

# Mitigating Academic Decline in English Language Skills through Aspectual Diversification and Curriculum–Practice Convergence: A Multi-Theoretical Perspective Based on PTAPD, ADLL, and CPCT

PHILIP ABAYOMI OLORUNFEMI<sup>1</sup>, MUSTAPHA BAYARO<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>*Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria*

*Abstract- Persistent decline in students' academic performance in English Language across Nigerian secondary schools has raised critical concerns for educators, curriculum planners, and policymakers. This paper synthesizes three contemporary theoretical contributions: Philip's Theory of Academic Performance Decline (PTAPD), the Aspectual Diversification in Language Learning Theory (ADLL), and the Curriculum–Practice Convergence Theory (CPCT) to construct a multi-theoretical lens for diagnosing and addressing the crisis. Drawing from national examination trends, curriculum studies, and second language acquisition literature, the paper argues that English Language underachievement is not merely a product of poor instructional quality but a systemic interplay of cognitive overload, undiversified pedagogical practices, and longstanding gaps between prescribed curriculum expectations and classroom realities. PTAPD provides a diagnostic framework explaining the cognitive, structural, and motivational triggers of learning decline; ADLL advances an innovative pedagogical model that promotes multi-teacher, aspect-based instruction for grammar, comprehension, writing, oral communication, and literature; and CPCT highlights the pressing need to realign curriculum documents with feasible classroom enactment. Through a conceptual synthesis of these theories, the paper proposes an Expanded Academic Recovery (EAR) Model that integrates instructional diversification, curriculum streamlining, teacher re-specialisation, and assessment reform as pathways toward mitigating English Language performance decline. This paper contributes a theoretically grounded and practice-oriented agenda for strengthening English Language education in Nigerian secondary schools and provides a foundation for future empirical research in curriculum innovation, language pedagogy, and educational policy reform.*

**Keywords:** *Academic decline, PTAPD, Aspectual Diversification, ADLL, Curriculum–Practice Convergence, CPCT, English Language Education*

## I. INTRODUCTION

English Language remains a critical academic subject and an essential tool for communication, cognitive development, and academic progression in many African nations, particularly in Nigeria where English functions as the official language and the medium of instruction. Yet, despite decades of curricular reform, teacher training initiatives, and pedagogical innovations, student performance in English Language continues to reveal worrying patterns of decline. Public examinations consistently report low achievement in core English competencies, including reading comprehension, grammar, listening, continuous writing, and vocabulary development (Adegbite, 2020; Okonkwo and Obidike, 2022). This decline is not merely an academic concern; it undermines students' preparedness for higher education, employment, and social integration. Scholars have attempted to explain the phenomenon through various lenses, such as teacher quality (Adebayo, 2019), instructional strategies (Olaoye, 2017), learner motivation (Akinbo, 2021), curriculum overload (Udosen, 2018), and language environment constraints (Bamgbose, 2014). While each perspective highlights valuable insights, none provides a holistic, interconnected theoretical framework capable of systematically diagnosing performance decline while also prescribing sustainable remedies. The absence of such a framework has contributed to fragmented interventions, many of which address symptoms rather than structural causes.

This paper advances a multi-theoretical approach grounded in three novel theories developed by Philip Abayomi Olorunfemi:

- i. Philip's Theory of Academic Performance Decline (PTAPD): a diagnostic theory explaining the structural, cognitive,

motivational, and systemic factors underlying academic decline.

- ii. Aspectual Diversification in Language Learning Theory (ADLL): an instructional theory proposing the specialization of English Language skill components for improved mastery.
- iii. Curriculum–Practice Convergence Theory (CPCT): a sustainability theory arguing that alignment between curriculum intent and classroom implementation predicts learning outcomes.

These theories collectively form a conceptual triad capable of illuminating the roots of English Language decline and offering a coherent pathway toward remediation. The purpose of this positioning paper is not to empirically validate the theories but to establish their conceptual grounding, delineate their relevance to contemporary debates in English Language pedagogy, and integrate them into a unified theoretical framework. Such positioning is vital for four reasons. First, theoretical clarity is foundational for developing effective interventions. Without understanding why decline occurs, policy responses become superficial or misdirected. PTAPD offers a multi-dimensional explanation that encapsulates pedagogical, cognitive, institutional, and sociocultural determinants. Second, the complexity of English Language as a discipline demands specialized instructional approaches. ADLL argues that a single teacher cannot adequately teach grammar, listening, reading, writing, literature, phonology, and vocabulary with equal expertise. In an era of expanding linguistic demands, diversification of instructional roles may yield deeper learning.

