycle/
I: (shows her a photo of a book) /Do you know the name of this one?/
AQ: /book/

Interactions with DQ

I: (Points at the image of an apple.) /What is this?/
DQ: /apple/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
DQ: /{flawa}/ /flauə/
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
DQ: (incomprehensible sound)
I: (shows him a cup) / What about this?/
DQ: /cup/
I: /What do we use cup for?/
DQ: /for drinking/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
DQ: */bread/

I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
DQ: /grass/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows him a human hand)
DQ: /hand/
I: (shows the picture of a rugby ball)
DQ: /ball/
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
DQ: /car/
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
DQ: */television/
I: (shows a picture of hamburger) /What do we call this?/
DQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of balloon)
DQ: /balloon/
I: (shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
DQ: /box/
I: (shows a picture of a bird)
DQ: /{bed}/ /bʒ:d/
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
D: /pencil/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of 7)
DQ: /seven/
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
DQ: /tree/
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
DQ: _____
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
DQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
DQ: /bicycle/
I: (shows her a photo of a book) /Do you know the name of this one?/
DQ: /book/

Rehoboth Academy
Interactions with HR
I: /HR how are you?/
HR: /fine/
I: /Do you know this?/(pointing at the image of an apple)
HR: /apple/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
HR: _____
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
HR: _____
I: (shows her a cup) / What is this called?/
HR: /cup/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/

HR: _____
I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
HR: /glass/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows her a human hand)
HR: /hand/
I: (shows the picture of a rugby ball)
HR: _____
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
HR: _____
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
HR: */TV/
I: (points at the photo of hamburger) /What do we call this?/
HR: _____
I: (shows a picture of balloon)
HR: */{ɒmblela}/ /ʌmbrelə/
I: (Shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
HR: _____
I: (shows a picture of a bird)
HR: /|tantabara|/ (bird in Hausa)
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
HR: /pencil/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of number 7)
HR: _____
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
HR: /|bishiya| (tree in Hausa)
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
HR: _____
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
HR: */ball/
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
HR: /|keke|/ (bicycle in Hausa Language)
I: /What do we use keke for?/
HR: /atuka/ (to ride)
I: (shows her a photo of a book) /What is this one?/
HR: /book/
I: /What do we use book for?/
HR: _____

Interactions with JR

I: /JR, what is this?/ (Pointing at the image of an apple)
JR: /apple/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
JR: _____
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
JR: _____
I: (shows him a cup) / What is this called JR?/

JR: _____
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
JR: _____
I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
JR: /eye glass/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows him a human hand)
JR: /hand/
I: /How many fingers are in the hand?/
JR: /five fingers/
I: (shows him the picture of a rugby ball)
JR: _____
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
JR: /car/
I: /What do we use car for?/
JR: /driving/
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
JR: _____
I: (points at the photo of hamburger) /What do we call this?/
JR: _____
I: (shows a picture of balloon)
JR: _____
I: /Show me balloon from the picture/
JR: (Points at balloon)
I: /How many balloons?/
JR: /tɪjɪ bajun/ /ʘrɪ: bəlu:n/
I: (Shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
JR: /gift/
I: (shows a picture of a bird) /What is this?/
JR: _____
I: /Show me a bird/
JR: (points at a bird)
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
JR: /pencil/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of number 7)
JR: _____
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
JR: _____
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
JR: _____
I: /Do you know what we use it for?/
JR: (shakes head)
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
JR: _____
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
JR: /bicycle/
I: /What do we use bicycle for?/

JR: /jaɪdɪŋ/ /raɪdɪŋ/
I: (shows him a photo of a book) /What is this one?/
JR: /book/
I: /What do we use book for?/
JR: /jɪ:dɪŋ/ /rɪ:dɪŋ/

Interactions with KR

I: /KR, what is this?/ (Pointing at the image of an apple)
KR: /apple/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
KR: /flower/
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
KR: /cat/
I: (shows him a cup) / What is this called?/
KR: /cup/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
KR: /cake/
I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
KR: /eye glass/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows him a human hand)
KR: /hand/
I: /How many fingers are in the hand?/
KR: /five fingers/
I: (points at the picture of a rugby ball)
KR: _____
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
KR: /motor car/
I: /What do we use car for?/
KR: /driving/
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
KR: /board/
I: (points at the photo of hamburger) /What do we call this?/
KR: */cake/
I: (shows a picture of balloon)
KR: _____
I: /Show me balloon from the picture/
KR: *(Points at ball)
I: /How many balloons?/
KR: /tɪjɪ bayun/ /Ɵrɪ: bəlu:n/
I: (Shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
KR: /box/
I: (shows a picture of a bird) /What is this?/
KR: /parrot/
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
KR: /pencil/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of 7)

