

## Teachers' Attitude Toward the Use of Instructional Materials: A Catalyst for Improved English Language Learning in Secondary Schools

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### Abstract

The utilization of instructional materials to aid content delivery has remained crucial for enhancing result-oriented learning. Improved performance in English language proficiency is equally pivotal to learners' academic success and national development, particularly in Nigeria where English serves as both the official language and the medium of instruction. Hence, there is a pressing need for teachers to develop positive attitudes toward the use of instructional materials. Reports from international organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, FCDO and UNICEF reveal that about 70% of learners at age ten exhibit deficiencies in the basic English language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This highlights the timeliness of this paper in addressing the challenge of teachers' negative attitudes toward instructional materials. The paper argues that teachers' positive attitudes toward instructional materials serve as a catalyst for improving English language learning in secondary schools. While systemic barriers such as paucity of materials, inadequate practical training for teachers and infrastructural deficits persist, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) suggests that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence teachers' attitudes toward adopting and applying innovations and instructional materials. Similarly, the Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners construct knowledge actively when they can relate new learning to their immediate environment through the use of instructional materials. Therefore, the paper recommends the provision of quality instructional materials, the organization of practical-based teacher training, and effective supervision to motivate teachers toward positive attitudes in utilizing instructional materials as a catalyst to improve students' English language performance in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Instructional materials, Teacher attitude, English language learning, Secondary schools, Motivation.

### Introduction

English language occupies a pivotal position in the educational systems of Nigeria and many African countries. As the official language of Nigeria, English language is the primary medium of instruction in schools and the gateway to higher education, employment, and participation in the global economy. Beyond Nigeria, English has become a dominant language across the African continent, serving both as a lingua franca in multilingual contexts

and as a tool for global communication (Kita, Ngatu and Basikin, 2019). Despite its importance, English language learning outcomes in Africa remain alarmingly poor, reflecting a broader educational crisis characterized by low literacy levels, inadequate instructional resources, and insufficient teacher training (Tom-Lawyer, Thomas and Kalane, 2021).

Recent statistics underscore the magnitude of the problem. According to the World Bank report (2025), more than 75% of Nigerian children are unable to read and understand simple text by the age of ten, a figure that reflects both limited access to textbooks and weak instructional practices. At a broader level, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (2022) reported that nearly 70% of 10-year-olds in low and middle-income countries in Africa cannot read comprehend. These figures point to a persistent challenge in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Without immediate interventions, Nigeria and many African countries risk entrenching cycles of low literacy and reduced economic competitiveness (World Bank, 2021).

The teaching and learning of English language in secondary schools have often been described as challenging due to its abstract nature, complex grammatical structures, and the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students (Afolabi, 2019). Many students struggle with listening, speaking, reading, and writing due to the abstract delivery of lessons and inadequate learner engagement. Instructional materials have therefore become essential tools in bridging these gaps. They provide concrete illustrations, support interactive learning, and help teachers contextualize abstract language concepts (Oladejo, 2020). Instructional materials have long been recommended as essential tools that aid comprehension, retention, and practical application of language skills (Oladejo, 2020). For instance, realia, visual aids, audio-visual tools, and digital resources make abstract concepts tangible and relatable.

However, the effectiveness of these materials is largely shaped by teachers' attitudes. A teacher who embraces innovation and values instructional aids is more likely to create stimulating classroom experiences that foster motivation and deeper understanding. Therefore, the effectiveness of these materials depends largely on the attitudes of teachers who deploy them. A positive attitude encourages innovation, adaptability, and learner-centered pedagogy, while a negative attitude often results in poor usage, thereby limiting students' opportunities for meaningful engagement with language concepts (Okonkwo, 2021).

Globally, research has shown that students exposed to well-integrated instructional materials score 20–30% higher in comprehension-based assessments compared to those in traditional lecture-only classrooms (UNESCO, 2018). Research equally shows that teacher attitudes significantly shape student outcomes. For example, in Finland, where education outcomes consistently rank high, teachers are trained to view instructional materials as essential mediators of learning rather than supplementary tools (Eneh-Onyejeli, 2025). Similarly, in the UK and the US, English language teachers trained to use digital instructional tools often report higher student engagement (Hattie, 2019). In contrast, in many African contexts,

inadequate training and resource constraints hinder positive integration (UNESCO, 2020). In countries such as Ghana and Kenya, government-led initiatives have improved access to instructional aids, yet success stories reveal that teacher attitudes, not just availability, determine real outcomes (World Bank, 2020).

