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INFLUENCE OF LIBERIAN ENGLISH ON STUDENTS' LEARNING OF STANDARD ENGLISH AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE -IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

VASHEILA G. SIRYON

2023

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INFLUENCE OF LIBERIAN ENGLISH ON STUDENTS' LEARNING OF STANDARD ENGLISH AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

BY

VASHEILA G. SIRYON

Thesis submitted to the Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Education, College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Arts Education (English)

August, 2023

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university of elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature…… Date. June 3, 2024

Name: Vasheila G. Siryon

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guideline on supervision of thesis laid down by the university of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature…… Date……

Name: Dr. Isaac Atta Kwenin

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of Liberian English on students' learning of Standard English and academic performance in the English language. A descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted for this investigation, employing a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale and an essay test for data collection. Proportional stratified random sampling was utilized to select 355 twelfth-grade students within Education District 6, Paynesville, Montserrado county, Liberia. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were employed to address research questions one, two and four, while research question three was tackled using inferential statistics, specifically multiple linear regression. The study revealed that Liberian English has significant influence on students' academic performance and their usage of Standard English. The study also discovered that the linguistic features of LE entailing wrong use of pronouns, the wrong tense of verb used, misspelling of words, and wrong use of grammar significantly influenced students' academic performance in English language. The study also found out that strategies focusing on education, awareness, and language policies seem to be more preferred, while outright bans and penalties are met with more mixed responses. Based on these findings, several recommendations were made. It was recommended that the Ministry of Education develop and implement language integration programs that provide students with opportunities to practice and improve their Standard English skills. Also, awareness campaigns aimed at highlighting the importance of proficient Standard English usage for academic and professional success was recommended.

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KEYWORDS

Academic performance

Cross linguistics interference

Influence

Liberian English

Pidgin English

Standard English

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Ms. Josephine S. Barnes

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION	**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
ABSTRACT	iii
KEYWORDS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
DEDICATION	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xii
CHAPTER ONE:INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	8
Purpose of the Study	10
Objectives of the Study	10
Research Questions	10
Significance of the Study	11
Delimitation of the Study	11
Limitation of the Study	11
Organization of the Study	12
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	
Introduction	13
Theoretical Review	13
Positive and Negative Transfer	14

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Conscious interference and unconscious interference 16

Theoretical Framework 17

Conceptual Review 20

Origin of Liberian English 20

Varieties of English in Liberia 23

Kru Pidgin English (KPE) 24

Liberian Settlers English (LSE) 24

Liberian Vernacular English (LVE) 25

Standard Liberian English (SLE) 25

Sociolinguistic status and utilization of English in Liberia 26

Influence of local languages and Liberian English on standard English 29

Features of Liberian English 32

Grammar of Liberian English 32

Phonology of Liberian English (LE) 35

Reduplication and semantic representation in Liberian English 36

Semantic Representation of some Liberian English lexis and standard English 37

The concept of standard English 40

Usage and register of standard English 40

The concept of academic performance 42

Empirical Review 43

Influence of Liberian English (pidgin) on the teaching and learning of standard English 44

Identifying common Liberian English/ (PE) interference error in students' writing 48

Digitized by Sam Jonah Library

University of Cape Coast https://ir.ucc.edu.gh/xmlui

Implication of PE interference on students' academic performance in English language 53

Chapter Summary 55

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction 57

Research Design 57

Study Area 59

Population of the Study 59

Sample and Sampling Procedures 59

Proportional Stratified Sampling 60

Research Instrument 63

Validity and Reliability of Instruments 62

Ethical Consideration 65

Data Collection Procedure 64

Data Processing and Analysis 65

Chapter Summary 67

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Data of Respondents 67

Results and Discussion 70

Extent to which the usage of Liberian English influence students' learning of standard English 70

Linguistic features of Liberian English that are most likely to interfere with students' writing 74

Influence of the linguistic features of Liberian English interference on students' academic performance in English language 75

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University of Cape Coast https://ir.ucc.edu.gh/xmlui

Measures that can be employed to mitigate the usage of Liberian English among students in senior high schools 79

Chapter Summary 83

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction 84

Summary of the Study 84

Summary of Major Findings 86

Conclusions 88

Recommendations 92

Suggestions for Future Research 93

Chapter Summary 93

REFERENCES 94

APPENDICES 104

Appendix A: Research Instrument 104

Appendix B: Letter of Consent by Thesis Supervisor 107

Appendix C: Ethical Clearance 108

Digitized by Sam Jonah Library

University of Cape Coast https://ir.ucc.edu.gh/xmlui

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
1.	Reduplication of Liberian English.	38
2.	Semantic representation of Liberian English to Standard English.	39
3.	Distribution of the study's Population and Sample size.	62
4.	Senior High Students' Characteristics.	69
5.	Extent to which the Usage of Liberian English has Influenced Students' Learning of Standard English.	71
6.	LE errors observed in students writing.	74
7.	ANOVA, Model Summary and Coefficient for Students' Academic Performance in English Language.	76
8.	Suggestions to Mitigate the Usage of Liberian English.	80

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Cross-linguistics Interference (CLI)

Kru Pidgin English (KPE)

Liberian English (LE)

Liberia Settlers English (LSE)

Mother Tongue (L1)

Pidgin English (PE)

Second Language (L2)

Speakers of Pidgin English (SPE)

Standard English (SE)

Vernacular Liberian English (VLE)

West African English (WAE)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The use of English language in Liberia was influenced primarily by the Portuguese who were the first to arrive in West Africa to trade, and also to a large extent by immigrants from the United States who were the elite people of Liberia (Singler, 1997). The English in Liberia is based widely upon American English. According to Ngovo (1998), English was imposed on indigenous Liberians in the 1800s by the liberated African slaves from the United States. However, the state of the American English has been altered by Liberians from imposition to a state of adoption, originating from it their own variations. These variations are collectively termed “Liberian English” (LE), Which is generally used to cover varieties of the non-standard English-lexifier speech spoken in the country which are categorized into these groups: the Kru Pidgin English, the Settlers English and the Vernacular Liberian English (Singler, 1997). Excluding the Liberian Standard English, which is the most prestigious variety, considered highly American in its content, and it is acquired primarily through formal education (Breitborde, 1988), all other varieties are non- standard, vernacular, colloquial (Kolokwa) or pidgin English. These varieties are extensively spoken throughout the country. However, despite these variations, they do have common features. These features distinguish them from English spoken in other countries. The most common way of referring to all of the English varieties used in Liberia is simply as "English." Liberians are not familiar with the phrase "pidgin" (Singler, 1997).

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The only black African country with English as a native language is Liberia, which largely credits its English to the United States of America instead of Britain (Hancock, 1974).Therefore, the "Liberian English" is the English for those in Liberia for whom English is their first and only language, as well as, for those who have English as their second or third language; it is for those who have completed tertiary education, and also for those who have never experienced western education in their lives, including those who have rarely travelled outside their village of birth (Singler, 1997).

English is a native language in America, Ireland, North America, Australia and Britain. It is also an official language for many British colonies. It is also an official language in Liberia. As noted by Gooden (2011, p.2), "of all the languages which had their probable origins in one language … one speech, many millennia ago, the most successful and the most widely spoken – up to the present day – is English". He mentions further that 380-million individuals use English as a primary language and approximately 600-million use it as their second language. Additionally, approximately one-billion people are exposed to the idea of learning English, including Liberians. With this substantial global population using English, Gooden's (2011) conclusion is that, English holds the leading position as an international communication tool and could potentially become the primary widespread language of our time.

The English language being a native language for America, from which Liberian English was established, has become both a first and second language for most Liberians, coexisting with more than 15 other indigenous languages in the nation. Paynesville, being a major urban center and Liberia's second-largest

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city, accommodates all these local languages. Therefore, Liberian English, due to the urban environment, emerges as the prevailing language in the area.

Liberian English can be seen as a distorted variant of the English language, employed for communication between individuals who speak diverse indigenous languages. Thus, the acquisition of each of these languages can be influenced either positively or negatively by others. The negative aspect is referred to as interference, a term coined by Lehiste (1988, p.1) as: “deviations from the norms of either language that occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language”. This kind of interference often stems from an individual’s first language and is known as mother tongue interference. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010, p.377), the term "mother tongue" is specifically referred to as “a first language which is acquired at home”. In this, Pidgin English is regarded as the first language or mother tongue (L1), whereas English Language is seen as the second language or target language (L2).

Liberian English has constantly bridged the communication gap among a variety of Liberians with distinct language and educational experiences. This variant is employed by politicians in their campaign endeavors due to its resonance with common people; government officials utilize it to connect with rural residents during advocacy trips; businesses owners rely on it for promoting products on various platforms such as billboards and radio/TV broadcasts. Additionally, medical practitioners employ it to effectively communicate with patients who lack literacy, while religious leaders utilize it to deliver sermons in churches. Notably, the use of Liberian English has permeated across the entirety of the nation.

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Notwithstanding, English is a global language. It is the foremost language used in international trade, diplomacy, science, and higher education. Many international organizations, including the United Nations and many professional associations, have adopted English as their official language. It is often the language used at international conferences and in international sports. Professional papers are widely published in English all around the world. English-language abstracts are frequently included in publications that have been published in other languages (Kitao, 1996). Therefore, the ability to grasp and use the English language properly and proficiently is typically a requirement for success in any type of school, training, or employment.

The term "standardization" describes the process by which a language has been organized. *"The process usually involves the development of such things as grammars, spelling book, dictionaries and possibly a literature"* as described by Wardhaugh (2010). Standard English (SE) is defined by Trudgill (1995) as that type of English which is normally taught in schools and to non-native speakers learning the language. The Liberian Standard English variety is particularly seen as the English "normally employed in written text and is strongly associated with public speech of educated 'cultured' or 'civilized' persons (Breitborde, 1988). There appears to be a consensus then, that Standard English is not tied to a particular accent and that it is generally associated with written language (Sato, 1989).

In light of the above, English was established as the national language during the Americo-Liberian government (1847–1980), and the Department of Education enacted a strategy to offer instruction in English despite the absence of equivalent regulations for any indigenous languages

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(Dillon, 2007). In addition to that, the Education Reform Act of 2011 (Republic of Liberia, 2011), through the Ministry of Education (MOE) declared English as the primary Language of Instruction (LOI). The SE is taught to students traditionally with its major reliance upon texts imported from the United States. However, by the time the children first enter school, they have already acquired a good amount of the LE which is widely spoken throughout the country (Fasold & Shuy, 1970).

English is the language of instruction used in every school in Liberia beginning from early childhood education, primary, junior and senior high schools, as well as tertiary level. It is also taught as a core subject from primary one to tertiary level and has been made compulsory for all students to successfully pass before being promoted to the next level (Hancock, 1974). A pass in English language is a major requirement for admission into tertiary institutions in Liberia. The main aim of teaching English language in Liberian schools is to equip students with the techniques of reading, listening, writing and speaking which are the four basic skills needed in language learning. Thus, effective oral and written English language proficiency is fundamental to the study of all other subjects in Liberia. Many students see the English language as a simple subject they can communicate with and do not worry about whether or not they maintain the ethics of the language (Prince & Onyejelem, 2020).

Before the enactment of the Liberia Education Reform Act in 2011, which introduced a new set of teaching requirements, numerous educators who joined the workforce had not received formal teacher training. A significant number of these teachers initially assumed their roles during the sequence of civil conflicts in Liberia from 1989 to 2003, a period when access to education

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and teacher training programs was exceedingly limited (HALI Access Network, n.d). Consequently, some educators might not have finished their secondary education and could be deficient in fundamental literacy abilities (MOE, 2016a). As per the Teacher Verification and Testing Program in 2017 which aimed at confirming teachers' qualifications and skills, the results showed that 40% of certified elementary school teachers lacked the essential English proficiency necessary to effectively teach (World Bank, 2017).

According to Cook (2016), the teacher's language is very important to language teaching. One important aspect of the learning of a second language efficaciously is how the learners are treated: the teaching methods they encounter, the language they hear, and the environment in which they are learning. However, teachers tend to code switch from the Liberian Standard English (LSE) to the LE during the teaching and learning process. This is probably done for better clarification of the topic under discussion. With that, students think it is right to code switch from the LSE to the LE to enable them express themselves clearly. This however doesn't encourage the consistent use of Standard English among students in senior high schools in Liberia. Code switching involves combining two separate languages in conversation or writing. To switch, an individual must know both languages well (Sebba, 1997)

Even though English is widely spoken throughout the country and its capital city, not all of its speakers are proficient in Standard English. (Breitborde, 1988). There have been many researchers who have written scholarly papers on the English in Liberia and the "Liberian English" (Hancock, 1974; Singler, 1981 & Ngovo, 1998). These studies however did not highlight the influence the Liberian English has on students' learning of Standard English

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and their academic performance in English language. Rather, they mostly talked about the varieties spoken in the country and how it differs from Standard English. Nevertheless, similar studies have been done in other countries as it relates to the influence pidgin English has on students learning of Standard English.

In Ghana, a study done by Ankrah (2018) indicated that pidgin has negative impact on student's writing structure. Students were unable to identify and understand various English structures, so they utilize pidgin structure instead. Transliteration, pidgin induced spelling errors, wrong pronoun use, omission errors and wrong word use were recognized pidgin interference errors committed in students writing.

Another study by Solomon (2015) revealed that the co-existence of English language and pidgin is an educational problem in Nigeria. The negative impact of the co-existence of the two languages exerts some considerable negative effect on the effective learning of English. It further shows the ignorance of some students about the distinct features of the two languages which has grave implication for the learning of English language in the country.

Again, a study carried out by Prince and Onyejelem, (2020) discovered that pidgin English is becoming a threat to students‟ ability to speak English as well as hindering their achievement in other subject areas based on the status given to it.

In Liberia, it has been observed that many students find it difficult to speak and write English proficiently. They tend to code switch from LE to SE. This is reflected in their poor performance in English language during WASSCE over the past three (3) years (WAEC Liberia Chief Examiners

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Report, 2022). At the same time, it was recorded that many teachers who entered the workforce prior to 2011 had not undergone teacher training. Many of whom are not qualified to be effective English instructor. Even the qualified ones according to the MOE (2016a) may not have the requisite knowledge of English to teach at the primary level. The incompetency of some of these teachers could hinder the teaching and learning of English language.

It is based on these reasons that the researcher deemed it necessary to delve into this study.

Statement of the Problem

The coexistence of pidgin English with the English language is indeed problematic for the acquisition of Standard English. According to a study conducted in Ghana by Adu-boahen (2020), there is a negative correlation between students' proficiency in Standard English and how often Pidgin English is used. This showed that using Pidgin English frequently has an impact on pupils' academic performance in the English language. It was reported again by Amakiri and Igani (2015) that the acquisition of Standard English in Nigeria has been negatively impacted by pidgin and its various variants.