KR: /seven/
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
KR: _____
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
KR: _____
I: /Do you know what we use it for?/
KR: _____
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
KR: */water/
I: (shows him a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
KR: _____
I: (shows him a photo of a book) /What is this one?/
KR: /book/

Interactions with OR

I: /OR, what is this?/ (Pointing at the image of an apple)
OR: /apple/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
OR: */leaf/
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
OR: /cat/
I: (shows him a cup) / What is this?/
OR: /cup/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
OR: /cake/
I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
OR: /eye glass/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows him a human hand)
OR: /hand/
I: /How many fingers are in the hand?/
OR: /five fingers/
I: (shows the picture of a rugby ball)
OR: _____
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
OR: /trailer/
I: /What do we use car for?/
OR: /driving/
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
OR: /board/
I: (points at the photo of hamburger) /What do we call this?/
OR: */cake/
I: (shows a picture of balloon) /What about this?/
OR: /balloon/
I: /How many balloons/
OR: (three balloons)
I: (shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/

OR: /gift/
I: (shows a picture of a bird) /What is this?/
OR: /parrot/
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
OR: /pencil/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of 7)
OR: /seven/
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
OR: /tree/
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
OR: /trumpet/
I: /What do we use it for?/
OR: /for blowing/
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
OR: _____
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
OR: /bicycle/
I: /What do we use bicycle for?/
OR: /riding/
I: (shows him a photo of a book) /What is this one?/
OR: /Bible/

Interactions with FR

I: /FR, what is this?/ (Pointing at the image of an apple)
FR: /apple/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
FR: _____
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
FR: _____
I: /Show me a cat/
FR: (points at a cat)
I: (shows her a cup) / What is this called FR?/
FR: /cup/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
FR: _____
I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/
FR: _____
I: /Show me eye glass/
FR: (points at a pair of eye glass)
I: /What of this one?/ (shows her a human hand)
FR: /hand/
I: /How many fingers are in the hand?/
FR: _____
I: (shows the picture of a rugby ball)
FR: _____
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/

FR: _____
I: /Show me a car/
FR: (points at one)
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
FR: _____
I: (points at the photo of hamburger) /What do we call this?/
FR: _____
I: (shows a picture of balloon)
FR: _____
I: /Show me balloon from the picture/
FR: (Points and says /|bolombo|/) (balloon in Hausa)
I: (Shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
FR: _____
I: (shows a picture of a bird) /What is this?/
FR: _____
I: /Show me a bird/
FR: _____
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
FR: /pencil/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of 7)
FR: _____
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
FR: /|gishiye|/ (tree in Hausa)
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
FR: _____
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
FR: */ball/
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
FR: /bicycle/
I: /What do we use bicycle for?/
FR: _____
I: (shows her a photo of a book) /What is this one?/
FR: /book/

Interactions with PR

I: /PR, what is this?/ (pointing at the image of an apple)
PR: /apple/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a flower)
PR: */plant/
I: (points at a cat) /what is this?/
PR: /cat/
I: (shows her a cup) / What is this called?/
PR: /cup/
I: (points at a piece of cake) /What is this?/
PR: _____
I: (points at a photo of eye glasses) /What is this one?/

PR: /eye glass/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows her a human hand)
PR: /hand/
I: /How many fingers are in that hand?/
PR: /five fingers/
I: (shows the picture of a rugby ball)
PR: /ball/
I: (shows the picture of a lorry) /What do we call it?/
PR: /car/
I: /What do we use car for?/
PR: /driving/
I: (points at the image of a white board) /What is this?/
PR: */television/
I: (points at the photo of hamburger) /What do we call this?/
PR: _____
I: (shows a picture of balloon)
PR: /balloon/
I: /How many balloons?/
PR: /tırı balun/ /Ɵrı bəlu:n/
I: (Shows a picture of a wrapped gift) /What about this?/
PR: /gift/
I: (shows a picture of a bird) /What is this?/
PR: /{bed}/ /bʒ:d/
I: /What about this?/ (points at a pencil/
PR: /pencil/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a picture of number7)
PR: /seven/
I: (points at a tree) /What is this?/
PR: /{tırı}/ /trı:/
I: (shows a photo of a trumpet) /Do you know this? What is it?/
PR: /trumpet/
I: /Do you know what we use a trumpet for?/
PR: /for singing/
I: (points at the image of earth) /What about this?/
PR: _____
I: (shows a picture of bicycle) /what about this?/
PR: bicycle
I: /What do we use bicycle for?/
PR: /riding/
I: (shows her a photo of a book) /What is this one?/
PR: /Bible/

