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THEME:

*TRANSFER FROM MOTHER TONGUE AND FRENCH TO  
ENGLISH BY BAATOMBU STUDENTS the case study of  
Nikki District*

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## **DEDICATION**

To God Almighty,  
To my dear parents,  
I dedicate this work

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This piece of research would not have been possible without the mentoring of Dr Patrice C. Akogbeto to whom I express my entire gratitude. I extend my gratitude to Dr. AbdoulayeHakibou for his concern in the accomplishment of this paper

I am also indebted to all the well-wishers who spurred me on to this point.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**BEPC:** Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle

**BAC :** Baccalauréat

**BAPES :** Brevet d'Aptitude Professionnelle de l'Enseignement Secondaire

**CAPES :** Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle de l'Enseignement Secondaire

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, all over the world, many languages are learnt as foreign languages to meet various needs. English is one of them that speakers of other languages like to learn as a foreign language in many countries. English language has not become a worldwide language overnight. In fact, the success of British colonial empire and the subsequent rise of the American industrial, technological, economic and political power boosted the English language to spread or emerge all over the world and become a worldwide medium of communication today. English language has impacted the world so that international meetings are often held in English no matter the area of discussion: it may be in politics, diplomacy, commerce, science and the like.

Consequently, to make the worldwide communication easier, many countries in Asia, Europe, America and Africa have required the learning of English as a foreign language in schools. Sharing the same point of view with its fellow countries all over the world, Benin Republic adopted the teaching of English as a foreign language in its secondary schools. Actually, teaching English in Benin appears to be a relief from the current challenges of globalization and international business interactions the country is facing today.

However, in practice teachers and students are confronted with an issue related to the teaching and the learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This issue is known as the interference of the learners' native language or prior acquired languages. Baatombu students in Nikki District are also faced with the same linguistic problem in their English learning process. This motivates the choice of my topic "*Transfer from mother tongue and French to English by Baatombu students: the case study of Nikki district*". Generally speaking, transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other languages that have been previously learnt. In

language acquisition, “positive transfer” occurs when the source language doesn’t negatively affect the second or foreign language learning in the rules governing the target language. In this case the rules taken from the target language are similar to the ones of the native language so that the knowledge of the native language facilitates the learning of the target language. When there is a case of negative transfer it is called “interference”. Interference occurs when the source language negatively and directly influences the second or foreign language in the application of rules. In this sense, this can lead to some errors that have connection principally with the source language. Odlin (1989:27)

To study this topic some research questions have been formulated. 1- Do the students exploit their mother tongue and French to produce their English sentences? 2- Are there words similarities between Baatonum, French and English, that’s what impacts their production? 3-Are there many types of transfer that’s why many areas of language learning are impacted in the students’ production? 4- Are the languages structures (syntax) not the same between Baatonum, French and English? 5-Are the grammatical structures not the same between the three languages? All the five hypotheses are going to be verified in this study to confirm or to gainsay them.

The objective of this study is to analyze the influence of Baatonum and French languages on the English learning process of Baatombu students in Nikki District and suggest ways of minimizing this linguistic difficulty.

This work is very significant in the sense that it reveals the different impacts the previous languages (Baatonum and French) of the students have on their English learning in Nikki district secondary school. It draws both teachers’ and students’ attention to how Baatonum or French is intuitively present in Baatombu students’ English sentences. This point is essential because

Baatombustudents as EFL learners often unknowingly use the inappropriate grammatical patterns when they are to produce their own English sentences. By way of consequences, the structure of their sentences is often inappropriate. This happens when transfer is a negative one. It often happens that the structure of their sentence is Baatonum-like or French-like though they are made up of English words, which the students are not aware of. This paper will help the teachers to predict the mistakes the Baatombu students can make in their English learning process. It helps the language instructors to know when they can teach the foreign language by reference to the native language's structural patterns and when direct teaching in the foreign language proves more appropriate. This work helps teachers to enlarge their awareness of socio-linguistic elements that hinder, most of the time their teaching effort.

The issue of transfer from mother tongue and French to English is very wide. Nevertheless, I have focused on the issue of the Baatombu students in 4e and 3e in Nikki secondary schools. I have taken into account the dialect of the area. In this study, I have scoped the written and oral English sentences of the students and brought out the linguistic issue in question and analyzed it. I have centered my analysis on phonological, lexical, semantic and syntactic grounds.

The present study has been structured in four chapters. The first chapter deals with the literature review which gives account of other similar research works previously done by scholars and former linguistics students. The second chapter is mainly concerned with the target speech community and the methodology. Here, the Baatombucommunity in general and the target groups or population in particular have been presented and the strategies used to collect the data given. The third chapter is devoted to data analysis. In this chapter, the data I have collected are presented and interpreted. The fourth chapter deals with

my suggestions and recommendations to the EFL learners, the EFL teacher and the teaching authorities in order to make the learning and the teaching of English as a foreign language easier in our country in general.

# CHAPTER I

## LITERATURE REVIEW

## **1.1-PRESENTATION OF MY READINGS**

The present research is far from being the first work on the issue of native language and other prior acquired languages' influence on foreign language learning. Some scholars have already investigated similar matters.

Wilga M. Rivers (1972:20) has declared the following about the achievement of a student learning a foreign language: “(...) with the result that he tended to develop a glib but inaccurate fluency, clothing native language structure in foreign vocabulary”.

DI Pietro (1971: VIII) investigated similar matters and declared: “the process of interpreting the particular grammar of a language in terms of another is called transfer. The mistakes that result from this process are said to be due to interference”. In his request for the appropriate equipment for a foreign learner, DI Pietro (1971:6) declared: “As part of the process, converting the speaker of one language into a learner of the other, at any rate, it is safe to say that if he has properly learnt the rules of the other language, he will be able to apply them. Whenever he has not learnt the rules, he will have to revert to those of this native language or to those of the other language”.

As for Dorvlo GHK (2000), he made more or less the same remarks as the first authors mentioned above. With regard to structural configuration in the course of language translation, he noticed: “translators sometimes happen to alter the structure of the source language (Ewe, their mother tongue) because literal translation of some structural patterns proves misleading in the target language (English).”

Working in the same field of language acquisition, Wikipedia the free encyclopedia stated: “most learners begin their acquisition process with “a silent period” in which they speak very little if at all. For some, this is a period of language shock in which the learner actively rejects the incomprehensible input of the new language.”

Ellis (1994) said: “learners begin by omitting pronouns or using them indiscriminately: for example, using “I” to refer to all agents. Learners then acquire a single pronoun feature often person, followed by number and eventually by gender. Little evidence of interference from the learners' first

language has been found; it appears that learners based entirely on their interferences about the target language structure.”

Sani-Agata (1988) has conducted a study on English language and Gengbe titled “A contrastive analysis of English language and Gengbe”. She has in fact contrasted English and gengbe respectively on phonological, lexical and syntactic ground.

On phonological basis, Sani-Agata (1988:24) has found out that English uses stress to carry accentual, grammatical and attitudinal information whereas in Gengbe (a tone language) stress does not exist. She has revealed that pitch is more important than stress in Gengbe. So the correct use of pitch bears far greater importance than stress”, Sani – Agata (1998: 28). On syntactic basis, Sani – Agata has attempted to compare words order in Gengbe sentence with the one in English sentences. Such an operation has led her to find that there are notable differences between some phrase structures in Gengbe and in English. She has for example noticed that the number is placed before the noun in English noun phrase whereas it is placed after the noun in Gengbe. Discussing sentence formation (words order in English and Gengbe), she has found that both English and Gengbe are Verb – Object types of language because the object is placed after the verb and the verb follows the subject in the two languages (subject – verb – object; S – V – O)

Sani – Agata contrasted English structure and Gengbe structure. As far as adjectives are concerned, Sani–Agata had discovered that adjectives are used after the noun they qualify in Gengbe whereas they are used before the noun they qualify in English. Her findings have implications on pedagogy. In fact, she has concluded that studies of this kind help to predict errors likely to be made by learners of a foreign language with regard to mother tongue impact on them

Wilkins (1872) with the mind to provide the teachers with strategies to teach efficiently the foreign language learners advocates: “when we contrast the structure of students’ native language with the one of the foreign language they are learning, we will certainly come to the inventory of the foreign language similarities and differences between the two languages. Such an inventory will guide instructors to know when they can teach the foreign language by reference to the native language’s structural patterns and when direct teaching in the foreign language proves more appropriate”

George Yule (1985:195) relating language production to culture has declared: “in the study of world cultures, it has become clear that different tribes not only have different languages, they have different world’s views which are reflected in their language.” Michael Swan and Bernard Smith share the same point of view with George Yule mentioned above. In the introduction to their book, *Learner’s English*, they point out: “the English of a non native speaker will almost always bear some hints of the accent of their mother tongue, so that we can recognize and talk about someone having a Germanic accent, a French accent or an English accent.”

Wilga M. Rivers (1972:20) in his declaration mentioned above found out that when the EFL learners are asked to produce their own sentences, they generally come up with sentence made up of lexical items from the foreign language but bearing the syntactic features of the native language. As for DI Pietro (1971: VIII), he took his time to state what transfer and interference are. He has thereby come to the conclusion that the process of language structure transfer generates mistakes due to the linguistic interferences. As far as his ideas of linguistic rules mastering by the learner is concerned, Di Pietro (1971:6) has concluded that a foreign language learner must be equipped with linguistic rules in force in the target language so that he or she can make and understand sentences in the new language he or she is learning despite the diverse obstacles he or she may be confronting during the learning process. The failure to bring the foreign language learner into the proper knowledge of the rules of the target language will surely lead to the transfer of native or prior acquired language’ structure into the foreign language being learnt.

Dorvlo G.H.K (2000) mentioned above, enlightened the mechanism at stake as far as language structure (syntax) and sociolinguistics’ patterns are concerned when translators try to translate a written text from Ewe into English. He has concluded that translators have to rearrange sentence constituents from the target language in order to fit into the structural (grammatical) patterns required in the target language.

Wikipedia, the encyclopedia has mentioned “a silent period” in language acquisition process. In fact, at that period, learners talk very little; or do not at all. It is a moment of language shock in which the learner selects what he understands and rejects what he does not understand in the new language.

As for Ellis (1994), he talked about pronouns omission and the indiscriminate use of the pronouns by language learner. Ellis came to the conclusion that it appears that learners use pronouns based entirely on the interferences about the target language structure.

Sani – Agata contrasted English structure and Gengbe structure. As far as adjective are concerned, Sani – Agata had discovered that adjectives are used after the noun they qualify in Gengbe whereas they are used before the noun they qualify in English. Her findings have implications on pedagogy. In fact, she has concluded that studies of this kind help to predict errors likely to be made by learners of a foreign language with regard to mother tongue impact on them.

## **1.2- CRITICAL VIEW ON THE READINGS**

Wilga M. Rivers (1972:20) Said that a foreign language learner tends to develop a glib but inaccurate fluency clothing native language structure in foreign vocabulary. He means that when EFL learners are asked to produce their own sentences, they generally come up with sentences made up of lexical items from the foreign language but bearing the syntactic features of the native language. His remark is very useful to my present work because it shows the real linguistic problem of my target learners. In his context of structure study, River's remark is true only when the learners' native language negatively affects the foreign language learning in the rules governing it. He failed to mention the advantages of the learners when their native language does not negatively affect the language they are learning.

As far as Di Pietro (1971: VIII) is concerned, he stated what transfer and interference are. He has thereby acknowledged that the process of language structure transfer generates mistakes due to linguistics interference. He also urges learners to learn the rules of the other language to be able to apply them. If not, they will revert to those of their native language or to those of other languages. Di Pedro's definitions of transfer and interference help to understand in my work the meanings of the terminologies "transfer" and "interference" which are capital in this study.