Many Liberians can comprehend and speak English to some extent due to the long-standing use of the language as a means of communication in Liberia, although they find it difficult to do so proficiently. However, it is becoming clear that students score poorly in English language during the WASSSCE due to their lack of skill in using Standard English, which tends to create a problem for them.

According to WAEC Liberia Chief Examiner's report (2020), the WASSSCE results of 39,367 candidates who sat for the English language exam,

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only 7.43% (2,913 candidates) achieved a credit pass. This worsened in 2021 as 40,036 candidates sat for the English language exams, and only 2.25% (901 candidates) obtained a credit pass, WAEC Liberia Chief Examiner's report (2021), Again in 2022, 43,379 candidates sat the English exam, and only 4.50% (1952 candidates) received a credit pass, WAEC Liberia Chief Examiner's report (2022). These statistics based on the performance of students in obtaining a credit pass (A1-C6) in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) over the past years indicate that the academic performance of students in senior high schools in the English language is below average.

It is extremely pertinent to bring to attention that what initially began as a "trade language" among the Portuguese traders, immigrants and indigenous Liberians to ease communication has progressed into a widely spoken language spoken among both literate and illiterate Liberians, of which students and teachers are not exempted. Thus, decreasing Standard English usage to the point that the students' proficiency and performance in Standard English are being compromised.

There have been extensive study on the types of English spoken in Liberia, for instance, (Singler, 1981, 1997; Hancock, 1974; Ngovo, 1988), and also studies on the effect of pidgin English on Standard English in other countries (Amakiri & Igani, 2015; Ankrah, 2018; Prince & Onyejelem, 2020).

However, the available literature on the study of pidgin English and its effect on Standard English indicates that there has been no work done on the topic in Liberia. This is a huge gap that needs to be filled. Undertaking this study will bridge the existing gap in literature. Hence, investigating the influence

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Liberian English has on students' learning of Standard English and their academic performance is paramount to this research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of Liberian English usage on SHSs students learning of Standard English and Academic Performance in English language.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the influence of Liberian English on learning of Standard English in Senior High Schools.
2. To identify some linguistic features of LE errors that are most likely to interfere with students' writing.
3. To assess the influence of linguistic features of LE interference errors on students' academic performance in English language
4. To seek the views of students on how to mitigate the usage of Liberian English among students in senior high schools by providing some suggestions.

Research Questions

1. What extent does the Liberian English influence students' learning of Standard English in senior high schools?
2. What are the typical linguistic features of LE interference errors that are observed in SHSs students' writings?
3. What is the influence of linguistic features of LE interference errors on students' academic performance in English language?
4. What are students view on these measures proposed to help mitigate the use of LE in senior high schools?

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Significance of the Study

Liberia, like many other African countries has English as its official language of instruction in schools. However, by the time many Liberians first start school, they have already acquired a whole lot of Liberian English which can potentially affect their acquisition of Standard English. Understanding the influence of the usage of Liberian English on students' learning of Standard English can inform education policy and curriculum development in Liberia and similar context, helping educators and policy makers make informed decision on language policies, curriculum materials and teachers training programs. The findings from this study can inform educational practices, policy decisions and contribute to one's understanding about the influence of Liberian English usage on the learning of SE and academic performance, and thus serve as a basis for other researchers who will intend to conduct similar research in this area of study.

Delimitation of the Study

The research was carried out in some selected senior high schools in Education District 6, Paynesville, Montserrado County, with the goal of revealing clear information about how Liberian English affects the learning of Standard English and the academic performance of students. The study concentrated on senior high school students of District No. 6, Paynesville, Montserrado county- Liberia. Demographic factors like age and gender were also covered in the study. The study was conducted in nine SHSs out of the 18 SHSs in the district.

Limitation of the Study

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One of the limitations faced by the researcher was getting related literature done on the topic in the district or country where the research was done. This made it difficult for the researcher to refute or confirm the findings from other researchers in the country. Also, due to time constraints, the researcher could not gather data from a large sample size.

Organization of the study

This research was organized into five chapters. Chapter one focused on the introduction of the study which includes the study's, background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and limitation, definition of terms and the organization of the research. Chapter two covered the review of literature in relation to the study and the framework that underpin the study. Among other subheadings, Chapter Two also examined how the LE or Pidgin English (PE) influence learning of SE.

The research method, including the research design, study area, population, sample, and sampling procedures, data collection tools, data collection and analysis techniques, and ethical considerations, were covered in Chapter 3. The study's results and discussion of the findings were covered in Chapter 4, and the summary, conclusions, and suggestions were covered in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The structure of the literature review consists of a comprehensive examination of relevant scholarly works, which include peer- reviewed, articles,

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books and reports that are significant to this study. The literature review commenced by providing an explanation of the theoretical foundation upon which this study relies. It delved into the broad understanding of Liberian English, including its historical evolution and linguistic features. This was followed by an analysis of the impact of this Liberian English or pidgin English on students' acquisition and utilization of Standard English. Additionally, this review delved into identifying the linguistic features of Liberian English or pidgin English errors that are most likely to interfere with students' writing, and how these interferences affect students' academic performance in English language.

Theoretical review

This study is pinned by the Cross-linguistic Interference (CLI). The CLI theory was initially introduced in the 1980s by Sharwood-Smith and Kellerman (1986). It encompasses all aspects related to language influence, including interference, transfer, avoidance, borrowing, and other factors associated with language loss in context of second language (L2) acquisition. CLI is considered a relatively new field of study, and according to Cenoz (2001), it is still in its early stages.

Cross-linguistic interference theory, also referred to as language transfer or linguistic interference, is a concept in second language acquisition (SLA) that explores how the knowledge and skills from a person's first language (L1) can influence their learning and utilization of a second language (L2). This theory suggests that learners tend to transfer linguistic structures, pronunciation patterns, vocabulary, and other aspects of their L1 into their L2. (Onwe, & Oguji, 2022).

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The idea of cross-linguistic transfer stems from the belief that the existing knowledge and skills in a person's L1 can either facilitate or hinder their acquisition of L2. It is based on the assumption that learners are not starting from scratch when learning a new language; instead, they bring their previous linguistic experiences into the learning process. Berthold (1997) as cited in Onwe. & Oguji (2022), suggests that there is mutual influence between languages in terms of word order, pronoun usage, determiners, tense, and mood.

Additionally, the phenomenon of cross-linguistic transfer can be seen as transfer of linguistic components from one language to a different language, encompassing phonological, grammatical, and lexical aspects. Transfer according to Odlin (1989, p. 27) as cited in (McManus, 2021 p.10), is defined as "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired".

Positive Transfer versus Negative Transfer

There are two main types of cross-linguistic transfer: positive transfer (also referred to as facilitative transfer) and negative transfer (also known as interference or fossilization), (Odlin, 1989). Positive transfer happens when the knowledge and skills from L1 assist in the acquisition of L2, making the learning process easier and faster. For example, if a learner's L1 and L2 share similar grammatical structures, they may be able to apply the rules from their L1 to their L2. This can result in accurate sentence construction and use of grammatical forms. Conversely, negative transfer happens when the L1 knowledge and skills hinder the acquisition of L2. This can happen when the grammatical structures or pronunciation patterns in L1 conflict with those in L2.

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For example, if a L1 has a different word order than L2, the learner may produce sentences in L2 with incorrect word order. Similarly, if L1 has phonemes that do not exist in L2, the learner may have difficulty pronouncing certain sounds correctly.

Cross-linguistic Interference theory also suggests that the level of transfer can vary depending on factors such as the similarities between L1 and L2, the proficiency level of the learner, the amount of exposure to the L2, and the type of language being learned (e.g., phonology, syntax, vocabulary). Additionally, the age at which a learner starts acquiring L2 can also affect the extent of transfer, as younger learners may have a greater capacity to separate the two languages and minimize interference (Murphy, 2003). The CLI theory helps explain the challenges and errors that may arise due to the interaction between the Liberian English and Standard English and offers insights into how educators can best support students in developing proficiency in Standard English.

Conscious interference and unconscious interference

Conscious interference and unconscious interference are two concepts that relate to Cross-linguistic Interference. Conscious interference occurs when there is a deliberate and conscious attempt to remember or recall information, but other memories or information interfere with the process. Unconscious interference occurs when new information interferes with the recall of previously learned information without our conscious awareness. Unlike conscious interference, learners are not aware that the interference is taking place. The unconscious interference usually takes place at the level of grammar

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and phonology. According to Mohammed (2021), interference in language learning is a genuine psycho-linguistic phenomenon.

The investigation into Cross-Linguistic Influence (CLI) originates from a psychological standpoint and aims to clarify the ways and conditions in which a person's knowledge of their native language (L1) impacts their production, comprehension, and development of a target language (TL) (De Angelis, 2007). In the past, CLI has primarily concentrated on research concerning Second Language Acquisition (SLA). According to Tremblay (2006), the influence of learners' native language on their acquisition of a second language (L2) can be ascribed to the fact that their L1 serves as their only prior language system. This leads to transfer of certain linguistic features from the L1 to the L2 until proficiency in the L2 is attained.

Numerous publications in the past fifteen years, including books, article collections, and state-of-the-art papers, indicate a persistent interest in cross-linguistic influence. Notable works by authors such as Dechert and Raupach (1989), Gass (1996), Gass and Selinker (1993), Sharwood-Smith and Kellerman (1986), Odlin (1989), Ringbom (1987), and Selinker (1992) exemplify this trend. Additionally, CLI garners significant consideration from scholars in various fields that do not primarily focus on transfer but recognize its significance. These fields include language contact, second language phonetics and phonology, language universals and linguistic typology, and second language writing.

However, in conclusion, different expressions fail to fully meet the requirements, and experts in linguistics have frequently pointed out several issues. Cook (2000), for instance, highlights that the terminologies "transfer"

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and "cross-linguistic influence" inaccurately imply a form of actual movement. Howbeit, the Cross-linguistic Interference is apposite for this research because it examines how the knowledge and skills from the students' previous knowledge of LE can influence their acquisition of SE. The CLI is deemed appropriate for this current study due to previous research findings (e.g., De Angelis, 2007; and Hammarberg, 2009) that demonstrate its ability to identify occurrences of language impact between two languages across various stages of language acquisition. The theory acknowledges that transfer can be both positive and negative as well as conscious and unconscious interference, and that it is a normal part of the language learning process. Understanding the CLI can help educators and learners become more aware of potential challenges and opportunities in SE acquisition and develop strategies to maximize positive transfer and minimize negative transfer which could help improve students' performance in English language.

Theoretical Framework

Behaviorist Theory: Thorndike's Identical Elements:

The identical elements theory is based on the idea that the transfer of learning occurs when the elements of the original learning situation and the new situation are similar or identical.

Edward Thorndike, as cited in Ormrod (1990), presented a theory of transfer that focused on particular transfer. That is, transfer happens when elements from one situation are most similar or identical to those in another. According to this theory, the degree of resemblance between situations determines the degree of carryover. In other words, more resemblance equals more transfer.

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Thorndike later conducted research on the interrelationships between high school students' academic ability in several curriculum areas. Achievement in one subject appeared to help students achieve success in another only when the two subjects shared certain similarities.

Since Thorndike's work, behaviorist perspectives on transfer have focused on how stimulus and response qualities in both the original and transfer settings influence transfer. In general, the following transfer principles have developed from the behaviorist literature (Osgood, quoted in Ormrod, 1990):

• When the stimuli and responses in the two situations are similar, maximum positive transfer occurs.

• When stimuli differ and reactions are similar, some positive transfer occurs.

• When stimuli are identical but responses differ, negative transfer occurs.

Factors Affecting Transfer:

A variety of variables are related to the occurrence of transfer. I will consider two of them.

• **The more similar two situations are, the more likely it is that what is learned in one will be applied in the other:** behaviorists have claimed that transfer requires similarity of stimuli or reactions. Cognitivists have claimed that because transfer is dependent on retrieving relevant knowledge at the proper time, perceived similarity between the two contexts is more essential than real similarity (Gick and Holyoak, 1987). In either case, one thing is certain: the resemblance of two situations influences transfer.

Numerous and varied examples and opportunities for practice increase the extent to which information and skills will be

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applied in new situations:

Individuals are more likely to transfer what they have learnt if they have seen a variety of examples and practice situations (Cheng et al., 1986; Cormier 1987, cited in Ormrod, 1990). Individuals who have been trained in this manner associate what they have learnt with a variety of situations and are thus more likely to recall information when they encounter one of those contexts again.

Many of Thorndike's experiments, as well as those of other classical transfer theorists, were criticized since it was believed that the evidence of transfer discovered occurred under unnatural conditions and did not reflect the true learning process.

The concept of separating the work from the student's goals, attitudes, motivation, and environment was also challenged. His theory was also criticized for relying too heavily on drills and practice. Haskell (2000) emphasizes the subjectivity of the concept of similarity, claiming that the identical elements model only results in close transfer.

Despite the criticisms of the identical elements approach, it has been credited for having the most impact on education. The idea of practice continues to be a fundamental part of contemporary transfer theories. In spite of these criticisms and modifications, Thorndike's work laid the foundation for subsequent research on transfer of learning of which this study utilizes this theory as a framework to delve into the influence of Liberian English on student's learning of Standard English and academic performance.

Conceptual Review

This portion of the research concentrated on gaining insights into the fundamental concepts, their relationships, and the implications they have in

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relation to key variables of the study. It aimed to provide a comprehensive and critical overview of existing knowledge and deeper understanding associated with the concepts being reviewed.

Origin of Liberian English

Liberian English basically was influenced by the Portuguese who were the first European traders to reach in West Africa. In 1401, Pedro de Cintra, the Portuguese sailor, and his crew- members became the first Europeans to make contact with the Liberian coast. Over the following century, the Portuguese engaged in trade along the West African coast, utilizing a trade language with Portuguese roots. However, the arrival of English ships, namely the Lion and Primrose, in 1553 marked a shift towards English dominance in trade, leading to the replacement of Portuguese-based terms with English equivalents. Nevertheless, traces of Portuguese influence can still be found in contemporary Liberian English, including words such as "pekin" (meaning "child" derived from the Portuguese word for "small," "pequeno"), "cavalla" (referring to a large fish, originating from the Portuguese term for "horse mackerel"), and various place names like Mesurado, Cestos, and Cape Palmas (Singler,1981: 13).

In the 18th century, there was significant growth in trade along the coastal area of Liberia. By the late 18th century, European and American vessels began making stops along the current Liberian coast to recruit crews for their voyages along the African coastline. Furthermore, these ships would also make stops during their return trips to Europe or America to disembark the mariners. While these mariners were commonly known as Krumen, there were also Bassas and Grebos among their ranks. The Kru, Bassa, and Grebo ethnic groups,

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who were closely related in language and culture, primarily made up the majority of the ship's crew. They started working on European vessels, serving as crew members and intermediaries in trade negotiations between Europeans and Africans along the coast. These developments, the growth of trade and the presence of Kru mariners, shaped an environment where an English-based pidgin language emerged along the Liberian coast. Consequently, when the African-American immigrants arrived in Liberia during the 19th century, they discovered the existence of an established variation of English in the region (Singler, 1997).