SESSION TWO

In this session, the researcher presents the images in the subjects' class, and each pupil was asked to respond accordingly in the midst of others. Attention was paid to their ability to recognise each image, name it and the articulation of the words.

Queen of Peace Nursery School
Interactions with SQ

I: (Shows SQ the image of a pen.) /What is this SQ?/
SQ: /pen/
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a school bag)
SQ: /bag/
I: (points at a chair) /what is this?/
SQ: /chair/
I: (shows her a table) / What about this?/
SQ: */chair/
I: (points at a bottle) /What is this?/
SQ: */kɒp/ /kΛp/
I: /Show me a fan/
SQ: /points at a fan/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows her a calculator)
SQ: _____
I: /Show me a calculator/
SQ: (Points at a calculator)
I: /Show me a pressing iron/
SQ: (Points at a pressing iron)
I: (shows the picture of a plate) /What about this?/
SQ: */kɒp/ /kΛp/
I: (pointing at a dress) /What is this one?/
SQ: /{kujot}/ /klɒϴ/
I: (points at the image of a stone) /What is this?/
SQ: /- - -/
I: (shows a picture of a computer) /What do we call this?/
SQ: */TV/
I: (shows a picture of a pair of shoes)
SQ: /shoe/
I: (Shows a picture of a land telephone) /What about this?/
SQ: */TV/
I: /Show me a telephone/
SQ: (points at a radio)
I: /SQ, show me a pair of scissors/
SQ: (points at scissors)
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a clock)
SQ: _____
I: /Show me a clock?/
SQ: *(points at a radio)
I: /Show me a ruler)
SQ: (points at a ruler)
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at an umbrella)
SQ: /{ɒmbjeja}/ /Λmbrelə/
I: (shows her a photo of a spoon) /Do you know this? What is it?/

SQ: /spoon/
I: (points at the image of a radio) /What about this?/
SQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of a wristwatch) /what about this?/
SQ: _____
I: /Show me a wristwatch/
SQ: (points at a wristwatch)
I: (shows her a photo of a television) /Do you know the name of this one?/
SQ: /- - -/

Interactions with LQ

I: (shows LQ a pen) /What is this?/
LQ: */pencil/
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a school bag)
LQ: /bag/
I: (points at a chair) /Do you know this?/
LQ: (nodes)
I: /what is it?/
LQ: /chair/
I: (shows a table) / What about this?/
LQ: /table/
I: (points at a bottle) /What is this called?/
LQ: _____
I: /What about this one?/ (pointing at a standing fan/
LQ: /fan/
I: /What do we call this one?/ (shows him a calculator)
LQ: /calculator/
I: (shows him the picture of a pressing iron) /What is this?/
LQ: /iron/
I: (shows the picture of a plate) /What about this?/
LQ: */jɒba/ /rʌbə/
I: /Do you know this one?/ (pointing at a dress among the images/
LQ: /kjot/ /klɒϴ/
I: (points at the image of a stone) /What is this?/
LQ: /stone/
I: (shows him a picture of a computer) /What do we call this?/
LQ: _____
I: /Show me a computer/
LQ: (confused between a computer and a television)
I: (shows a picture of a pair of shoes)
LQ: /shoe/
I: (points at a picture of a land telephone) /What about this one?/
LQ: /phone/
I: / What about this one?/ (pointing at a pair of scissors)
LQ: /{sɪzɒ} /sɪzəz/
I: (points at a clock?) /What about this? Do you know it?/

LQ: _____
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a ruler)
LQ: /ruler/
I: /What about this/ (pointing at an umbrella)
LQ: /{ɒmbrela}/ /Ʌmbrelə/
I: (points at a photo of a spoon) /What is this?/
LQ: /{ʃpun}/ /spuːn/
I: (points at the image of a radio) /What about this?/
LQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of a wristwatch) /what about this? Do you know what it is?/
LQ: _____
I: (shows him a photo of a television) /Do you know this one?/
LQ: */man/
NB: There is an image of a person on the television.

