

ASSESSING CREATIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN SELECTED SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed creative pedagogical practices among English Language teachers in selected senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted. Twenty English Language teachers from ten purposively selected schools were each observed twice using the Teachers' Creativity in English Language Instruction Rating Scale (TCELIRS), a validated 20-item checklist rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low to 5 = Very High). Reliability was established at 0.78 (Cronbach's Alpha) and 0.80 (inter-rater consistency). Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation, with a threshold of 3.00. The teaching workforce was predominantly female (92.5%) and professionally trained, with 70.0% holding a B.Ed degree. The overall weighted mean of 3.52 confirmed a generally high level of teacher creativity. Highest-rated practices included motivating learners through praise and encouragement (Mean = 4.00) and relating lessons to real-life experiences (Mean = 3.98). The lowest-rated practices were the use of instructional materials and media (Mean = 2.53) and improvisation of teaching aids (Mean = 2.65), both below the threshold. The study recommended provision of adequate instructional resources, professional development on improvisation, and curriculum reforms that promote flexible English Language pedagogy.

Keywords: Creative pedagogy; English Language instruction; Teacher creativity; Instructional strategies; Nigerian secondary schools

Introduction

English Language occupies a foundational position in Nigeria's educational system. As the country's official language and the medium of instruction from primary through tertiary levels, English is the channel through which learners' access virtually every discipline in the school curriculum. Njoku (2017) described English as indispensable to education in Nigeria and a veritable tool for human development. Adediran and Aiyede (2023) stated that English language is the life blood of the educational sector at all levels while Mishina and Iskandar (2019) argue that competence in the language underpins meaningful social, political, and economic participation. At the secondary level, the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) requires a minimum credit pass in English Language for university admission, making the subject a gatekeeper that directly shapes the life trajectories of millions of learners each year (Oguntade, 2021).

National examination data, however, reveal persistent weaknesses that implicate the quality of classroom instruction. According to Channels Television (2022), the 2022 WASSCE results showed that 76.36% of the 1,601,047 candidates obtained credits in at least five subjects including English Language, a decline of 5.34 percentage points from the 81.7% recorded in 2021. Long-term trends show further instability: success rates moved from 35.99% in 2019 to 65.24% in 2020, peaked at 81.7% in 2021, and fell again to 76.36% in 2022. Philip et al. (2024) attribute these fluctuations to inconsistencies in teaching quality rather than changes in

examination difficulty, and several studies trace poor outcomes directly to inadequate instructional approaches.

In many Nigerian secondary schools, English Language teaching remains dominated by teacher-centred, examination-driven methods. Uzoegwu (2014) observes that many teachers continue to rely on the 'chalk-and-talk' technique, reducing students to passive listeners, while Avaa et al. (2024) find that innovative strategies such as collaborative tasks and project-based learning remain uncommon in observed classrooms. This persistence of conventional methods limits learners' development of genuine communicative competence. Majid and Kareem (2025) note that rigid, repetitive instruction contributes directly to student disengagement and the declining examination outcomes documented in national data.

Teacher creativity, understood as the capacity to think flexibly, adapt instruction to learners' needs, and design activities that genuinely engage students (Xhomara & Uka, 2022), has been identified as a key determinant of instructional effectiveness in language-based subjects. Fakeye and Aiyede (2023) note that the intrinsic value of creativity in pedagogy stands as a cornerstone for fostering a stimulating and enriching learning environment. Anderson et al. (2022) found that teachers who hold strong beliefs about their own creative capacity are significantly more likely to implement varied, learner-centred strategies. In Nigeria, where many learners encounter English almost exclusively within school walls, the creative teacher becomes the primary mediator between students' everyday realities and the formal language demands of academic and professional life (Henriksen et al., 2017). Despite the acknowledged value of creative pedagogy, empirical investigations into teachers' actual creative practices in Nigerian English Language classrooms remain limited. This study addressed this gap by assessing creative pedagogical practices among English Language teachers in ten selected senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State.