The American Colonization Society (ACS) was established in 1816 with the goal to return former slaves to Africa due to the oppressive racial conditions in the United States. The ACS believed that African Americans were unable to fully enjoy their rights as citizens in America. However, a major underlying motive of the ACS was to transform the United States into a colonial power, which would stimulate its growing economy. The ACS argued that repatriating freed slaves to Africa would not only benefit the former slaves but also contribute to the economic development of the USA.

During the initial two-thirds of the 19th century, approximately 17,000 African Americans migrated to Liberia. Immediately after reaching their destination, these settlers established around 40 settlements, primarily located along or close to the coast. Most of these settlements were quite small and were predominantly concentrated in and around Monrovia, which served as their capital. Throughout the 1800s, these settlers and the government they formed were restricted to coastal areas. In the meantime, the pidgin language that existed before their arrival continued to be widely used and spread along the

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West African coast. It was so prevalent along the coast of Liberia that Jehudi Ashmun, an early official of the American Colonization Society, who brought liberated black individuals from the United States to Liberia, reported in the 1820s that:

"every head man around us, and hundreds of their people speak, and can be made to understand our language without an interpreter" (Gold, 1979)

According to Gold (1979), it is believed that the vocabulary of this pidgin, known as LE, is predominantly English, accounting for approximately ninety per cent of its composition. The settlers remained isolated within their own community and continued to use English as their primary language. When it came to engaging with the local people, they adopted a similar condescending and superior demeanor as their English predecessors. In 1847, Liberia was established with English being designated as its official language. Another significant event in the early development of Liberian English took place a few years later. Between 1859 and 1861, ships belonging to the allied forces intercepted Confederate vessels and rescued approximately 5,700 Africans who were being transported to the United States. Despite originating from the Congo delta, these Africans were transported to Liberia. They were referred to as "Recaptured Africans" and eventually became known as "Congos." Over time, the Congos developed their own distinct variation of Liberian English (Singler, 2008).

Discussing this concept of the origin of Liberian English is important because it provides insights into the linguistic growth of the language in the Liberian setting. Understanding the history of Liberian English is essential to comprehend how the language has diverged from standard English. It helps

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identify the unique features, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar structures that have emerged in Liberian English as a result of historical and cultural factors. This knowledge is crucial in studying the Liberian English influence on students' learning of Standard English and their academic performance.

Varieties of English in Liberia

In the context of Liberia, Liberian English is specifically the varieties of English spoken in the country, which has been influenced by local languages and cultural factors according to Hancock's 1974 article, in which he posited that Liberia has many types of English being spoken, but it would be incorrect to view them as separate forms with well-defined boundaries. Instead, these varieties of English exert varying degrees of influence on one another, and the standard English language has a normalizing impact on all of them. Hancock identifies several distinguishable types of English in Liberia, including standard Liberian English, vernacular Liberian English, "Congo," nonnative vernacular Liberian English, Liberian pidgin English, soldier English, and Kru pidgin English. However, I argue that the nonnative vernacular Liberian English and Liberian pidgin English can be combined into a single variety called Vernacular Liberian English (VLE) given that we acknowledge the continuum they share due to their similar features.

Soldier English is no longer evident in the Liberian population, and "Congo" English is spoken by only a small number of Liberians. However, for the nature of this study we will consider four of the varieties since each of them has greatly influenced the English spoken in Liberia and collectively, they are referred to as Liberian English (LE), excluding the Standard Liberian English (SLE).

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Kru Pidgin English (KPE)

Kru Pidgin English (KPE) is a language employed by the Kru fishermen residing along the coastline as their secondary means of communication. It incorporates certain elements from English dialects spoken in Liberia and bears similarity to Krio, spoken in Sierra Leone. This language was already in use in Liberia prior to the country's independence (Singler, 1984).

Liberian Settlers English (LSE)

Liberian Settlers English refers to the language spoken by the descendants of more than 16,000 African Americans and Afro-Caribbean settlers who migrated to Liberia during the 19th century. As anticipated, this linguistic variety has its roots in 19th-century African American English and serves as the primary language for its speakers. The term "Americo-Liberians" is used to describe these individuals who are the descendants of the aforementioned African-Americans and Afro-Caribbean settlers, many of whom were former slaves who gained their freedom.

Liberian Vernacular English (LVE)

This form of English is extensively used by the people of Liberia across the entire country. It represents the unique version of West African pidgin English spoken by Liberians, which has been significantly influenced by the English spoken by the original Liberian settlers. Although Standard Liberian English still serves as the official language of the country's government, markets, and educational institutions (at least in principle), Liberian Vernacular English is the variant that is frequently spoken in public and has even been known to occasionally take the place of native languages at home (Sheppard, 2013). Liberian Vernacular English (LVE) encompasses the language spoken

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by all Liberians who communicate in a variety of English as their main language. LVE is distinct from other English varieties in West Africa as it follows a continuum similar to Caribbean creoles, as outlined by DeCamp (1971) and further developed by Bickerton (1975) and Rickford (1987).

Standard Liberian English (SLE)

The official language of Liberia is Standard Liberian English (SLE), it is predominantly influenced by American customs. This influence is upheld through consistent political and economic connections with the United States, the presence of American educators in Liberia, Liberian students studying abroad on American scholarships, and the impact of American media, such as movies, records, and textbooks. While Standard Liberian English bears similarities to other West African variations of English, its distinct phonology reflects the American influence rather than British. Standard Liberian English (SLE) is the language that is taught in primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. It is used in formal speeches, newspapers, and media outlets, and it serves as the medium of communication with international partners. SLE is the designated form of English for Liberian schools and is employed in both spoken and written formal speeches, as well as in media content. It can be noted that SLE has very few, if any, native speakers. While there is no specific data to rely on, it seems that the standard dialect is a learned variation, and being familiar with it is considered a sign of education and cultural understanding (Hancock, 1974).

In summary, the concept of varieties of English in Liberia provides the foundation for understanding the linguistic features and characteristics of Liberian English. It helps the researcher examine how these linguistic

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differences impact the acquisition and proficiency of standard English among Liberian students.

Sociolinguistic status and utilization of English in Liberia

The sociolinguistic situation in Liberia has been highly complex since the mid-19th century. Initially, there were four main linguistic groups: tribal languages, English pidgins that emerged during the first encounters with Europeans, African American English (AAE), and imported Congo languages. Over time, the "Congos" conformed to the speech of the settlers, and their languages no longer have a noticeable influence. As mentioned earlier, the early pidgins evolved into what is now known as vernacular Liberian English (LE), incorporating features from AAE and tribal languages. Today, many Liberians speak a tribal language as a marker of tribal identity, along with some form of English, either as a basilectal pidgin or a more refined form acquired through formal education (Ngovo, 1998: 48). Nevertheless, the focus of this analysis is LE. According to Singler (2008: 876), three distinct forms of modern LE exist. Vernacular Liberian English is spoken by the majority of the Liberian population and is acquired either as a first language (L1) at home or as a second language (L2) when communicating with non-tribe members. It is primarily used in informal and domestic settings (Hancock 1974: 225) and ranges from a "deep" pidgin to a vernacular Liberian version of International English along a continuum (Singler 2006: 23). Singler argues that VLE originated from West African Pidgin English (WAPE) varieties rather than African American English (AAE), as it displays numerous features of WAPE languages.

Standard Liberian English (SLE) has become the language of media, politics, and business, spoken by a small minority (5%) with higher education

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opportunities (Ngovo,1998). It is generally considered the most prestigious variety (Gut 2012: 227), but many uneducated Liberians feel averse to its complexity. (Ngovo 1998: 49). It sets itself apart by its close resemblance to American English. Liberian Settlers English developed in isolated settler communities, primarily in Sinoe County, and has received significant attention from historical linguists due to its strong ties to early African American Vernacular English (AAVE).

English quickly became the most prestigious language in Liberia after it was declared the official language. The English-speaking minority, who maintained connections with the USA, had more wealth and resources than the rest of the population. Consequently, many Liberians from rural areas flocked to Monrovia, the capital, and had to acquire English to communicate with the settlers. Additionally, settler politicians promoted the rapid spread of English by establishing missions, schools, and other national institutions across the country. Today, even remote Liberian communities have access to English, and approximately 3.1 million out of 3.2 million Liberians speak the language (Crystal, 2003: 62-65). About 20% of the population learns English as their first language (Wolf, 2001: 39), while the remaining 80% learn it as a second or third language, making it a lingua franca for most Liberians (Dunn-Marcos, et al. 2005: 43).

The initial skepticism and tensions between settlers and locals when they arrived in Liberia were more a result of the settlers' overbearing attitude than the introduction of English. Indigenous Liberians recognized the socio-economic benefits of English and willingly learned it, using it to communicate with other tribes and overcome intertribal boundaries. (Dunn-Marcos et al.

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2005: 43). Thus, “the language of the powerful […] influenced the language of the dominated […] [without] being itself profoundly influenced in turn” (Singler, 2008: 875). Liberians strongly identify with their tribal heritage and are reluctant to learn the language of another tribe. However, English, not being a tribal language, became a medium to communicate with other tribes and bridge intertribal boundaries.

Presently, the usage of English in Liberia varies depending on the region and the speaker's social background. In rural areas, everyday communication relies on the local tribal language, while English is primarily used in schools and when interacting with foreigners. Educated Liberians residing in the country may use English as their working language. In urban areas, particularly Monrovia, English is used across all social levels. A family migrating from rural areas to Monrovia may continue speaking their tribal language among themselves, but in public settings, English becomes the preferred choice (Ngovo 1999: 45). It is evident that code-switching plays a important role in bridging the different varieties of English and the numerous tribal languages in Liberia (Dunn-Marcos, et al. 2005: 45). Interestingly, Ngovo (1998: 47) observes a growing number of indigenous Liberians who exclusively speak English due to intertribal marriages or the preferences of educated parents.

Regarding the actual usage of English, Liberians tend to be flexible. The government promotes standard American English (AE) as the official norm taught in schools, but deviations from this norm are highly prevalent outside professional contexts. While English holds undeniable prestige, the perception of different varieties varies among different groups (Ngovo, 1999: 46). Particularly, Liberian Settlers English in Sinoe County enjoys more prestige

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than standard LE. This is because the settlers in Sinoe share a common origin, hailing from the plantations of the United States' Deep South. Their identity as a distinguished group is reinforced by a shared history and a common dialect that existed before their settlement in Liberia. Moreover, the isolation of Sinoe limited the influence of missionaries on the development of Liberian Settlers English, resulting in weaker standardization forces compared to other Liberian counties (Singler, 2008: 878). This is not to say that LE has no role in Sinoe. In the county seat, Greenville, many cosmopolitan Liberians adhere to LE standards. However, the speech of upriver settlers shows less accommodation to the speech of non-settler Liberians, as it is perceived as belonging to the settlers (Singler, 2008: 879). The complicated language landscape of Liberia reflects a dynamic interplay of regional, social, and historical factors. English, while promoted as the official norm, takes on diverse roles depending on the setting and the speakers involved. In rural areas, tribal languages dominate daily interactions, but English remains essential for education and cross-cultural communication. Urban centers like Monrovia embrace English as a unifying language across social levels, while code-switching bridges the gaps between English and various tribal languages.

Influence of local languages and Liberian English on standard English

Just as the West African languages played a significant role in shaping Portuguese-based and later English-based West African pidgins, the languages spoken in Liberia also had an impact on the establishment of Liberian English. The furthermost noticeable influence of these local languages on Liberian English can be observed in its pronunciation pattern. To illustrate, one prominent feature of Liberian English is omission of consonants at syllables

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end. Although some native Liberian languages such as, (Kpelle, Vai, Belle, and Gola) allow for a nasal consonant to be present in such positions, they do not allow any other consonant to appear there. In contrast, other languages (like Kru, Grebo, and Lorma) do not allow any consonant to occur at the end of a syllable (Singler, 1981). Liberian English can also be considered a native language of Liberia, as it originated within the country. Nevertheless, when we use the phrase "indigenous Liberian language" in this context, we specifically refer to the languages spoken in Liberia before the arrival of Europeans and European-influenced languages. These languages include those belonging to the Mande, Kru, and West Atlantic groups. The impact of indigenous languages in Liberia on Liberian English is most noticeable in terms of pronunciation, but it extends beyond just that aspect of the language. Numerous words in the vocabulary of Liberian English are directly borrowed from indigenous languages. For instance, words like “gbasa jamba” (referring to “cassava leaf”), “jafen” or “jafe” (meaning “money”), “manjaa” (used as a friendly term for a chief), and “musu” (referring to a “woman”, especially a “young girl”) - all of these words are commonly used in Monrovia and originated from the Vai language.

Generally, coastal languages have exerted a stronger impact on LE due to their prolong and more extensive interaction. Different expressions and terms from various Liberian languages are directly converted into English using their literal meanings. The grammar of Liberian English (LE) shows significant influence from transliterations of Liberian languages. For instance, the phrase *“He got big heart”* in LE is a transliterated version of the Standard form, *“He is excessively ambitious and self-centered”*. The equivalent sentence could be

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used in various indigenous Liberian languages, demonstrating its compatibility with Standard English. These examples given below corresponds to the syntax of Vai and Kru languages (Robert et al., 2021).

Vai: *" à fàĺá kòĺò"*

"His heart big"

English: *"His heart is big"*

Kru: *" ɔɔ wio boa"*

"his heart big"

English: *"His heart is big"*

In most Liberian languages, the term 'come' is frequently employed to indicate the future, particularly in the near future. For instance:

Kru: *"na ji dɛ di"*

"I come thing eat"

English: *"I'm coming to eat something or I'm about to eat".*

Lorma: *"ga vaazu liizu"*

"I coming going"

English: *"I'm about to go".*

Consequently, LE uses "coming" in the same way:

LE: *"I coming eat"*

English: *"I'm about to eat"*.

As recorded in Singler (1981), Standard American English recognizes 'three' pronouns for the third-person singular: he, she, and it. In contrast, Kpelle, one of the local languages in Liberia, and LE both have only one third-person singular pronoun which is 'he' but it is realized as 'i'. Standard American English uses the same form for both second-person singular and second-person

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plural pronouns which is 'you', whereas Liberian English follows the same pattern as Kpelle in making a distinction in this regard. In LE 'You' is used as the second person singular whereas 'yɔɔ' is used as the second person plural. LE has a single form as well as Kpelle for the first-person pronoun 'I' but it can be realized as 'a' in LE. All of these forms of pronouns originated from standard American English except 'yɔɔ' which derives from the Southern American English *y'all*.

To conclude, examining the influence of local languages on Liberian English is significant to this study as it examines the impact of local languages on the development and usage of English in Liberia. These local languages such as Kpelle, Bassa, and Vai, among others, have had a significant influence on the vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and overall structure of Liberian English. By acknowledging the influence of Liberian English, educators can develop effective language teaching strategies that bridge the gap between the students' mother tongues, including local languages, and the acquisition of standard English.