Interactions with FQ

I: (shows FQ the image of a pen) /What is this FQ?/
FQ: /- - -/
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a school bag)
FQ: /bag/
I: (points at a chair) /what is this?/
FQ: /tʃɪye/ /tʃeə/
I: (shows him a table) /What about this?/
FQ: /- - -/
I: (points at a bottle) /What is this?/
FQ: _____
I: (points at a photo of a standing fan) /What is this one?/
FQ: /fan/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows him a calculator)
FQ: _____
I: /Show me a pressing iron/
FQ: (points at a pressing iron)
I: (shows the picture of a plate) /What about this?/
FQ: _____
I: /What is this?/ (points at a dress/
FQ: /{kuyot}/ /klɒϴ/
I: (points at the image of a stone) /What is this?/
FQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of a computer) /What do we call this?/
FQ: */television/
I: (shows a picture of a pair of shoes)
FQ: /shoe/
I: (Shows a picture of a land telephone) /What about this?/
FQ: _____
I: /What is this one?/ (pointing at scissors/
FQ: /- - -/

I: /Felix, show me a pair of scissors/
FQ: (confused about which is scissors)
I: (Shows him a clock?) /What is this?/
FQ: _____
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a ruler)
FQ: _____
I: (points at an umbrella) /What is this?/
FQ: /{ɒmbjeja}/ /ʌmbrelə/
I: (shows him a photo of a spoon) /What is this?/
FQ: _____
I: (points at the image of a radio) /what about this?/
FQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of a wristwatch) /what about this?/
FQ: _____
I: (shows him a photo of a television) /Do you know the name of this one?/
FQ: /televɪʃɒ̲n/ /telɪvɪʒn/

Interactions with GQ

I: (points at a pen) /What this is?/
GQ: /pen/
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a school bag)
GQ: /bag/
I: (points at a chair) /Do you know this?/
GQ: (nodes)
I: /what is it then?/
GQ: /chair/
I: (shows her a wooden table) /What about this?/
GQ: /table/
I: (points at a bottle) /What is this called?/
GQ: /bottle/
I: /What about this one?/ (pointing at a standing fan/
GQ: /fan/
I: /What do we call this one?/ (shows her a calculator)
GQ: /{kakjuletɒ}/ /kælkjuleɪtə/
I: (shows her the picture of a pressing iron) /What is this?/
GQ: /iron/
I: /What do we use pressing iron for?/
GQ: /for {kjot}/ /klɒϴ/
I: (shows the picture of a plate) /What about this?/
GQ: /{pjet}/ /pleɪt/
I: /Do you know this one?/ (pointing at a dress among the images/
GQ: /{kjot}/ /klɒϴ/
I: (points at the image of a stone) /What is this?/
GQ: /- - -/
I: (shows her a picture of a computer) /What do we call this?/

GQ: */television/
I: (shows a picture of a pair of shoes)
GQ: /shoe/
I: (shows a picture of a land telephone) /What about this?/
GQ: _____
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a pair of scissors)
GQ: _____
I: /show me a pair of scissors/
GQ: (points at scissors)
I: (points at a clock?) /What about this?/
GQ: /{kjɒk}/ /klɒk/
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a ruler)
GQ: */pen/
I: /what about this/ (pointing at an umbrella)
GQ: /{ɒmbjeja}/ /Ʌmbrelə/
I: (points at a photo of a spoon) /What is this?/
GQ: /spoon/
I: (points at the image of a radio) /What about this?/
GQ: */flask/
I: (shows a picture of a wristwatch) /what about this? Do you know what it is?/
GQ: /{jɪʃwɒ}/ /rɪstwɒtʃ/
I: (shows her a photo of a television) /Do you know this one?/
GQ: /televɪʃɒ̲n/ /telɪvɪʒn/