Statement of the Problem

Although creativity is widely acknowledged as central to effective English Language instruction, the WASSCE performance data and observed reliance on lecture-based instruction cited above suggest that this value is not consistently translated into classroom practice. What remains unclear is how creative English Language teachers in Ibadan North Local Government Area actually are in practice, which specific instructional materials and classroom management strategies support or constrain that creativity, and what challenges limit its expression. Without empirical evidence on these questions, professional development, resourcing, and policy decisions intended to improve English Language instruction cannot be properly targeted. This study addressed this empirical gap.

Research Questions

This study answered the following research questions:

1. What is the level of creative teaching strategies employed by English Language teachers?
2. How do teachers creatively manage classrooms and deploy instructional materials during English Language lessons?
3. What challenges do teachers face in implementing creative teaching strategies?

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework: Creativity in Education and Teaching

Creativity in educational contexts is understood as the generation of ideas or practices that are both original and appropriate within a given context (Rodríguez-Silva & Violant-Holz, 2026). Building on earlier divergent-thinking and process models of creativity, recent scholarship

distinguishes teaching creatively, using imaginative approaches to make content accessible and engaging, from teaching for creativity, which develops learners' own creative and expressive capacities (Maor et al., 2024). In English Language classrooms, both dimensions are visible when teachers pose open-ended questions, allow multiple valid interpretations of a text, and invite students to generate original language rather than reproduce model answers. Anderson et al. (2022), in a study of 337 teachers, found that those who identified strongly as creative practitioners were significantly more likely to integrate varied, learner-centred strategies and sustain student engagement under institutional pressure, confirming that creative teaching is as much a professional identity as a technical skill set.

Runco and Jaeger (2012) specify that genuine creativity requires both originality and contextual appropriateness, a specification particularly important in language teaching where original expression must simultaneously conform to communicative conventions. Muchie et al. (2025) similarly demonstrate that effective language teaching depends on adapting strategies to specific classroom contexts, since no single technique is universally appropriate across learner needs and settings. Sawyer and Henriksen (2024) frame teaching itself as an improvisational practice in which teachers respond continuously to learners' contributions, adjust instructional decisions in real time, and maintain coherent lesson progression without rigid adherence to a prepared script.

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Teacher Creativity in English Language Instruction in Nigerian Secondary Schools

The NERDC (2013) curriculum for English Language at the senior secondary level specifies objectives centred on communicative competence in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, alongside the development of critical thinking. In practice, these aspirations frequently collide with examination pressure and resource scarcity. Adewumi and Alao (2018) found that despite curriculum reforms, many Nigerian teachers continue to prioritise rote memorisation and grammar drilling over communicative engagement. WAEC Chief Examiners' Reports (2022) document persistent student weaknesses in essay writing, oral expression, and summary, attributing these partly to instructional approaches that do not engage learners in authentic language use. Olatoye (2019) noted specifically that WAEC examination pressures push teachers toward drilling model answers, making any creative departure from test preparation both professionally risky and institutionally unsupported.

Saadu (2022) identified limited professional development, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate materials, and weak institutional support as the primary structural constraints on creative teaching in Nigerian public secondary schools. Elfiyanto (2025), studying EFL teachers in Indonesia, found that institutional support was the single most enabling factor for sustained creative practice, and that even highly motivated teachers struggled to maintain creative instruction without it. Hidayat and Mason (2023) demonstrated that individual motivation, access to technology, and collegial relationships all significantly shape English teachers' creative practice, confirming that creativity in teaching is a dynamic, environmentally mediated attribute rather than a fixed personal quality. Fitria (2024) showed that creative

writing activities in English Language lessons, even in resource-limited settings, produced measurable gains in student linguistic self-expression when teachers made deliberate choices to create low-stakes expressive spaces.