Third, curriculum reforms often fail because classroom practice does not reflect curriculum intentions. CPCT highlights the importance of fidelity, pedagogical readiness, and systemic coherence in actualizing curricular goals. This addresses the long-standing “theory–practice gap” discussed by curriculum scholars (Fullan, 2019; Ornstein and Hunkins, 2018). Fourth, integrating these theories yields a comprehensive explanatory and prescriptive model. While PTAPD diagnoses the causes of decline, ADLL proposes a targeted pedagogical innovation, and CPCT ensures long-term alignment and sustainability. Given the urgent need to improve English Language outcomes,

especially within multilingual educational contexts, this paper contributes a foundational theoretical structure that invites empirical testing, policy formulation, and practical adaptation.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### The English-Language Learning Crisis in Secondary Schools

Over the past two decades, national and regional assessment data and multiple scholarly reviews have signaled persistent underachievement in English Language among secondary-school learners in Nigeria and comparable contexts (Adewuyi, 2020; Okonkwo and Obidike, 2022; Ojo and Adetunji, 2021). These studies report systematic weaknesses across several interlinked domains: reading fluency and comprehension, accurate and confident written expression, grammatical competence, vocabulary depth, and receptive listening ability. Patterns show that decline is not limited to isolated cohorts or single exam sittings but recurs across years and exam boards, pointing to systemic rather than ephemeral causes (Adewuyi, 2020; Okonkwo and Obidike, 2022).

### Common Explanations and their Limits

The literature commonly attributes low performance to teacher quality deficits, large class sizes, inadequate instructional materials, insufficient exposure to English outside school, and socioeconomic constraints (Adebayo, 2019; Olaoye, 2017; Bamgbose, 2014). While each factor is real and consequential, these explanations often remain partial and descriptive rather than integrative. They identify risk factors but do not provide an organizing model that explains how these factors interact to produce the recurring phenomenon of broad-based academic decline. Consequently, interventions based on single-factor reasoning (e.g., teacher professional development without curriculum realignment) frequently deliver modest and unsustained gains (Fullan, 2019).

### Need for Theoretical Integration

Addressing the crisis effectively therefore requires a theoretical scaffold that:

- i. diagnoses the multi-layered causes of decline,
- ii. proposes targeted instructional remedies, and
- iii. Ensures fidelity of implementation within curriculum ecosystems.

The triadic integration of PTAPD, ADLL, and CPCT offers such a scaffold: PTAPD as diagnostic architecture, ADLL as a practical instructional redesign, and CPCT as the mechanism for ensuring sustainable curriculum enactment. The remainder of this part explicates each theory in depth and demonstrates their conceptual complementarity.

#### Theoretical Foundations

##### Philip's Theory of Academic Performance Decline (PTAPD)

PTAPD is formulated as a comprehensive diagnostic theory explaining why student performance in academic domains may systematically deteriorate over time despite episodic reforms. PTAPD posits that academic decline is not a unitary event but the emergent result of interacting failures across five principal domains: structural, pedagogical, cognitive, motivational, and systemic. Each domain contains subcomponents and causal pathways; together they create feedback loops that, if unchecked, produce entrenched underachievement.

##### The Five PTAPD Domains and Mechanisms

###### 1. Structural Decline

Structural decline refers to material and organizational conditions that degrade learning environments: inadequate instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms, poor physical infrastructure, and unstable timetabling. These constraints reduce opportunities for practice and meaningful engagement, hampering the cumulative development of language skills (Adewuyi, 2020). Structural deficits also raise teacher workload and reduce the time available for differentiated instruction.

###### 2. Pedagogical Decline

Pedagogical decline denotes erosion in the quality and appropriateness of instructional methods. It arises from a mismatch between teachers' pedagogical repertoires and the evolving demands of language teaching (e.g., listening pedagogy, process writing, explicit vocabulary instruction). Pedagogical decline can result when in-service training is generic and fails to build deep, skill-specific competence (Adebayo, 2019; Richards & Rodgers, 2017).

###### 3. Cognitive decline

Cognitive decline captures reductions in students' capacity for attention, working memory, and metacognitive regulation that are necessary for complex language processing. This domain recognizes that repeated exposure to fragmented or low-quality instruction can impair strategies such as inferencing, monitoring comprehension, and planning extended written discourse (Krashen, 1982; Cummins, 2017). Cognitive decline is both outcome and amplifier: poor teaching reduces cognitive skill development, which in turn limits the capacity to benefit from subsequent instruction.

###### 4. Motivational decline

Motivation is critical to sustained effort in language learning. Motivational decline emerges when learners experience repeated failure, perceive low relevance of tasks, or encounter teaching that lacks autonomy, mastery, and relatedness features. Declining motivation reduces engagement and practice vital for language acquisition creating a negative spiral that reinforces underperformance (Akinbo, 2021).