Interactions with AQ

I: (shows her a pen.) /What this is AQ?/
AQ: /pen/
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a school bag)
AQ: /bag/
I: /what is it?/ (points at a chair)
AQ: /chair/
I: (shows her a table) / What about this?/
AQ: /table/
I: (points at a bottle) /What is this called?/
AQ: /bottle/
I: /bottle for you?/
AQ: /for water/
I: /What about this one?/ (pointing at a standing fan/
AQ: /fan/
I: /What do we call this one?/ (shows her a calculator)
AQ: /calculator/
I: (shows her the picture of a pressing iron) /What is this?/
AQ: /iron/
I: (shows the picture of a plate) /What about this?/
AQ: /plet/ /peɪt/
I: /Do you know this one?/ (pointing at a dress among the images/

AQ: /{dures}/ /dres/
I: (points at the image of a stone) /What is this?/
AQ: /stone/
I: (shows a picture of a computer) /What do we call this?/
AQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of a pair of shoes)
AQ: /shoe/
I: (shows a picture of a land telephone) /What about this one?/
AQ: /telephone/
I: /What about this one?/ (pointing at a pair of scissors)
AQ: /scissors/
I: (points at a clock?) /What about this?/
AQ: /clock/
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a ruler)
AQ: /ruler/
I: /what about this/ (pointing at an umbrella)
AQ: /umbrella/
I: (points at a photo of a spoon) /What is this?/
AQ: /spoon/
I: (points at the image of a radio) /What about this?/
AQ: /radio/
I: (shows a picture of a wristwatch) /what about this? Do you know what it is?/
AQ: /watch/
I: (shows her a photo of a television) /Do you know this one?/
AQ: /TV/

Interactions with DQ

I: (shows him a pen) /DQ, what is this?/
DQ: /pen/
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a school bag)
DQ: /bag/
I: (points at a chair) /what is it?/
DQ: /chair/
I: (shows him a wooden table) / What about this?/
DQ: /table/
I: (points at a bottle) /What is this called?/
DQ: /bottle/
I: /What about this one?/ (pointing at a standing fan/
DQ: /fan/
I: /what do we call this one?/ (shows him a calculator)
DQ: /{kakuletɒ}/ /kælkjuleɪtə/
I: (shows him the picture of a pressing iron) /What is this?/
DQ: /iron/
I: (shows the picture of a plate) /What about this?/
DQ: /plet/ /peɪt/
I: /Do you know this one?/ (pointing at a dress among the images/

DQ: /dress/
I: (points at the image of a stone) /What is this?/
DQ: /stone/
I: (shows a picture of a computer) /What do we call this?/
DQ: */{teviʃɒn} /telɪvɪʒn/
I: (shows a picture of a pair of shoes)
DQ: /shoe/
I: (Shows a picture of a land telephone) /What about this one?/
DQ: /phone/
I: /What about this one?/ (pointing at a pair of scissors)
DQ: /scissors/
I: (points at a clock?) /What about this?/
DQ: /clock/
I: /What is this?/ (pointing at a ruler)
DQ: /ruler/
I: /What about this/ (pointing at an umbrella)
DQ: /umbrella/
I: (points at a photo of a spoon) /What is this?/
DQ: /spoon/
I: (points at the image of a radio) /What about this?/
DQ: _____
I: (shows a picture of a wristwatch) /What about this? Do you know what it is?/
DQ: /watch/
I: (shows him a photo of a television) /Do you know this one?/
DQ: _____

SECOND SESSION WITH REHOBOTH ACADEMY

Interactions with HR

I: /HR do you know this?/ (Pointing at the image of an airplane)
HR: /A is for airplane/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a donkey)
HR: /donkey/
I: (points at a human eye) /what is this?/
HR: /eye/
I: (shows her a glass of water) / What is this called HR?/
HR: _____
I: (points at a horse) /What is this?/
HR: _____
I: (points at a photo of ice-cream) /What is this one?/
HR: _____
I: /What of this one?/ (shows her a jacket)
HR: _____
I: (points at the picture of a key)
HR: _____
I: (shows the picture of a lamp) /What do we call it?/
HR: _____