Teacher Creativity and Student Learning Outcomes

Empirical evidence consistently links teacher creativity to improved student learning outcomes. Bolibekova et al. (2020) found that integrating storytelling into English Language lessons produced measurable gains in student motivation and language proficiency relative to conventional instruction. Raja et al. (2022) demonstrated that culturally relevant and student-interest-centred activities significantly raised classroom engagement and academic enthusiasm. In the Nigerian context, Agbenge (2018) showed that literature circles significantly improved secondary school students' reading comprehension relative to conventional teacher-led methods, using an Analysis of Covariance design that controlled for pre-existing differences. Yusuf (2015) similarly reported that structured interactive reading activities produced significant comprehension gains over a control group in Kaduna State, and Yusuf et al. (2016) confirmed that discussion-based instruction consistently outperformed conventional methods on comprehension measures in Plateau State secondary schools.

Getie (2020) added a longitudinal dimension, finding that students exposed to creative instruction not only achieved higher proficiency during lessons but also demonstrated greater willingness to continue learning English independently, suggesting that the motivational effects of creative pedagogy outlast the instructional period. Ismail and Kassem (2022) found that students who perceived their English Language classrooms as creative and inclusive reported higher levels of enjoyment, willingness to participate, and sustained engagement. Sun (2016), in a meta-analysis of creative instructional approaches in language classrooms, confirmed that flexible and imaginatively designed instruction positively influenced language learning outcomes across diverse learner profiles, providing broad empirical support for the value of creative pedagogy.

Challenges to Creative Teaching

The barriers to creative English Language teaching in Nigeria are structural, professional, and contextual, and they typically operate simultaneously. Minaz et al. (2025) found that overcrowded classrooms significantly increase teacher workload, reduce the feasibility of group-based and interactive activities, and compel teachers to prioritise order and syllabus coverage over instructional innovation. In many Nigerian public secondary schools, English Language teachers manage between 60 and 80 students per lesson, conditions under which individualised instruction and collaborative tasks become practically unmanageable (Togunloju & Ajewole, 2025). Majid and Kareem (2025) similarly found that teaching in overcrowded contexts directly increased cognitive and emotional teacher strain, reducing both the motivation and the capacity to experiment with new approaches.

Dave-Ugwu et al. (2024) identified the shortage of instructional materials as a systemic constraint, arguing that without varied physical and audio-visual resources, teachers default to text-reliant instruction that forecloses multimodal and experiential approaches. The British Council (2015) found that resource inadequacy and limited professional development together produce a teaching environment where creativity is the exception rather than the norm in Nigerian schools. Oluikpe and Omenka (2023) demonstrated that integrating cooperative learning and multimedia into English lessons produced significant achievement gains in schools where it was attempted, but noted that the physical and technological conditions for such integration were available in only a minority of schools. Zickafoose et al. (2024) situate these challenges within a broader Sub-Saharan African context, arguing that systemic resource and infrastructure deficits represent a structural educational problem that individual teacher effort cannot resolve without institutional and policy-level intervention.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical frameworks: Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, with emphasis on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding, and Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity. Together, these frameworks explain both the mechanism through which creative teaching produces learning gains and the conditions under which teacher creativity is enabled or suppressed.

Vygotsky (1978) argued that cognitive development is mediated through social interaction and cultural tools, with language serving as the primary tool through which thought is organised (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the distance between a learner's independent performance and what becomes achievable with guidance from a more capable other, identifies the instructional space where genuine developmental gains occur. Scaffolding, the temporary and adaptive support through which learners accomplish tasks beyond their current independent reach, operationalises this insight in the classroom (Wood et al., 1976). This study applies the ZPD to interpret why the interactional and relational forms of creativity observed, which depend on the teacher's responsiveness to learners rather than on physical resources, are the dimensions most fully expressed among the sampled teachers.