This paper therefore takes the position that teachers' positive attitudes toward the use of instructional materials are a catalyst for improved English language learning in Nigerian and African secondary schools. By situating teacher attitudes within the broader educational context, the paper highlights their role as both a mediating and amplifying factor in ensuring that instructional resources achieve their intended purpose. In doing so, it underscores the need for policies and practices that not only provide adequate materials but also cultivate favorable teacher dispositions toward their use.

### **Aims and Objectives**

This paper discusses the attitude of English Language teachers towards the use of instructional materials and the attendant effects of its usage on improved English Language learning in secondary school. The specific objectives are to;

- I. Identify the attitudes of English Language teachers towards the use of instructional materials
- II. Discuss improved language learning in secondary schools

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Concept of Instructional Materials**

Instructional materials are the physical and digital resources teachers employ to simplify teaching and foster learning. These include textbooks, pictures, charts, maps, flashcards, real objects (realia), videos, projectors, and interactive software (Ibrahim, 2020). According to Olagunju (2018), instructional materials act as bridges between theoretical explanations and real-life applications, thereby making learning more concrete and engaging. Studies across sub-Saharan Africa have emphasized the role of teachers using instructional materials in promoting retention and ensuring language skills are acquired in context. For instance, a classroom using role-play cards for dialogue practice recorded higher fluency levels compared to those relying solely on rote learning (Nwachukwu, 2020). Globally, the use of instructional materials has been linked to improved performance in second-language acquisition. In Japan, for instance, the use of multimedia-based language labs has been shown to significantly improve pronunciation and listening comprehension among high school learners (Tanaka, 2017).

#### **Teachers' Attitudes toward Instructional Materials**

Teachers' attitudes are shaped by beliefs, training, prior experiences, and the perceived usefulness of materials. Positive attitudes often translate into proactive integration of aids, improvisation where resources are lacking and enthusiasm that inspires learners (Adeyemi, 2017). Conversely, negative attitudes manifest as resistance to change, excessive reliance on teacher-centered lectures, and minimal student engagement (Chukwu, 2020). Obidike and Onwuka (2019) observed that students taught by teachers with high enthusiasm towards instructional aids demonstrated a 15% higher pass rate in English comprehension tests. International research echoes these findings. In Finland, where teacher training emphasizes resource-based pedagogy, students consistently outperform peers in English literacy (OECD, 2019). In contrast, in some Nigerian classrooms, lack of motivation or professional training causes teachers to underutilize available aids (Agboola, 2019).

Positive attitudes often result in innovative and consistent application of instructional resources in the classroom, while negative attitudes are linked to neglect, over-reliance on chalk-and-talk methods, and resistance to technological adoption (Adeyemi, 2017). In Nigerian classrooms, for example, some teachers show enthusiasm for integrating ICT-based resources, while others remain skeptical, perceiving them as distractions rather than tools for learning (Obidike and Onwuka, 2019). In contrast, countries like Singapore have institutionalized professional development programs that train teachers to embrace digital and traditional instructional resources as complementary rather than competing.