Features of Liberian English

Grammar of Liberian English

LE grammar stands out due to its extensive alterations of the verb phrase. Instead of relying on conventional tense marking found in English, a wide range of auxiliary verbs is favored for expressing tense. Research has shown that LE exhibits various non-standard markers for the past tense and its aspects. Some of these are derived from AAE and others are idiosyncratic features of LE (Singler, 2008b; Singler, 1981 & Hancock, 1974). Generally, "verbs are […] frequently uninflected for tense, although inflected forms have been noted in

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the language of all kinds of speakers, probably reflecting standard English intrusion" (Hancock, 1974: 228).

LE does not have grammatical inflections and employs uninflected verbs for all instances of speech. Additionally, there is a lack of affixes. The absence of number markers like "s" or "-es" is noticeable, as is the notable distinction in using the determiner "the" for both names and places. Another grammatical characteristic involves substituting "one" for the singular marker "a," while instances where Standard English would require an indefinite determiner like "a" or "an" are entirely omitted (Singler, 1981: 27).

There is no differentiation between simple present and simple past in LE. In both tenses, the simple present is used; the context decides which tense is applied (Singler, 1981: 80). The third person-s that is found in SE is omitted in LE (Singler, 1989: 63). For instance: /so waɪ hi carri mi, sãbʌdi bihã mi *f*ʌyʌ – bam bam bam – wɪ e gõn/ 'So, while he carries me, somebody behind me fires – bam bam bam – with a gun'.

According to Singler (1981: 31), the word "no" is commonly used for negation, while "didn't" or "hasn't" are substituted with the word "never." Another notable characteristic is the substitution of "to" with "for," and in certain instances, "for" also replaces other prepositions.

The use of "past" (written as pass) as a comparative and past tense marker is found in LE. For instance:

/ʤɔn bi: pɑ:s ʤems/

"John big pass James"

"John is bigger than James"

/ʤɔn pɑ:s ma hau jestədey/

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"John went past my house yesterday"

Therefore, in the initial sets, the word "pass" functions as a marker for making comparisons. However, in the final set, it acts as an indicator of the past tense, as demonstrated in American Standard English. Speakers of LE mostly use 'he' for 'him'. For instance: /de kɛʃ hĩ/

LE: "They catch he"

SE: "They caught him."

Possessive form

In LE, possessives are not used, and instead, possession is indicated by the order of words, with the possessor coming before the possessed entity (Hancock, 1974). For instance:

LE: /ma frẽ ɔ̃ŋko hau/ "My friend uncle house"

SE: "my friend's uncle's house"

Plural Form

Nouns are not marked for plurality in LE. For instance:

LE: /ɔ: dɛ bɔ ple:ɪ/ "All the boy playing"

SE: "All the boys are playing."

However, when LE speakers intend to indicate plurality, they tend to add 'nehn' or "dem" at the end of the word. For instance:

/ɔ: dɛ bɔ nehn ple:ɪ/ all the boys are playing.

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Phonology of Liberian English (LE)

Despite sharing certain components with other variants of WAE, LE clearly differs from other varieties of English due to its distinctive phonological characteristics. English contributes to most vocabulary in LE. As stated by Gold in his "Some Terms from Liberian Speech" in 1979, remarks that it is not necessary to acquire new words in order to comprehend Liberian English, but instead one must become familiar with how English words are pronounced with a Liberian accent. Gold emphasizes that sounds don't necessarily change, but are typically omitted, like for example in the word "finish" which becomes "finni". One of the most noticeable characteristics of LE phonology is its omission of word final consonants.

In comparison to American English, the vowels /i:, e, u, əu/ in LE are shorter. The distinction between *pick* and *peak*, for instance, would be obscured because the sound /i:/ might occasionally be pronounced as /ɪ/ and vice versa, making both words homophones. Additionally, because /e/ and /ɪ/ are sometimes pronounced in the same way, the words *"with/we"* and *"way/we"* becomes homophones.

Another representative feature of LE phonology is the realization of dental fricatives / ð θ/. The dental fricative can be realized as plosive depending on how it is used. The voiced th / ð / is realized as d, whiles the voiceless th /θ/ is realized as / t/. consequently, the th sound in words like *this, these, and those* is realized as *dis, dese,* dose by LE speakers. 'the th sound in words like throw, think, and three is pronounced as trow, tink, tree (Gold, 1979). The indigenous Liberian languages have a significant interference with dental fricatives which has led to the absence of /θ,ð/ Sounds in Words Containing th. The affricates

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/tʃ/ and /ʤ/ are realized at the beginning of a syllable but in the middle and at the end of words, the corresponding fricatives occur" (Singler, 2006: 26). Thus, child is realized as /ʧal/ and *age* is realized as /eʒ/. this feature is typical of LVE but also occurs in LSE (Singler, 2006: 27 & 2008: 881).

When 'y' comes at the end of a word with two or more syllables the 'y' is realized as /ey/. For instance:

/ju: a le zey/ "You are lazy!"

As was already established, one noticeable feature of LE is the deletion of consonants in the coda position. Singler (2008a: 882) observes that "all dialects of English are given to dropping the /d/ and /t/" in coda clusters, such as sand castle. However, LE also gets rid of consonants in other situations, such as single coda consonants.

All of the aforementioned characteristics of LE consonant deletion are attributable to Mande, the most common tribal language in Liberia, according to Singler (1991). He refers to the 'Mande-cization' of LE as the fusion of Mande phonology with English lexicon. Therefore, Mande's influence extends beyond consonant deletion to include LE phonology as a whole.

Reduplication and semantic representation in Liberian English

According to Crystal (2003), reduplication is a morphological process that involves the repetition of a certain element. Reduplication in Liberian English is a linguistic feature where words or phrases are repeated for emphasis or to intensify meaning. In Liberian English, reduplication is commonly used in everyday speech and plays an important role in communication. It is a common pattern in the language and is used in various contexts. One common form of

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reduplication in LE is the repetition of a whole word. The repetition of words in LE does not seem to change the meaning, rather fits English into the rhythms of Liberian speech. Table 1 shows some reduplication of Liberian English.

Table 1:Reduplication of Liberian English

Liberian English Reduplication	Meaning
different-different	varied; many kinds
fine fine	Excellent/wonderful
Small-small	gradually, little by little
Beard beard	beard/mustache, and to a fish with whiskers
Now now	at the moment
Real real	True
Quick quick	fast

Source: Field Data, 2023

Semantic representation of some Liberian English lexis and standard English

Liberian English (LE) incorporates borrowed words, newly coined terms, polite expressions, combined words, and expanded meanings, many of which are heavily influenced by indigenous languages and culture in Liberia, as

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well as American and Black American culture. Table 2 provides some lexical items of LE as well as their semantic representation in Standard English.

Table 2: Semantic representation of Liberian English to Standard English.

Lexical Items	Semantic Representation
Ba	Pal/friend
Bend	to go around
Big belleh	Pregnant woman
Big jue	a woman who is independent and financially
Pekin	child (especially a boy child)
Bobo	a person who cannot speak
Burku	plenty/much
Bright	lighter skinned/ fair
Cuss	verbally insult/abuse
Chakla	to mix up/ scatter
Dress	shift/ move out of the way
Har mouth	firm/ straight forward talk
Fat	healthy (a compliment)
Finni	bring to an end/complete/finish
hold your foot	pleading with you
Grona	street urchin
Kroo kroo gee	deceitful/ crooked/ sneaky
Go come	leave with intent to return

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Kinny kinny	very small
Ā	It
loving to	to be a lover/ having an affair
Wetin	What
Looka	Look at

Source: Field Data, 2023

In conclusion, when studying the influence of Liberian English on the teaching and learning of standard English, understanding the specific features of Liberian English becomes crucial. By identifying and analyzing these features, researchers can gain insights into the potential challenges faced by learners of standard English in a Liberian English-speaking context. They can investigate how these features impact students' acquisition of Standard English, including issues related to pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and grammar. Furthermore, studying the Liberian English features allows for a better understanding of the interlanguage development of learners, potential sources of errors, and areas that require targeted instruction and support.

The concept of standard English

Standard English has evolved over centuries and is influenced by various historical, social, and cultural factors. It has it root in the English language as it developed in England, particularly in the London area. The standardization process began during the Late Middle Ages and continued through the Early Modern English period (Auer, 2005). Standard English refers to the variety of English that is considered the most prestigious and widely accepted form of the language. It is the form of English that is typically used in formal settings, such as academic and professional contexts, and is often considered the "correct" or "proper" way to speak and write English.

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Standard English is typically the variety of English used in government, education, business, and the media. As a result, it has a significant impact on other varieties of English and serves as a model for language learners. It is not tied to a specific region. It is widely recognized and used around the world without any major differences. It is considered the ideal form of English to teach in educational settings and can be spoken with any accent (Strevens,1981).

One of the defining characteristics of standard English is its adherence to grammar and syntax. Standard English follows a set of grammatical rules and syntactic structures that are generally accepted and used by educated speakers. This includes rules for sentence structure, verb conjugation, agreement, and word order. Another important aspect of Standard English is its vocabulary. Standard English uses a core vocabulary that is widely understood and accepted. It avoids colloquialisms, regionalisms, slang, and jargon that might be specific to certain dialects or social groups. Standard English also tends to incorporate loanwords from other languages, particularly Latin and French. Standard English has a more standardized pronunciation compared to other varieties of English. It is generally based on the Received Pronunciation (RP) accent, which is associated with educated speakers in southern England. However, it is important to note that there are regional variations in pronunciation within Standard English, such as the General American accent in the United States. It follows standard spelling conventions and uses punctuation marks in accordance with accepted rules (Trudgill & Hannah, 2017). It adheres to the guidelines provided by dictionaries and style guides, such as the Oxford English Dictionary and The Chicago Manual of Style.

Usage and register of standard English

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Standard English is typically used in formal and professional settings, such as business communications, academic writing, and official documents. It is expected to be used in situations where clarity, precision, and professionalism are paramount. Standard English is often associated with prestige, education, and social class. It is commonly used by those with higher levels of education and is perceived as a marker of intelligence and social status (Luhman, 1990). However, it is important to recognize that the use of Standard English should not be equated with superiority or denigrate other dialects or varieties of English. Standard English is not a fixed entity and continues to evolve over time. It incorporates new words, phrases, and grammatical constructions as the language develops. Moreover, there are variations within Standard English itself, influenced by factors such as geography, age, and social context (Bauer 2014). In conclusion, Standard English serves as a vital tool for effective communication in formal and professional settings, where clarity, precision, and professionalism are essential.

The concept of academic performance

Academic performance refers to a student's level of achievement in their educational pursuits, it can be measured through various factors such as grades, test scores, attendance, participation, and overall engagement in learning activities. It is an assessment of how well a student is performing academically in comparison to their peers. It can also be influenced by factors such as study habits, motivation, time management, and overall engagement in the learning process (Wentze, & Wigfield,1998). Illahi and Khandai, (2015). explains that academic performance is generally regarded as the display of knowledge attained or skills developed in school subjects. It is the level of performance in

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school subject as exhibited by an individual (Ireoegbu, 1992) as cited in Illahi and Khandai, (2015). Based on the literature on achievement, there seems to be no single or universally accepted definition of academic performance (Strenze, 2007). Individuals are categorized as high achievers, average achievers, and poor achievers based on their degree of performance. Zimmerman (2001). states that the value the student places upon his own worth effects his academic performance. Test scores or marks assigned by teachers are indicators of this achievement. It is the school's evaluation of the student's classwork as quantified on the basis of marks or grades.

However, performance can be said to be the outcome of instruction. Every parent, guardian, and teacher want the best possible academic performance for their kids, wards, or students. The performance of their students is typically used to qualitatively grade schools and teachers. Success in educational institutions is determined by a student's academic standing or by how successfully they meet the requirements set by the school.

There are several factors that can influence academic performance, including motivation and learning environment. The level of motivation a student possesses can significantly impact their academic performance. Intrinsic motivation, which comes from within oneself, is generally considered more effective than external motivation. Students who are genuinely interested in the subject matter are more likely to perform well. On the other hand, the learning environment, including the classroom environment, teaching methods, and resources available, can impact academic performance. For this study, academic performance relates to the level of essay writing performance of students after they might have been taught for a long time by their teachers.

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Empirical Review

This section of the literature review involves a systematic and comprehensive examination of relevant published studies and research articles as it relates to the objective of the study. The literature was examined using expert opinions and considering the similarities and variations found in their studies. The reviews were grounded in empirical evidence regarding the effects of PE on students' learning of SE in different locations as there seems to be no empirical studies done in the Liberian context.

Influence of Liberian English (pidgin) on the teaching and learning of standard English

The Liberian English, without any doubt, has negatively influenced the learning of Standard English. Liberian English, being a distinct pidgin language, lacking proper linguistics features, can have effects on the acquisition and proficiency of Standard English (De Kleine, 2012). One way in which the usage of Liberian English can influence the teaching and learning of Standard English is through its impact on pronunciation. Since Liberian English has its own distinct pronunciation patterns, learners may struggle to adopt the correct pronunciation of standard English sounds. This can lead to difficulties in understanding and being understood by native English speakers.

Another influence is on grammar and vocabulary. Liberian English grammar rules and vocabulary differ from those of standard English. Learners who primarily use Liberian English may transfer these non-standard features into their use of standard English, leading to errors in sentence structure, verb tense, and word choice (Winford, 2005; Singler, 1981). This can hinder

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effective communication and require additional effort to unlearn these non-standard features.

Additionally, the informal nature of Liberian English can affect the formality and register of learners' English usage. Standard English is typically used in formal settings such as education, business, and professional environments. If learners are more accustomed to using Liberian English in their daily lives, they may struggle to adjust to the more formal and structured nature of Standard English.

Although there seems to be no empirical research on the influence of LE on the learning of SE, studies carried out in different settings reveal that Pidgin English (PE) has considerable influence on SE (Huber, 2014; Eta, 2006; Adu Boahen, 2020; Ankrah 2018).

In Ghana, both the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and Chief Examiners' Reports consistently raise alarm about the decreasing level of achievement in English among students. Occasionally, they point out that the use of pidgin English by students is one of the factors contributing to this unsatisfactory performance (e.g., refer to Ferdinand's study on WASSCE 2018).

Amuzu and Asinyor (2016) conducted a study that focuses on the errors made by Ghanaian students in their written English. The research sheds light on the case of Ghana and potentially in Cameroon, where the English language is taught as L2 and spoken alongside pidgins that are similar to English. English language learners, particularly those in secondary and higher institutions, frequently blame the pidgin language for their mistakes in both spoken and written English. The paper specifically examines whether the School Pidgin

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English (SPE) that educated Ghanaians speak can be blamed for errors in their written English.