Applied to this study, the theory predicts that teachers with strong domain knowledge and intrinsic motivation will express creativity most fully in dimensions that depend least on external resources, specifically in interaction, motivation, and classroom management, while being constrained in dimensions requiring materials and technology the environment does not provide. This prediction is directly confirmed by the pattern of results obtained.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, enabling the systematic collection of data on teachers' creative instructional practices as they occurred naturally in classrooms without experimental manipulation. The study population comprised all English Language teachers in senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State. Purposive sampling was used to select ten schools, chosen on the criteria of having a functioning English Language department, a minimum of two English Language teachers on staff, and administrative willingness to permit classroom observation; two English Language teachers were randomly selected from each, giving a sample of 20 teachers. Each teacher was observed twice during instruction, yielding 40 observation sessions in total. All observations focused on SS1 classes.

The primary instrument was the Teachers' Creativity in English Language Instruction Rating Scale (TCELIRS), a 20-item researcher-designed observation checklist assessing five creativity dimensions: originality and flexibility in lesson delivery; variety of instructional strategies; creative use and integration of teaching aids; classroom interaction and management; and learner engagement in participatory and imaginative activities. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = Moderate, 4 = High, 5 = Very High. Section A of the instrument captured demographic variables: gender, academic qualification, and years of teaching experience.

Content validity was established through expert review by the researcher's supervisor and faculty members in the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, University of Ibadan, who assessed items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. Reliability was established through a pilot study yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.78 and an inter-rater reliability index of 0.80, both confirming acceptable internal consistency. Observations were conducted discreetly to minimise observer effect and encourage natural teaching behaviour. A trained research assistant conducted simultaneous observations in different schools during the same periods. Quantitative data were analysed using frequency counts, simple percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation. A decision

threshold of 3.00 was adopted: items at or above this value indicated acceptable or high levels of creative practice, while those below indicated areas of weakness.

Results

Research Question 1: Level of Creative Teaching Strategies Employed by English Language Teachers

Table 1 presents the frequency distributions, mean scores, and standard deviations for all 20 TCELIRS items. The overall weighted mean of 3.52 exceeded the decision threshold of 3.00, and 18 of the 20 items individually scored above this threshold, confirming a generally high level of creative instructional practice across the sample. The five highest-rated items were: Item 18, motivating learners through praise, encouragement, or rewards for creative contributions (Mean = 4.00, SD = 1.09), with 80.0% of observations rated High or Very High; Item 8, relating lesson content to students' real-life experiences in a creative way (Mean = 3.98, SD = 0.97), with 67.5% rated High or Very High; Item 11, managing the classroom to foster active participation and orderliness (Mean = 3.90, SD = 0.81); Item 12, using humour, storytelling, or analogies to make lessons engaging (Mean = 3.88, SD = 1.36); and Item 1, demonstrating originality and flexibility in lesson presentation (Mean = 3.88, SD = 1.04), with 70.0% rated High or Very High. Items 10 and 14, collaborative learning opportunities (Mean = 3.85, SD = 0.53) and freedom of student expression (Mean = 3.85, SD = 0.86), confirmed that participatory and inclusive instructional conditions were consistently established. Items 5 and 19 (Mean = 3.73 for both) showed that teachers regularly design activities to stimulate imagination and encourage student-generated language examples. Items 17 (Mean = 3.65), 4 (Mean = 3.48), 7 (Mean = 3.48), 15 (Mean = 3.45), 20 (Mean = 3.45), 16 (Mean = 3.38), 6 (Mean = 3.35), and 2 (Mean = 3.35) all scored above the threshold, confirming a broad base of creative instructional practice.

Two items fell below the decision threshold. Item 9, the teacher demonstrates creativity in the use of instructional materials and media during English lessons (Mean = 2.53, SD = 0.85), recorded the lowest score on the scale. Of the 40 observations, 47.5% received Low ratings and 7.5% received Very Low, while no observation received a Very High rating. Item 13, the teacher creatively improvises teaching aids when standard materials are not available (Mean = 2.65, SD = 1.21), received Very Low ratings in 15.0% of observations and Low ratings in 37.5%, together accounting for more than half the sample. Item 3, creative integration of teaching aids to clarify concepts (Mean = 2.95, SD = 1.20), fell marginally below the threshold. These three items form a coherent cluster identifying material and resource dimensions of teaching as the principal area of weakness.