I: (points at the image of a monkey) /What is this?/
HR: */donkey/
I: (points at the photo of human nose) /What do we call this?/
HR: /nose/
I: (shows a picture of onions)
HR: _____
I: /Is it onions?/
HR: (nodes head)
I: /Is it tomatoes?/
HR: _____
I: /Is it onions?/
HR: (nodes head)
I: (shows a picture of a pocket) /What about this?/
HR: _____
I: (shows a picture of a queen) /Who is this person?/
HR: _____
I: /What about this?/ (points at a rat)
HR: */{ɒmbrela}/ /Ʌmbrelə/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the picture of shoes)
HR: /shoe/
I: (points at a train) /What is this?/
HR: /- - -/
I: (shows a photo of a flower vase) /Do you know this? What is it?/
HR: */lion/
I: (points at the image of a wristwatch) /What about this?/
HR: _____
I: (shows a picture of a Christmas tree) /what about this?/
HR: _____
I: (shows her a photo of a yacht) /What is this one?/
HR: _____
I: /What about this?/
HR: /Z is for zebra/

Interactions with JR

I: /JR, what is this?/ (pointing at the image of an airplane)
JR: /airplane/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a donkey)
JR: _____
I: (points at a human eye) /what is this?/
JR: /eyes/
I: (shows him a glass of water) / What is this called?/
JR: /{gjaʃ}/ /gla:s/
I: (points at a horse) /What is this?/
JR: _____
I: (points at a photo of ice-cream) /What is this one?/
JR: /aɪz-krɪm/ /aɪs-krɪ:m/

I: /What of this one?/ (shows him a jacket)
JR: /jacket/
I: (show the picture of a key)
JR: /key/
I: (shows the picture of a lamp) /What do we call it?/
JR: /{jamp}/ /læmp/
I: (points at the image of a monkey) /What is this?/
JR: _____
I: (points at the photo of human nose) /What do we call this?/
JR: /nose/
I: /Show me your nose/
JR: (points at his nose)
I: (shows him a picture of onions)
JR: /onions/
I: (shows a picture of a pocket) /What about this?/
JR: _____
I: (shows a picture of a queen) /Who is this person?/
JR: /queen/ (the first 2 consonants pronounced as one- kw)
I: /Have you seen a queen before?/
JR: /shakes his head/
I: /What about this?/ (points at a rat/
JR: /{jat}/ /ræt/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the picture of shoes)
JR: /shoe/
I: (points at a train) /What is this?/
JR: /tijen/ /treɪn/
I: /Have you seen a train before?/
JR: (nodes his head)
I: (shows a photo of a flower vase) /Do you know this? What is it?/
JR: /{vat}/
I: (points at the image of a wristwatch) /What about this?/
JR: /{jiʃwɒ}/ /rɪstwɒtʃ/
I: (shows a picture of a Christmas tree) /what about this?/
JR: _____
I: (shows him a photo of a yacht) /What is this one?/
JR: _____
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the image of a zebra)
JR: /{tibija}/ /zɪ:brə; zebrə/

Interactions with KR

I: /KR, what is this?/ (Pointing at the image of an airplane)
KR: /aero plane/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a donkey)
KR: /donkey/
I: (points at a human eye) /what is this?/
KR: /eye/

I: (shows him a glass of water) / What is this called?/
KR: /glass/
I: (points at a horse) /What is this?/
KR: /horse/
I: (points at a photo of ice-cream) /What is this one?/
KR: /{aɪz-krɪm}/ /aɪs-krɪ:m/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows him a jacket)
KR: /jacket/
I: (shows the picture of a key)
KR: /key/
I: (shows the picture of a lamp) /What do we call it?/
KR: /lamp/
I: (points at the image of a monkey) /What is this?/
KR: /monkey/
I: (points at the photo of human nose) /What do we call this?/
KR: /nose/
I: /Show me your nose/
KR: (points at his nose)
I: (shows a picture of onions)
KR: /onions/
I: (shows a picture of a pocket) /What about this?/
KR: /pocket/
I: (shows a picture of a queen) /Who is this person?/
KR: /queen/ (the first 2 consonants pronounced as one: kw)
I: /Have you seen a queen before?/
KR: /shakes his head/
I: /What about this?/ (points at a rat/
KR: /rat/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the picture of shoes)
KR: /shoe/
I: (points at a train) /What is this?/
KR: /train/
I: (shows a photo of a flower vase) /Do you know this? What is it?/
KR: /vase/
I: (points at the image of a wristwatch) /What about this?/
KR: /watch/
I: (shows a picture of a Christmas tree) /what about this?/
KR: /X-mas/
I: (shows him a photo of a yacht) /What is this one?/
KR: /yacht/ (pronounced with voiceless affricate/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the image of a zebra)
KR: /zebra/

