

# INDICES OF EFFECTIVE ENGLISH GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN EXAMINATION OF TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL PACING AND TIME FOR COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES

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## Abstract

*This study examined instructional pacing and time for communicative activities as indices of effective English grammar instruction among senior secondary school teachers in Ibadan South West Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The correlational design was adopted. The participants were 10 English Language teachers drawn purposively from 10 public senior secondary schools in the local government area. The instruments used in collecting data were Teachers Instructional Pacing Observation Scale ( $r=0.74$ ) and Adequacy of Time for Communicative Activities Observation Scale ( $r=0.80$ ). Classroom observations lasted two weeks. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, means, and standard deviation. Findings showed that teachers' instructional pacing with a mean of 3.60 was good, while time allotted for communicative activities with a mean of 3.65 was adequate. Based on the findings, it is recommended that English Language teachers should continue to avail themselves of the various professional development programmes so as to be able adjust the pacing of lessons to suit the students and provide copious communicative activities to enable students to communicate in English in various contexts.*

**Key Words:** English grammar, Instructional pacing, Time for communicative activities, Lesson preparation,

## Introduction

Grammar is a very important aspect of language and must be understood in order for one to communicate effectively. One of the factors that affects how fluency in oral or written expression is user's competence in grammar. This is because students' success in English grammar is instrumental to success in English language. Grammar is the way words are used, classified and structured together to form coherent written or spoken sentences. A student who does not know the rules of English grammar will never be able to communicate clearly and effectively in English Language.

Good grammar reflects in both competence and performance in language delivery. This is because

grammar involves not only the ability to internalise the rules of a language; it also enables the person to effectively use the internalised knowledge to achieve a desired communicative impact (Alonge, 2024). Effective teaching and learning of English language cannot be achieved without the knowledge of English grammar. Thus, the knowledge of grammar is central and very important to effective second language teaching and learning. Harmer (2007) asserts that over the years, a number of errors and deviant forms in language use that are commonly observed in English as a Second Language (ESL) students' writing include: poor knowledge of tenses and sequences of tenses, weakness in concord, winding constructions due to illogical thinking,

wrong use of prepositions and direct translation from mother tongue thought process to English, among others.

Beyond passing examinations, the inability of the senior secondary school students to be well-grounded in the rudiments of the grammar of English language may jeopardise their effective public communication. Good command of English usually earns the individuals some respect in the society, while the reverse is often the case for those who lack a good command of English. In addition, the chances of securing prestigious jobs will be reduced as part of the considerations for employment opportunities are good expression skills. This confirms the submission of Ogunyemi (2014) that proficiency in oral and written expressions confers on the individual the privilege of securing gainful employment. An urgent solution to the problem of under achievement is, therefore, imperative to help students overcome weaknesses in the mastery and usage of the grammar of the English language in order to improve their speaking and writing skills.

Alonge (2024) reports some of the grammatical errors committed by students in their writing to include wrong use of transitional words in creating relationships between sentences including conjunctions such as 'and', 'but'; conjuncts such as 'also'; 'for example', 'finally', 'moreover', 'nevertheless', 'therefore', 'as a consequence' and a host of others. These are expressions that could be misused if, when and where, they are not appropriately taught. For instance, it is not uncommon to find sentences like "Although I admire him, but I do not respect him." In this statement, there is a tautology in the use of conjunction "Although" already sets a contrast between the two clauses, using "but" is unnecessary. Such errors may

not be avoided by students unless they are taught the grammatical use and restriction of these conjuncts and conjunctions. Pronoun reference is even more technically involved, in that it has to agree with its proper antecedent noun phrase, no matter where it is placed in the sentence or clause. In other words, a noun is used in one sentence or clause, and a pronoun to refer to it is used in the succeeding sentence or clause. Alternatively, a noun is used in one sentence and a pronoun is used in its place in the following sentence. Students' errors in this area include:

(a) the use of pronominal objects of preposition as pronominal subject such as:

A few of we campers learned to swim. A few of us campers learned to swim-(correct)

(b) the use of a singular object pronoun to refer to a plural subject as:

Neither the Secretary nor his Assistants were consistent in his policy. Neither the secretary nor his assistants were consistent in their policy-(correct).