The researchers carried out a case study in a diploma awarding institution, dividing the students into two groups: those individuals categorized as SPE and those categorized as non-SPE speakers were both requested to compose an essay on a specific subject, and subsequently, the researchers analyzed the grammatical and spelling mistakes in their writing. The findings revealed that none of the recognized error types were exclusively made by the SPE speakers. This suggests that there is no definitive causal relationship between speaking SPE and making errors in written English. Instead, the investigation revealed that errors were primarily linked with specific grammatical aspects of the students' native languages and the writing systems utilized on electronic media platforms. As a result of these findings, the study suggests that enhancing the English language learning process in Ghana (and potentially in Cameroon) could be achieved by concentrating on these more likely reasons for the students' challenges, instead of merely attributing them solely to speaking English as a Second Language (SPE).

Omari (2010) also carried out a study aiming to examine the influence of pidgin usage on students' English language proficiency. This research contributes to an ongoing exploration of the relationship between speaking Pidgin English and academic performance, particularly in the WASSCE exams. This study recognizes that secondary schools face challenges where students often struggle in examinations, particularly in English language papers. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the factors contributing to poor academic performance among Ghanaian secondary school students. The study employed

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the random sampling technique, selecting a total of 500 students, 180 teachers, and 200 parents without any specific criteria, purely based on random selection. However, the research findings did not provide conclusive evidence establishing a direct connection between academic performance and the use of non-standard English or Pidgin English.

Although Omari (2010) and Amuzu and Asinyor (2016) did not discovery a correlation between the use of Pidgin English (PE) by students and their poor outcome in Standard English (SE), Huber (1999) discovered that PE usage has a detrimental impact on SE. Mireku-Gyimah (2014) also observed that PE use has the potential to harmfully affect students' SE. These negative perspectives on Pidgin English have influenced influential individuals within Ghanaian society, who frequently attribute students' underachievement in secondary and higher education institutions to the use of PE, commonly referred to as "Broken English." For instance, some Ghanaian educationists were mentioned as viewing pidgin as a risky phenomenon in Huber (2014), a paper that examined the usage of creoles and pidgins in education in West African nations like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Ghana. Egblewogbe (1992) is a notable example, as he claimed that the unrestricted use of pidgin was leading the country towards illiteracy. The same paper highlighted that the Faculty of Pharmacy at the then University of Science and Technology in Kumasi formally prohibited the usage of pidgin within its premises in 1985. Similarly, Professor Asenso Okyere, a former Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana, cautioned the incoming students of the 2002/2003 academic year against using pidgin, emphasizing its potential harm to their academic performance (Rupp, 2013). Furthermore, Baitie (2010) described how a Ghanaian university displayed a

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signboard with the message "PIDGIN IS TAKING A HEAVY TOLL ON YOUR ENGLISH, SHUN IT" to discourage the use of pidgin.

However, people in other countries, not only Ghana, are also concerned about PE use on campus and have made deliberate effort to ban it. Eta (2006) also observes that, in Cameroon too, the university Buea went as far as erecting signboards around the campus, in a serious campaign against PE, with inscriptions some of which read as follows:

NO PIDGIN ON CAMPUS, PLEASE!

BE MY FRIEND, SPEAK ENGLISH

IF YOU SPEAK PIDGIN, YOU WILL WRITE PIDGIN (cited in Amuzu and Asinyor 2016, pp. 49, 50).

A study conducted by Adu Boahen (2020) at Adventist Senior High School in Ghana concentrated on exploring the impact of pidgin English on students' academic performance in the English language. The primary objective of the study was to assess how the use of pidgin English affected students' performance in English. The study employed a quantitative approach and gathered data through a cross-sectional survey administered to respondents. The researcher used purposive and convenient sampling techniques to select the participants, which is a non-probability sampling method. The sample consisted of 200 students who completed a structured questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed a negative correlation between the frequency of pidgin English usage and performance in Standard English. However, several shortcomings were identified. The researcher mistakenly mentioned that 200 students were sampled for the study but later revealed in Chapter Four that 10 teachers were also included. There seems to be a lack of clarity in reporting the exact sample

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size and composition which can lead to confusion and potential bias in the findings. Additionally, the total number of individuals in the target population from which the study sample was drawn was not mentioned. This missing information makes it difficult to assess the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the findings. Lastly, although the researcher initially stated that a structured questionnaire would be used for data collection, it was later mentioned that both structured and unstructured questionnaires were employed. This inconsistency raises questions about the rigor and reliability of the data collection process. Overall, the research findings indicate that frequent use of pidgin English has a detrimental effect on students' academic performance in English.

Notwithstanding, these cited studies (Omari, 2010; Amuzu & Asinyor, 2016; Mireku-Gyimah, 2014; Huber, 2014; Adu Boahen, 2020) are highly relevant to this study, as they all aimed to investigate the effect of pidgin on students' English proficiency, written works, and academic performance in the English language - which align with the primary objectives of this research. However, it is important to note that these studies have certain limitations that warrant consideration. Most of the mentioned studies were confined to a single institution, limiting the generalizability of their findings beyond that specific context. With that, the current research sought to fill the existing gap by extending its scopes nine schools instead of a single institution.

Identifying common Liberian English/ (PE) interference error in students' writing

When speakers of Liberian English or pidgin English learn Standard English, they may encounter certain interference errors due to the differences

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between the two languages. Some common LE or PE interference errors in the acquisition of standard English are listed below:

Pronunciation: Pronunciation error might occur because certain English sounds are pronounced differently in pidgin. It has been noted that learners of English are highly motivated and exposed to a supportive linguistic environment, where they acquire their language skills (Onuigbo, 1984 cited in Aladeyomi & Adetunde, 2007). According to Bhela (1999), the learning environment for English incorporates everything the learner sees and hears, with the ultimate goal of achieving proficiency in the target language. Starting from a beginner's level or something close to it, the learner gradually accumulates mastered aspects of the target language until they have acquired enough to reach a specific level of proficiency.

Liberian English has its own pronunciation patterns, which can lead to errors in standard English. For example, the pronunciation of certain vowels and consonants may differ, such as pronouncing "th" as "d" or "t" (e.g., "dat" instead of "that"), Singler (1991).

A study done by Koźbiał (2011) focused on the mapping of phonological errors in a comparative analysis between English and Polish. The research delved into the concept of Phonological Error Mapping, exploring how phonological rules from participants' native language (referred to as L1, Polish) are transferred to their target language (referred to as L2, English). This transfer involves applying certain phonological rules, such as differences in vowel lengths or stress patterns in words and sentences, from L1 to L2. This transfer typically occurs when learners lack sufficient knowledge of L2 and attempt to compensate using L1 rules. This is known as 'positive' transfer, which happens

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when L1 and L2 share similarities, allowing learners to adapt L1 knowledge to L2. This research however demonstrated that the anticipated transfer did not consistently happen in many cases. Additionally, there were instances where participants exhibited a tendency to apply transfer against their knowledge of L2, contrary to expectations.

Likewise, in another piece of research titled *"Impact of Mother Tongue on the Spoken English of Berom Speaking Students at Plateau State Polytechnic,"* Marcus (2018) explored how the presence of one's native language can affect the way Berom language speakers at Plateau State Polytechnic in Barkin Ladi, Nigeria pronounce English sounds. The investigation involved a comparison between the individual speech sounds, or phonemes, of English and Berom languages, revealing how these distinctions create challenges in the spoken English of Berom students. The study also aimed to pinpoint which specific English sounds are most susceptible to being influenced by Berom sounds, and it suggested potential activities to mitigate this linguistic interference.

The phenomenon of interference in English speaking and writing tends to persist throughout a person's life, requiring ongoing attention. Sometimes, even into adulthood, individuals may retain the lexical stress patterns of their native Pidgin language when producing English speech, despite years of instruction and exposure.

Verb usage/ Tenses: Liberian English often does not use the past tense marker that is used in Standard English (Hancock, 1974). For instance, instead of saying "She came here today" a Liberian English speaker might say "She kam here today."_ "She come here today" or "they were absent from school today". A LE

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speaker might say " dey wɔ absent from school today" _"they was absent from school today"

Sentence structure: Liberian English follows different rules for sentence structure compared to standard English. This can result in errors such as omitting auxiliary verbs or using non-standard word order. For example, saying "She going to school" instead of "She is going to school" or "She goes to school." Or "She is not here" would be "She na here" _ "She not here"

A study carried out by Labiba's (2015) demonstrated that Hausa individuals learning English as a second language encounter challenges in mastering tense formation. Unlike Hausa, where tenses remain consistent, English employs diverse morphological forms for various tenses, resulting in negative transfer effects. Hausa native speakers often struggle with possessive pronoun usage in English sentence construction. This happens because the use of verbs (have and has) contrasts in English language. While "have" applies to first person singular, second person singular, first person plural, second person plural, and third person plural, "has" is restricted to third person singular. In contrast, Hausa lacks such distinctions. Consequently, Hausa speakers may incorrectly employ "have" instead of "has," such as saying "*He have a book*" instead of "*He has a book,*" or "*I has a bag*" instead of "*I have a bag*." This confusion arises from the fact that the Hausa word "da" encompasses both "have" and "has."

Prepositions: Liberian English speakers may struggle with the appropriate use of prepositions in standard English. They might use prepositions inconsistently or incorrectly, such as saying "on the bed" instead of "in the bed" or "to the market" instead of "at the market."

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Articles: Liberian English speakers may have difficulty with the correct use of articles (e.g., "a," "an," "the") in standard English. They might omit articles altogether or use them incorrectly, such as saying "I saw cat" instead of "I saw a cat" or "I saw the cat."

Spelling errors: According to Hassan (2014), the pronunciation of words by individuals learning a foreign language greatly impacts their spelling or written representation. The way learners pronounce words has a significant influence on how they are written. When English language learners are exposed to pidgin, a simplified form of a language, they encounter difficulties in producing specific sounds, particularly when those sounds are absent in the pidgin language. Identifying these linguistics features of LE is significant to this study as it gives researchers insights into the potential linguistic obstacles' students face when learning Standard English, especially when it differs significantly from their L1.

Implication of PE interference on students' academic performance in English language

Ankrah (2018) conducted a study with the main goal of evaluating the interference errors caused by Pidgin in the English language among students in Senior High Schools in Ghana. The study focused on three schools in the Ashanti Region: Ejura Anglican Senior High, Ejura Islamic Senior High, and Sekyeredumase Senior High. A total of 206 participants, including 196 students and 10 teachers, were involved in the study, and a questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study indicated that the influence of Pidgin on English had a predominantly negative impact. Beginner-level students faced difficulties in recognizing and comprehending the various structures of English, leading them to utilize Pidgin structures when writing in

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English. The study identified several Pidgin interferences errors in English writing, including transliteration, Pidgin-influenced spelling errors, omissions, incorrect pronoun usage, and inappropriate word choices. Among these errors, transliteration was found to be the most frequently committed, followed by omissions, spelling errors, incorrect pronoun usage, and inappropriate word choices, in that order.

The utilization of Pidgin English in Nigeria has evolved from simply being a means of verbal communication to becoming a behavioral pattern. It is now used not only in informal conversations but also in formal situations. Unachukwu et. al. (2020) conducted a study to investigate how students at Eha-Amufu Secondary School in Nigeria use Standard English in light of their use of Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE). The aim was to determine the factors that influence its usage and the extent to which Nigerian Pidgin English has affected the students' use of Standard English, using Krashen's (2003) Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory, specifically the affective filter hypothesis. Data were collected from 200 students and willing teachers through questionnaires and essay writing as research tools, from four selected secondary schools in Eha-Amufu. The findings indicate that the use of Nigerian Pidgin English can be attributed to influences from home and peer groups, and it has had a significant negative impact on the students' usage of standard English. The analysis revealed a substantial presence of Nigerian Pidgin English expressions in the students written essays, indicating its detrimental effects on both spelling and contextual usage of standard English. Consequently, this research concludes that raising awareness among Eha-Amufu students about the negative consequences of using NPE on their academic performance and the importance

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of reducing its use can greatly alleviate the adverse effects of Nigerian Pidgin English on their usage of Standard English.

Onyejelem, and Onyedikachi, (2020) conducted a study to examine the impact of Pidgin English on students in Nigeria, specifically in Port Harcourt Local Government Area, Rivers State. The study involved 200 students and eight teachers from four selected schools, as well as four government workers and eight media staff. The aim of this research was to address the significant use of Pidgin English among secondary school students, which poses a threat to their educational performance. During the study, certain factors contributing to this issue were identified. The negative consequences of Pidgin English on the socio-linguistic status of Nigerian society prompted several recommendations. These recommendations include raising awareness among parents, the media, and the government about the detrimental effects of excessive use of Pidgin English. Additionally, teachers should receive training on effective methods for delivering English language lessons. The government should allocate more resources and manpower to education to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in improving their English language skills. Furthermore, Pidgin English should be incorporated into the curriculum to help students understand its structure and vocabulary, reducing the need for code-switching with English.

This study aims to explore the impact of Liberian English/P. E usage on students' English language proficiency and academic performance. While existing research has examined this topic, it is essential to recognize certain limitations in these studies that deserve attention. Most of the cited research has been confined to a single institution or a few institutions, leading to potential narrowness in their findings. Additionally, these studies primarily relied on

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descriptive statistics, limiting the extent to which their conclusions can be generalized beyond their specific contexts.

To address these limitations or gaps, the present study expanded its scope to include data from nine different schools. By doing so, the researcher hopes to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of pidgin English on students' language proficiency and academic achievements. Moreover, the researcher employed a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data, thereby enhancing the potential for generalizability and providing more robust insights. By taking these steps, the researcher aims to contribute significantly to the existing literature on this subject and offer valuable implications for educators and policymakers to improve English language teaching and student performance in diverse educational settings.

Chapter Summary

This chapter concentrated on exploring the relevant literature regarding the impact of Liberian English and or pidgin English on students' learning of standard English, their academic performance in the English language. The review commenced by explicitly discussing the theory that underpinned this study, namely the Cross-linguistic Interference theory. It was followed by a concise summary of the concepts that formed the basis for the review. The subsequent paragraphs then provided a comprehensive examination of previous empirical research in the areas of interest. These areas included investigating the influence of Liberian English or pidgin English on the acquisition and usage of Standard English, identifying the linguistic characteristics of Liberian English or pidgin English that are most likely to interfere with students' writing,

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and exploring how these interference impact students' academic performance in the English language.