Interactions with OR

I: /OR, what is this?/ (pointing at the image of an airplane)
OR: /aero plane/

I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a donkey)
OR: /{doŋkı}/ /dɒŋkı/
I: /Have you ever seen a donkey before?/
OR: /Yes/
I: (points at a human eye) /what is this?/
OR: /eyes/
I: (shows him a glass of water) / What is this called?/
OR: /{gulas}/ /gla:s/
I: (points at a horse) /What is this?/
OR: /horse/
I: (points at a photo of ice-cream) /What is this one?/
OR: /{aız-karı:m}/ /aıs-krı:m/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows him a jacket)
OR: /{tʃaket}/ /ʤækıt/
I: (show the picture of a key)
OR: /key/
I: (shows the picture of a lamp) /What do we call it?/
OR: /lamp/
I: (points at the image of a monkey) /What is this?/
OR: /monkey/
I: (points at the photo of human nose) /What do we call this?/
OR: /noz/ /neuz/
I: (shows a picture of onions)
OR: /onions/
I: (shows a picture of a pocket) /What about this?/
OR: /pocket/
I: (shows a picture of a queen) /Who is this person?/
OR: /queen/ (the first 2 consonants pronounced as one: kw)
I: /What about this?/ (points at a rat/
OR: /rat/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the picture of shoes)
OR: /shoe/
I: (points at a train) /What is this?/
OR: /train/
I: (shows a photo of a flower vase) /Do you know this? What is it?/
OR: /vase/
I: (points at the image of a wristwatch) /What about this?/
OR: /watch/
I: (shows a picture of a Christmas tree) /what about this?/
OR: /X-mas tree/
I: (shows him a photo of a yacht) /What is this one?/
OR: /yacht/ (pronounced with voiceless affricate/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the image of a zebra)
OR: /zebra/

Interactions with PR

I: /PR, what is this?/ (pointing at the image of an airplane)
PR: /aero plane/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a donkey)
PR: /donkey/
I: (points at a human eye) /what is this?/
PR: /eye/
I: (shows her a glass of water) / What is this called?/
PR: /glass/
I: (points at a horse) /What is this?/
PR: /horse/
I: (points at a photo of ice-cream) /What is this one?/
PR: /{aɪz-krɪm}/ /aɪs-krɪ:m/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows her a jacket)
PR: /jacket/
I: (shows the picture of a key)
PR: /key/
I: (shows the picture of a lamp) /What do we call it?/
PR: /lamp/
I: (points at the image of a monkey) /What is this?/
PR: /monkey/
I: (points at the photo of human nose) /What do we call this?/
PR: /nose/
I: (shows a picture of onions)
PR: /onion/
I: (shows a picture of a pocket) /What about this?/
PR: /pocket/
I: (shows a picture of a queen) /Who is this person?/
PR: /queen/ (the first 2 consonants pronounced as one: kw)
I: /What about this?/ (points at a rat)
PR: /rat/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the picture of shoes)
PR: /shoes/
I: (points at a train) /What is this?/
PR: /train/
I: /Have u seen a train before?/
PR: /Yes/
I: (shows a photo of a flower vase) /Do you know this? What is it?/
PR: _____
I: (points at the image of a wristwatch) /What about this?/
PR: /watch/
I: (shows a picture of a Christmas tree) /what about this?/
PR: _____
I: (shows her a photo of a yacht) /What is this one?/
PR: /yacht/ (pronounced with voiceless affricate/
I: /What is a yacht?/
PR: _____

I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the image of a zebra)
PR: /zebra/