Table 1: Teachers' Ratings on Creativity in English Language Instruction (N = 40 Observation Sessions)

S/ N	Observation Item	VL (%)	L (%)	M (%)	H (%)	VH (%)	Mean	SD
1	The teacher demonstrates originality and flexibility in lesson presentation.	–	6(15.0)	6(15.0)	15(37.5)	13(32.5)	3.88	1.04
2	The teacher creatively uses a variety of instructional strategies (e.g., discussion, role play, group work).	–	6(15.0)	14(35.0)	20(50.0)	–	3.35	0.74
3	The teacher creatively integrates teaching aids (real objects, charts, multimedia) to clarify concepts.	6(15.0)	8(20.0)	11(27.5)	12(30.0)	3(7.5)	2.95	1.20

4	The teacher uses open-ended questioning techniques that stimulate students' creative thinking and expression.	–	6(15.0)	15(37.5)	13(32.5)	6(15.0)	3.48	0.93
5	The teacher creatively designs lesson questions that encourage students to create their own examples.	3(7.5)	–	9(22.5)	21(52.5)	7(17.5)	3.73	1.01
6	The teacher adapts creative teaching strategies to suit students' learning styles and levels.	3(7.5)	6(15.0)	11(27.5)	14(35.0)	6(15.0)	3.35	1.14
7	The teacher creatively uses original language activities that stimulate imagination and creative expression.	–	3(7.5)	21(52.5)	10(25.0)	6(15.0)	3.48	0.85
8	The teacher relates lesson content to real-life experiences of students in a creative way.	–	3(7.5)	10(25.0)	12(30.0)	15(37.5)	3.98	0.97
9	The teacher demonstrates creativity in the use of instructional materials and media during English lessons.	3(7.5)	19(47.5)	12(30.0)	6(15.0)	–	2.53	0.85
10	The teacher creates opportunities for collaborative learning among students.	–	–	9(22.5)	28(70.0)	3(7.5)	3.85	0.53
11	The teacher manages the classroom in a way that fosters active participation and orderliness.	–	3(7.5)	6(15.0)	23(57.5)	8(20.0)	3.90	0.81
12	The teacher uses humor, storytelling, or analogies to make lessons engaging.	6(15.0)	–	3(7.5)	15(37.5)	16(40.0)	3.88	1.36
13	The teacher creatively improvises teaching aids when standard materials are not available.	6(15.0)	15(37.5)	11(27.5)	3(7.5)	5(12.5)	2.65	1.21
14	The teacher allows students to express their own ideas and interpretations freely.	–	3(7.5)	9(22.5)	19(47.5)	9(22.5)	3.85	0.86
15	The teacher demonstrates flexibility by adjusting lesson flow when necessary.	–	9(22.5)	12(30.0)	11(27.5)	8(20.0)	3.45	1.06
16	The teacher provides opportunities for learners to practice language skills creatively (e.g., poems, short plays, dialogues).	–	6(15.0)	18(45.0)	11(27.5)	5(12.5)	3.38	0.90
17	The teacher links current lesson content to previous knowledge in a creative way.	–	3(7.5)	11(27.5)	23(57.5)	3(7.5)	3.65	0.74
18	The teacher motivates learners through praise, encouragement, or rewards for creative contributions.	3(7.5)	–	5(12.5)	18(45.0)	14(35.0)	4.00	1.09
19	The teacher designs original language activities that stimulate imagination and creative expression.	–	3(7.5)	11(27.5)	20(50.0)	6(15.0)	3.73	0.82
20	The overall atmosphere of the classroom reflects creativity, innovation, and learner-centredness.	–	9(22.5)	12(30.0)	11(27.5)	8(20.0)	3.45	1.06
Weighted Mean = 3.52; Threshold = 3.00								

Note: VL = Very Low; L = Low; M = Moderate; H = High; VH = Very High. Values in parentheses represent percentages.