The literature confirms that Liberian English was initially influenced by the Portuguese, who were the first Europeans to arrive in West Africa for trade. In 1401, Pedro de Cintra and his crew reached the Liberian coast, marking the Portuguese presence. However, the dominance of English in trade began with the arrival of English ships, particularly the Lion and Primrose, in 1553. Consequently, English gradually replaced Portuguese-based terms, leading to a shift towards English dominance. Additionally, the development of Liberian English has been influenced by local languages spoken in Liberia, particularly in terms of pronunciation. One notable characteristic is the omission of consonants at the end of syllables, influenced by native languages like Kpelle, Vai, Belle, and Gola. Also, as established in the literature, the usage of Liberian English or Pidgin English has a negative influence on the teaching and learning of Standard English. One major concern is that continued exposure to LE or PE can hinder the development of proper pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary skills necessary for effective communication in Standard English. If learners become too reliant on PE or LE, they may struggle to transition to standard English, which is widely used in formal contexts such as education, business, and professional settings.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The main aim of this study was to investigate Liberian English influence on students learning of Standard English and academic performance in English language in some selected senior high schools (SHSs) in Education District 6, Paynesville. This chapter explains the trends the researcher followed while collecting data for the study. Precisely, it highlights the research design, geographical location/study area, population, sample and sampling selection process/procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure, data processing and data analysis and ethical issues.

Research Design

A study design is the framework, plan, or approach the researcher employed to get answers to the research question. Its essence is to outline for the researcher how to gather and evaluate data (Atindanbila, 2013). This study adopted a quantitative approach. According to Cohen et al. (2011), the quantitative approach makes conducting research simple, quick, and applicable to a wide range of cases. The primary goal of quantitative research is to offer decision makers with particular information so that they may develop informed predictions about the correlations between market conditions and behaviors, acquire significant insights into those relationships, and confirms or authenticates the relationship that already exists (Best & Kahn, 2012; Creswell, 2012). On the other hand, this approach has a tendency to be rigid, manufactured, and ineffective for determining the importance that individuals ascribe to actions, and it is not useful for creating theories (Creswell, 2012).

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Since the study's focus was on addressing issues in a place where there may be little or no research in regards to the current study, the researcher deemed it suitable to utilize the descriptive survey design. The design can help in examining the influence of the Liberian English usage on students learning of standard English and academic performance in English language.

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, A cross- sectional designs is when the information on the respondents is gathered at one particular time. The key advantage is that it is manageable, reasonably priced, and practical (Atindanbila, 2013). Descriptive cross-sectional survey designis often referred to as statistical research, aiming to provide a comprehensive depiction of a situation, individual, or event. It also examines the relationships between various components in real-world scenarios (Blumberg et al., 2005). Descriptive cross- sectional survey effectively addresses the questions of *what, who, how,* and *when*. One justification for considering the descriptive cross- sectional survey design was because the study made use of questionnaires, and according to Pallant (2001), descriptive survey design normally makes use of survey instrument such as questionnaire.

One limitation of descriptive cross- sectional design is that it uses statistics as part of its analysis instrument. It is limited in that statistics can assist, but do not always explain causal relationships. Since the description is based on scientific observation, it should be more accurate and thorough than a simple explanation. Descriptive research has a minimal requirement for internal validity because it cannot be utilized to demonstrate a causal relationship in which one variable affects another (Crotty, 1998).

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Conversely, because descriptive studies don't try to explain why an event happened, they are far better suited for emerging or unexplored topic of study (Punch, 2005). In a descriptive research according to Creswell (2014), there is an accurate description of activities and this goes beyond mere- fact findings. It offers a rather clear-cut method for studying attitudes, perceptions, values, beliefs, and motivations.

Study Area

This research was conducted in Education district 6, Paynesville Montserrado County, Liberia. The researcher selected this study location because it is one of the most populated districts in Paynesville. Moreover, the district includes high performing schools in the WASSSCE as well as relatively poor performing schools. Additionally, residents in this area are a mixture of high, medium and low classes of people and it is presumed that majority of the residents of this area speak Liberian English.

Population of the Study

According to Yates (2014), a population is the total collection of subjects who satisfy a predetermined set of criteria. There are eighteen SHSs in the Education District 6, Paynesville. Therefore, all twelfth grade SHS students are the targeted population for this study. Thus, the targeted population was about 835 twelfth graders from the 18 schools. The accessible population was 379 twelfth grade senior high school students which are presumed to be users of Liberian English.

Sampling and Sample Procedures

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Sampling involves choosing a subset of individuals from a population with the intention of representing the entire population. Through this process, conclusions and inferences can be drawn about the larger population (Zikmund, 2013). Sample refers to a collection of people or element selected from a population from which data have been gathered. In order to examine a less extensive set of units from the target population and obtain a typical data for that particular group, researchers need to employ a specific sample (Sarantakos, 2005). This study sampled 355 twelfth grade students from nine selected schools in educational district Six, Paynesville, Montserrado county- Liberia.

Proportional stratified random sampling

The proportional stratified random sampling ensures that all levels of the identified variables will be adequately represented in the sample. This reduces sampling error and allows smaller samples to be taken, thereby reducing the cost of the research (Atindanbila, 2013). Another advantage is that, it ensures that an adequate number of participants are selected from different sub-groups.

The researcher utilized the proportional stratified sampling technique to select nine schools out of the 18 SHSs in District Six, Paynesville. The researcher divided the district into three strata based on the previous WASSSCE results from each school: high performing schools, average performing schools and low performing schools. Each stratum contained Six schools. The study utilized a simple random sampling technique to choose participating schools for the study from each stratum. The researcher scrabbled the names of the six SHSs in each stratum on scraps of paper and randomly selected three Schools from each stratum. The number of students from each school included in the sample

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was determined using Slovin's formula, which is specifically used when estimating the proportion of a population and when .05 confidence level is desired. The Slovin's formula was used to draw sample size from each school after which the total number of samples was summed up to get the accessible population. The distribution of the sample of schools and students are shown in Table 3.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)2}$$

n= sample size

N= Population

e = Margin of error

Table 3: Distribution of the study's Population and Sample size

No.	Schools	No. of Students	Sample size
1.	Bishop Matthew High School	58	51
2.	Action Faith Institute	42	38
3.	Weltona High school	60	52
4.	Zion Praise Academy	36	33
5.	William Bean High School	42	38
6.	Nathan E. Gibson High school	52	46
7.	Light Christian Institute	35	32
8.	Maretha Preparatory School	35	32
9.	Don yannizzi High School	37	33
Total		397	355

Source: Field Data, 2023

Research Instrument

Questionnaires and essay tests were the instruments used to collect data for the study. The researcher developed a set of questionnaires that was used to collected data from students. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A presents participants profile with two items such as age and gender. While section B, and C consist of 13 structured questions (six questions in section one and seven questions in section two), which addressed research question one and four respectively. These included the extent to which Liberian

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English influence the learning of Standard English, and suggestion for mitigating Liberian English usage among students. Section D consisted of an essay test which was scrutinized for traces of Liberian English interferences errors in students writing and scored to determine students' academic performance. The test was scored based on the following: content, organization, expressions and mechanical accuracy. This section was used to address research questions two and three.

Validity and reliability of instruments

The content validity of the instruments was assessed with the assistance of the researcher's supervisor and other professionals from the Department of Arts Education. The questionnaires were shared with them for scrutinization, suggestions, and comments. The suggestions they provided were utilized to make the required modifications and enhance the quality of the instruments. Reliability, which refers to the consistency of outcomes or data produced by a research instrument in repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999), was evaluated by the researcher through a pilot test. This test aimed to assess and enhance the reliability of the instrument. According to Goldsmith (2010), when conducting a pilot study on research instruments, it is necessary to have a smaller number of respondents compared to the actual population. The researcher piloted the questionnaires drafts using 32 SHSs students from the African Dream Academy which falls within a nearby district of the actual study. This school was selected for the pilot testing because participants from this school possess similar characteristics in terms of the usage of Liberian English as well as the targeted population.

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The primary aim of the pilot test was to verify the suitability of the items. The researcher set aside time to engage with the respondents, addressing any uncertainties, inconsistencies, or doubts they may have had regarding any aspect of the draft questionnaire. Certain items that were identified to be unclear were revised to enhance easy understanding of that particular item. Subsequently, the respondents completed and submitted the revised questionnaires. Additionally, the reliability of the instruments was assessed using Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) version 22.0. To measure internal consistency and determine questionnaire reliability, Cronbach's alpha was employed. Given that a majority of the questionnaire items were scored using multiple-choice options, Cronbach's alpha was considered appropriate. A reliability coefficient of .728 was achieved after the pilot test, indicating that the instrument was reliable, as Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) suggest that "For research purposes, a useful rule of thumb is that reliability should be at .70 and preferably higher" (p.179). The questions were designed to address the research objectives.

Ethical consideration

When one wants to properly conduct a research, ethical issues are important. Basically, confidentiality, inform consent and anonymity. are the primary ethical issues considered under this research.

Considering confidentiality, all reasonable measures were taken to preserve the confidentiality of the respondents' responses. In other words, the participants were given the assurance that their responses would be treated as confidential, and no identifiable external entity or persons would be able to access the information they would provide. Additionally, inform consent was approved by respondents. That is, the opportunity was given to the respondents

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to accept or decline from partaking in the study. Inform consent outlines the necessity for respondents to comprehend the primary goal, objective, and possible adverse effects before deciding whether or not they want to engage in the research (Seidman, 2006). Before distributing the questionnaire to the participants, the researcher provided a clear explanation of the research objective. Lastly, During the course of this research, the respondents' anonymity was also considered. According to Oliver (2010), anonymity in research is crucial from an ethical standpoint since it allows respondents to keep their identities hidden. Consequently, codes rather than names were employed to identify the responders in order to ensure anonymity of the data information collected.

Data collection procedure

Data for this research was collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire which includes structured items and an essay test. To ensure correctness of data and high recovery rate, the researcher administered the questionnaires personally along with a research assistant. The assistant is a senior high school teacher who has also conducted a research during his undergraduate studies. The students were required to complete the filling of the questionnaire and essay test within one hour thirty minutes(1hr:30mins), after which it was collected from them by the researcher. However, before proceeding with the data collection procedure, the researcher provided the principal of each selected school with an introductory letter from the Head of the Department of Arts Education at the University of Cape Coast. The aim of this introductory letter was to seek consent from the school administrator to conduct the research. The data was collected from July 28- August 2, 2023.

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Data Processing and Analysis

Data after being collected was keyed in Micro soft excel version 2016 for temporary storage. The data was later cleaned, organized and exported to IBM SPSS _ Statistical Package for Social Science, version 2022 for analysis. The collected data was quantified, categorized and analyzed keeping in mind the objectives of the study. Since the study adopted a quantitative approach, a descriptive statistical analysis was done. Frequency distribution, percentages and graphs were used to ensure easy understanding of the analyses. Analyses output included both descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentages, frequencies and regression. In the descriptive statistics, the frequencies and percentages were used to make sense of the data. while for the inferential statistics, the linear regression analysis was used to obtain the objectives of the study.

Chapter Summary

In summary, Chapter three provided an overview of the research methods employed in investigating the influence of Liberian English on students learning of Standard English and their academic performance in English language in some selected senior high schools. The chapter covered various aspects of the research methodology including the research design, study area, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure, data processing and analysis, and ethical considerations. Some limitations encountered during the data collection process were explained in chapter one of this thesis.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study sought to investigate the influence Liberian English may have on students' learning of Standard English in senior high schools in Liberia. The study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The content of this

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chapter is divided into two sections. Section "A" focuses on presenting and discussing the demographic characteristics of the participants, utilizing descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages. In Section "B," the main results are discussed which addressed research questions one to four.

To collect the information required for the study, the researcher employed a questionnaire and an essay test for students. The analysis of data included both descriptive and inferential statistics. The analysis of the data from the respondents included means, standard deviations, percentiles and multiple linear regression as well as concluding the findings. The results are presented and analyzed based on the research questions that guided the study. Results are presented in tables for the purpose of clarity and simplicity.

Demographic Data of Respondents

This segment of the chapter focused on the demographics of the participants (students). Table 4 shows the senior high students' characteristics.

Table 4: Senior High Students' Characteristics

Variable	**Sub-Scale**	**No.**	**%**
Gender	Male	174	49.0
	Female	181	51.0
	Total	355	100.0
Age	Below 15 years	7	2.0

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	15-20 years	281	79.2
	21 and above	67	18.8
	Total	355	100.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 4 presents data on grade twelve students from the nine schools that were involved in the study in Education District 6, Paynesville, Montserrado county-Liberia. From Table 4, it was recorded that, 174 (49.0%) of the students were males and 181 (51.0 %) were females. The total number of respondents was 355, representing 100% of the respondents. As shown in the table, the data set seems to have a relatively even distribution between males and females, with females slightly outnumbering males by seven individuals.

With regards to age, the age group "Below 15 years" consists of seven respondents, representing 2% of the total respondents. The majority of respondents fall into the "15-20 years" age group, with 281 respondents, making up 79.2% of the total respondents. While the "21 and above" age group has 67 respondents, comprising 18.8% of the total respondents. It is evident that the survey attracted a large number of students in the 15-20 years age group, followed by a smaller percentage of respondents below 15 years and those aged 21 and above. This connotes that the majority of the students in the study at the SHS level are between 15 and 20 years. They are in their adolescent period and can make constructive decisions with other people's influence being minimal.

Results and Discussion

This section of the report presents the findings and analysis of the data gathered to answer the research questions raised in the study. The results of quantitative data are presented to demonstrate the influence of Liberian English

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(LE) on students' learning of Standard English (SE) in senior high schools in Liberia. The results are presented in tables that show students' responses. It also displayed the findings of the essay tests as part of the research.

Extent to which the usage of Liberian English influenced students' learning of Standard English

This research objective aimed to discover the extent to which the usage of Liberian English has influenced students' learning of Standard English. The data was collected using a Five-point Likert scale type ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA).

Table 5 presents the results of students' responses on the extent to which their usage of Liberian English has influenced the learning of Standard English in Liberia.

Table 5: Extent to which the Usage of Liberian English has Influenced Students' Learning of Standard English

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
The frequent use of Liberian English (LE) at home affects my ability to learn Standard English (SE).	25 (7%)	26 (7.3%)	10 (2.8%)	114 (32.1%)	180 (50.7%)
The use of LE with my classmates affect my learning of SE	23 (6.5%)	55 (15.5%)	35 (9.9)	132 (37.1%)	110 (31%)

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The use of LE during class activities affects my learning of SE	17 (4.8%)	55 (15.5%)	52 (14.6%)	131 (36.9%)	100 (28.2%)
The use of LE by some of my teachers when teaching affects my ability to learn SE	26 (7.3%)	38 (10.7%)	42 (11.8%)	125 (35.3%)	124 (34.9)
The use of LE affects my written English	43 (12.1%)	71 (20%)	31 (8.7%)	104 (29.3%)	106 (29.9%)
The use of LE affects my spoken English	25 (7%)	36 (10.1%)	22 (6.3%)	124 (34.9%)	148 (41.7%)

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 5 presents the results of the responses of respondents with regards to the extent to which the usage of Liberian English has influenced students' learning of Standard English. The responses are presented with categories indicating different levels of agreement/disagreement: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). The numbers outside the parentheses represent the counts or frequencies of responses falling into each category, with percentages in relation to the total number of responses for each statement in the parenthesis.