Dorvlo G.H.K. (2000) he made more or less the same remark as the authors mentioned above. His expression "literal translation of some structural patterns" is related to "language structure transfer" and seems to mean the same

as Wilga Rivers' expression: "sentences clothing language in foreign vocabulary". According to him such a translation is misleading. Dorvlo's contribution is useful to my study because it enlightens what Baatombu students in Nikki district do while producing their English sentences. But he failed to realize that in the context where there are similarities between the structural patterns taken from the native language and the ones from the foreign language there is no misleading.

Wikipedia the free encyclopedia, in the context of its study mentioned "a language shock" which is true and correct because approved by the above mentioned authors; some in terms of "transfer and interference" some "sentences clothing native language structure in foreign vocabulary"; and for others "literal translation of some structural patterns" and language structure transfer".

Sani – Agata worked on English-Gengbe contrastive study and pointed out that adjectives are used after the noun they qualify in Gengbe whereas they are used before the noun they qualify in English. Her contribution is very important to me because in Baatonum adjectives are used after the noun they qualify whereas they are used before the noun they qualify in English language. . It is true that in English adjectives precede the noun they qualify, but she failed to mention that there are cases where they immediately follow the noun they qualify as it is in French. Ex: secretary general. This is the reason why I came back on the topic to point out the contrasts and the similarities between Baatonum and English.

Wilkins (1972) provides the teachers with strategies to teach efficiently the foreign language learners, he urges the teachers to do a structural contrast between the native language structure and the one of the other languages. This will help them to know when to teach the foreign language with reference to the native language's structure patterns and when direct teaching in the foreign language proves more appropriate. Wilkin's work is important and helps me to suggest the teachers teaching in Baatombu community a structural contrast between Baatonum structure and the one of English. This will help them to teach English to Baatonum speakers successfully.

Considering George Yule (1985:195), his idea of relating language production to culture is useful to my work and helps me to show

Baatombu's view of the world from where language transfer can also happen. Baatombu people have their own language and world's views, they are faced with particular phonological, semantic, and grammatical problems that need to be enlightened.

Michael Swan and Bernard Smith share the same point of view with George Yule. What differs M. Swan and B. Smith's point of view from the one of G. Yule is that they emphasize the high degree of the mother tongue impact on the non native speaker of English. They mean that it is practically impossible for non native speaker of English to produce English that has no traces or hints of the accent of his/her mother tongue. Their contribution is important to my work in the sense that it makes me notice the hints of the accent of Baatonum language in the English production of Baatombu students. But they failed to point out that such a social interference must not be taken as failure but rather a strong signal that languages are equal.

There are many aspects of the topic that authors have not dealt with. None of them talked about the use of negative sentences based on negative indefinite pronouns; the use of first person pronouns in association with a noun or another pronoun, the final "s" omission in simple present tense in the third person singular; the use of the indefinite article "a"; the use of relative pronouns; etc...

Baatombu people are one of the tribes with remarkable cultural identity in Benin Republic. It's then clear that if we consider the ideas of the authors mentioned above, Baatombu students' English production will surely almost bear some hints of the accent of their mother tongue (Baatonum). Consequently, it is relevant that all the aspects of their English are likely to be Baatonum-like or french-like. Thereby raises the problem of transfer and interference in their English production.

Hence the need to carry the work on transfer from mother tongue and French by analyzing the field investigation results in order to be able to show the different influences Baatonum and French have on the English production of the Baatombu students in Nikki district and to provide relevant suggestions and recommendation to tackle the issue.

# CHAPTER II: A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE TARGET SPEECH COMMUNITY AND METHODOLOGY

## **2-1. A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE TARGET SPEECH COMMUNITY**

### **2-1.1-The sociolinguistic situation of baatombu people**

The term Baatonum is used to refer to the language of Baatombu people. Baatombu is the plural of Baatonu. The term Bariba is also used to refer to Baatombu or to their language. Let's bear in mind that these people feel more comfortable when they are referred to as Baatombu because this term expresses their cultural identity.

### **2-1.2- The Baatombu people and area**

Baatonum language is mostly spoken in the northern part of Benin republic, in the central west of Nigeria, in Niger and Togo. In Benin, according to atlas et Etudes Sociolinguistiques du Benin (2003), Baatonum language covered (52,098km<sup>2</sup>) fifty-two thousand and ninety-eight square kilometers in area.

Besides, in Nigeria, Baatonum language is widely spoken in the western region of Borgu in Kwara State, Okuta, Ilesha, Yashikira and in Gwanara. It covers 20,000km<sup>2</sup> in area, ADEOLA Richard Olusegun (1987).

### **2-1.3- The dialects**

Baatonum has many dialectal variants among which there is an acceptable intercomprehension. In fact to find the Baatonum that is not greatly influenced by other languages, one has to go to Nikki particularly in its surrounding villages, to N'dali, Bori, Wenou. The Baatonum spoken in those areas is considered as "authentic" compared to the one spoken in Banikoara, Kerou, Kouandeetc that have known other languages influence. That is why this dialect is used in teaching literacy

### **2.1.5- Baatonum and English contact**

In Benin, English Language is spoken in one way or another almost everywhere. For the fact that Nigerian traders known as Ibo people established in Nikki and in all Borgou as shopkeepers, Baatombu sometimes speak English with them. This contact is reinforced by their exchanges and transactions between them and Nigerians from Tchicandu and from other parts of Nigeria.

Furthermore, many students from Nikki and from other towns of the Borgou region often spend their holidays in Barutem where the Baatombu live in Nigeria. There, they are in permanent contact with English speakers. Their contact with the English language increases by watching Nigerian films on social realities presented in English. What is officially known is that English is taught to any Baatonum pupil entering secondary school. My present research work focuses on academic teaching of English. Even if they are zealous and talented in their learning of English, their mother tongue and French must influence this acquisition. It is then appropriate to make investigations in such a linguistic field.

## **2-2-METHODOLOGY**

### **2-2.1-presentation of the target groups**

#### **2-2.1.1- The students**

Students are the center of my present study. The students that are concerned with this work are Baatombu native attending school in a Baatombu community. To achieve the purpose of this research work the students in 4<sup>ème</sup> and 3<sup>ème</sup> have been considered simply because I think that after having learnt English in 6<sup>ème</sup> (first form secondary school) where they are mainly initiated to English words' pronunciation and vocabulary notion, and in 5<sup>ème</sup> (second form of secondary school) where they are taught basic English grammatical patterns, they are armed enough to start making a great deal of sentences on their own. That's the reason why the grammatical notions acquired up to 5<sup>ème</sup> are more intensified in 4<sup>ème</sup> and in 3<sup>ème</sup>. Thus, the students are much more asked to produce sentences during English classes. Students are generally asked to produce their own sentences to illustrate the different English vocabulary and grammar they are taught. In 4<sup>ème</sup> and 3<sup>ème</sup>, during the different English examinations they are submitted to, the students are regularly asked composition or writing. Let's also bear in mind that after their success in the first turn of BEPC examination, the students always undergo oral activities in English.

The different students contacted are geographically located in Nikki district and attend CEG1, CEG2, and the private secondary school "La Fontaine". Let's notify that the students' age is not taken into account but their

class. Moreover , the students' performance is not taking into account, that is to say I don't consider whether a student is brilliant and gets good marks or not. What is important to me is to make sure that each student selected for the study meets the characteristic features of the target group as mentioned above.

### **2-2.1.2- The teachers**

Teachers are the most important channels through which students get to know about English language in the secondary schools. They are the ones who make the EFL learners understand the language by using different strategies. In addition to the personal information I asked them to supply, they have principally acted as faithful co-operators. I have actually considered native Baatombu who are teaching English in a Baatombu community. I have also been interested in English teachers who are non Baatombu native but able to communicate fluently in Baatonum because I think that they can successfully detect Baatonum or French patterns in their students' English sentence. The enquiry is centered on teachers working in CEG1, CEG2 or in the private school: LA FONTAINE. These teachers are not owners of the same certificates.

### **2-2-2-The instruments**

To gather information about the EFL students and EFL teachers, different instruments have been used. The major ones are questionnaires. Others are: class observations and the collection of the students' papers.

#### **2-2.2.1- The students' questionnaire**

The students' questionnaire is a series of 12 questions written in French to make them easily understandable to the students. This questionnaire overviews aspects such as the students' interest in English learning , for how they have been learning English, whether they like marking English sentences or not, how they manage to make them, how they do with English activities and exercises requiring their own English sentences production, how they deal with the part (writing) of English exam papers, if their knowledge of Baatonum / French is of any help in their sentences production and if they have opportunities to speak English outside the school. They are also asked whether they are tempted to pronounce some English words like French words because of their similarities. And finally to say whether some English words are similar to some words in their mother tongue.

### **2-2.2.2- The teachers' questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire is composed of four (4) parts (see appendix). The first part is about teacher's contribution in gathering sample to register from the students during their classes as five oral sentences and written sentences influenced by Baatonum language whereas the second part asks them to do the same thing with the difference that the sentences are influenced by French language. They are asked to comment on these transfer problems the EFL students usually have and to make proper suggestions to help them overcome the difficulties. The fourth and last part invites the teachers to give their level (degree) and their length of service. This part aims at knowing their pedagogical training and their academic achievement. Fourteen (14) teachers were asked to answer the questionnaire because they met the condition of my research. Nine (09) teachers out the fourteen (14) have returned their answers to me. The five (05) remainders have not. But the task has been declared difficult by the nine (09) teachers who gave their answers. Among these nine (09) teachers, two (02) have not succeeded in findings ten (10) sentences but less than ten (10) in the first two parts of the questionnaire.

### **2-2.2.3- The collection of students' papers**

The collection of students' papers has been of vital importance in the data collection strategies adopted during the field work. It has to do with the students' papers already graded by their teachers. To achieve, it I have made a list of the targeted students in the class of 4ème and 3ème in the different schools considered during my work via their class prefects. I had to explain my purpose to the students in order to let me collect their English papers at the end of semester. But some students refused to submit their English papers simply because they don't do well at English. All the same, I was able to gather 45 copies out of the 62 expected from the 6 classes considered for this particular collection of the students' papers. After the collection, Part III of the exam paper knows as WRITING has been the center of my concentration. It has been of vital importance to me because it is the parts of the exam papers which demands students to produce English sentences on their own. The reading of these writings, allowed me to come across the sentences which account for the present research work.

#### **2-2.2.4- The class observations**

I have organized the class observations essentially to observe students in their attempt to make English sentences in 2- State Owned Schools and 1- private school. For this reason, some classes have been selected: 4<sup>ème</sup>E; 4<sup>ème</sup>B; 3<sup>ème</sup>B and 3<sup>ème</sup>D in CEG1 Nikki. 4<sup>ème</sup>A; 4<sup>ème</sup> C; 3<sup>ème</sup>A and 3<sup>ème</sup>C in CEG<sub>2</sub>Nikki. 4<sup>ème</sup> and 3<sup>ème</sup> of the private school “La Fontaine” in Nikki.

During these class observations, my concentration was mainly on the opportunities offered to students to produce English sentence and how the students exploit these opportunities. The sentences bearing the features under analysis in this research work have been registered.

It is when illustrative sentences are required from the students during vocabulary or grammar lessons many teachers offer opportunities to the students to make English students on their own. Group activities are organized by some teachers to oblige the students to interact in English among themselves. When opportunities are given to students to make sentences, indubitably two categories of students are visible.

The first category of students enthusiastically involves themselves in producing English sentences whereas the second category of students never tries unless the teacher constrains them by calling them to react. Generally, the students of the first category are better than the ones of the second category in producing structurally acceptable sentences. But sometimes, the teacher has to do some structural rearrangement before taking some sentences into account.

In their group activities, the students often speak French Baatonum in their interactions. But it is when the teacher is close to a group for supervision that the students try to communicate in English. Nevertheless, some of them are very good and are to be encouraged.

My attention was focused on any sentence produced by the students. To make sentences, the student has to introduce himself. If a sentence falls in line with my study, I write it down exactly the way it has been produced by the student.