Ellis (2006) identifies students' problems in the use of parallelism and repetition of key terms. A parallel construction, according to Adigun (2016) is one in which the same grammatical pattern is repeated two or more times, usually with some of the same words and often with the whole pattern governed by a phrase or clause that is not repeated. Besides ensuring continuity of ideas and rhythm, parallelism is one of the most powerful methods of achieving compression, vigour and memorability in oral and written discourse; that is within a sentence or over a short sequence of sentences. This aspect of English grammar is a fairly knotty one for many students, as lack of it often garbles their message. Hence, we often find

sentences such as the ones below in students' written communications:

- \* (1) My car needs a new battery, a tyre, and the oil should be changed. (My car needs a new battery, a tyre, and a litre of oil).
- \* (2) The new guard is strong, competent and you can depend on him. (The new guard is strong, competent and dependable).

If the series begins with a noun, other items in the series must be nouns. If it begins with an adjective, other items must be adjectives, and so also for the clause or phrase. Consider the following examples:

- (1) The boy reads for understanding, knowledge and pleasure (nouns).
- (2) A trial lawyer must be shrewd, alert and bold (adjectives).
- (3) The position calls for a person who is open-minded and who is cool (clauses).

So far, the role of grammar in the organisation and logical presentation of ideas has been discussed. Apart from improving students' writing in the area of sentence construction, grammar can also supply resources for the variation of emphasis in an essay. This is usually a function of word order. Indeed, Adedigba (2019) notes that the possibility of variation in word order is the greatest single contribution that grammar, as distinct from vocabulary, can make to solving the fundamental problems of written English..." An examination of the five sentences below becomes apposite:

- (a) The doctor, together with groups of angry patients, protested the closing of the clinic.
- (b) The closing of the clinic was protested.
- (c) Groups of angry patients, together with the doctor, protested the closing of the clinic.

- (d) Although the economy is buoyant, armed robbery is destroying the peace of the citizens.
- (e) Although armed robbery is destroying the peace of the citizens, the economy is buoyant.

In (a), the point of emphasis is the doctor; in (b), it is the closing of the clinic, and in (c) it is groups of angry patients. Also, in (d) and (e), the important ideas are contained in the main clauses, while the less important ones are in the subordinate clauses. Thus, if students realise that word order is of paramount importance to the meaning and impact of their writing, their style is likely to improve considerably. Also relevant is their awareness of the choices they have to make. But in teaching this grammatical aspect, students must be encouraged to arrange words in the order which makes their meaning most clearly and forcibly.

In specific terms, the grammar of English is taught so as to expose pupils to the structural patterns of the language as a way of developing in them the tool for effective communication. It can be argued that early exposure of learners to the rules and structural pattern of English will equip them with the knowledge of how the language works and this will provide a solid bedrock for good communication skill as they grow up. Without laying good foundation in this aspect of English language, learners or even graduates of such level may find it difficult to communicate effectively. Furthermore, students need a smattering of knowledge of the grammar of English to write answers to examinations questions. Little surprise, therefore, that Thornbury (2014) pointed out that effective mastery of the grammar of English is one of the indices of measuring proficiency in the language. Hence, effective speaking and writing

in English depends on the extent to which the students have come to terms with its grammatical structures.

Language is rule-governed and its use is holistic which means, poor mastery of grammar may manifest in virtually all aspects of language use. Be it essay and summary writing, lexis and structure, and answers to comprehension questions, grammar is of high importance and the skeleton of English language. Even the question pattern of West African Examinations Council (WAEC) English Language examination reveals that the knowledge of grammar is integrated into papers 1 and 2 of the examination. For instance, the paper two examines candidates on letter/essay writing, comprehension and summary. In letter/essay writing, grammar is tested under expression and mechanical accuracy, and it takes 30 out of the 50 marks allocated to that section.

In comprehension and summary, every correct answer given is first checked to ascertain whether it is grammatical before it is awarded full marks; if not, half a mark is deducted for each grammatical error committed for each answer (WAEC, 2024). Also, Paper 1, which is the objective test usually, tests candidates' knowledge of lexis and structure (vocabulary and grammar). All the indices show that prominence is given to grammar even by WAEC.