###### 5. Systemic decline

Systemic decline describes breakdowns in policy, curriculum design, assessment alignment, and accountability systems that make it difficult to sustain high-quality practice across schools. Examples include frequent curriculum revisions without adequate teacher preparation, high-stakes examinations that skew classroom priorities, and weak monitoring of curriculum enactment (Fullan, 2019; Ornstein and Hunkins, 2018).

##### Interaction and Feedback Loops

PTAPD emphasizes interaction effects for example, structural overcrowding (structural) raises teacher workload leading to superficial lesson delivery (pedagogical), producing repeated student failure (motivational) and reducing opportunities for

cognitive strategy development (cognitive). At the systemic level, poor accountability allows pedagogical drift to persist. PTAPD thus frames decline as emergent and path-dependent rather than isolated or random.

#### Propositions and Testable Claims

PTAPD yields several falsifiable propositions relevant to English Language learning:

P1: Schools with higher levels of structural deficit will show larger declines in cumulative English proficiency, controlling for student background.

P2: Pedagogical specialization (targeted teacher expertise) mitigates the negative effects of structural deficit on skill acquisition.

P3: When curriculum–practice convergence is low, instructional innovations produce only transient improvements

#### Aspectual Diversification in Language Learning Theory (ADLL)

ADLL argues that English Language is multi-dimensional and that deep mastery requires specialized instructional focus on distinct aspects listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and discourse competence. The central claim is that specialization of instructional roles (e.g., assigning teachers with specific expertise to teach listening or writing) produces greater depth of instruction, more appropriate pedagogical methods, and superior student outcomes than a single generalist approach.

#### Theoretical Support and Mechanisms

ADLL draws on differentiation theory (Tomlinson, 2014) and applied linguistics research showing that different language subskills require distinct teaching strategies (Richards and Rodgers, 2017). Mechanisms include improved pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) for each skill area, more precise assessment and feedback, and curriculum sequencing that allows deeper skill scaffolding.

#### Relationship to PTAPD

Within the PTAPD architecture, ADLL functions as a pedagogical remediation: it directly counters pedagogical decline by reducing teacher role overload, enhancing instructional quality for discrete skills, and improving cognitive scaffolding for learners. ADLL thus operationalizes one pathway for reversing the pedagogical and cognitive components of PTAPD.

Curriculum–Practice Convergence Theory (CPCT)  
CPCT foregrounds the alignment between curriculum intent (what the curriculum documents prescribe) and classroom practice (what teachers enact). The theory posits that convergence (high fidelity, coherent enactment, and shared understanding) is necessary for curriculum goals to translate into student learning. CPCT also attends to systemic enablers (professional development, assessment alignment, leadership) that sustain convergence.

#### Mechanisms and Supporting Literature

Curriculum studies have long emphasized enactment fidelity as crucial to reform success (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2018; Fullan, 2019). CPCT specifies that convergence requires (a) teacher conceptual clarity about curricular aims, (b) availability of resources to enact prescribed pedagogies, and (c) monitoring and feedback loops to identify drift. In English education, CPCT highlights that innovations like ADLL must be embedded in curriculum support systems otherwise they risk being irregular or unsustainable. CPCT primarily addresses the systemic domain of PTAPD. Where systemic decline prevents curriculum intent from reaching classrooms, even well-designed pedagogies (ADLL) will fail to scale or persist. CPCT therefore operates as a governance and implementation theory ensuring that remedial interventions have structural longevity. While PTAPD identifies the multi-source causes of decline, ADLL prescribes a targeted instructional reconfiguration to remedy pedagogical and cognitive causes. CPCT ensures the systemic alignment required for ADLL to be implemented consistently and for PTAPD’s systemic causes to be addressed. Together they create a diagnostic-intervention-sustainability pipeline that can be operationalized in policy and later tested empirically.

#### Philosophical Foundations Underpinning the Theoretical Triad

A sound positioning requires grounding in philosophical principles that justify the coherence of the chosen theories. The present study draws on constructivism, systems theory, and educational realism, each providing a logical basis for PTAPD, ADLL, and CPCT respectively.

#### Constructivism and the Logic of Aspectual Diversification

Constructivist theorists argue that learning is most effective when learners construct meaning from varied, authentic, and differentiated experiences (Bruner, 1996; Tomlinson, 2014). ADLL builds on this principle by proposing that English Language learning should not be delivered as a monolithic body of content. Instead, it should be segmented into distinct cognitive aspects: grammar, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, oral fluency, listening proficiency, creative composition, and editing. Through this diversification, learners receive specialized instructional input that matches their cognitive readiness and specific linguistic needs, which enhances conceptual clarity and long-term retention (Akinbo, 2021). Thus, ADLL's premise aligns naturally with constructivist thinking: learners construct linguistic competence more effectively through targeted micro-experiences rather than broad, undifferentiated instruction.