# CHAPTER III

## DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### 3.1- DATAANALYSIS

#### 3.1.1- DATAPRESENTATION

##### 3-1.1.1- Data related to the students answers

The answers to the students' questionnaire help me to establish these tables below. Each table contains particular information very important for my study.

##### 3-1.1.2-The students' interest in English

*Table 1: Levels of students' interest in English*

<b>Students' levels of interest in English</b>	<b>Frequency of "yes"</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Interested in English	79	82.29
A little bit interested in English	15	15.62
Not interested at all	02	02.62
<b>Total number of the students</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100</b>

This table reveals that 79 students out of the 96 who have answered my questionnaire are interested in English and that is more than 82% of the total number. Fifteen students are a little bit interested and that is more than 15% of the total number. Finally, two students mentioned that they are not interested in English at all .Their number covers more than 2% of the total number. In all, 94 students are interested in English.

##### 3-1.1.3-Places of English use

*Table 2: The places students speak English.*

<b>Places</b>	<b>Frequency of "yes"</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
During English class only	69	71.87
At school in general	11	11.45
Only at home	00	00
Every where when it is required	16	16.66
<b>Total of the students</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that 69 students out of the 96 speak English during the English class only.

Eleven students speak English at school in general. So, eighty students speak English only at school and their number covers more than 83% of the total number. Only 16 students speak English everywhere when it is required. They occupy only 16.66% of the total number of the students. None of the students speak English only at home.

### 3-1.1.4-Similarities ‘existence between Baatonum, French and English

*Table 3: Similarities between students’ mother tongue, French and English.*

<b>Similarity</b>	<b>Frequency of “yes”</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Baatonum-English	14	14.58
French-English	82	85.41
<b>Total</b>	96	100

Through the table 3, I come to know that 85.41% of the students notify that there is similarity between many French words and English words. Only 14.58% recognize the similarity existing between Baatonum and English words. But similarity between words does not always mean that the words have the same meaning. These similarities sometimes misled the students into trap of false friends.

### 3-1.1.5-Exploitation of the students' mother tongue and French in their attempt to make English sentences

**Table 4: Students' exploitation of Baatonum / French in their attempt to make English sentences.**

Baatonum and French exploitation in the students' making of English sentence	Frequency of "yes"	Percentage (%)
Exploit Baatonum in their attempt to make English sentences	22	22.91
Exploit French in their attempt to make English sentences	51	53.12
Exploit both Baatonum and French in their attempt to make English sentences	23	23.95
Exploit neither Baatonum nor French in their attempt to make English sentences	00	00
Total number of the students	96	100

This table reveals that 22.91% of the students exploit Baatonum in their attempt to make sentences. 53.12% exploit French in their attempt to make English sentences. 23.95% exploit both Baatonum and French in their attempt to make English sentence. Finally, 0% exploits neither Baatonum nor French while doing the same task..

### 3-1.2-The oral and written sentences influenced by Baatonum or French

The list of the oral and written sentences influenced by Baatonum and French is in the annex.

Whether oral or written, the sentences mainly suffer from words order problems. This is the case of sentence N°3 (oral) where adjective "red" comes after the noun "pen" (French influence). In the sentence N°6, the object "car" comes before the verb "drive" (Baatonum influence). Other sentences suffer from "s" omission in their verbs at the third person singular in simple present tense. Generally speaking, these English sentences of the students reveal language learning problems related to syntactic, semantic, lexical, grammatical, graphic areas, etc. Undoubtedly, these different language problems the students' English sentences are suffering from, altogether raise transfer problems between Baatonum, French and English.

### 3-1.2.1-The teachers' conformation of the existence of transfer issues in the students' English sentences

*Table 5: Existence of transfer problems in students' English production*

Transfer problems	Frequency of "yes"	Percentage %
From mother tongue	09	100
From French language	09	100
From both mother tongue and French	09	100

This table shows that 100% of the teachers recognized that the transfer problems in the students' English production are from their mother tongue. 100% of them also recognized that the transfers are also from French language.

100% of the teachers finally recognized that the problems are from both Baatonum and French. This information gives me boldness and assurance to continue my research in transfer from mother tongue and French knowing that I am in the right field.

### 3-1.2.2-Types of transfer

*Table 6: The levels at which the transfers are noticed.*

Levels	Frequency of "yes"	Percentage %
Spelling	09	100
Phonetics	09	100
Semantics	09	100
Syntax	09	100
Lexis	09	100

In table 6, 100% of the teachers attest that transfer problem EFL students are faced with is in many domains of language learning in the areas of orthography, phonetics, lexis, grammar, semantics, syntax, etc. This information help me know exactly the areas where to focus my research with precision

### 3-1.2.3-Categories of transfer

*Table 7: The frequency of the categories of transfer in the students' English sentences*

<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Frequency the of categories of transfer in a text of 15 sentences</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Negative	11	73.33
Positive	04	26.66
Total	15	100

In table 7, the teachers reveal that in a text of 15 sentences, 73, 33% contain negative transfers and 26.66% contain positive transfers. It is clear that negative transfers are more numerous than positive ones in the students' English sentences. These negative transfers impede the understanding of the message contained in the sentences.

### 3-1.2.4-Teachers' appreciations of the students' behavior while doing writing

*Table 8: The students' behavior while doing writing*

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Abandon the writing	10	22.22
Use French words	05	11.11
Use false friends	30	66.66
Total	45	100

It is mentioned in this table that in a classroom of forty-five students 22.22% abandon the writing; 11.11% use French words and finally, 66.66% of the students use false friends. These percentages retrace the students' problems while writing an essay.

### 3-1.2.5-The EFL teachers' training background

*Table 9: The qualifications of the EFL teachers*

Degrees	Number of teachers	Percentage (%)
BAC	02	22.22
DUEL	02	22.22
LICENCE	03	33.33
MAITRISE	01	11.11
BAPES	01	11.11
CAPES	00	00
TOTAL	09	100

In this table, 22.22% of the teachers are owners of BAC, 22.22% have DUEL, 33.33% have LICENCE and 11.11% are owners of MAITRISE. 11.11% of the teachers have BAPES and none of them (0%) are owners of CAPES.

## **3.1.2-DATA INTERPRETATION**

### **3.1.2.1-The students' interest in English.**

A glance at this table makes me know that 82% of the students are interested in English and 15% are a little bit interested. In all more than 97% are interested in English, only 2% or so are not interested. This great number is justified by the fact that these students like English. The consequence is that they often attend English classes. Contrary to these latter, the other 2% is not interested in English simply because they don't like it. Consequently, they are often absent in English classes or they don't often do the assignments.

### **3.1.2.2- Places of English use.**

In table2, more than 83% of the students speak English only at school, 16, 66% speak English everywhere it is necessary and no student speak English only at home. This means that the 83% don't speak English outside the school but Baatonum or French. These percentages mentioned here above really show that the students in Nikki district are not in an English environment. Consequently, Baatonum and French are more privileged than English. After all considerations in this table, I find out that English is less practiced than Baatonum and French

### **3.1.2.3-Similarities'existence between Baatonum, French and English .**

Table 3 expresses the similarities between students' mother tongue, French and English .14, 58% of the students recognize that there are similarities between Baatonum words and English words and 85, 41% recognize that there are similarities between French and English words.

I discover that these word similarities are helpful to the learners when the words have the same meanings (True friends). But when words are similar and don't have the same meanings (false friends) they mislead the students. I also find out that there are vowel and consonant similarities between the languages. Not only that there are also structural similarities between Baatonum, French and English

### **3.1.2.4-Exploitation of the students' mother tongue and French in their English sentences**

In table4 22,91% of the students exploit Baatonum in their attempt to make English sentences while 53.12% exploit French and 23.95% exploit both Baatonum and French. Finally 0% exploitsneitherBaatonum nor French for the same purpose. This last percentage shows that none of the students uses English language directly in their attempt to make English sentences because they are unable to find ideas directly in English. Only Baatonum or French or both are used for the same attempt. All things considered I find out the students first find ideas in either Baatonum or French and make sentences before they translate them into English.

### **3.1.2.5- Interpretation of the oral and written sentences influenced by Baatonum and French.**

I recall that the list of the sentences is in the annex. The oral as well as the written English sentences of the students visibly suffer from word order problems. The sentences N°3 and N°6 illustrate it very well.N°3 "Borrow me your pen red (oral)". N°6 "She car drives" (Written). In N°3 the noun "pen" comes before the adjective "red" (French influence). In N°6 the verb "drives" comes just after the object "car" (Baatonum influence). In N°10 "I and Baké play together", "Baké" comes after "I".By considering the words order in N°3; N°6 and N°10 I find out that it is important to look at the place of adjectives, the

place of verbs and the use of first person pronoun in association with a noun or another pronoun.

In N°12 "My friend eat rice every Sunday" the student has not put "s" at the end of the verb "eat" though it is in the simple present tense and at the third person singular. In N°18 "One farmer came to see my father" The students used the cardinal number "one" instead of the article "a". The N°23 "He not rice eat everyday" the learner has not used the auxiliary "does" but has just put "not" to form his negative sentence. This is surely due to an influence of Baatonum or French. In N°28 "Don't worry life will good" The student used the adjective "good" just after the modal auxiliary "will" as if it were a verb. Such use of adjective is contrary to English grammatical structure. In N°30 "The fire who I made burnt me" (oral) there is an inappropriate use of the relative pronoun "who".

After all considerations about the sentences N°12 ; N°18 ; N°23 ; N°28 and N°30, I find out the learners omit the final "s" in simple present tense in the third person ; they fail to use the indefinite article "a", they also fail to form the ordinary negative sentences. I also find out that the learners use some adjectives as verbs and misuse the relative pronouns.

### **3.1.2.6-The teachers' confirmation of the existence of transfer issues in the students' English sentences.**

Table 5 is about the existence of transfer problems in the students' English production.

In this table, all the 9 teachers recognized that the transfer problems in the students' English production are from their mother tongue and also from French language. All of them finally recognized that the transfer problems are from both Baatonum and French. This implies that there is a link between Baatonum, French and English in the production of the students. It means that the students' knowledge of Baatonum and French affects negatively to some extent their English production. Therefore, I find out that the students exploit their mother tongue and French in making English sentences.

### **3.1.2.7-Types of transfers**

Table 6 expresses the levels at which the transfers are noticed in the students' production.

All the 9 teachers recognized that the transfer problems are noticed in some areas such as orthography, phonetics, semantics, lexis, syntaxes etc...

This implies that the students' English production suffers from transfer problems in the areas of writing words, words pronunciation, meanings, words order, words choice...

Therefore I find out that in the students' English production there are Graphic transfer, phonetic transfer, semantic transfer, syntactic transfer, lexical transfer etc...

### **3.1.2.8-Categories of transfers**

Table 7 shows the frequency of the categories of transfers in the students' English sentences.

In a text of 15 sentences, 04 sentences contain positive transfer and 11 contain negative transfer. It is then clear that negative transfer is more frequent than the positive one in the students' English production. In this table, I find out that there are two categories of transfer; positive and negative transfers.

### **3.1.2.9- Teachers' appreciations of the students' behavior while doing writing.**

Table 8 is about the students' behavior while doing writing.

In this table the teachers said that in a classroom of 45 students, 22.22% abandon the writing, 11.11% use French words and finally 66.66% use false friends. Those who abandon the writing abandon it simply because they don't know what to write or simply because they don't like doing it. Those who use French word are willing to do it but don't make the necessary effort to use English words. Finally, those who use false friends have the will to do the writing but are unconsciously misled in their choice of words by the apparent similarities that exist between French and English words. They think that these words necessarily have the same meanings, which is not always true. In this

table I find out that the students like the writing at different degrees and express their immaturity at different levels.

### **3.1.2.10-The EFL teachers'training background.**

Table 9 expresses the qualifications of the EFL teachers. It shows that 22.22% of the teachers are owners of BAC, 22.22% of DUEL, 33.33% of LICENCE and 11.00% are owners of MAITRISE. These degrees mentioned here above are purely academic, besides BAC and DUEL are low levels.