As reflected in Table 5, 294 respondents amounting to 82.8%, either agreed or strongly agreed that the frequent use of Liberian English at home affects their ability to learn Standard English (SE). About 51 respondents, amounting to 14.3% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, while 10 respondents amounting to 2.8% of the respondents remained neutral. Again, it was seen that a significant portion amounting to 68.1% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that using Liberian English with classmates affects their learning of Standard English. While 78 (22%) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, and 35

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(9.9%) remained neutral. Furthermore, it was again seen that 65.1% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the use of Liberian English during class activities affects their learning of Standard English. While 14.6% were neutral, 20.8% either strongly disagree or disagree to this statement. It was also observed that a substantial proportion (over 70%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the use of Liberian English by some teachers affects their ability to learn Standard English, while 18% strongly disagree or disagree to this statement, 11.8% kept neutral.

It was recorded that 210 respondents (59.2%), agreed or strongly agreed that the use of Liberian English affects their written English. While 114 (32.1%) strongly disagree or disagree that the use of Liberian English affects their written English and 31 (8.7%) of the respondents remained neutral. Lastly, it can also be seen that 272 (76.6%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the use of Liberian English affect their spoken English. While 22 (6.3%) of the respondents stayed neutral. Here, 61 (17.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that the use of LE affect their spoken English.

From Table 5, the overall data revealed a prevalent belief among respondents that the use of Liberian English negatively impacts their ability to learn and use Standard English, both in written and spoken forms, across various contexts such as home, school, and interactions with teachers and classmates.

The study's results revealed that participants acknowledge that the Liberian English usage influence their learning of Standard English. Participants generally agreed that the use of Liberian English at home, with classmates, during class activities, and by some teachers highly affects their ability to learn Standard English.

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The problem of Liberian English influence on students' learning of Standard English does exists as majority of the students in their responses indicated that they most of the time use LE which affects their use of the Standard English language. This may be attributed to the fact that the Liberian English language has dominated the minds and tongues of the students. This finding corroborates with De Kleine (2012) who found that Liberian English, being a distinct pidgin language, lacking proper linguistic features, can have effects on the acquisition and proficiency of Standard English and that one way by which the usage of Liberian English can influence the learning of Standard English is through its impact on pronunciation. The finding also confirms Huber (2014), Adu-Boahen (2020), and Ankrah (2018) studies which revealed that Pidgin English (PE) has a considerable influence on SE. Learners who primarily use Liberian English may transfer these non-standard features into their use of Standard English, leading to errors in sentence structure, verb tense, and word choice. These discoveries then show that SHSs students have been highly influenced by the Liberian English to the detriment of using Standard English in Liberia.

The linguistic features of Liberian English most likely to interfere with students' writing

This research objective aimed to discover the linguistic features of LE that are most likely to interfere with students' writing. The LE interference errors observed during the test were analyzed using the following categories: Wrong use of pronouns, wrong verb tense used, misspelled words and grammatical errors.

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Table 6 presents the types of errors observed in SHSs students' written essay along with their frequencies and percentages.

Table 6: LE errors observed in students writing

Error	Frequency	Per cent
Wrong use of pronouns	204	11.7
Wrong verb tense used	755	43.4
Misspelled words	698	40.2
Grammatical errors	81	4.7
Total	1,738	100.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

As seen in Table 6, there were a total of 1,738 errors observed in students' writing, with the most prevalent being wrong verb tense usage, followed by misspelled words, wrong use of pronouns and grammatical errors. The wrong use of verb tense was the most prevalent, which occurred 755 times, accounting for 43.4% of all errors. This suggests that students struggle with maintaining consistency in their use of verb tenses, which can significantly impact the clarity and coherence of their writing. This aligns with Hancock's (1974) study which stated that verbs are often not modified for number or tense, although variations in inflected forms have been observed among speakers of different backgrounds, possibly due to the intrusion of Standard English. The uninflected form of the verb is employed to indicate both present and past (or earlier) time.

Misspelled words constitute a significant portion of errors; it was observed 698 times, comprising 40.2% of the total errors observed. This indicates that students may lack proficiency in spelling, which can hinder the readability and professionalism of their written work. Pronoun errors are also

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notable, it occurred 204 times accounting for 11.7% of all errors. This suggests that students struggle with proper pronoun usage, which can affect the clarity and coherence of their writing, particularly in terms of maintaining consistency and clarity in referring to subjects. Lastly, grammatical errors were also found, it was observed 81 times, accounting for 4.7% of the total errors observed. While this indicates that grammatical issues are less prevalent compared to other types of errors, they still represent an area for improvement in students' writing skills.

These findings indicate potential areas in which students might require further teaching, drill, or practice to enhance their writing abilities. Educators can utilize this data to adapt their teaching approaches and offer tailored support to tackle these particular language challenges. Moreover, offering feedback that concentrates on these specific aspects can heighten students' awareness and competence in circumventing such errors in their writing.

Influence of linguistic features of Liberian English interference on students' academic performance in the English language

This research objective sought to investigate the influence of linguistic features of LE interference on students' academic performance in the English language in Liberia. It was intended to determine whether linguistic features of LE influence the academic performance of learners. A standard multiple regression was conducted to see if students' wrong use of pronouns, the wrong tense of verbs used, the misspelling of words, and the wrong use of grammar predicted their academic performance in the English language. Results from the analysis, using the enter method showed that the predictors (students' wrong use of pronoun, wrong tense of verb used, misspelling of words, and wrong use

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of grammar) explain 34% of the variance in the students' academic performance in the English language in Liberia F (4,350) = 45.00, $p<.05$, R^2 =.34, R^2 Adjusted = .33. See Table 14 for model.

Table 7: ANOVA, Model Summary and Coefficient for Students' Academic Performance in English Language.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Value	B	Std. Error	β	t-value	p value
(Constant)	30.657	.878		34.900	.001
wrong use of pronoun	-3.457	.590	-.257	-5.859	.001
wrong tense of verb used	-1.426	.296	-.223	-4.816	.001
misspelled words	-1.821	.279	-.302	-6.533	.001
Transliteration	-4.475	.831	-.235	-5.385	.001
Multiple R		.583	F value		45.00
R Square value		.340	df		354
Adjusted R Square		.332	P value		.001

a. Dependent Variable: Exam Score of Students
b. Predictors: (Constant), Transliteration, wrong tense of verb used, wrong use of pronoun, misspelled words.

Source: Field Data (2023)

Results from the analysis further indicated that linguistic features of LE entailing wrong use of pronouns (β = -.257, t = -5.86, p <.05), the wrong tense of verb used (β = -.223, t = -4.816, p <.05), misspelling of words (β = -.302, t = -6.53, p <.05) and wrong use of grammar (β = -.235, t= -5.385, p < .05) significantly influenced students' academic performance in English language.

The results also show that the academic performance of students is significantly predicted in order of magnitude, by the use of pronouns, wrong tense of verb used, misspelling of words and wrong use of grammar. Therefore,

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according to the findings of this study, the wrong tense of verbs used, wrong use of grammar, wrong use of pronouns and misspelling of words are predictors of the academic performance of students. This implies and confirms that the academic performance of students is influenced by the linguistic features of LE. These linguistic features of LE of the students have also been found to influence the academic performance of students. This finding confirms Ankrah (2018) who identified several pidgin interferences errors in English writing, including transliteration, Pidgin-influenced spelling errors, omissions, incorrect pronoun usage, and inappropriate word choices which work together to influence the English performance of learners academically. Among these errors, transliteration was found to be the most frequently committed, followed by omissions, spelling errors, incorrect pronoun usage, and inappropriate word choices, in that order. However, in this study, it was discovered that the wrong tense of verbs used topped the other interference, wrong use of grammar, wrong use of pronouns and misspelt words.

This result aligns with Unachukwu et al. (2020) findings in Nigeria, where they observed that the utilization of Pidgin has a considerable adverse influence on students' utilization of Standard English. Additionally, the usage of Nigerian Pidgin English has been associated with unfavorable effects on students' academic achievements. The finding also supports Winford (2005) who discovered that learners who primarily use Liberian English may transfer these non-standard features into their use of Standard English, leading to errors in sentence structure, verb tense, and word choice. This has the potential to hinder effective communication and require additional effort to unlearn these non-standard features.

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Conversely, this study's finding disproves Amuzu and Asinyor (2016) who focused on the errors made by Ghanaian students in their written English. Their study sheds light on the situation in Ghana (and potentially in Cameroon as well) where English is taught and used as a second language alongside variations of an English-related pidgin. The pidgin language is often blamed for the errors made by English learners, especially those in secondary and tertiary institutions, both in spoken and written English. Their findings revealed that none of the identified error types were exclusively committed by the SPE speakers, which suggests that there is no definitive causal relationship between speaking SPE and making errors in written English. Instead, it was discovered that the errors were more directly linked to certain grammatical features of the students' mother tongues and the writing systems they use on electronic media platforms.

The findings also contradict Omari (2010) who sought to find a relationship between speaking Pidgin English and academic performance, particularly in the WASSCE exams, and saw that the findings did not provide conclusive evidence establishing a direct connection between academic performance and the use of non-standard English or Pidgin English. However, Huber (2014) examined the use of pidgins and creoles in education in four West African countries such as Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, and Liberia. He stated that some Ghanaian educationists were mentioned as viewing pidgin as a dangerous phenomenon. Based on the above evidence, it can be said from this study that the academic performance of learners is influenced wrong tense of verbs used, wrong use of grammar, wrong use of pronouns and misspelling of words.

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Measures that can be employed to mitigate the usage of Liberian English in senior high schools

This research objective was to develop measures that deal with those variables that undermine pupils' language competency in English in senior high schools. The data was collected using a five-point Likert scale type with key Strongly Disagree (SD); Disagree (D); Neutral (N); Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA) to examine this research objective. Table 15 presents the results of students' views on measures that can be employed to mitigate the usage of Liberian English in senior high schools.

Table 8: Suggestions to Mitigate the Usage of Liberian English

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Students should be made to know the difference between Liberian English (LE) and Standard English (SE)	21 (5.9%)	16 (4.5%)	12 (3.4%)	113 (31.8%)	193 (54.4%)
Teachers and students should be educated about the importance of using SE academic/professional setting	5 (1.4%)	2 (.6%)	7 (2%)	138 (38.9%)	203 (57.2%)

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Language policies that promote the use of SE should be developed and implemented	12 (3.4%)	6 (1.7%)	21 (5.9%)	143 (40.3%)	173 (48.7)
The use of LE should be banned in Liberian schools	52 (14.6%)	52 (14.6%)	37 (10.6%)	102 (28.7%)	112 (31.5%)
Students should be penalized for speaking LE on campus	62 (17.5%)	83 (23.4%)	44 (12.4%)	89 (25.1%)	77 (21.6%)
Peer corrections should be encouraged by teachers	20 (5.6%)	12 (3.4%)	37 (10.4%)	130 (36.7%)	156 (43.9%)
Students should be taught only in SE	28 (7.9%)	27 (7.6%)	27 (7.6%)	69 19.4%)	204 (57.5%)

Source: Field Data (2023)

The responses are categorized into five levels of agreement: strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA). The numbers in parentheses indicate the percentage of respondents at each level of agreement for each statement.

From Table 15, it was seen that up to 57.2%% of the students strongly support the idea of educating both teachers and students about the importance of using Standard English (SE) in academic and professional settings. About 38.9% also simply agree to this statement. A minimum portion amounting to 7.4% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to this statement while 2% remained neutral. The responses from the students pertaining to this

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statement suggest that they recognize the significance of SE in formal contexts and how it can enhance academic and career opportunities.

Again, about 89% of the respondents agreed that language policies that promote the use of SE should be developed and implemented. While 5.9% remained neutral, about 5.1% disagreed to this statement. This indicates a perceived need for structured guidelines to encourage SE usage. Furthermore, about 86.2% of the respondents agreed with the idea that students should be made to know the difference between Liberian English (LE) and Standard English (SE). About 10.4% 0f the respondents disagreed to this, while 3.4% stayed neutral.

Additionally, about 76.9% of the respondents agreed that students should be taught only in Standard English. About 7.6% remained neutral, while 15.5% either disagreed or strongly disagreed to this statement.

It can be observed that 80.6% of the respondents agreed that peer corrections should be encouraged by teachers; about 9% disagreed to this, while 10.4 % stayed neutral.

From Table 15, the results show that up to 60.2% of the respondents agreed that the use of LE should be banned in Liberian schools; while 10.6% were neutral, about 29.2% disagreed to this.

Table 15 again shows that about 46.7% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that students should be penalized for speaking LE on campus. About 40.9% of the respondents strongly disagree or disagree with this statement while 12% remained neutral. This result reveals that participants show less support for penalizing students for speaking Liberian English (LE) on campus. This might

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be due to concerns about potential negative effects on their self-esteem and cultural identity.

It was revealed that the overall responses obtained from the respondents showed that the respondents are generally in favor of strategies to promote the use of Standard English (SE) and mitigate Liberian English (LE) among students. These results indicate that the respondents viewed majority of the statements as effective measure that can be employed to mitigate the usage of Liberian English among senior high schools' students. Among the measures agreed on are; students should be made to know the difference between Liberian English (LE) and Standard English (SE), teachers and students should be educated about the importance of using SE in academic/professional settings, language policies that promote the use of SE should be developed and implemented, peer corrections should be encouraged by teachers, students should be taught only in SE.

This finding affirms Onyejelem and Onyedikachi (2020) who found that raising awareness among parents, the media, and the government about the detrimental effects of excessive use of Pidgin English helps to reduce the use of Pidgin in school settings. Teachers as part of the measures to mitigate the problem suggested by Onyejelem and Onyedikachi should receive training on effective methods for delivering English language lessons.

To conclude, the results from Table 15 suggests that while there is substantial support for promoting the use of Standard English (SE) in academic and professional settings, there is a need for careful consideration when dealing with Liberian English (LE). Strategies focusing on education, awareness, and

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language policies seem to be more favored, while outright bans and penalties are met with more mixed responses.

Chapter Summary

This study sought to investigate the perceived influence Liberian English may have on students' learning of Standard English in senior high schools in Liberia. To collect the information required for the study, the researcher employed a questionnaire for students and an essay test. Table 1 indicates there are more females then males' respondents and their ages are between 15-29 years.

From Table 2, it was seen that an overall mean score of 3.71 (SD= 1.26) indicates that students agreed that the Liberian English has highly influenced students' learning of Standard English. This may be attributed to the fact that the Liberian English language has dominated the minds and tongues of the students. The results show that the academic performance of students is significantly predicted in order of magnitude, by the wrong tense of verb used, wrong use of grammar, wrong use of pronouns and misspelling words. It was revealed in Table 12 that an overall mean score of 3. 97 (SD= 1.14) was obtained which showed that respondents have highly agree to measures that can be employed to mitigate the usage of Liberian English among senior high schools' students in Liberia.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

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This chapter centered on the study's summary, conclusions, and recommendations. The main findings were pinpointed and transformed into actionable suggestions for future studies. The study's summary provides an overview of its purpose, objectives, and research questions. It includes a review of the theories and theoretical framework used, a summary of the research methods and design, encompassing the research design, population, sample, sampling procedures, and data analysis procedures. The key findings are then provided and structured in accordance to the research questions. Conclusions were drawn based on these findings, leading to recommendations and suggestions for future research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary.