#### Systems Theory and the Curriculum–Practice Convergence Argument

Systems theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of educational components: curriculum structures, teaching practices, administrative policies, and assessment regimes and argues that dysfunctions arise when these elements fail to work in synergy (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2018). The CPCT advances this systemic logic by identifying misalignment as a central cause of academic decline. In many English classrooms, the curriculum demands complex language performance, such as inferential comprehension or coherent composition, yet:

- i. teachers lack adequate training to deliver these skills,
- ii. classrooms are overcrowded,
- iii. continuous assessment practices are inconsistent, and
- iv. national examinations test competencies not adequately taught in schools (Ojo and Adetunji, 2021).

CPCT posits that without structural congruence between what the curriculum prescribes and what teachers can realistically implement, even the most innovative pedagogy such as ADLL will fail to produce sustained improvement.

#### Educational Realism and the Diagnostic Lens of PTAPD

Educational realism maintains that learning outcomes are influenced by actual school conditions, not idealistic visions of what education should be (Marsh, 2020). PTAPD is rooted in this realist tradition. It argues that academic decline is not accidental; it is an accumulative and predictable phenomenon resulting from repeated exposure to ineffective instruction, learning gaps, student fatigue, and systemic inadequacies (Adewuyi, 2020). By conceptualising decline as progressive, PTAPD introduces a critical diagnostic vocabulary: decline trajectories, decline accumulation, decline inertia, and decline reinforcement. These constructs help explain why students often perform worse over time even when exposed to remedial interventions. PTAPD thus provides the foundational rationale for why new, diversified, and system-conscious interventions such as ADLL and CPCT are urgently needed.

#### Synthesizing PTAPD, ADLL, and CPCT: A Unified Theoretical Position

Rather than treating the three theories as isolated intellectual strands, this study positions them as mutually reinforcing components of a broader conceptual framework. Their integration serves a unique purpose: to produce a holistic understanding of English Language performance decline and its possible reversal.

#### PTAPD: The Diagnostic Pillar

PTAPD clarifies the nature, pattern, and drivers of decline. It answers the question:

“What exactly is deteriorating and why?”

It highlights:

- i. skill-specific erosion (e.g., reading or grammar gaps)
- ii. weakened motivation and academic self-efficacy
- iii. insufficient reinforcement of English sub-skills
- iv. cumulative deficits resulting from poor instructional sequencing

This diagnostic clarity establishes the problem definition that the other theories respond to.

#### ADLL: The Pedagogical Pillar

ADLL responds to PTAPD by proposing an instructional shift that is: differentiated, aspect-based, specialist-driven and micro-targeted. It suggests that English cannot be effectively taught by a single teacher managing multiple sub-domains

simultaneously (Krashen, 1982). By employing aspectual specialists, schools can:

- i. isolate the exact points of decline
- ii. intensify instructional reinforcement
- iii. create coherent skill-building pathways

This positions ADLL as the solution-generation theory within the triad.

#### CPCT: The Systemic Pillar

Even when pedagogy improves, systemic disconnections often neutralize its impact (Fullan, 2019). CPCT ensures that the diversification proposed by ADLL is not undermined by:

- i. rigid curricula,
- ii. insufficient instructional time,
- iii. misaligned assessments, or
- iv. contradictory administrative expectations.

Thus, CPCT provides the environmental and structural support necessary for ADLL to function and for PTAPD-identified decline to be reversed.

#### The Multi-Theoretical Positioning Argument

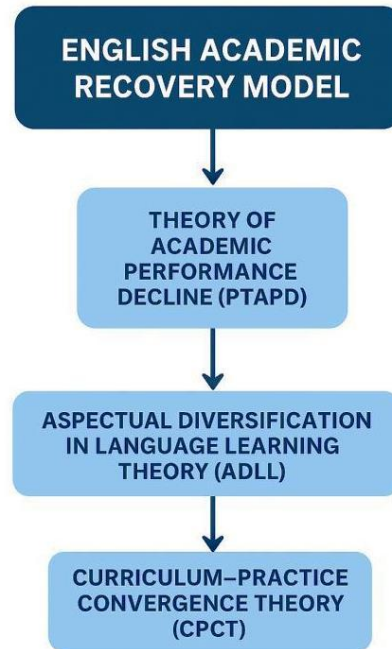
The paper advances the argument that English Language decline is a multidimensional crisis, and no single theoretical framework adequately explains or addresses it. Thus, the three theories collectively produce a positioning statement:

“Academic decline in English Language is best understood and mitigated through the combined influence of diagnostic insight (PTAPD), differentiated instructional restructuring (ADLL), and systemic alignment of educational components (CPCT)”.