11.11% are owners of BAPES and 0% has CAPES. These latter degrees are professional but unfortunately very few have them. In this table I find out that very few of the Teachers are professional teachers. This lack of professional training of the teachers affects their performance and consequently the knowledge of the students. Therefore, these teachers need to receive professional training to perform well.

All the findings discovered in data interpretation are now going to be detailed.

## **3.2- FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

### **3.2.1-The students' fillings.**

While interpreting the data I found out that generally speaking the students like English. This is to say that they are interested in it. This fact is good for mental predisposition(availability) to learn.

I also discovered that the students like writing/ essay at different degrees. This implies that some like it and others don't. Consequently, this fact affects either positively or negatively the students production according to their degrees of love of the writing.This interest is justified by many factors. Fore some, they like English because English is a new language they should master and be able to communicate fluently. Some students have their parents or relatives in Nigeria and want to learn English to communicate freely with them in holidays' time. Some again like English because of the good behavior of some of their English teachers who encourage them in their English learning process.

. Others like English for an academic reason which is to work hard and get good marks at English. Finally others like English for religions reasons. Such students

attend churches where pastors are from English speaking countries and some church members are Nigerians or Ghanaians.

For the fact that the students like English, many attend English classes and do their assignments. Some even participate in English club activities with the help of some of their teachers.

I also discovered that all the students don't like "the writing" at the same level. Some don't like it and others do. Those who don't like it simply abandon the writing because they often find it difficult to do. Those who like it do it with some signs of immaturity. Some use French words to do it and others use false friends.

In one way or the other this mental availability of the students is an asset for their English learning process.

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### **3.2.2-The teachers qualifications**

I found out that very few teachers are professional teachers. That is to say that very few received professional training. Being owners of academic certificates many of the teachers teach just as they can. Some teachers, because of lack of good classroom management, ill-treat the students. Therefore they quench the love and passion the students have for English and begin to hate the subject. The consequence is that frustrated students stop attending English classes and most of the times they don't do their assignments. Unfortunately this fact affects negatively the students' performance as far as English learning is concerned. Teaching is a job like any other one, therefore it should be learnt.

### **.3.2.3- The languages practicability**

I discovered that English is less practiced than Baatonum and French by the students in NIKKI district. This implies that in the environment where the students live, people speak Baatonum and French more than English. This also shows that the students are not living in an English environment.

### 3.2.4- words similarities

I found out that true friends are helpful to the learners whereas false friends are misleading .That is to say that word similarities are helpful only when the similar words have the same meaning. But when the similar words don't have the same meaning they are misleading and are not helpful to the learners. There are words similarities among Baatonum ,French and English, but these similarities are not always helpful. Words' similarities often lead to Lexical negative transfer.

A lexical transfer happens when the previous vocabulary of the learner is wrongly inserted in the new language he/she is learning mainly when the orthographies are the same in both languages and the meanings are different. What is obvious is that some French words appear in English with the same or almost the same orthography but with different meanings. My main purpose at this level is to look at what can happen when a learner who has grown up with one vast body of vocabulary encounters and tries to get a grip on another language which has deceptively similar vocabulary. False friends and loan words have shown the influence that the mother tongue of the students can have on the English sentences they produce. It is obvious that similarities between words in different languages can lead to false assumption about shared meaning and sometimes induce the learner into linguistic traps. Let us consider these false fiends below between French and English on one hand and between Baatonum and English on the other hand.

List1: some false friends between French and English

<b>French</b>		<b>English</b>
Chair	—————→	Flesh
Chaise	—————→	Chair
Pain	—————→	Bread
Douleur	—————→	Pain
Demander	—————→	To ask, to request
Exiger	—————→	To demand

Car → Bus  
 Voiture → Car

List2: some false friends between Baatonum and English

<b>Baatonum</b>	<b>English</b>
I	→ You (plural)
Nε	→ I
be	→ Them
Wăsa	→ be
Yam	→ glue, atmosphere
Tasu	→ yam
We	→ To come (present continuous, past)
Bεεε	→ We
Tie	→ remaining
Bɔke	→ Tie

A look at List1 shows that in French as well as in English some words have the same orthography but different meanings. The same is true with the list 2 (between baatounum and English). The consequence is that the students in many areas misuse such words and their speech become unclear to an English native speaker or someone who masters the English Language. Such words bring confusion to the learners and thereby make the English language acquisition difficult.

There is also positive lexical transfer. Positive transfer is all about positive influence of that native language or the acquired language on the target language. Loan words make it easier among the languages. The learners easily identify the meaning of the loan words in the sentences be it in French, English or Baatonum. Loan words are mostly used in French and in English.

Some French words and expressions have been taken into English wholesale with their Frenchness intact, like, *route*; *rendez-vous*; *tête-à-tête*, *sangfroid*; *déjà vu* and *detour*. Some like *par excellence*, *amateur*, *boutique*, *nuance*, *bête-noir*; and *cause célèbre* still look and sound quite French but are used with ease and seen as English words. Other words have been adapted to English orthography but reliably retain the meanings of the French origin. Such words are known as true friends. Here are some examples of English loan words in French.

### True friends

<b>French</b>		<b>English</b>
Autorité	—————→	Authority
Confort	—————→	Comfort
Age	—————→	Age
Adresse	—————→	Address
Littérature	—————→	Literature
Chambre	—————→	Chamber

These true friends affect positively the EFL learners’s English production in NIKKI. But they make them face orthography problems. For example when students are asked to translate these sentences: “J’aime la littérature”; “Il est une autorité” They translate them correctly but they often make orthography mistakes; they are unable to spell the English words “literature and authority” . The word “hire” is an English loan word in Baatonum but is pronounced differently. “Hire” is normally pronounced /haiə/ in English but /haya/ in Baatonum. Those transfers are positive and the meanings are easily understood by the learners. So, true friends help the learners understand English very easily. But this is not perceptible in Baatonum language which hardly share true friends with English. It is then clear that the transfers from Baatonum to English are mainly negative transfers.

### **3.2.5-The students’ ways of making English sentences.**

I discovered that the students exploit their mother langue and French to make English sentences. To make it clear, the students first find ideas in either Baatonum or French and make sentences before they translate them into English. They do so simply because they master Baatonum and French more

than English and take Baatonum and French as their reference in all areas of language learning. They exploit these languages by finding ideas first in Baatonum or French and make sentences before they translate them into English. It implies that the students are not able to find ideas directly from English. This is due to their lack of English words to make their sentences directly. To solve this challenge they are faced with, the students use baatonum or French words to express their ideas. In this process of translation many things happen. They unconsciously misuse false friends because of their apparent similarities; they misuse the place of adjectives, the place of verbs, the relative pronouns etc... In the area of phonetics they mispronounce words because of the phonetic dissimilarities that exist between Baatonum, French and English. Consequently their English sentences are finally baatonum like or French like. This can be explained by the fact that the students take Baatonum and French structures or phonetics as reference in making their English sentences.

### **3.2.6- Categories of transfers**

I found out there are two categories of transfers: positive transfer and Negative transfer. I also found out that there are different types of transfers: Graphic transfer (orthographic transfer); phonetic transfer, semantic transfer, lexical transfer etc..

These latter can be used either negatively or positively. There can therefore be as example phonetic negative/ positive transfer; semantic negative transfer etc...

These transfers determine the understanding of the students' English sentences. Negative transfer typically refers to the learner's application of the rules and patterns of first language to the target language. The term can also include the transfer of features from one additional language to another. This is the case of false friends' misuse.

Positive transfer is all about positive influences of the first language on the target language; true friends use is a good example of positive transfer.

I also discovered that there are different types of transfers: Graphic transfer, lexical transfer, grammatical transfer etc...

These latter can be used either negatively or positively. In such a case we can talk about phonetic negative transfer, phonetic positive transfer, semantic negative transfer etc...

Here are more clarifications about the above terminologies related to my study.

### **A- Grammatical transfer**

Grammatical transfer is related to the structure of a language and the way its words are arranged into meaningful sentences. It hence has to do with syntax which is the study of the form, positioning and grouping of the elements that go together to make up a sentence. In other words, syntax refers to the arrangement of words in a given order to have grammatically accepted phrases or sentences in a language.

That transfer occurs at any level in grammar: personal pronouns, the place of adjectives, adverbs and the place of articles etc... On their study of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) of learners, researchers came to study how learner's language is compared to the target language. They also dealt with the field of error analysis in a second or a foreign language acquisition established in 1970s by SP Corder and Colleagues. A widely-available survey can be found in chapter 8 of Brown, 200.

Error analysis was an alternative to contrastive analysis through which applied linguists sought to use the formal distinction between the learner's first and second language to predict errors in the structure of sentences. Error analysis shows that contrastive analysis was unable to predict a great majority of errors although its more valuable aspects have been incorporated into the study of language transfer.

There are different types of errors: omitted, additive and substitutive or relative to words order. They can be classified by how apparent they are: overt errors such as "I angry" are obvious even out of context. We can assess them according to the degree to which they interfere with communication: global errors make an utterance difficult to understand, which local errors do not. In the above examples, "hungry" would be a local error since the meaning is apparent and anyone who masters English and knows that

English' learners can easily make such a mistake may understand what the learner means by saying that.

On the contrary, when the learner says "I am hungry" to mean "I am angry", the meaning is totally different and no one can really know whether he wants to say "I am hungry". Such an error is a global error or a substitutive one because the learner has used "I am angry" instead of "I am hungry".

In relation with the structure of a sentence, Firth (1957:17) also declared "elements in structure especially grammatical relation, share a mutual expectancy in an order which is not a sequence". That is to say language as oral or written means of communication among human beings imposes a linear articulation or organization of its words to yield intelligible sentences or utterances for its speakers. In fact, an intelligible message in English corresponds to distinctive words ordered in succession to fit grammatical convenience. To illustrate this opinion Robins R.H (1971) notes that English sentences can be of the types "the men eat" but not of the type "men the eat". Thus, we understand that even when words are collocation ally appropriate, they can not be put together in just any order. Besides, the meaning of a sentence may depend simply on words order. For instance, although made up of the same words, the sentence "the tiger killed the hunter" does not mean the same thing as "the hunter killed the tiger".

### **B-Semantic transfer**

Semantic transfer is similar to the lexical transfer and occurs when the EFL learner does a literal translation either from his mother tongue to English or from his prior acquired language to English. In general, this kind of translation is frequently noted when the students are asked to do a writing or when they are to do a pair work or to discuss on a given topic. This is due to the fact that in Benin educational system, at the age of four or five, children start writing and speaking, not their mother tongue but French language at school. Six years later, they reach secondary school and are confronted with a new language (English) from first from on. This is a typical example of semantic transfer that Baatombu students often produce, "kill the TV" to mean "off the TV". Only Baatombu scholars can understand what the students mean through their literal translation

from Baatonum to English whereas English natives and those who master the English language will not.

Writing an essay or translating a sentence from French to English sets a frame for a dialogical construction of meaning, i.e. that meaning starts from a social base. The learners are not just putting down words or sentences; they are actually performing utterances while striving for social significance. They go beyond a personal context dealing with the actual meaning of their thought. The social dimension of the learning situation provides a ground on which they build up their knowledge of a new language. This also stresses the fact that a language cannot be taught in isolation from meaning. On the same line, Bakhtin wrote “a passive understanding of linguistic meaning is no understanding at all”. At this point, writing must be seen as an interpretative act, that is to say a constructive activity which aims at the satisfaction and the comprehension of orders.

Most of the times, the students come to know the right things that should be said or written through the corrections of the different exercises given to them.

### **C-Graphic transfer**

Graphic transfer is concerned with the spelling and the orthography of words. Cognate words present spelling traps which are very easy for the EFL learners to fall into. This English words “comfortable” is cognate with some European language in which it is spelt with an “n” rather than an “m”. French: “confortable” Italian: “confortevole”; Spanish “confortable”. The ensuing spelling mistake is then predictable.