Research Question 2: Teachers' Creative Management of Classrooms and Instructional Materials

From Table 2, Items related to classroom management and materials use allow a differentiated assessment of where creative practice is strong and where it is constrained. On the classroom management dimension, Items 11, 10, and 14 (Means of 3.90, 3.85, and 3.85 respectively) collectively show that teachers consistently facilitate active participation, collaborative learning, and free expression of student ideas. These dimensions of creative practice depend

primarily on the teacher's relational and communicative skill rather than on physical resources, and the low standard deviation on Item 10 ($SD = 0.53$) is particularly informative: it indicates that collaborative learning opportunities were established with notable consistency across all observed sessions, suggesting this is an embedded feature of practice rather than an occasional variation.

On the materials dimension, the pattern reverses sharply. Item 9 (Mean = 2.53, $SD = 0.85$) shows that creative use of instructional materials was consistently absent from the majority of observed lessons. The low standard deviation for this item, comparable to those of the highest-rated items, signals that this weakness is evenly distributed across the sample, a structural pattern rather than individual failure. Item 13 (Mean = 2.65, $SD = 1.21$) shows more individual variation: some teachers improvise creatively, but they represent a clear minority, with over half the sample receiving Very Low or Low ratings. Item 3 (Mean = 2.95, $SD = 1.20$), just below threshold, reflects a zone where materials are occasionally integrated but inconsistently and without the creative flair that would merit higher ratings.

Research Question 3: Challenges Teachers Face in Implementing Creative Teaching Strategies

The data in Table 2 identify with precision the dimensions where creative practice breaks down. The below-threshold cluster of Items 9, 13, and 3 provides direct empirical evidence that material and resource constraints are the primary challenge to creative English Language teaching in these schools. That 47.5% of observations received Low ratings on Item 9 and that no observation received a Very High rating indicates a sample-wide structural pattern rather than isolated individual variation. Item 13's higher standard deviation (1.21) compared to Item 9 (0.85) reveals that improvisation varies more across teachers, whereas the absence of materials to use creatively is a uniform constraint that affects all teachers in the sample equally. The contrast between the 17 above-threshold items, all relying on teacher-learner interaction, oral creativity, contextualisation, and classroom management, and the 3 below-threshold items, all requiring physical and technological resources, is the defining pattern of this study. It establishes that the challenge facing these teachers is not a deficit of creative motivation or pedagogical skill but a structural deprivation of the material enabling conditions that would allow their established creativity to extend across all instructional dimensions. This finding aligns with Fakeye (2010), the British Council (2015), Oluikpe and Omenka (2023), and Zickafoose et al. (2024), all of whom identify resource inadequacy as the binding constraint on creative instructional practice in Nigerian and Sub-Saharan African school settings.

Discussion of Findings

The results show that English Language teachers in the selected schools demonstrate a high level of creative practice, especially in the way they relate with and engage their learners. Their strongest areas include motivating learners through praise and recognition, relating lessons to students' everyday experiences, encouraging participation, promoting collaborative learning, and using humour, storytelling, and analogies. These findings agree with earlier studies. Bolibekova et al. (2020) found that storytelling-based instruction improved learners' language proficiency, while Raja et al. (2022) reported that culturally relevant activities increased classroom engagement. In Nigeria, Agbenge (2018) and Yusuf et al. (2016) also found that interactive and collaborative approaches produced better comprehension outcomes than conventional teacher-led methods. The findings of this study show that these practices are common among the teachers observed and are not limited to a few schools or individual teachers. However, such practices may not be easy to sustain in every school. Elfiyanto (2025) found that even motivated EFL teachers struggled to maintain similar practices when they lacked institutional support.

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory helps explain the value of these practices. When teachers relate lesson content to students' real-life experiences, learners may find it easier to connect new knowledge with what they already know. This can make learning easier within the zone of proximal development. Praise and encouragement can also give learners the confidence to participate and make mistakes while learning. The use of group activities and opportunities for students to express their ideas also allows them to learn through discussion and interaction with others. In this way, the teachers create opportunities for learning through social interaction, even when they may not consciously describe their practices using Vygotsky's ideas.