This position challenges traditional remedial strategies that focus narrowly on teacher competence or student motivation. Instead, it conceptualises achievement as the outcome of interacting forces across cognitive, pedagogical, and systemic domains.

#### Conceptual Model: The English Academic Recovery (EAR) Framework

The integration of PTAPD, ADLL, and CPCT culminates in what can be termed the English Academic Recovery (EAR) Framework.



#### The English Academic Recovery (EAR) Model

The model follows a simple but powerful logic:

- i. PTAPD identifies what is declining
- ii. ADLL prescribes how to intervene
- iii. CPCT ensures the intervention is sustainable.

#### Pedagogical Implications of the Multi-Theoretical Model

The classroom is the operational site where theory meets practice. The fusion of PTAPD, ADLL, and CPCT creates several pedagogical imperatives.

#### Adoption of Aspectual Diversification in Instruction

One of the strongest implications of ADLL is the restructuring of English Language teaching around aspectual specialization. This means reorganising teaching responsibilities so that each teacher becomes a specialist in one domain of English, such as:

- i. grammar and structure
- ii. comprehension strategies
- iii. vocabulary development
- iv. listening and oral fluency
- v. writing and editing

Specialisation enhances teacher expertise, deepens instructional quality, and aligns with findings in differentiated instruction that specialised teaching improves learner outcomes (Tomlinson, 2014). Such diversification also ensures that learners receive consistent reinforcement in each micro-aspect of

English: an approach shown to promote mastery in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

#### Continuous Diagnostic Assessment Based on PTAPD

PTAPD emphasizes that decline is cumulative and progressive. This suggests a strong need for regular diagnostic assessments that identify decline trajectories early.

Teachers must implement:

- i. periodic micro-skill tests
- ii. classroom-based formative assessments
- iii. proficiency mapping across English sub-skills
- iv. targeted feedback cycles

These practices align with the argument of (Black and Wiliam, 2018) that formative assessment significantly amplifies learning when systematically embedded in instruction. Diagnostic data also provide the empirical basis for assigning learners to specialized intervention groups under the ADLL structure.

#### Enhanced Collaborative Pedagogy

ADLL inherently requires a multi-teacher collaborative model. Teachers must:

- i. jointly design lesson plans
- ii. engage in cross-aspect consultation
- iii. track learners' progress across skill domains
- iv. collectively review diagnostic data
- v. hold reflective meetings on decline indicators

Collaborative practice is widely supported in teacher-effectiveness research, which shows that teacher teamwork contributes to improved instructional quality and learner achievement (Vangrieken et al., 2015).

#### Instructional Reinforcement Cycles

PTAPD suggests that academic decline grows when weaknesses are not reinforced. ADLL therefore necessitates intentional reinforcement cycles, where learners revisit and practice previously taught aspects at structured intervals. Such cyclical reinforcement draws on the "spiral curriculum" concept advanced by (Bruner, 1996), which posits that learning improves when concepts reappear with increasing complexity.

#### Curriculum Implications of the CPCT Framework

While pedagogy reforms the classroom, curriculum reforms reshape the broader instructional landscape. CPCT asserts that English Language improvement is impossible without aligning curriculum intentions with classroom realities.

#### Balancing Curriculum Content with Classroom Time

One of the misalignments highlighted by CPCT is curriculum overload. Research in Nigerian and African contexts has identified curriculum congestion as a major contributor to underperformance (Udosen, 2018).

Therefore, the curriculum must be decluttered, ensuring that:

- i. the volume of content matches available instructional time
- ii. tasks correspond to developmental readiness
- iii. teachers have sufficient room for reinforcement and assessment

A balanced curriculum enhances both instructional depth and learner comprehension.

#### Strengthening Instructional Coherence through Professional Competency Alignment

One major implication of PTAPD is the recognition that instructional fragmentation—where teachers operate with uneven mastery of English macro-skills magnifies learners' cognitive confusion and widens performance gaps (Adewuyi, 2020; Ojo and Adetunji, 2021). ADLL responds to this challenge by proposing aspectual specialization, which encourages English teachers to build deep expertise in specific components: grammar, comprehension, writing, oral communication rather than spreading thin across all areas. To operationalize this in practice, teacher education programmes must adopt a competency-alignment model, where prospective English teachers develop major and minor areas of specialization. This approach mirrors best practices in advanced educational systems where language educators are trained as reading specialists, writing instructors, speech communication experts, or applied linguists (Richards & Rodgers, 2017). For Nigeria's multilingual ESL context, such alignment prevents the "generalist trap," where a teacher's weakness in one aspect negatively impacts the entire instructional spectrum. Furthermore, the CPCT underscores that curriculum expectations should match teacher capacity, meaning that if the

curriculum prescribes rigorous writing tasks, teachers must be professionally equipped to teach writing effectively. Misalignment between curricular difficulty and teacher capability exacerbates performance decline a central claim in PTAPD.