Some common English spelling errors in different mother tongues give a very different picture of the problems English spelling rises for the learners. Here, the mother tongue specific accent can be heard. For example, because of the fact that Baatonum does not have the sound /j/ in its words and /tʃ/ doesn't exist in Baatonum, Baatombu English learners not only are likely to say “sare” and “sange” for the English words “share” and “change” but also are likely to write them.

But language transfer in learning English is not restricted to problems of pronunciation being carried over into spelling. Unlike Baatonum language, English does not have a high correspondence between sound and spelling.

For the learner in whose mother tongue this correspondence is greater, it's harder to grasp some of the complexities of English on sound and spelling. That is the case of Baatombu students. The vowel sounds of the letters “e” and “I” are often confused. For illustration, we have the words “deny” /dinai/; “differ”/difə/. In English, the letter “I” phonetically can be either /i/or /ai/ depending on the environment where it occurs. In the same way, “e” can be pronounced /ə/,i/ or /ɛ/ and “a” can be pronounced /ə/,/ei/ or /æ/ or even /a:/. “These” /ðiz/and “this”/ðis/ are often confused because the sound distinction is unclear to the learners. .

### **D-Lexical transfer**

A lexical transfer happens when the previous vocabulary of the learner is wrongly inserted in the new language he is learning mainly when the orthographies are the same in both languages and the meanings are different. Such words are false friends. There are too many false between French and English. They also exist between Baatonum and English language. Here below is a list of common false friends selected from the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (CUP, 1995, P491). The French words on the left have shared roots but no shared meanings with English words that look just like them. Their meaning in French is given on the right

French	→	Meaning in English
Librairie	→	bookshop, the book trade
Veste	→	jacket
Pain	→	bread
Lecture	→	reading or reading matter
Demander	→	to ask or to request or to require
Chef	→	boss, chief, leader
Location	→	rental, hire
Chair	→	flesh
Déception	→	disappointment, disenchantment

Eventuellement	→	possibly
Génial	→	inspired, fantastic, brilliant
Journée	→	day
Actuellement	→	at present, currently, nowadays
Cave	→	cellar, basement, night club
Raisin	→	grape
Care	→	coach, bus, van

When the meaning of a false friend is not understood, one is bound to produce sentences that are far from reflecting correct ideas. For example, let's consider the use of this French word "librairie" in the following French sentence: "Les livres sont vendus dans les librairies". Its correct translation may be: Books are sold in bookshops. They then use libraries instead of Bookshops without knowing that the French word for libraries is bibliothèques.

The students also translate this French sentence as follows. "Qu'elle actuellement?" "What does she actually say"? "Actuellement" in French means at present, currently and nowadays in English and "actually" in English means "réellement" in French.

### **E-Phonetic transfer**

In the process of phonetic transfer, English words pronunciation is affected and many areas are then touched: stress position, phonetic systems, the nature of morphemes etc...

Fortunately, French and English share some phonetic elements which is helpful to the students in their English learning process in one hand. In the other hand, they have some dissimilarities that trouble the learners.

## E-1- Phonetic similarities

### a- Vowels similarities

English vowel chart reveals twelve (12) vowels. Baatonum vowel chart also reveals twelve (12) vowels. But French' own reveals 10. A glance at the vowel charts of the three languages makes me conclude that they have some phonetic elements in common such I, u ,a . In French and in English, the phonetic symbols are not the same as the graphic marks in their orthography, whereas in Baatonum, they are the same in some words.

**Example:** class/klas/ “sans” French/sǎ/

“maro” Baatonum/maro/ (town)

English, French and Baatonum language have four (04) vowels in common.

English	French	Baatonum
/a/: <b>barf</b>	<b>ami</b>	<b>maro</b> (town)
/ɔ/: <b>course</b>	<b>donner</b>	<b>durɔ</b> (husband)
/i/: <b>it</b>	<b>lire</b>	<b>diru</b> (room)
/U/: <b>taboo</b>	<b>route</b>	<b>kurɔ</b> (wife)

### b- Consonants similarities

English consonant symbols are many: some are standard symbols and known as Received Pronunciation (RP). If we consider the Received Pronunciation, the English consonants are not more than twenty-four (24) whereas the French own are 19. Baatonum consonant sounds are twenty (20) in number. We find a Scottish symbol, which is /x/ and appears in “loch”, /ʃ/ in Edinburgh. We also have /r/ and appear in American English as in the word “better” /berə/.

The three languages have thirteen consonant symbols in common as their sign of the similarities existing among them. All these similarities are centered on the pronunciation. These thirteen consonant symbols are:

English	French	Baatonum
/b/: <b>taboo</b>	<b>beau</b>	<b>baba</b> (father)
/d/ <b>driver</b>	<b>dossier</b>	<b>dobi</b> (millet)
/f/ <b>father</b>	<b>forme</b>	<b>faaba</b> (rescue)
/g/: <b>game</b>	<b>gauche</b>	<b>gobi</b> (money)
/k/: <b>kingdom</b>	<b>caisse</b>	<b>kekε</b> (car)
/l/: <b>look</b>	<b>belle</b>	<b>Alafia</b> (peace)
/m/: <b>moon</b>	<b>mere</b>	<b>maro</b> (town)
/n/: <b>noun</b>	<b>nom</b>	<b>nàsu</b> (feet)
/p/: <b>pride</b>	<b>pardon</b>	<b>pwetabu</b> (to take off)
/r/: <b>route</b>	<b>race</b>	<b>duro</b> (husband)
/s/: <b>save</b>	<b>salaire</b>	<b>suuru</b> (patience)
/t/: <b>teacher</b>	<b>tenir</b>	<b>tabu</b> (war)
/w/: <b>ware</b>	<b>wagon</b>	<b>wǎru</b> (life)

There is no specific place these consonant symbols to be placed, they can occur, at the beginning, at the end or within the word.

Phonetic similarities lead to phonetic positive transfer and are helpful to the learners.

## E-2- Phonetic dissimilarities

### a- Vowels dissimilarities

It is true that English and French have vowel sounds in common, but another truth is that there are some others they don't have in common. French vowel sounds are sixteen (16) whereas English vowel sounds are twelve and Baatonum own are seventeen (17). There are eight (8) diphthongs six (6) triphthongs in English.

Baatonum and French have the vowel sound /o/ in common, but it never appears in any English word. In English it sounds /ɔ /, / əu/or/u/ depending on the environment where it occurs. Some vowel sounds are also nasalized in French, English as well as in Baatonum.

But this nasalization is less frequent in English than in Baatonum and in French. These vowel sounds are some French nasalization: /ɔ̃/ in **oncle**; /ɛ̃/ in **saint**; /ɑ̃/ **temps** and /œ̃/ in **lundi**.

As far as Baatonum nasalization is concerned, it obeys a co-production theory discovered by Bell-Berti and Harris (1981). This theory stipulates that when the voiced alveolar nasal stop /n/ appears after the vowel sounds /i/; /ɔ̃/, or /a/, they become nasal vowels. This is also applicable to English nasalization. Some vowel sounds are specific to French language. Here they are: /ɛ̃/; /ɑ̃/; /ɔ̃/; /œ̃/; /õ/; /ỹ/;

English has its own specific vowel sounds / ʌ/; /a:/; /ɔ̃/; /U/; /æ/; / I /.

Let's illustrate these particularities through proven examples

French: /o/ in **motto**; /ø/ in **vieux**; /y/ in **vendu**; /a/ in **papa**; /œ/ in **vendeur**; /ɑ̃/ in **cent**; /ɛ̃/ in **sein**; /œ̃/ in **brun**; /ə/ in **le** and /ɔ̃/ in **songer**

English: /U/ in **good**; /ə/ in **the**; /a: / in **car**; /æ/ in **back**; /ʌ/ in **brother**; /ɔ̃/ in **box**; /i:/ in **eat**.

Baatonum: /o/ in "bo" (goat)

It is noticeable that the vowel sound /o/ appears both in Baatonum and in French but not in English. As for /ə/ it occurs in English as well as in French but not in Baatonum.

## **b- Consonants dissimilarities**

French consonant chart reveals that French has 23 consonant sounds. As for Baatonum, its chart shows 22. English has 24 consonant sounds and 3 other consonant sounds which occur in American, Scottish and Edinburgh English. Each language has its own specificities as far as consonant sounds are concerned. This is to say the language phonemes differ in sounds. An illustration will make it clearer:

French: /V/;/h/;/g/

English: /g/;/?/; (Scottish); / / (American);/V/; /O/; /z/;/x/;/r/;/d/;/t/;/j/

Baatonum: /kp/;/gb/;/bw/;/sw/;/mw/;/pw/;/tw/;/dw/

Among the 22 Baatonum consonant sounds 14 are simple consonant sounds and are shared with the two other language. But eight other digraph consonant sounds mark the particularity of that language: /kp/;/gb/;/bw/;/sw/;/mw/;/pw/;/tw/;/dw/ which are used neither in French nor English.

Baatonum does not use the following consonant sounds: j-c-h-q-v-x. Nevertheless, there is an exception as far as “h” is concerned in this borrowed word wahala (difficulties, pains). An analysis of the received Pronunciation-RP-makes me retain that the phonemes /? /, /f/ and /x/ are not used in the English language, but English native speakers make use of them.

### E-3- Mispronunciations

A language cannot be learnt without the mastery of its words’ pronunciation. It is true that French and English share almost the same alphabet letters, but, yet the pronunciations are different. Moreover, words’ pronunciation in Baatonum is different from the one of English. For example, the letter “a” is pronounced /a/ in French and in Baatonum but /ei/; or /ə/ in English depending on the environment where it occurs. It is then obvious that the pronunciation of “a” in French and in Baatonum can lead to phonetic negative transfers in English.

The Baatombu students say: attract/ a’ trakt) instead of /ə’trækt/; date /dat/ instead of /deit/. The voiceless dental central fricative /θ/ and the voiced dental central fricative /ð/ are also mispronounced by the students. Those sounds don’t appear in French nor do they in Baatonum. The students use the voiceless labio-dental central fricative /f/ and the voiced labio-dental central fricative /v/ respectively for /θ/ and /ð/. They say /və/ instead of /ðə/.

Many other phonetic transfers occur. The voiced velar nasal stop /ŋ/ in the front of “ing” and the palato-alveolar affricative /tʃ/ are also mispronounced by the students. For the word “meeting” they say /miting/ instead of / ‘mr:tiŋ/. For “match” they say /mæf/ instead of /mætʃ/. The fact that Baatonum language does not have consonant sound like /ʃ/ Baatonum EFL students are likely to replace it

by /s/. For example, the word “chare” is pronounced /seə/ instead of //ʃeə/. The other difficulty the students are faced with is the stress position. When one misses to put the stress at its right position or if one fail to observe the rules governing the stress position, mispronunciation is occasioned. The analysis of a word is done starting from the right that is the end of the word. In this perspective, a stress pattern of the type/10/ indicates that the concerned word carries the main stress in the penultimate syllable. For example, let’s consider the word “joyful” /’dʒɔɪfʊl/. That word is made of two syllables and the stress falls on the second syllable starting from the right.

The endings of words help identify the stress pattern in some cases. Endings such as –ic # and –ity # are strong endings. Endings like –ic# have a pattern of the type /10/ slanted /10/ whereas ending like –ity # have the pattern of the type /100/. The word “fantastic” has an –ic ending and the stress must fall on the second syllable starting from the right to the left. “fantastic”/fæn’ tæstɪk/ whereas “identity” has an –ity # ending and the stress must fall on the third syllable:”identity” ai’dentətɪ/.

The neutral endings like –al # added to a strong ending does not affect the stress pattern of a word: “identic + al” = identical /ai’ dentɪkəl/. That ending in the word does not affect the pattern of the word identic”. Dual-pattern of a endings like –ence# or –ent # may have an influence on the stress pattern of a word. The word “president” is derived from “preside” and we have the stress patterns “preside” /pri’zaid/ =/o1/ and “president” /prezɪdnt/= /100). It means that the ending –ent # has changed the stress pattern of the words ‘preside” /01/ into /100/.