The weakest area was the creative use of instructional materials and media, including the ability to improvise teaching aids. This finding is important because it points to a problem that goes beyond the individual teacher. Amabile and Pratt's (2016) componential model explains that creative practice can be limited when teachers have the motivation and knowledge to be creative but lack the resources and support needed to put their ideas into practice. Amabile (1997) also identifies motivation and creative thinking as important parts of creative performance. The teachers in this study appear to show these qualities in their classroom interaction, but limited access to materials, audio visual resources, and institutional support may restrict their ability to use creativity in other areas of teaching. This weakness was found across the sample, which points more to a school or system problem than an individual weakness. Similar findings were reported by Dave Ugwu et al. (2024), who found that Nigerian teachers often depend on their personal creativity to provide instructional materials when standard resources are unavailable. Zickafoose et al. (2024) also linked such shortages to wider underinvestment in schools across Sub Saharan Africa.

The use of humour, storytelling, and analogies also differed among the teachers observed. Some teachers used these strategies more effectively than others. Sawyer and Henriksen (2024) describe the ability to use stories, analogies, and humour in response to classroom situations as an important part of creative teaching. This ability may develop with teaching experience and continued professional learning. Since many teachers in the sample were at the early stage of their careers, they may not yet have developed the same level of confidence and skill in using these oral strategies. This points to an area that professional development can address. Training could help teachers learn how to use storytelling, analogies, and humour more effectively during lessons.

The teachers also recorded lower scores in adapting their teaching to different learner abilities and in using a wide range of instructional strategies. These findings do not mean that the teachers were ineffective. Instead, they show that while many teachers used certain strategies well, they may have had a more limited range of approaches available to them. Their strengths were clearer in motivating learners and relating lessons to familiar experiences than in varying their methods to meet different learning needs. Anderson et al. (2022) found that teachers' belief in their own creative ability was linked to their willingness to try new approaches and use a wider range of teaching strategies. Professional development could therefore help teachers build confidence in their creative abilities while also exposing them to a broader range of practical teaching strategies.

Conclusion

This study assessed creative pedagogical practices among English Language teachers in ten selected senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings confirm a generally high level of creative instructional practice, expressed most fully through motivational reinforcement, real-life contextualisation, participatory classroom management, and collaborative learning. These results establish that creative pedagogical orientation is not exceptional but broadly characteristic of how the observed teachers approach

their work, reflecting a teaching workforce that has internalised the value of learner engagement and interactive instruction.

At the same time, the study identifies a consistent and significant gap in the material dimension of creative teaching. The creative use of instructional materials and media, improvisation of teaching aids, and creative integration of physical resources all fell below or at the threshold for acceptable practice. This is not a pattern of individual variation but a structural consistency: the absence of material-based creativity is uniformly distributed across the sample. This pattern suggests that where enabling environmental conditions are absent, creative performance concentrates in dimensions requiring only individual skill and motivation while being suppressed in those requiring resources the environment does not provide. These teachers are not uncreative; they are creatively constrained by structural deprivation.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Educational authorities and school administrators should prioritise the provision of adequate instructional resources, including audio equipment for spoken English practice, visual charts, supplementary reading texts, and basic digital tools.
2. Continuous professional development programmes should specifically target creative improvisation and the construction of instructional resources from locally available materials.
3. Training should focus on oral creative strategies, including structured storytelling, analogical reasoning, and flexible group facilitation, to strengthen the dimensions of practice showing the most individual unevenness.
4. Curriculum planners and policymakers should incorporate formative and process-based assessment into the English Language curriculum to reduce the examination pressure that pushes teachers toward rote instruction.
5. School leaders should recognise and reward creative instructional practice as a core professional competency, and establish mentoring structures through which the strong creative foundations already present in this early-career workforce can be systematically developed and sustained across full teaching careers.

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