The place of grammar in the 2022-2025 syllabus of West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) expatiates on the role of grammar in an ESL setting. The aims and objectives are that candidates should demonstrate the ability to (i) use correct English Language (ii) write about incidents in English Language that are appropriate to specified audiences and situations (iii) organise materials in paragraphs that are chronologically, spatially and logically

coherent (iv) control sentence structures accurately (v) exhibit variety in the choice of sentence patterns (vi) comply with the rules of grammar, spelling and punctuation (vii) comprehend written and spoken English (viii) recognize implied meanings, tones and attitudes (*Regulations and Syllabuses for WASSCE 2022-2025* pg 203). The spate of poor performance in English grammar by public senior secondary school students has resulted in poor attitude to the subject. Studies have shown that attitude is an integral part of learning and that it should, therefore, become an essential component of second language learning pedagogy. Learners' attitude to a subject must not be negative rather it must be positive and balanced (Lawal 2018).

Despite the importance of English grammar to students' academic advancement in English Language and success in the other school subjects, students' performance in this aspect of English has been very poor. It is obvious that most Nigerian students, and many senior secondary schools students in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area in particular, are deficient in English grammar, which is quite evident in their poor oral and written communications. This is confirmed by the reports of the Chief Examiners for West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) English Language in 2022, 2023 and 2024. For instance, the Chief examiner in 2024 identified the weaknesses of students in English grammar as poor knowledge and use of tenses, concord and sentence conjoining, among others. The chief examiner reported further that students' essays were flawed with construction of loose sentences, translation from mother tongue to English language and abuse of basic rules of grammar. And this strongly

indicates that all is not well with the students' attainment in English grammar. In view of the problems of poor performance in English language and most especially in grammatical structures, it becomes imperative to embark on this study so as to identify factors that could ameliorate the problems the students are facing in English grammar. Previous studies focused more on intervention with innovative teaching strategies (Adedigba, 2019), home, school, student and textbook factors influencing students' performance in English grammar (Popoola, 2021; Alonge, 2024). However, very little research had been given to teachers' instructional pacing and time for communicative activities, especially at senior secondary school level in Ibadan.

One of the major factors affecting the teaching of language or any aspect of it, be it first, second or foreign language is adequacy of time for communicative activities. Communicative activities aim to encourage learners to speak and listen to other learners in the classroom setting. The teacher provides opportunities to learners to speak, while the learners will have the desire to communicate in real life situations. According to Moss and Rose-Feldman (2018), communicative activities help in preparing learners to use language in real learning situations. Thornbury (2018) avers that the use of communicative activities exposes learners to a whole-task practice, improves their motivation, affords them opportunities to learn natural language, and creates a social context which supports learning. The communicative activities that students can be engaged in are, role play, simulation, games, interviews, songs, information gap activity, problem-solving activity, discovering sequence activity and conversation grid. Umar

(2020) claims that communicative activities can develop students' effective use of grammatical structures in oral and writing tasks.

There is no consensus among language teaching researchers on the exact proportion of an English language lesson that should be devoted to communicative activities because of the wide variation in teaching and learning contexts. However, the consensus is that there should be a lot of communicative activities in language lessons. Nation and Newton (2019) suggest that approximately 25 percent of classroom time in English grammar should be devoted to communicative tasks. There are, however, probably very few classrooms around the world where learners have anything like this amount of time to spend on communicative activities. This is because teachers often feel under pressure to prepare their students for examinations where language knowledge is more important than communicative competence (Gorsuch, 2018). At the same time, teachers who are using coursebooks are invariably under pressure of time to cover the material in these books. Therefore, the reasons for the limited amount of time devoted to communicative activities in English grammar lessons may be understandable.

Without opportunities to re-use and interconnect the grammatical structures they have studied, learners' knowledge about the language may never become the ability to use it.