As far as French language is concerned, one cannot talk about stress patterns because French words do not have any stress patterns. Therefore, they are pronounced freely and without too much constraint like in English. For illustration, let’s consider the word “radio” in English and its equivalent “radio” in French. We have the following pronunciation: “radio” /’reɪdiəʊ/ = /10/; “radio” /radio/ = (no stress in French); education /,edʒu’keɪʃn/ = 201/ (English pronunciation) ; education /eduka’sjɔ̃/ = (no stress in French). Those French influence make the students have of the time French feature in their English production. Phonetic dissimilarities lead to phonetic negative transfer very harmful to the learning process.

### 3.2.7- Language' structures.

In the process of data interpretation I found out the necessity to look at:

-the place of adjectives,

- The place of verbs;
- And the use of first person pronoun in association with a noun or another pronoun.

Most of the times, the students mixed up the English structural pattern as far as the place of adjectives, the place of verbs and the use of first person pronoun in association with a noun or another pronoun are concerned. This is due to the fact that the students take Baatonum or French structures as their reference in producing their English sentences. Mainly this part deals with words' order (syntax) in the students' English sentences.

#### A- The place of adjectives

Here are some sample sentences below:

1-My teacher English is in the classroom (oral)

2-My mother bought me a skirt beautiful (paper N°3)

3-Borrow me your pen red (oral). (French or Baatonum)

4-I saw the man tall. (paper)

A noun phrase (NP) can be defined as the element in the sentence which typically functions as subject, object and complement. Taking this into account, let us emphasize how noun phrases are patterned in both English and Baatonum languages.

Table 10: Noun phrases' pattern

<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>BAATONUM</b>
Determiner + Noun	Noun + determiner
The man, this man	Durɔwi
Determiner + adjective + Noun	Noun + adjective + determiner
The tall man	ruDɔ ogodwi

A close look at these Noun phrases patterns in English and in Baatonum show us that they are not structured the same way. In English language, the determiner “the” comes before the noun man and the adjective tall precedes the noun it qualifies. In Baatonum language however the determiner “Wi” is used not only after the noun but contrarily to what happens in English, the adjective appears after the qualified noun. English phrase structure rules provide for noun phrases the following structure:

NP → ( det ) +( adj)+ N.

The configuration “N + Adj”) observed in the sentences (2), (3) and (5) above proves grammatical in Baatonum and since they are English sentences produced by Baatombu students, it occurs that they are influenced by Baatonum structure. For instance, in Baatonum for the sentence (5) it will be “Na durɔdogowiwa”.

The noun phrase “durɔdogowi” can be rewritten as: NP → N (durɔ) + Adj (dogo) + det (wi).

The positioning of the adjective after the noun is then syntactically inappropriate in English sentence structure. So, the occurrence of such a structure in the noun phrase under study surely results from Baatonum interference in the students’ English sentences.

As far as English language is concerned, the adjective in some rare cases occurs after the noun to give way to the following structure:

NP → (det) + N + (Adj) e.g.: det (A) + N (secretary) + Adj (general). God almighty etc..

In French, the sentence (3) would be “empruntes- moi ton stylo rouge”. The noun phrase “Ton stylo rouge” can be rewritten as:

NP → det (ton) + N (stylo) + Adj (rouge)

This structure conforms to the structure of the noun phrase of the sentence (4). But such a structure is not appropriate in English. It is then possible to say that sentence (4) is also influenced by the students’ prior knowledge of French.

We can then retain that both Baatonum and French have something to do with the inappropriate structure noticed in sentences (1), (2), (3) and (4).

## **B -The place of verbs**

The positioning of the verbs influences the English sentences production of the students. The Students are supposed to use this structure in their English sentence: S= sub +v +o. But some students come up with the following structure: S=sub + o + v like in (5), (6) and (7) below:

5- Last week, I rice ate. Paper (1) written

6-She car drives. Paper (5) written

7- He my name knows. (2) Oral

Both structures are not similar: In Baatonum structure the verbs come after the object while in English the verbs come before the object. It is then obvious that the sentence (4); (6) and (7) are influenced by the students' prior knowledge of Baatonum language.

The same case is noticeable with some transitive verbs as in sentences (8) and (10) below:

8- They Ali job give. Paper (4)

9- My friend me present offered.

The English structure is as follow: S = sub + V + O1 + O2

The Baatonum structure is as follow: S = Sub + O1 + O2 + V

The two structures remain incompatible despite the presence of the two objects.

In all the inappropriate structures noticed in sentences (5), (6), (7), (8) and (9) produced by Baatombu students are as the result of the students' prior knowledge of Baatonum language.

### C The use of first person pronoun in association with a noun or another pronoun

In English, when first person pronouns are to be used in association with a noun or another pronoun as a partial subject of a verb, they are put after the coordinate conjunction “and” which links them to the noun or the other pronoun in initial position as in the following rule:

$S \longrightarrow NP + VP$

$NP \longrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} N \\ \text{Pron} \end{array} \right\} + \text{and} + \text{Pron (first person pronoun)}.$

Despite that, the sentences (10) and (11) are made as follow.

(10) “I and Baké play together “Teachers” questionnaire (1)

(11) I and he came to school. (Oral)

In (10) and (11), the students have placed the first person “I” in initial position, which is contrary to English structure as mentioned above.

In Baatonum, the first person is put in initial position in the noun phrase before the coordinate conjunction “Ka” (and) when it is used in association with another pronoun or noun as partial subject which gives way to this rule:

$NP \xrightarrow{\text{Pron}} \text{pron (first person pronoun)} + \text{Ka} + \left\{ \begin{array}{l} N \\ \text{Pron} \end{array} \right\}$

Considering the rewrite rule, I can notice that while the students were making (10) and (11) they transferred the Baatonum way of positioning the first person pronoun in each case into English. But their structural transfer from Baatonum to English proves inappropriate since it results in syntactically incorrect English sentences. So the structure of the sentences (10) and (11) drives from the impact of Baatonum structure on the students.

#### 3.2.8-Grammatical Patterns

Through out the data interpretation process, I found out that the students:

- omit the final "s" in simple present tense in the third person singular,
- fail to use the indefinite article " a"

- fail to form the ordinary negative sentences,
  - use some adjectives as verbs;
- misuse relative pronouns.

Here, these findings are grammatical facts that affect the students' English learning.

#### **A- Final “S” omission in simple present tense in the third person singular**

While demonstrating subject-verb concord in English John Lyons (1971:240) proved that when ordinary verbs are conjugated in simple present tense, a final “s” is generally added to the verb in the third person singular. Here is the structure:

S → subject (in the third person singular) + bare verb + s /es/ies.

For negative sentences we have: S → subject (in the third person singular) + does not + verb.

The other persons of conjugation in English require no inflection to the bare verb in simple present tense. What is obvious in Baatonum is that bare verbs are kept invariable in any person of conjugation in simple present tense and this is the structure:

S → subject (in the third person singular) + bare verb. Through (12), (13), (14), (15), (16) and (17) below, it is noticeable that Baatombu students very often omit the third person singular final “S” at the end of English ordinary verbs in simple present tense.

(12) “My friend eat rice every Sunday” Paper N° 13

(13) “What she do is not good” Paper N° 16

14) “The man don’t know me” Paper N° 11

(15) “My father is a man who sell yam” Paper N°19

(16) “Her mother have not some money” Paper N°12

(17) “Everybody come to school on Mondays” Paper N°22

The invariability of bare verbs in the simple present tense in Baatonum has actually misled the students to keep English verbs invariable in the third person singular in simple present tense. It is also important to mention that the invariability of the verb in the other person of conjugation in English can reinforce the students' final "s" omission in the third person singular in the simple present tense.

### **B- The use of the indefinite article "A"**

Most of the time, students use the cardinal number "one" instead of the indefinite articles "a/an". This can be verified in the sample sentences (18); (19); (20); (21) and (22) below.

(18) One farmer came to see my father. (Un paysan était venu voir mon père) Paper N° 15

(19) If you have one problem come to see me. (Si tu as un problème viens me voir) Paper N°44

(20) One day, one madman came in the market. (Un jour un fou était venu au marché.) Paper N°26

(21) If I find one job I will be happy. (Si je trouve un job je serai content.) Paper 58

(22) I want to give one answer to the question. (je veux donner une réponse à la question.). Oral

According to Baatonum grammar, there are four words for the singular indefinite articles "a/an" (go) for a human being; (ga; garu; gam,) for things. They are used accordingly. But for the cardinal number "one" is "tia". All things considered, the impact of Baatonum language cannot account for the inappropriate use of "one" in the sample above instead of "a/an". It is then necessary to look at it in French language.

To express the singular indefinite article "a/an" and the cardinal number "one" in French, the students always use the same word "un". Because of the level of understanding of the students about the English word for "un" is one", they often come up with the word "one" (whether appropriate or not) when they find themselves in a situation in which French speakers use the word "un".

Unfortunately, their automatic transfer of the French speakers' use of "un" as cardinal and indefinite article into English does not always fit into the grammatical context of the English language. It appears inappropriate when the students use it as indefinite article. The sample sentences (18), (19), (20), (21), (22) are good examples to illustrate it.

Though students are taught the difference between "a" and "one" they still use "one" where the indefinite article "a" should be used. I can then say that the knowledge of French as first foreign language has prevailed over the English grammar in some Baatombu students' English sentences. Such impact of French grammar on Baatombu students' use of the indefinite article leads to a serious miscommunication since the cardinal number "one" means that something is single as far as quantity is concerned whereas the indefinite article "a" generalizes things to some extends.

### **C-The use of ordinary negative sentences**

The structure of negative sentences that contain ordinary verbs in English is as follows:

$S \rightarrow NP + VP$

$VP \rightarrow do/does + \text{bare verb} + \text{Object}.$

When the verb is an auxiliary verb or a modal verb we add "not" to it:

$S \rightarrow NP + VP.$

$VP \rightarrow V + \text{not} + \text{Object}.$

In Baatonum the structure of negative sentences is:

$S \rightarrow NP + VP.$

$VP \rightarrow N + O + V + \text{Object}.$

The structure of (23), (24), (25) and (26) is different from what is generally allowed in English.

(23) "He not eat rice everyday". Paper N° 39

(24) "If you not money have today, you are nobody" Paper N° 68

(25) “War not good in Africa”. Paper N°74

26) “I not it want in Benin” Paper N°74

In the English structure presented above, the negation of the auxiliary “to do” (do not or does not) preceding an ordinary verb in a sentence is what makes it negative. However, in sentences (23), (24), (25), the students have deleted the auxiliary “to do” and have just put “not” before the object and the bare verb. So (23), (24), (25) are not grammatically appropriate negative sentences in English.

In Baatonum, there is not need of an auxiliary verb before putting sentences into negative form. Baatombu people rather put “ n ” before the object and the verb at the end of the verb phrase to have a negative sentence. The obvious English translation for “n” is “not. Therefore I can say that (23), (24), (25) and (26) are structurally Baatonum-like though they are made up of English words. So, the use of “not” before the object and the ordinary verbs in the sentences proves that students have derived the structure of (23), (24), (25) and 26 from Baatonum. Unfortunately their attempt to transfer Baatonum structure for negative sentences into English has resulted in the inappropriate structure:

VP Not + O + bare verb; is the evidence that students who have made (23), (24), (25) and (26) have been influenced by Baatonum language.

In French, the use of “ne....pas” makes negative sentences. I can then say that French also has something to do with the inappropriateness of (23), (24), (25) and (26).