Summary of the Study

The main aim of this research was to explore how Liberian English impacts the acquisition of Standard English among senior high school students in Education District 6, Paynesville, Liberia. The study sought to understand the potential effects of using Liberian English on students' proficiency in Standard English and their academic performance in the English language. To achieve this, the research focused on four key questions: *(1) To what extent does Liberian English influence students' learning of standard English in senior high schools? (2) What are the typical linguistic features of LE interference errors that are observed in SHSs students' writings?*

(3) What is the influence of linguistic features of LE interference errors on students' academic performance in English language? and (4) What are students view on these measures proposed to help mitigate the use of LE in senior high schools?

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The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. A well-structured survey questionnaire containing a five-point Likert scale was utilized as a tool to collect quantitative data for research question one and four. The first research question aimed to understand the extent the usage of Liberian English (LE) impacts students' learning of Standard English (SE). Additionally, the fourth research question proposed suggestions to reduce the use of Liberian English among students. An essay test was given to participants to collect data for the second and third research questions which aimed to identify some of the linguistic features of LE that are most likely to interfere with students' acquisition of SE and how these linguistics interference errors affects students' academic performance. These linguistic features were identified and quantified into frequencies and percentages. Employing the proportional stratified random sampling technique, the study gathered information from 355 twelfth-grade students who were selected from the overall population.

The instrument underwent a pilot test, during which the reliability of the instrument and its different aspects were explained in the reliability section of this thesis. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were employed for the analysis. Frequencies and percentages were applied to examine research questions one, two and four, while research question three was tackled using an inferential statistical method, specifically multiple linear regression.

Summary of major findings

Based on the outcomes discussed in chapter four, the primary findings of the research were recognized:

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1. From the results of the analysis, it was found 82.8% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that students' usage of Liberian English at home influenced their learning of Standard English. The study's results revealed that 68.1% of the participants acknowledged that the use of Liberian English with classmates influence their learning of Standard English. About 65.1% of the participants agreed that the use of Liberian English during class activities affect their learning of SE while 14.6% remained neutral and 20.3% disagreed. About 70.2% agreed that the use of LE by some teachers affects their ability to learn Standard English; 59.2% agreed that it also impacts their written English while 76.6% agreed the LE impacts their spoken English written English,
2. The findings also revealed that about 1,738 errors were identified in students writing with the most prevalent being wrong tense of verb used (n=755) amounting to 43.4% of the total errors followed by misspelled words (n =698) amounting to 40.2%; wrong use of pronoun (n=204) amounting to 11.7% and grammatical errors (n=81) amounting to 4.7%. These findings demonstrate that while there is room for improvement in certain areas of writing, the majority of respondents exhibited a reasonably strong grasp of the language's grammar and syntax.
3. In relation to the influence LE interference errors have on students' academic performance in English language, the results from the analysis shows that the linguistic features of LE entailing wrong use of pronouns (β = -.257, t = -5.86, p <.05), the wrong tense of verb used (β = -.223, t = -4.816, p <.05), misspelling of words (β = -.302, t = -6.53, p <.05)

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and wrong use of grammar (β = -.235, t= -5.385, $p < .05$) significantly influenced students' academic performance in English language.

4. The findings revealed that most respondents considered the majority of the statements to be helpful in reducing the use of Liberian English among senior high school students. About 86.2% out of 100% of the respondents agreed the students should be made to know the difference between LE and SE; while, about 96.1% agreed the teachers and students should be educated about the importance of using SE in academic/professional setting. Approximately 89% of the respondents agreed that language policies that promote the use of SE should be developed and implemented. There were diverse responses about LE being banned in Liberian schools and students being penalized for speaking LE on campus. About 60.2% of the respondents agreed with this statement; 10.6% were neutral and 29.2% disagreed that LE should be banned in Liberian Schools. About 40.9% disagreed that students should be penalized for speaking LE on campus, while 46.7% agreed to this statement and 12.4% remained neutral. Again about 80.6% agreed that peer corrections should be encouraged while about 76.9% of the respondents agreed that should be taught only in SE. The overall data demonstrated a general preference among respondents for implementing strategies that encourage the use of Standard English (SE) and discourage the use of Liberian English (LE) among students. However, the results imply that while there is substantial support for promoting the use of Standard English (SE) in academic and professional settings, there is a need for careful consideration when dealing with Liberian

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English (LE). Strategies focusing on education, awareness, and language policies seem to be more favored, while outright bans and penalties are met with more mixed responses.

Conclusions

The research aimed to examine how the influence of Liberian English (LE) affects students' acquisition of Standard English (SE) in Education District 6, Paynesville, Montserrado county, Liberia. The focus was on gauging the extent to which LE influence students' SE learning, recognizing common linguistic features of LE-related errors present in the written work of senior high school (SHS) students. Furthermore, the study sought to evaluate how these linguistic errors stemming from LE interference influence students' academic performance in the English language. Finally, the goal was to develop strategies for reducing the prevalence of Liberian English usage among senior high school students.

Regarding the first research objective which sought to investigate the perceived influence of LE on students' acquisition of SE, the research revealed that the majority of students acknowledge the strong influence of LE on their learning of SE, both in terms of spoken and written English. Participants attributed this influence to various contexts, including home, interactions with classmates, classroom activities, and even certain teachers. The overall data show a strong consensus among respondents on the significant impact of LE on their learning of SE, corroborating earlier research findings that the use of Pidgin English had a negative impact on students' SE acquisition.

Drawing from the study backed by existing literature, it can be concluded that the use of Liberian English or PE can be attributed to influences

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from home and peer groups, and it has had a significant negative impact on the students' usage of standard English. This implies that the continuous usage of LE at home and with peers, influence students' acquisition of SE. as a result, interventions addressing both home and peer group environments are necessary to alleviate the negative impact of Liberian English on students' acquisition and use of standard English.

The study's second objective was to identify linguistic features of LE interference errors that are observed in SHSs students' writings. The study's findings validated that of the literature that identified several pidgin interferences errors in students' writing, including transliteration, Pidgin-influenced spelling errors, omissions, incorrect pronoun usage, and inappropriate word choices which work together to influence the English performance of learners academically. Among these errors, transliteration was found to be the most frequently committed, where as in this study, the wrong tense of verbs used topped the other interference. From the findings, it could be concluded that language acquisition and writing abilities are multifaceted processes influenced by various linguistic factors. This implies that there is no one-size-fits-all method to teaching writing skills, as different students may struggle with different aspects of language and writing. Furthermore, it also indicates that strategies aiming at improving students' writing abilities need to be adjusted to address the specific linguistic challenges they confront. These strategies may include targeted instruction on grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and other elements of academic writing. Additionally, continual support is necessary to help students develop and refine their writing skills over time.

In relation to the third research objective that sought to assess the influence of linguistic features of LE interference errors on students' academic

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performance in English language. Importantly, the study underscored the detrimental influence of LE interference errors on students' academic performance in English language. The analysis revealed significant correlations between linguistic features entailing incorrect pronoun usage, improper verb tense, misspelled words, and erroneous grammar with students' academic performance. These results corroborate findings from prior literature which found that the use of pidgin English has a significant negative impact on the students' usage of standard English and academic performance. Based on these results, it could be concluded that errors related to the Liberian English interference significantly impact students' academic performance in English language. Specifically, errors such as wrong use of pronouns, incorrect verb tense usage, misspelling of words, and improper grammar significantly affect students' performance. This suggests that students who struggle with these types of errors are likely to perform worse in English language tasks or assessments. Educators and policymakers should take note of these findings and consider implementing interventions or educational strategies to address these specific linguistic challenges. This could involve targeted instruction, remedial programs, or additional support for students who exhibit these difficulties in order to improve their academic outcomes in English language studies.

Finally, in relation to providing strategies for mitigating the influence of LE and promoting SE usage among SHS students, the research provided insights into the views of participants. The implication of the findings suggests that there is a clear preference among respondents for promoting the use of Standard English (SE) over Liberian English (LE) among senior high school students. This preference is reflected in the high percentages of agreement

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regarding the importance of teaching the difference between SE and LE, educating teachers and students about the importance of using SE in academic/professional settings, and developing/implementing language policies that promote the use of SE. However, there are differing viewpoints when it comes to more punitive measures such as prohibiting LE in Liberian schools and penalizing students who speak LE on campus. While a sizeable proportion of respondents support these measures, there is also considerable disagreement and neutrality, emphasizing the need for careful analysis and perhaps further exploration of alternative approaches. To sum up, the findings also emphasize the importance of strategies such as peer corrections and teaching solely in SE, which received substantial support from respondents. This suggests that educational and awareness-building programs are preferable to strict enforcement measures. This implies that, while there is a strong desire to encourage SE usage in academic and professional contexts, any measures implemented must be balanced and take into account the complexities of language dynamics in Liberia, particularly the function and importance of LE in specific circumstances.

Recommendations

In relation to the outcomes and conclusions outlined in this research, the following suggestions were formulated:

1. The Ministry of Education should develop and implement language integration programs that provide students with opportunities to practice and improve their Standard English skills.
2. School authorities should launch awareness campaigns aimed at highlighting the importance of proficient Standard English usage for

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academic and professional success. These campaigns can involve workshops, seminars, and writing on build boards and bulletin that emphasize the benefits of effective communication in Standard English.

3. School authorities should provide teachers with specialized training on identifying and addressing Liberian English interference errors. Teachers should be equipped with strategies to help students overcome specific language challenges, such as pronoun usage, verb tense, and grammar errors.
4. School authorities should establish peer mentorship programs where students proficient in Standard English can support and mentor their peers who struggle with language acquisition. This creates a supportive learning environment and encourages collaborative language improvement.
5. School authorities should engage parents and families in supporting their children's language development. They should organize workshops or information sessions that guide parents on creating a language-rich environment at home and understanding the balance between Liberian English and Standard English.

Suggestions for future research

The study has brought insights into pidgin English known as Liberian English in the Liberian context on students' learning of Standard English and academic performance. It was carried out in a single district. Therefore, it is suggested that additional research in other districts of the country be carried out and among other schools to further corroborate the results of this study.

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Furthermore, it is suggested that more variables (to include teachers) be considered in future research studies.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the research including its purpose, objectives, methodology and design, population, sample and sampling technique. It also covered tool for gathering data, varieties of acquired data, data processing, analysis methods, and a concise account of the findings corresponding to the research questions. Additionally, this chapter included a conclusion, recommendations and suggestion for future research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Research Instrument

Research Instrument (Students' Questionnaire)

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire aims at gathering data on the ***"Influence of Liberian English on students' learning of Standard English and academic performance in English language in Senior High Schools, Educational District 6, Paynesville".*** Your participation in the study is important and the researcher appreciates your time in filling out this questionnaire. All responses will be kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of this research. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose to refrain from answering any one of the questions or the entire questionnaire at your will. Thank you.

Consent

I gave my consent to take part in this study. I am aware that my participation in this study is voluntary, and I am free to leave at any time, without having to give a reason or incur any penalties.

Signed_____
Respondent

Instruction

Please read each question carefully and select the response that best represents your views.

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SECTION A

Demographic Data

Complete the following information by ticking (√) that which applied to you.

1. GENDER: Male ( ) ,Female ( )
2. AGE: below 15 ( ), 15-20 ( ), 21 above ( )

SECTION B

THE EXTENT IN WHICH THE USAGE OF LIBERIAN ENGLISH INFLUENCE THE LEARNING OF STANDARD ENGLISH

Please read each question carefully and tick (√) the response that best represents your views.

Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree(D), Neutral(N), Agree(A) Strongly Agree (SA)

No.	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
3.	The frequent use of LE at home affects my ability to learn SE					
4.	The use of LE with my classmates affect my acquisition of SE					
5.	The use of LE during class activities affects my acquisition of SE					
6.	The use of LE by Some of my teachers when teaching affects my ability to learn SE					
7.	The use of LE affect my written English					
8.	The use of LE affect my spoken English					

SECTION C

RQ FOUR: WAYS TO MITIGATE THE USAGE OF LE

Please read each question carefully and tick (√) the response that best represents your views.

Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree(D), Neutral(N), Agree(A) Strongly Agree (SA)

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
9.	Students should be made to know the difference between LE an SE					

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10.	Teachers and students should be educated about the importance of using SE in academic/professional setting					
11.	Language policies that promotes the use of SE should be developed and implemented					
12.	The use of LE should be prohibited in Liberian schools					
13.	Students should be penalized for speaking LE on campus					
14.	Peer corrections should be encouraged by teachers					
15.	Students should be taught only in SE					

SECTION D

IDENTIFYING LINGUISTICS FEATURES OF LE INTERFERENCE IN STUDENTS WRITING AND ASSESS HOW THEY INFLUENCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Essay (60 Points)

Instruction: Not less than 300 words, write a story that ends with the statement “I wish I have never met him”.

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APPENDIX B: Consent letter by Thesis supervisor

Department of Business and Social Sciences Education
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Education
College of Education Studies
University of Cape Coast
18th April, 2023

The Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
University of Cape Coast

Dear Sir:

FIELD SURVEY BY VASHEILA G. SIRYON: A LETTER OF CONSENT BY THESIS SUPERVISOR

The above-mentioned student is writing an M.Phil. thesis titled "The Influence of Liberian English on Students' Learning of Standard English and Academic Performance in English Language": A study to be conducted in some senior high schools in Education District 6, Paynesville, Montserrado county-Liberia, and is set to begin her field data collection very soon. I am by this letter imploring your Office to grant her Ethical Clearance to enable her undertake this exercise.

I hope that this request would be granted her.

Thank you for the opportunity.

Yours Faithfully,

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Prof. Bethel T. Ababio (PhD)
(Thesis Supervisor)

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APPENDIX C: Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT
TEL: 0558093143 / 0508878309
E-MAIL: irb@ucc.edu.gh
OUR REF: IRB/C3/Vol.1/0271
YOUR REF:
OMB NO: 0990-0279
IORG #: IORG0011497

26TH JULY, 2023

Ms. Vasheila Goldi Siryon
Department of Arts Education
University of Cape Coast

Dear Ms. Siryon,

ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/CES/2023/73)

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research on **Influence of Liberian English on Senior High School Students' learning of Standard English and Academic Performance in English Language: The case of some selected schools in Educational District 6, Paynesville-Liberia.** This approval is valid from **26th July, 2023** to **25th July, 2024**. You may apply for an extension of ethical approval if the study lasts for more than 12 months.

Please note that any modification to the project must first receive renewal clearance from the UCCIRB before its implementation. You are required to submit a periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,

Kofi F. Amuquandoh
Ag. Administrator

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