Another factor that could determine the quality of English grammar instruction is teachers' speed in lesson presentation which is technically referred to as the pace of instruction. The pace of instruction is how slow or fast the teacher is in talking and presenting class activities. The pace of instruction may be slow or fast (Babalola, 2016). The pace with which

the teacher moves from different stage of lesson to another plays an essential role in language learning. When teachers vary the pace and rhythm of instruction, they are providing covert instructional and behavioral support that is responsive to a wide range of pupil needs and abilities. A dull and drab lesson could slow down the quantum of learning made by pupils. On the other hand, sprightly presented lessons tend to raise the bar of accomplishments made by pupils. When instructional activities are rapidly presented, concentration of learners on the lesson and frequency of responses in class are scaled up. This then helps to move away the mind of learners from destructive and distractive activities in class (Alonge, 2024).

The role of teachers in shaping the instructional environment is pivotal, particularly in the context of language acquisition. Instructional pacing and the allocation of time for communicative activities are two critical factors that influence the quality and effectiveness of English grammar instruction. Teachers are expected to manage these elements effectively to facilitate students' learning and engagements.

### **Statement of the Problem**

English grammar is an important aspect of English Language. Proficiency in it is indispensable for fluent oral and written communication in English. However, reports have shown that many public senior secondary students in Ibadan are deficient in English grammar, which partly accounts for their poor expressive skills. Previous studies focused largely on effective strategies of teaching English grammar, textbook and student-related factors influencing performance in English grammar, with little consideration for examination of

teacher instructional pacing and time for communicative activities. This study, therefore, was carried out to investigate teacher instructional pacing and time for communicative activities in English grammar lessons at senior secondary schools in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, Nigeria.

### **Objective of the Study**

The main aim of this study was to examine the instructional pacing and time for communicative activities in English language instruction in selected secondary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study were:

1. to examine the instructional pacing of teachers for communicative activities in English language classrooms in selected secondary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.
2. to establish adequacy of time for communicative activities in English grammar classrooms in selected secondary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the rating in Instructional Pacing in selected secondary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of English Language adequacy in time communicative in selected secondary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

### **Scope of the Study**

This study was conducted in selected secondary schools within the Ibadan South West Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. This study investigated the Instructional pacing and time for communicative activities among public senior secondary school teachers. It covered SS2 teachers from public senior secondary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government, Ibadan.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study seeks to illuminate how instructional pacing strategies influence both content delivery and students' opportunities to engage in communicative activities, offering insights that could lead to more effective teaching practices and improved students' outcomes.

Firstly, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of how instructional pacing, the rate at which teachers deliver content impacts students' ability to participate in communicative activities such as discussions, role-playing, and group interactions. These activities are crucial for real-world language application and proficiency. However, when teachers are under pressure to meet curriculum goals and prepare students for standardised examinations, they often rush through content, leaving little time for meaningful communication. By examining how pacing strategies are implemented in classrooms, the study will highlight the need for a more flexible approach to lesson structuring that ensures students have adequate opportunities for interactive language use, thus promoting greater language competence.

Secondly, the study will provide insights into the role of teacher experience and training in managing instructional pacing and incorporating communicative tasks. Teachers with

limited experience or inadequate professional development may struggle to balance content coverage with communicative activities, relying heavily on traditional lecture-based methods that limit students' interaction. This study will identify gaps in teacher preparation and offer recommendations for targeted professional development programs aimed at equipping educators with the skills and confidence to integrate communicative language teaching effectively. Such programs can enhance teachers' ability to create a balanced learning environment where both content knowledge and language practice is prioritised, leading to more engaging and effective English language instruction.

In addressing these issues, this study holds the potential to inform curriculum reforms that promote a more flexible approach to instructional pacing. The current curriculum in Nigeria often emphasises content-heavy syllabi, leaving little room for the kind of interactive, communication-based learning that fosters language proficiency. By providing evidence on the importance of communicative activities for language acquisition, the study could advocate for reducing excessive content in the curriculum, thus allowing teachers more flexibility in their lesson pacing. Such reforms could enable a more balanced approach to English language instruction that prioritises both content mastery and practical language use, ultimately benefiting students' long-term language development.