#### Re-Engineering the Curriculum through the Lens of Functional Literacy

The English curriculum in many African contexts has been critiqued for being overly theoretical and insufficiently responsive to real-world communicative demands (Marsh, 2020; Fullan, 2019). The CPCT advances the idea that curricula should not only articulate learning outcomes but embed practice pathways that make the outcomes attainable.

To mitigate English performance decline, the curriculum must:

- i. Embed skill-specific modules aligned with ADLL (e.g., a dedicated “Grammar for Communication” module, a “Reading-to-Learn” module, and a “Creative Writing Lab”).
- ii. Integrate real-life literacy tasks such as note-taking, summarizing media content, oral argumentation, and digital writing.
- iii. Use spiral progression, ensuring that learners revisit core skills at increasing complexity levels.

This aligns with constructivist perspectives that view language mastery as a cumulative process shaped by prior knowledge and active engagement (Bruner, 1996; Vygotsky in Lantolf, 2014). When the curriculum emphasizes functional literacy, learners perceive English as a tool for thinking, expressing, negotiating, and participating in academic and social spaces thereby narrowing the motivational gap highlighted in PTAPD.

#### Policy-Level Interventions for Sustainable English Language Recovery

At the policy level, PTAPD, ADLL, and CPCT collectively demonstrate that English performance decline is not merely a school-level problem, but a national educational concern requiring structural reforms. Effective policy interventions should include:

- i. National Standard for English Teaching Competencies

Governments and curriculum agencies should establish a national competency benchmark that guides recruitment, training, and professional development of English teachers. This ensures that only teachers with demonstrable proficiency in specific English components are assigned to teach them, thus implementing the ADLL principle system-wide.

#### ii. Mandatory Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Framework

A CPD system aligned with CPCT must be introduced to ensure that teachers continuously update their instructional practices in line with curriculum revisions. Research shows that systematic CPD reduces performance gaps across schools and improves instructional effectiveness (Guskey, 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2017). Through this, teachers remain responsive to evolving curriculum demands.

#### Policy Support for Instructional Differentiation

(Tomlinson, 2014) demonstrated that differentiated instruction can mitigate learning disparities. ADLL inherently promotes differentiation by recognizing learners’ varied strengths across English aspects. Policymakers should therefore mandate differentiated learning plans, formative assessments, and remedial structures within English instruction.

#### The Learner as the Centre: Reformulating Motivation, Agency, and Engagement

A major implication of PTAPD is that learners’ diminishing interest and perceived difficulty of English contribute significantly to performance decline (Akinbo, 2021). Thus, pedagogical and curricular changes must prioritize learner motivation and agency. ADLL offers a solution by ensuring that learners experience success in smaller units: grammar mastery, reading fluency, vocabulary consolidation before confronting complex integrative tasks. This builds learner confidence, which (Bandura, 1995) identifies as a key determinant of academic success. Furthermore, CPCT’s insistence on practical engagement ensures that learners perceive English not as an abstract academic requirement, but as a lived skill with cultural, academic, and social relevance. When learners begin to “see” English in their daily interactions, digital spaces, professional aspirations, and peer networks, their engagement strengthens naturally.

### III. IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORIES

### Implications for English Language Teachers and Teacher Preparation Systems

The implications of the tri-theoretical framework for teacher competence are profound. PTAPD positions teacher quality as a significant determinant of: academic decline, identifying inadequate content knowledge, uneven mastery across language skills, and ineffective instructional delivery as common early indicators of performance deterioration. This aligns with global research that consistently links student achievement to teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Hattie, 2015). The rise of academic decline in English is therefore not accidental; it reflects long-standing gaps in teacher preparation and deployment.

ADLL directly addresses this issue by proposing aspectual specialization, where teachers develop deep competence in particular English components: grammar, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, oral communication, or writing. This specialization is not merely administrative; it reflects the cognitive reality that mastery of language micro-skills requires targeted expertise (Richards and Rodgers, 2017). Empirical evidence from studies in applied linguistics suggests that teachers with strong domain-specific knowledge produce better learning outcomes than generalist instructors (Borg, 2018). The CPCT further amplifies this implication by emphasizing the alignment between teacher capacity and curriculum demands. A well-designed curriculum is ineffective if teachers lack the knowledge and skills to implement it. Therefore, teacher preparation institutions must integrate more robust training in curriculum interpretation, diagnostic assessment, formative feedback, and skill-based pedagogy. In sum, the tri-theoretical framework implies that teacher education must shift from broad, generalist English training to competency-based, aspect-driven, curriculum-aligned preparation. Without this paradigm shift, English Language decline will persist in spite of reforms.