### **D The use of some adjectives as verbs**

Here are some sample sentences:

(27) “My bicycle doesn’t big”. Paper N°79

(28) “Don’t worry life will good” (oral)

(29) “My friend not kind”. Paper N°87

It’s clear that the adjective “big” in (27) is used just after “doesn’t” as if it were a verb. In the same way the adjective “good” is used just after the modal auxiliary “will” in (28) as if it were a very.

Therefore, I can say the adjectives “big” and “good” are used as verbs in (27) and (28) contrary to English structure.

In Baatonum, in simple present tense, in simple tense, an adjective is used right after the noun or the pronoun it qualifies. In (27) and (28) the students transferred this Baatonum use of adjectives into English. Here, there is no use of auxiliary. The presence of the modal auxiliary “will” in (28) is as the result of the students’ effort to use English simple future tense.

In negative sentences, the elements of negation “kun”, “n”, “gan”, “tan”; “yan” (not) are placed just before the adjectives. It is obvious that it is this Baatonum use of adjectives in a negative sentence that the student transferred into English in the sentence (29). So the use of these adjectives as verbs proves that the students have derived the structure of (27), (28) and (29) from Baatonum. Unfortunately this attempt of transfer is revealed inappropriate in English.

### **E The use of relative pronouns**

According to John Lyons (1971:232) in English “who” is the appropriate relative pronoun to be used for human being and “which” for animals and objects.

In Baatonum, the relative pronoun “wi” is used for human being and for nouns like “moon”; Sun”, “fire” and “death”. The relative pronouns “te”; “ye”; “yi”; “mε” and “ge” are used accordingly for animals and for things. The plural of “wi” is “be”. Here is the global use of relative pronouns in Baatonum:

Sub + relative pronoun + V + O.

The sample sentences (30); (31) and (32) below are very illustrative

(30) “The fire who I made burnt me”. Oral

(31) “The death who happened is not good” Paper N°99

(31) “The sun who rises in the East sleeps in the West. Paper N°93

I notice that the relative pronoun “who” is inappropriately used in (30) (31) and (32) in association with nouns referring to things contrary to the distributional use provided by English grammar as explained earlier.

In Baatonum, it is generally admitted that there is no distinction between the relative pronoun appropriate for human being (wi) and the one appropriate for “moon”, fire”, “death”, and “sun”, (wi) . I can then say that Baatombu students are accustomed to the use of the same pronoun in Baatonum for the different circumstances distinguished by English grammar as far as the use of the pronouns “who” and “which” are concerned. So, the misuse of the relative pronoun in (30); (31) and (32) is due to the influence of the students’ prior knowledge of Baatonum grammar in the area of relative pronouns’ use.

On the other side, I have to take into account the fact that in French the relative pronoun “qui” is used regardless to the nature of the antecedent. Therefore, I can say that the prior knowledge of French has also influenced the students in their misuse of “who” in (30), (31) and (32).

At the beginning of this chapter I mentioned that I conducted field investigations. These field investigations helped me gather some data. .

All these data have been presented and interpreted. Through this analysis I discovered the following findings:

I found out that **most of the students like English** for many reasons. I also found out that **very few teachers are professional**. I discovered that **English is less practiced than Baatonum and French** in NIKKI district. I also discovered that **true friends are helpful** to the learners whereas **false friends are misleading**. I noticed that **the students exploit their mother tongue and French to make English sentences**. Another discovery is that there are **two categories of transfer which are positive and negative transfers**. I also came to know that **the students misuse the place of adjectives, of verbs and the use of first person pronoun in association with a noun or another pronoun**. I discovered that **the students omit the final “S” in simple present tense in the third person singular; they fail to use the indefinite article “a” and to form the ordinary negative sentences**. The students often **use some adjectives as verbs and misuse relative pronouns**.

All these findings considered I came to the conclusion that such transfers lead to either structurally, semantically or phonologically inappropriate sentences. Such transfers consequently lead to miscommunication.

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# CHAPTER IV: SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The interference of the learners' native language or prior acquired language is one of the critical issues related to the teaching and the learning of English as a foreign language (EFL). In the logic of sociolinguistics, it is quite normal that language encounter brings such situations. They even lead in some context to the creation of a new language: a kind of pidginisation. It is then a natural and social reality. However, in a context of searching for excellence, one might not leave things as such. That is why it is important for researchers in such a field to propose ways of minimizing difficulties related to new languages learning and teaching. Those proposals should be addressed to the actors at different levels.

#### 4-1- **EFL students**

In general, students are not conscious of the influence of their mother tongue and French on the learning of English. The students should be brought to the consciousness of the existence of similarities and differences between the languages through teachings in the areas of phonetics, grammar, vocabulary and so on. They should also learn their mother tongue's phonemes as well as French phonemes and English phonemes and be aware of misusing them. The students should bear in mind that practice makes perfect and therefore should practice the English language daily. Media can be of help. They can listen to English songs and comments on radio and television which can help them understand English easily. They should watch English TV channels, listen to the speakers' comments and read product labels on Tee-shirt, or in advertisements, titles of songs and watch films. On the remote commander of a TV set or CD-player, there are words like "on" or "play"/"off", "Menu", "recall"; "Display"; "jump"; "audio" etc which quickly become familiar to them. At first, they may identify those words because of their functionality. Later on, they will also be able to read and pronounce them in their own way. Nowadays, computer manipulation is very essential for the students to discover many words and get familiar to them. To cut it short, I can say that the New Technologies can help the students improve their English and be able to get the message their teachers convey through their lessons and speeches.

#### 4-2- EFL teachers

English teachers are the students' guides. Therefore there is need for them to attend University for training and get degrees that offer them opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of the working of human language in all of its various forms and lead them to an awareness of the relationship between linguistics and every other aspect of human behavior. They must investigate the various ways in which different social and cultural groups use English. They should also know how students acquire languages; the relationship between language and thought and what has been the influence of the students' mother tongue and French on the acquiring of English as a target language.

The teachers must master English phonetics so that they could pronounce the phonemes correctly and teach the students a true English phonetics instead of a mixture of sounds meaning nothing. They should correct them in English classes in the presence of the teacher. This happens simply because they are very accustomed to their mother tongue. They also speak French during English classes for they have been speaking it since they entered nursery or primary school. It should be noticed that students spend only seven academic years in secondary school for English study before going to university comparing to the thirteen years they spend before going to university. Moreover, the French teachers spend six hours per week and per class teaching French. Thus the students are more accustomed to French and their mother tongue than English. This can be one of the reasons why some language interferences occur in most of the Students' English productions.

Taking those matters into account, the teaching authorities should add some hours to the amount of time the students have for English classes per week and take it at least to six hours instead of four.

The authorities should also supply the teachers with didactic materials and English as well as our local languages should be taught from primary school all over the country. The teaching authorities should accept as EFL teachers only those who attend university for at least three years and have not only obtained a qualified degree but are also fluent in English language. Most importantly, the English phonetics must be taught to students and contrastive analysis should be done by the teachers, concerning the didactic materials the authorities should put them at the teachers disposal. The teaching advisers should go at the schools at

least once a month to do some class observation and give the teachers some practical pieces of advice to improve the students pronunciation by pronouncing correctly the words making them repeat after them. The teachers should also put emphasis on some true friends and false friends and make the students benefit from an explicit teaching. To make the students happy and to encourage them, the teachers have the duty to motivate the learners in their English language acquisition. By so doing, the students will get the necessary proficiency and then success will follow.

The EFL teachers are also advised to use the pre-teaching strategies. They are to determine the source of errors and once they are identified, the teachers determine which ones to teach immediately and which ones to teach next. Here, it is the teacher's responsibility to provide a positive learning experience for proficiency and selecting accordingly specific errors to be discussed in a specific sequence.

#### **4-3- The teaching authorities' involvement**

All over Benin Republic, the amount of time devoted to the teaching of English in the schools by the teaching authorities are not sufficient. For example three or four hours per week are assigned to the classes depending on their categories. As far as the government is concerned, it should improve the living and working conditions of all the teachers by increasing their salaries and encourage the EFL teachers by sending them to English speaking countries yearly in order to practice English and get more experience and knowledge. The government should regularly organize teachers training sessions for the better mastery of the language and their job. They should also initiate and provide the necessary needs for the teaching of our local languages in our schools to enable the students to read and write properly our local languages.

Anyway, language inferences are not to be taken as failure, but rather a strong signal that languages are equal. So, socio-linguistically it is not a problem. The importance of my study lies on the fact that, it is necessary for teaching and learning protagonists to be aware of the fact and take it into account so as to show the difference between formal language use and informal language use.

# CONCLUSION

## CONCLUSION

My research work is basically concerned with one of the major interests of linguistics in the process of foreign language learning. This interest is the impact of prior known languages on the learners' ability to communicate in the foreign language they are learning. In my present work, I have focused my research on Baatombu students learning English in Nikkin district secondary schools so as to analyze the impact of their mother tongue (Baatonum) and to some extent the one of French in their English sentences production. The analysis has basically been devoted to the transfer from mother tongue and French language to English by Baatombu students.

To reach my goal I have read some scholars that have already investigated similar matters and formulated critical view on the readings in chapter I. In fact here are some of them. DI Pietro (1971: VIII) investigated similar matters and declared: "the process of interpreting the particular grammar of a language in terms of another is called transfer. The mistakes that result from this process are said to be due to interference". In his request for the appropriate equipment for a foreign learner, DI Pietro (1971:6) declared: "As part of the process, converting the speaker of one language into a learner of the other, at any rate, it is safe to say that if he has properly learnt the rules of the other language, he will be able to apply them. Whenever he has not learnt the rules, he will have to revert to those of this native language or to those of the other language".

As for Dorvlo GHK (2000), he made more or less the same remarks as the first authors mentioned above. With regard to structural configuration in the course of language translation, he noticed: "translators sometimes happen to alter the structure of the source language (Ewe, their mother tongue) because literal translation of some structural patterns proves misleading in the target language (English)."

Working in the same field of language acquisition, Wikipedia the free encyclopedia stated: "most learners begin their acquisition process with "a silent period" in which they speak very little if at all. For some, this is a period of language shock in which the learner actively rejects the incomprehensible input of the new language."

In chapter II after dealing with the target speech community some groups have been targeted and a data collection conducted. In fact, questionnaires have been addressed to teachers and to Baatombu students in Nikki District secondary schools and I have also conducted class observations. The collected data of the field investigation have been presented and interpreted in chapter III. Through out the data analysis some practical problems that the students face are dealt with. In fact they are faced with phonetic transfer problem. In that issue I mentioned the phonetic similarities that are helpful to the students (in the areas of vowels and consonants). I also mentioned the phonetic dissimilarities that are serious difficulties to the students. These dissimilarities often lead to mispronunciation which is concerned with the place of stress. Lexical transfer is also one of their problems. It has to do with false friends. When they are wrongly used they lead to miscommunication. Another problem is grammatical transfer. It has to do with words' order problem (syntax) in the students' English sentences. The positioning of adjectives, verbs and nouns suffer from this issue in the students' English sentences production.

The students' sentences also suffer from semantic transfer problem .It is similar to lexical transfer but it happens when the student does a literal translation from his mother tongue or from his prior acquired language. The learners also encounter graphic transfer problem which is concerned with the spelling and the orthography of words.

This data analysis has led to the discovery of the following findings:

I found out that most of the students like English for many reasons. I also found out that very few teachers are professional. I discovered that English is less practiced than Baatonum and French in NIKKI district. I also discovered that true friends are helpful to the learners whereas false friends are misleading. I noticed that the students exploit their mother tongue and French to make English sentences. Another discovery is that there are two categories of transfer which are positive and negative transfers. I also came to know that the students misuse the place of adjectives, of verbs and the use of first person pronoun in association with a noun or another pronoun. I discovered that the students omit the final "S" in simple present tense in the third person singular; they fail to use the indefinite article "a" and to form the ordinary negative sentences. The students often use some adjectives as verbs and misuse relative pronouns.

All these findings have been considered and I came to notice that such transfers lead to either structurally, semantically or phonologically inappropriate sentences. Such transfers consequently lead to miscommunication.