### **Methodology**

This study employed the descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised all English-Language teachers in selected public secondary schools in the Ibadan South West Local Government Area,

Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Ibadan South West Local Government Area was purposively selected for the study due to its large number of English Language teachers in Oyo State. Ten government secondary schools in Ibadan South-west Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, were randomly selected, while 10 SSII teachers of English (one per school) were purposively selected. The instruments used in collecting data were Teachers Instructional Pacing Observation Scale ( $r=0.74$ ) and Adequacy of Time for Communicative

Activities Observation Scale ( $r=0.80$ ). Classroom observations lasted two weeks. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, means, and standard deviation

## Results

**Research question one:** What is the rating in Instructional pacing of English grammar teachers in selected public secondary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Teachers instructional pacing in English Language**

S/N	Items	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
1	The lesson progresses at a fast rate	-	-	8 (40.0%)	12 (60.0%)	3.60	0.503
2	The lesson progresses at a slow rate	-	9 (45.0%)	9 (45.0%)	2 (10.0%)	2.65	0.671
3	Time is evenly distributed among various activities in the lesson	-	-	9 (45.0%)	11 (55.0%)	3.55	0.510
4	Teacher uses linguistic markers to signal transition from one activity to another	-	4 (20.0%)	7 (35.0%)	9 (45.0%)	3.25	0.786
5	Teacher varies the pace and rhythm of instruction	-	1 (5.0%)	7 (35.0%)	12 (60.0%)	3.55	0.605
6	Teacher spends enough time on teaching	-	%	7 (35.0%)	13 (65.0%)	3.65	0.489
7	Teacher uses planned Repetition	-	9 (45.0%)	9 (45.0%)	2 (10.0%)	2.65	0.671
8	Teacher uses pauses at the appropriate time of the lesson	-	1 (5.0%)	9 (45.0%)	10 (50.0%)	3.45	0.605
9	Teacher allows adequate time for pupils' activities	-	1 (5.0%)	4 (20.0%)	15 (75.0%)	3.70	0.571
10	Teacher carries along all pupils in the lesson	-	-	-	20 (100.0%)	4.00	0.000
		<b>Weighted Mean = 3.41</b>		<b>Threshold = 2.50</b>			

Table 1 shows the analysis of instructional pacing in English language classes among selected public secondary schools in the Ibadan South West Local Government Area. The study revealed a generally high level of

effective pacing practices among teachers. 60.0% of respondents agreed that lessons progress at a fast rate (mean = 3.60), while none reported 'Never', revealing that English language lessons are paced quickly enough to

maintain learner engagement. Furthermore, 55% indicated that time is evenly distributed among various lesson activities (mean = 3.55), and 65% agreed that the teacher spends enough time teaching (mean = 3.65), reflecting deliberate and structured use of class time. The highest rating (mean = 4.00) came from the item “Teacher carries along all pupils in the lesson”, with 100% of respondents agreeing, indicating inclusivity and balanced attention during instruction. However, the study revealed areas needing improvement. The use of planned repetition and attention to lessons that progress at a slow rate both recorded low mean values (mean=2.65), revealing inconsistency or under-utilisation in those pacing techniques. Similarly, the item regarding the use of linguistic markers for transition between activities showed only

moderate agreement (mean = 3.25). The study revealed that while the overall instructional pacing is commendable with a weighted mean of 3.41, which implies frequent and well-paced instruction, specific strategies like repetition and smooth transitions require targeted professional development for more consistent and effective classroom delivery. The study reveals that the overall instructional pacing has a weighted mean of 3.41 against the threshold of 2.50, which implies that the instructional pacing is good.

**Research question two:** What is the level of adequacy of teacher time for communicative activities in selected public secondary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Adequacy of time for communicative activities**