### Implications for Learners and the Learning Process

From the learner perspective, PTAPD highlights the emotional and cognitive dimensions of academic decline. Students experiencing difficulty in English literacy often develop negative attitudes, reduced motivation, and a weakened academic identity (Akinbo, 2021). PTAPD therefore locates decline not

only in structural challenges but also in the learner's psychological state. ADLL offers a learner-friendly response by promoting micro-skill mastery. Through aspect-based lessons, students receive smaller, manageable, confidence-building tasks, which psychologically reduce the threat associated with language learning. This supports Bandura's (1995) theory of self-efficacy, which posits that students who experience small, progressive successes become more motivated to pursue larger academic challenges. The Curriculum-Practice Convergence Theory (CPCT) also creates positive implications for learners. A curriculum that aligns with classroom practice ensures that learners encounter coherent, structured, and scaffolded learning experiences. This consistency reinforces cognitive stability, supports retention, and promotes deeper comprehension (Bruner, 1996; Marsh, 2020). Through the EAR model introduced earlier, learners are positioned as active agents who co-construct knowledge through multimodal literacy practices, collaborative learning circles, performance tasks, and reflective activities. This represents a shift from traditional passive learning towards a more engaged, dynamic learning culture. Thus, the tri-theoretical framework implies that learners can recover from academic decline when instructional, curricular, and psychological supports converge around their developmental needs.

### Implications for Curriculum Development and National Educational Policy

The implications for curriculum developers and policy makers are equally extensive. CPCT argues strongly that curriculum success depends on its practical realizability. A curriculum that is theoretically sound but structurally misaligned with teacher capacity, available resources, or classroom realities will fail to achieve expected outcomes (Fullan, 2019). In many contexts, especially in African education systems, English curricula remain overloaded, abstract, and insufficiently anchored in real-world communication demands. By integrating ADLL, curriculum designers must restructure English Language syllabi into skill-based strands with explicit performance indicators for each aspect of language instruction. The curriculum should articulate not only what to teach, but how each skill should be taught, practiced, assessed, and reinforced. PTAPD provides policy makers with a diagnostic lens for identifying system-level precursors of academic decline such as inconsistent teacher deployment, insufficient professional development,

poor supervision, and the absence of early-warning assessment systems. Policies must therefore go beyond curriculum reform to include:

- i. competency-based teacher licensing;
- ii. continuous professional development;
- iii. school-level monitoring systems;
- iv. diagnostic assessment frameworks;
- v. performance accountability structures.

These implications indicate that English Language reform is not achievable through isolated curriculum revisions but requires systemic coherence across teacher education, curriculum design, assessment regulations, and school governance.

**Implications for Schools and Leadership Structures**  
School leadership plays a crucial mediating role in translating theoretical reforms into classroom outcomes. PTAPD underscores that academic decline often begins when instructional weaknesses go unmonitored, unnoticed, or unaddressed at the school level. Therefore, principals and English department heads must establish robust internal monitoring mechanisms. ADLL requires leadership to allocate teaching responsibilities based on teacher competence rather than administrative convenience. This means deploying teachers as grammar specialists, reading specialists, writing instructors, and oral communication facilitators based on demonstrable mastery. CPCT demands that schools convene Curriculum–Practice Alignment Meetings (CPAMs) where teachers analyze learning outcomes, plan strategies for implementation, and evaluate the degree of congruence between expected standards and classroom realities. Thus, the implications for school leadership are clear: they must become instructional leaders, not just administrative overseers. Their role includes coordinating diagnostic assessments, guiding aspectual specialization, ensuring curriculum fidelity, supervising classroom instruction, and sustaining professional learning communities.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated that English Language performance decline is a multi-layered problem requiring a theoretically comprehensive response. Through the integration of PTAPD, ADLL, and CPCT, a rich analytic framework has emerged that identifies the roots of decline, proposes specialized pedagogical solutions, and ensures systemic