### **Instructional Materials and English Language Learning**

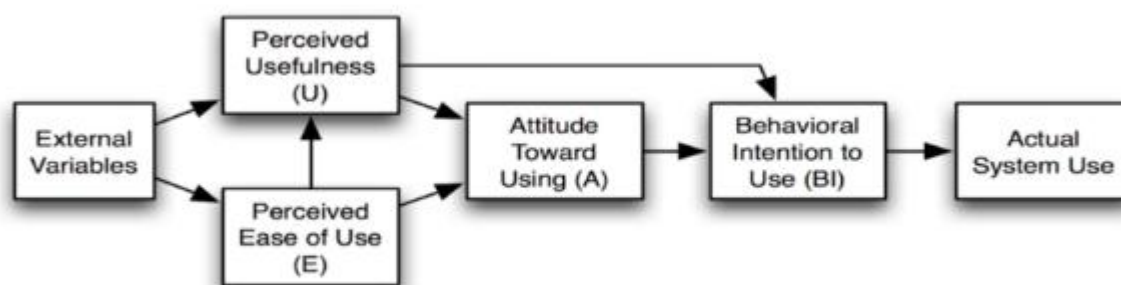
English language learning demands mastery of four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Instructional materials enhance these by promoting practice, contextualization, and multisensory engagement. For example, audio devices improve pronunciation and listening comprehension, while visual charts help learners grasp grammar patterns. Digital applications such as language learning software also allow individualized pacing and feedback (Yusuf, 2018). According to Nwachukwu (2020), the consistent integration of instructional aids can significantly reduce common errors in writing and reading fluency and serve as catalysts for improving these skills by providing opportunities for practice, interaction, and contextual learning (Nwachukwu, 2020). For instance, audio-visual aids enhance listening and speaking abilities, while flashcards and charts facilitate reading and writing. A positive teacher attitude ensures that these materials are integrated into lesson delivery for maximum effect. Classroom-based evidence shows that students exposed to diverse instructional resources develop stronger cognitive links, resulting in improved vocabulary retention and grammar accuracy (Yusuf, 2018).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the perspectives of two major theories: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Theory and the Constructivist Learning Theory.

**Technology Acceptance Model (TAM):** TAM posits that an individual's acceptance of a new tool depends on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). Applied

to education, teachers are more likely to integrate instructional materials, including ICT-based ones, when they believe such tools improve learning and are easy to manage (Wilcox et al., 2024). Positive attitudes, therefore, function as mediators between availability and actual use of instructional resources. This theory was originally designed to explain technology adoption. TAM is relevant for digital instructional aids. Teachers' perceptions of usefulness and ease of use shape their willingness to adopt multimedia, projectors, and online instructional resources. Positive attitudes therefore directly influence integration levels and student outcomes.



### Technology Acceptance Model Theory (TAM)

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S026840121830553X>

**Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, Vygotsky):** The Constructivist Learning Theory, advanced by Piaget and Vygotsky, emphasizes that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment. Instructional materials align with this by providing learners with visual, auditory, and tactile stimuli that support self-discovery and contextual understanding (Pouts-Lajus and Riche-Magnier, 2000). A teacher's positive attitude fosters constructivist classrooms where learners take ownership of their progress. Instructional materials provide learners with concrete experiences that help them form mental models of abstract language concepts. For example, using role-play or dialogue cards in English classes allows students to practice real-life communication scenarios, making learning authentic and participatory. This theory suggests that learners construct knowledge actively through interaction with their environment. Instructional materials serve as scaffolds, allowing learners to connect new concepts with prior knowledge (Osei and Boateng, 2022). Teachers' attitudes toward these materials determine whether classrooms function as passive lecture halls or active learning environments.

Therefore, by combining TAM and constructivism, this paper highlights that teacher attitudes are not only shaped by perceptions of usefulness but also by philosophical orientations toward active, student-centered learning.

### Policy Framework

Policy frameworks in Nigeria and Africa also acknowledge the importance of instructional materials. The Nigerian Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2021–2025 outlines resource-based teaching as a priority area (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021). Similarly, the African Union’s Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25) emphasizes the integration of innovative instructional strategies and teacher training (African Union, 2022). At the global level, UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report (2023) highlights instructional materials, including digital resources, as critical for equitable and effective learning.

Despite these policy aspirations, gaps exist between policy and practice. Teachers often face systemic barriers such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and lack of professional development opportunities. These barriers weaken teacher motivation and hinder effective classroom practice (Okafor and Adeniran, 2023). Thus, academic research and policy documents converge on a central point that while instructional materials are vital, teacher attitudes are decisive in determining their classroom utility.

## Conclusion

Teachers’ attitudes towards instructional materials play a pivotal role in shaping the quality of English language learning in secondary schools. A positive attitude not only enhances comprehension and motivation but also fosters inclusivity, creativity, and critical thinking. Conversely, negative attitudes undermine students’ learning outcomes and perpetuate ineffective pedagogy. By drawing lessons from international best practices and grounding recommendations in educational theories, it becomes clear that sustained professional development, adequate resourcing, and positive reinforcement are essential for transforming classrooms. Ultimately, cultivating positive teacher attitudes toward instructional materials is not just a matter of improving English language proficiency but also an investment in equipping students with the communication skills necessary for global citizenship and lifelong learning.

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