S/N	How adequate is the time given to:	Not adequate	Adequate	Very adequate	x	S.D.
1	Role play	3 (15.0%)	13 (65.0%)	4 (20.0%)	2.05	0.605
2	Discussions	1 (5.0%)	11 (55.0%)	8 (40.0%)	2.35	0.587
3	Dramatization	9 (45.0%)	5 (25.0%)	6 (30.0%)	1.85	0.875
4	Storytelling	6 (30.0%)	7 (35.0%)	7 (35.0%)	2.05	0.826
5	Simulations	6 (30.0%)	7 (35.0%)	7 (35.0%)	2.05	0.826
6	Oral conversations	1 (5.0%)	6 (30.0%)	13 (65.0%)	2.60	0.598
7	Oral substitutions	4 (20.0%)	7 (35.0%)	9 (45.0%)	2.25	0.786
8	Quizzes	11 (55.0%)	7 (35.0%)	2 (10.0%)	1.55	0.686
9	Impromptu speeches	7 (35.0%)	9 (45.0%)	4 (20.0%)	1.85	0.745
10	Filling information gaps	8 (40.0%)	9 (45.0%)	3 (15.0%)	1.75	0.716
11	Story completion	4 (20.0%)	12 (60.0%)	4 (20.0%)	2.00	0.649
12	Sentence recasting	6 (30.0%)	12 (60.0%)	2 (10.0%)	1.80	0.616
13	Changing active to passive voice	7 (35.0%)	10 (50.0%)	3 (15.0%)	1.80	0.696
14	Converting direct to indirect speeches and vice versa	9 (45.0%)	8 (40.0%)	3 (15.0%)	1.70	0.733
<b>Weighted Mean =1.99</b>		<b>Threshold = 1.50</b>				

Table 2 shows the adequacy of time allocated for communicative activities in English language instruction in selected public secondary schools in the Ibadan South West Local Government Area. The study revealed that time provision is moderately

adequate. The overall weighted mean of 1.99 indicated that most of the activities fall between Not Adequate and Adequate. Activities like quizzes (mean = 1.55), changing direct to indirect speech (mean = 1.70), filling information gaps (mean = 1.75), and

sentence recasting (mean = 1.80) were among the least rated in terms of time adequacy, with more respondents considering them insufficiently catered for during English lessons. Similarly, dramatisation and impromptu speeches, which are essential for spoken fluency and creativity, also received low mean ratings (mean=1.85), revealing a significant gap in practical communicative opportunities.

However, some activities showed relatively better time allocation. Oral conversations received the highest rating (mean = 2.60), with 65% of respondents indicating it was very adequate, revealing that speaking practice in informal or structured formats may be prioritised. Discussions (mean=2.35), oral substitutions (mean=2.25), and drills on question-and-answer tags (mean=2.25) also showed moderate adequacy, indicating a reasonable emphasis on interactive and grammatical competence. Nonetheless, the overall pattern reflected an imbalance where more cognitively engaging and creative tasks such as simulations, role play, and storytelling are under-utilised in the classroom due to time constraints.

The study reveals that with the weighted mean of 1.99 compared with the threshold of 1.50, it can be concluded that the time for communicative activities is very good.

### Discussion

The study investigated teachers' instructional pacing and lesson delivery in English grammar in selected public secondary schools in Ibadan South West local government, Oyo State. The result revealed that teachers' instructional pacing and communicative activities were satisfactory. The discussion of findings is presented below:

### Teacher Instructional Pacing in English Grammar

The study reveals that teachers' instructional pacing was very good. Teachers maintained lesson flow, used time efficiently, and engaged students effectively. This very good level of pacing shows that teachers were able to carry every student along; no learner was left behind, and all students benefited from the lesson. Due to this, students tend to understand better. The findings of a fine degree of lesson progression, structured time management, and inclusive instruction are in agreement with Akmal et al. (2024), who emphasises the strategic use of instructional media to improve learner engagement and lesson flow. The results also reflect teachers' deliberate efforts to distribute lesson time evenly and avoid digressions which explains why the instructional pacing appeared particularly favourable. The strong execution of pacing further aligns with Babinski et al. (2024), whose study demonstrated that professional development helps teachers apply evidence-based strategies that promote collaboration and inclusivity. However, the findings revealed underutilised strategies such as planned repetition and linguistic markers for transitions. The limited use of these strategies may be attributed to teachers' preference for keeping lessons fast-paced to cover syllabus content, which leaves less room for such micro-level pacing techniques. This gap reflects Brevik and Rindal's (2020) observation that variation in pacing is often inconsistent and requires more targeted teacher training. On the other hand, Goodman (2014) notes that EMI teachers often struggle with pacing due to linguistic challenges, whereas the Nigerian teachers in this study demonstrated confidence and adaptability, suggesting either stronger English proficiency or more effective

classroom management practices in the local setting.