Interactions with FR

I: /What is this FR?/ (pointing at the image of an airplane)
FR: /aero plane/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at a donkey)
FR: /donkey/
I: (points at a human eye) /what is this?/
FR: /eye/
I: (shows her a glass of water) / What is this called?/
FR: /glass/
I: (points at a horse) /What is this?/
FR: /horse/
I: (points at a photo of ice-cream) /What is this one?/
FR: /{aɪz-krɪm}/ /aɪs-krɪ:m/
I: /What of this one?/ (shows her a jacket)
FR: /jacket/
I: (show the picture of a key)
FR: /key/
I: (shows the picture of a lamp) /What do we call it?/
FR: /lamp/
I: (points at the image of a monkey) /What is this?/
FR: /monkey/
I: (points at the photo of human nose) /What do we call this?/
FR: /nose/
I: (shows a picture of onions)
FR: /onion/
I: (shows a picture of a pocket) /What about this?/
FR: /pocket/
I: (shows a picture of a queen) /Who is this person?/
FR: /queen/ (the first 2 consonants pronounced as one: kw)
I: /What about this?/ (points at a rat)
FR: /rat/
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the picture of shoes)
FR: /shoes/
I: (points at a train) /What is this?/
FR: /train/
I: /Have u seen a train before?/
FR: /Yes/
I: (shows a photo of a flower vase) /Do you know this? What is it?/
FR: _____
I: (points at the image of a wristwatch) /What about this?/
FR: /watch/
I: (shows a picture of a Christmas tree) /what about this?/
FR: _____

I: (shows her a photo of a yacht) /What is this one?/
FR: /yacht/ (pronounced with voiceless affricate/
I: /What is a yacht?/
FR: _____
I: /What about this?/ (pointing at the image of a zebra)
FR: /zebra/

Letter to Respondents

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Philomena Elom, a postgraduate student of the department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. I am working on the research topic- **Syntactic Development of Selected Preschoolers: A Cross-Sectional Approach**. The research aims at surveying how nursery school children develop and use sentences, as well as the social and environmental conditions that contribute to this.

As I anticipate your full co-operation in filling in the questionnaire below, be rest assured that the information you provide will be solely used for the purposes of the research.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Philomena Elom (Researcher)

SECTION A
Information about the Parent/Guardian(s)

Educational Background

1. Your educational level [graduate] [secondary school leaver] [primary school leaver]

2. If a graduate, what level? [BA/BSc] [Master's] [PhD] [Professor]

Ethnic/Linguistic Background

3. What ethnic group are you from? [Hausa] [Igbo] [Yoruba] [Others]Specify

4. Are both parents/guardian from the same ethnic group? [Yes] [No]. If No, mention the different tribes (a) (father's) _____, (b) (mother's)_____

5. What is the language commonly used at home? _____

6. Apart from this dominant language in number (5) above, what other language(s) is/ are used at home? _____, _____

7. What is the reason behind the use of the language in number (5)? _____

Economic Background of the Family

8. What is the occupation of the parent/guardian(s)? [Civil Servant] [Business] [Trader] [Others]Specify

9. If a civil servant, under what cadre? [Senior Civil Servant] [Junior Civil Servant] [Others] Specify

SECTION B
Information about the Child

10. Gender [Male] [Female]

11. Age (Please include the number of months where necessary e.g. 2years 4months) _____

12. What is the position of your child in the family? [first child] [second child] [third child] [others]specify _____

13. How many children are they in your family?_____

14. What language does the child speak fluently? _____

15. What other language(s) does the child speak? _____, _____

Letter to Queen of Peace Nursery School

Department of English and Literary Studies
Faculty of Arts
Ahmadu Bello University
Zaria

30 March 2017

The Head
Our Lady Queen of Peace Nursery School
Ahmadu Bello University
Zaria

Dear Madam

Permission to Use your Pupils for Research

I am a postgraduate student of the aforementioned Department, working on the research topic **LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED PRESCHOOLERS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL APPROACH.** The researcher intends to gather data from children between two and five, with a view to understanding how their mastery of English is affected by their social background. My supervisors are Prof. J. Y. Surakat and Dr Jonah Amodu, of the same Department.

Whatever material gathered from the research, I assure you, will be treated with utmost confidentiality, and used solely for research purposes.

Yours faithfully

Philomena Elom
(Researcher)

Letter to Rehoboth Academy

Department of English and Literary Studies
Faculty of Arts
Ahmadu Bello University
Zaria

28 September 2017

The Head
Model Learning School
Samaru, Zaria

Dear Sir/Madam

Permission to Use your Pupils for Research

I am a postgraduate student of the aforementioned Department, working on the research topic **LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED PRESCHOOLERS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL APPROACH.** The researcher intends to gather data from children between two and five, with a view to understanding how their mastery of English is affected by their social background. My supervisors are Prof. J. Y. Surakat and Dr Jonah Amodu, of the same Department.

Whatever material gathered from the research, I assure you, will be treated with utmost confidentiality, and used solely for research purposes.

Yours faithfully

Philomena Elom

(Researcher)