To remedy this linguistic problem, I have made many suggestions to the EFL, students, the EFL teachers and to the teaching authorities in chapter IV. In general, my suggestions draw the attention of both teachers and students on the possibility to overcome the contrastive and dissimilar feature between Baatonum or French and English so that they could take them into account in the process of language teaching or learning. My suggestions also create in the teaching authorities' mind the awareness of the necessity of providing the schools with didactic materials. They are also urged to train the teachers on their teaching skills. The improvement of the teachers' living and working conditions should also be their concerns to help the students overcome this crucial transfer problem.

All the aspects of the topic are not entirely covered or detailed. The field investigation being made at Nikki secondary school, then raises a dialectal problem. The dialectal problem in Nikki is not the same as the ones in Banikoara, Gogounou, Kérou and Kouandé. The truth is that the predictions of the structural mistakes that Baatombu students may make can be verified in these different localities because the different dialects have not modified the Baatonum language structure. But the phonological mistakes predicted will not be verified in the English production of the Baatombu students of the other dialectal groups because every dialect has its own phonology.

My work is a general study of the phonetic, lexical, grammatical, semantic, graphic and syntactic transfer from Baatonum and French to English language. It helps to bring a concrete example of transfer Baatonum and English. Some aspects of this transfer may be the subject of future researches.

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# APPENDIX

## STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire: destiné aux élèves.

Ce questionnaire vise à évaluer l'interférence du Baatonum et du Français dans les phrases Anglaises des élèves Baatombu.

Veillez cocher les cases correspondantes à vos réponses et répondre en quelques mots aux autres questions dans l'espace prévu à cet effet.

Question : 1

Comment te sens-tu au cours d'Anglais ?

Intéressé (e)  un peu intéressé (e)  Ennuyé (e)

Pourquoi ? (explique ton choix).....

.....

Question : 2

Aimes-tu faire des phrases au cours d'Anglais ?

Oui  Non

Pourquoi ? (explique ton choix)

.....

.....

Question : 3

Où parles-tu l'Anglais ?

Au cours d'Anglais seulement  A l'école en général

seulement à la maison  partout où le besoin se fait sentir

Question : 4

Comment parviens-tu à faire des phrases en Anglais s'il t'arrive de t'y essayer ?

Directement à partir de l'Anglais  A partir du Français  A partir du Baatonum  ou un mélange des trois langues

Question : 5

Ta connaissance du Baatonum t'aide –t'elle dans tes efforts à faire des phrases en Anglais ?

Oui  Non

Si oui, comment t'aide-t-elle ?

Sur le plan du vocabulaire  sur le plan de la grammaire

Tu fais d'abord les phrases en Baatonum avant de les traduire en Anglais

Question : 6

Ta connaissance du Français t'aide –t'elle dans tes efforts à faire des phrases en Anglais ?

Oui  Non

Si oui, comment t'aide-t-elle ?

Sur le plan du vocabulaire  sur le plan de la grammaire

Tu fais d'abord des phrases en Français avant de les traduire en Anglais

Question : 7

Y a-t-il de similarité entre le Baatonum et l'Anglais ?

Oui  Non

Si oui, où précisément ?

Au niveau des lettres  Au niveau des mots

Ces mots semblables ont-ils toujours le même sens oui  Non

Question 8 :

Y a-t-il de similarité entre le Français et l'Anglais ?

Oui  Non

Si oui, où précisément ?

Au niveau des lettres  Au niveau des mots

Ces mots semblables ont-ils toujours le même sens ? Oui  Non

## TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This data collection sheet aims at gathering data on the Baatombu students' English sentences influenced by Baatonum or by French language.

- 1- Please, write down at least ten sentences (produced by Baatombu students) which you think are influenced by Baatonum language.
- 2- Five of the sentences should be the ones written in writings (compositions) and the other five should be the ones produced orally during classes
- 3- Please mark "written" or "oral" at the end of each sentence
- 4- Explanation (please say in a few words why you think the sentences are Baatonum influenced)
- 5- If you could find more sentences please write them down on the back of the papers.

Sentence 1.....  
.....

Explanation .....  
.....

Sentence 2.....  
.....

Explanation .....  
.....

Sentence 3.....  
.....

Explanation .....  
.....

Sentence 4.....  
.....

Explanation .....

.....  
Sentence 5.....

.....  
Explanation .....

.....  
Sentence 6.....

.....  
Explanation .....

.....  
Sentence 7.....

.....  
Explanation .....

.....  
Sentence 8.....

.....  
Explanation .....

.....  
Sentence 9.....

.....  
Explanation .....

.....  
Sentence 10.....

.....

Explanation .....

How can you explain Baatonum language transfer into the English sentences produced by Baatombu students?

.....

1- Please, write down at least ten sentences (produced by Baatombu students) which you think are influenced by French language.

2-Five of the sentences should be the ones written in writings (compositions) and the other five should be the ones produced orally during classes

3-Please mark “written” or “oral” at the end of each sentences

4-Explanation (please say in a few words why you think the sentences are influenced by French.).

5-If you could find more sentences please write them down on the back of the papers.

Sentence 1.....

Explanation .....

Sentence 2.....

Explanation .....

Sentence 3.....

Explanation .....

.....

Sentence 4.....

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Explanation .....

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Sentence 5.....

.....

Explanation .....

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Sentence 6.....

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Explanation .....

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Sentence 7.....

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Explanation .....

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Sentence 8.....

.....

Explanation .....

.....

Sentence 9.....

.....  
Explanation .....

.....  
Sentence 10.....

.....  
Explanation .....

.....

How can you explain French language transfer into the English sentences produced by Baatombu students?

.....  
.....  
.....

Please, tick the boxes accordingly and answer the other questions in just a few words.

Question1:

Are there any transfer problems in the students' English sentences?

Yes  No

If yes, then they are from:

Mother tongue  French language  mother tongue and French

Question2

The transfer problems are noticed at the level of:

Phonetics  orthography  semantics  syntax  lexis

Question3

In the students' English sentences there is:

Positive transfer  Negative transfer

■

Question4:

While doing writings some students:

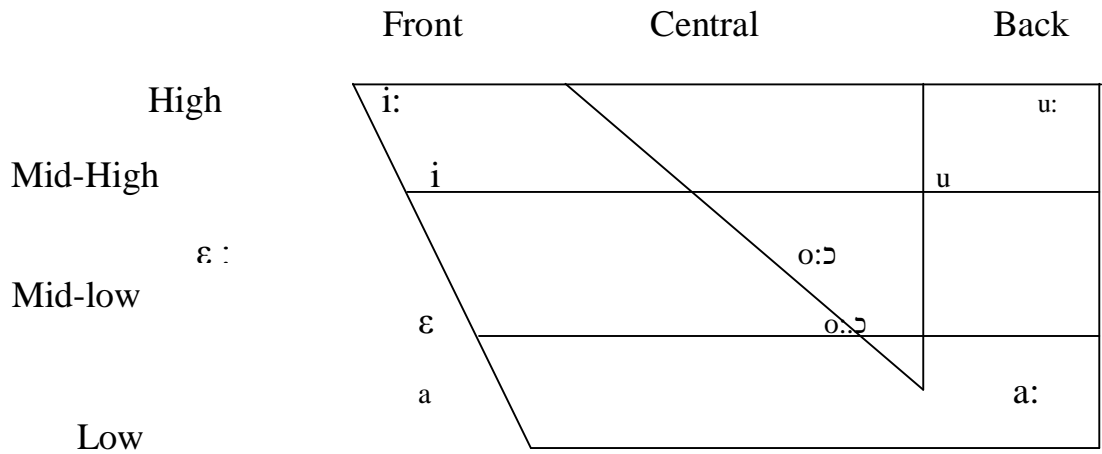
Abandon the writing  Use French words  Use false friends

Question5:

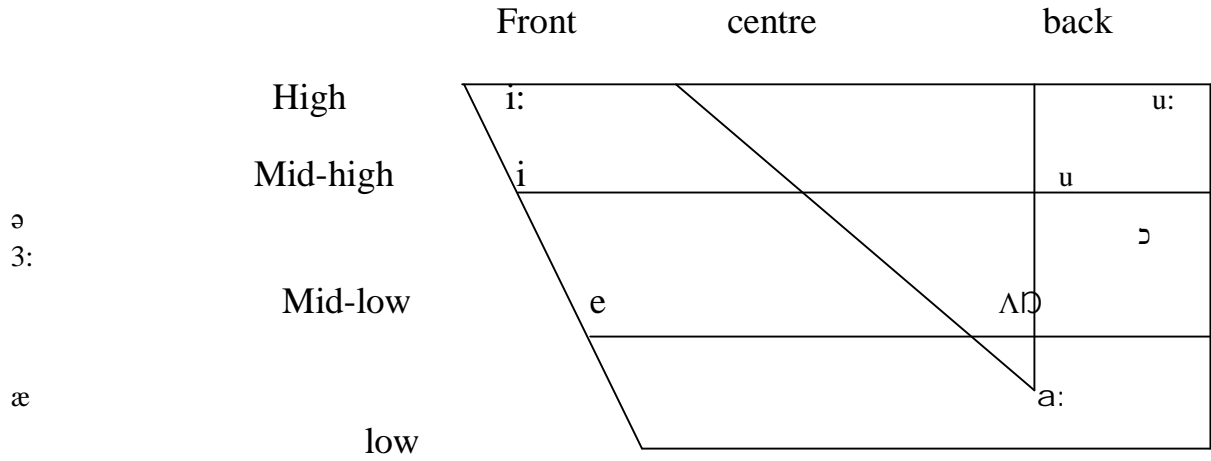
As an EFL teacher I'm owner of:

BAC  DUEL  LICENCE  MAITRISE  BAPES  CAPES

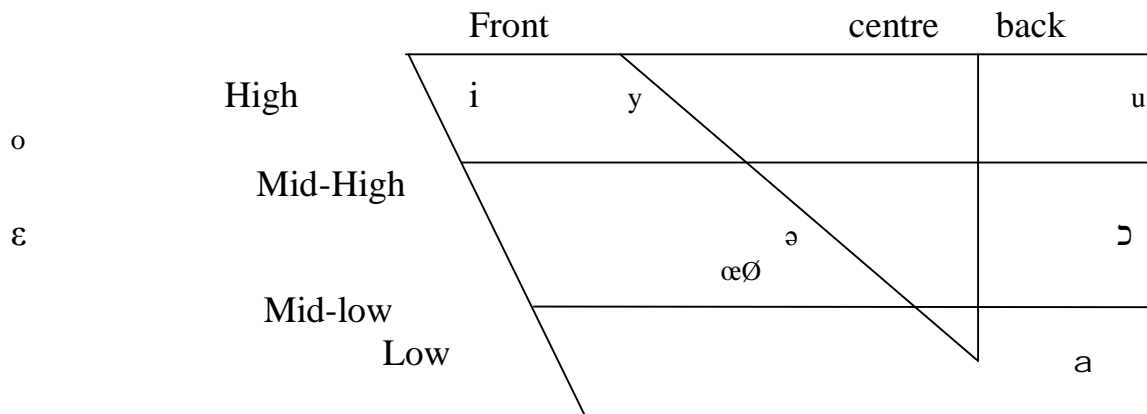
Baatonum vowels chart



English vowels chart



French vowels chart





## English consonant chart

PLACE OF ARTICULATION

MANNER OF ARTICULATION

		LABIAL OR BILABIAL	LABIODENTAL	DENTAL	ALVEOLAR	PALATO- ALVEOLAR	PALATAL	VELAR	GLOTTAL
STOPS	NASAL	m			n				
	ORAL	p b			f d			k g	ʔ
FRICATIVES	CENTRAL		f v	θ ð	s z	ʒ		x	h
	LATERAL								
APPROXIMANTS	CENTRAL	(w)			r		j	(w)	
	LATERAL				l				
TAP									
AFFRICATES						t dz			