### **Adequacy of time for communicative activities**

The study reveals that the teachers' communicative activities are very effective. While some activities, such as conversations and discussions, were rated well, the cognitive and communicative ones, such as dramatisations, storytelling, simulations, and impromptu speeches, were poorly rated, showing that they were not sufficiently prioritised. This imbalance indicates that, although the pacing was very satisfactory, students had limited opportunities to apply their learning in real-life communicative situations. When communicative activities are not sufficiently integrated, students encounter it difficult to transfer classroom learning into functional communicative use, which weakens their overall language competence. This divergence from Musdariah and Amansyah (2023) and Radosavlevikj (2021), who reported strong engagement through interactive strategies, highlights systemic constraints in the Nigerian schools studied, such as curriculum rigidity, examination pressure, and tight schedules that limit the space for communicative tasks.

Theoretically, this imbalance is in agreement with the Pickle Jar Theory of Time Management (Wright, 2002; Gunawan, 2024; Idowu & Bamire, 2022), which explains that while teachers prioritised core instructional pacing as an essential "stone" activity, communicative tasks were relegated to the status of "gravel" or "sand", thereby receiving less attention. Teachers tend to prioritise grammar, reading comprehension, and test preparation, which explains why they invest less time in communicative activities. The implication, as Nyarko (2018) argues, is

that, although foundational knowledge is taught effectively and pacing is good, inadequate time for communicative practice reduces overall communicative competence.

Adebileje and Akinola (2020) argue for a principled eclectic approach that integrates traditional and modern methods. The findings suggest that many teachers still rely on traditional strategies that favour structured pacing over student-centered communication. This reliance is understandable because structured pacing provides predictability, helps cover required content, and reduces classroom management challenges. However, the underuse of storytelling, role play, and simulation shows that the teaching model undervalues creativity and interactivity, which are crucial for communicative competence. Similarly, Okedigba et al. (2023) highlight how linguistic insecurity can discourage oral participation. This may explain why teachers avoid communicative activities that demand spontaneous speaking, fearing that both students and teachers will struggle with fluency or accuracy in English. In addition, Adelana (2022) and Aremu et al. (2024) stressed the potential of technology to enhance oral proficiency, but the classrooms in this study still reflected largely traditional, teacher-centered methods, perhaps due to resource limitations or a lack of training in technology use.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study reveal that English language teachers in selected public secondary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, generally demonstrate effective instructional pacing during classroom instruction. Teachers were observed to maintain lesson momentum, allocate time fairly across different activities,

and ensure that all students are actively engaged throughout the learning process. These practices suggest a commendable level of professional competence in managing classroom time to enhance learning outcomes and maintain student attention. However, certain instructional strategies remain underused. The use of planned repetition and clear linguistic markers to signal transitions between lesson segments was not consistently observed. These techniques are essential for reinforcing key concepts and maintaining instructional coherence, and their inconsistent application may limit opportunities for learners to consolidate their understanding. Addressing these gaps through focused professional development could enhance the overall quality of instructional pacing and support more structured learning experiences.

With regard to time allocated for communicative activities, the findings reflect a moderate level of adequacy. While tasks such as conversations and structured discussions appear to receive reasonable attention, more dynamic and creative communicative activities, such as role play, dramatisation, storytelling, and impromptu speech, were not given sufficient instructional time. These forms of engagement are critical for developing fluency, spontaneity, and communicative confidence, yet they are often constrained by curriculum pressures or instructional preferences that prioritise more controlled language exercises. Although teachers generally perceive the time allocated for communicative tasks as adequate, the observed imbalance in activity types suggests a need for a more inclusive approach to communicative language teaching. Greater emphasis should be placed on integrating diverse, learner-centred activities that allow students to

experiment with language in authentic settings. This shift would not only promote communicative competence but also contribute to more interactive and meaningful classroom experience. It can be concluded from the study that instructional pacing and lesson delivery were good. Teachers in the selected public secondary schools have outstanding instructional pacing and competent lesson delivery and therefore are expected to provide a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following five recommendations are proposed.

1. English Language teachers should continue to avail themselves of the various professional development programmes such as attending seminar and training workshops to hone their instructional pacing skills.
2. Adequate time should be allotted to English Language on the time table to enable the teacher create more time for communicative activities so that students will be able to communicate effectively in the English Language outside the classroom.

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