alignment across classrooms, curricula, and policy structures. The proposed Expanded Academic Recovery Model (EARM) serves as the conceptual and operational heart of this framework. It synthesizes diagnostic mapping, aspectual specialization, curriculum–practice alignment, learner motivation activation, and continuous accountability. Together, these components offer a coherent route for reversing academic decline and building sustainable proficiency. The convergence of these theories thus represents a significant scholarly contribution to English Language Education. It charts a pathway for future empirical studies, informs large-scale educational reforms, and offers practical guidance for teachers, schools, and policy architects. Above all, it affirms that decline is not destiny and that with the right theoretical grounding and strategic alignment, English Language education can be revitalized for present and future generations.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the theoretical insights and implications discussed, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. There is need to establish aspect-based specialization pathways for English teacher education.
- ii. There is need to integrate modules on curriculum alignment, diagnostic literacy assessment, and differentiated instruction.
- iii. Practicum experiences should be strengthened by aligning them with ADLL and CPCT principles.
- iv. There is urgent need to develop a National English Teacher Competency Standards aligned with PTAPD indicators.
- v. There should be provision of structured, mandatory in-service professional development programs.
- vi. Policy makers should establish an English Language assessment council to monitor national trends and identify early signs of decline.
- vii. Schools should adopt the Integrated English Language Recovery Model (IELRM) as a whole-school improvement strategy.
- viii. School administrators should reassign English teachers according to their strongest aspects and provide mentoring for weaker areas.

- ix. School administrators should use diagnostic mapping tools to track learner performance and inform teaching.
- x. Teachers of English language are advised to participate in peer learning communities focused on shared problem-solving.
- xi. Teachers should employ multi-modal resources, creative instructional strategies, and formative assessment practices.
- xii. Teachers should maintain reflective teaching journals to document progress and challenges.
- xiii. Teachers should engage actively in literacy circles, practice-based writing sessions, and peer editing.
- xiv. Teachers should use digital tools (e.g., vocabulary apps, reading platforms) to reinforce classroom learning.
- xv. Teachers should develop self-monitoring habits by setting aspect-specific learning goals.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] S. O. Adebayo, Teacher qualification and students' achievement in English Language in senior secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Language Pedagogy and Instruction*, 2019, 11(2), 45–58.
- [2] W. Adegbite, Language policy, English dominance and the future of Nigerian multilingualism. Ibadan University Press, 2020
- [3] J.A Adewuyi, Persistent underachievement in English Language: Trends, causes and intervention opportunities. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Research and Evaluation*, 2020, 25(1), 72–89.
- [4] F. M. Akinbo, Motivation and learners' performance in English as a second language in Nigerian schools. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy Studies*, 2021, 9(3), 33–47.
- [5] R. Alexander, *Developing dialogic teaching: Genesis, process, trial*. Cambridge University Press, 2018
- [6] A. Bamgbose, The language ecology of Nigeria: Dynamics, challenges, and prospects. *Sociolinguistic Studies*, 2014 8(2), 231–248.
- [7] J. Bruner, *The culture of education*. Harvard University Press, 1996
- [8] J. Cummins, *Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters, 2017
- [9] L. Darling-Hammond, Teacher education around the world: What we have learned so far. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 2017 40(3), 291–309.
- [10] A. Fink, *Conducting research literature reviews: From the internet to paper (5th ed.)*. SAGE, 2020
- [11] M. Fullan, *The new meaning of educational change (5th ed.)*. Teachers College Press, 2019
- [12] X. Gao, and W. Wang, Rethinking language learning motivations in post-digital classrooms. *Language Teaching Research*, 2022 26(5), 751–767.
- [13] T.R. Guskey, *Get set, go! Planning and implementing effective professional learning*. Corwin, 2020
- [14] A. Hargreaves, and M. Fullan, *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. Teachers College Press, 2012
- [15] J. Harmer, *The practice of English language teaching (5th ed.)*. Pearson, 2015
- [16] J. Hattie, *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. Routledge, 2012
- [17] N. Hornberger and H. Link, Translanguaging and language education. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 2019, 39, 1–12.
- [18] S. Krashen, *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon, 1982
- [19] W. Littlewood, Communication-oriented language teaching: Where are we now? *TESOL Quarterly*, 2014, 48(3), 613–629.
- [20] C. J Marsh, *Key concepts for understanding curriculum (6th ed.)*. Routledge, 2020
- [21] Ojo, A. and Adetunji, T. (2021). Reviewing ten years of WAEC performance in English Language: Implications for teacher preparation. *African Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 2021, 5(1), 91–108.
- [22] C. Okonkwo and Obidike, Trends in students' performance in English Language in West African examinations: A diagnostic review. *West African Journal of Language and Literacy*, 2022, 4(1), 27–43.
- [23] A. A. Olaoye, Effective teaching strategies and students' learning outcomes in English comprehension. *Journal of English Language Education*, 2017, 14(1), 55–66.
- [24] N. P. Ololube, The problems and prospects of teaching English in Nigerian secondary schools.

- International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review, 2018, 5(2), 23–33.
- [25] A. C. Ornstein, and F. P. Hunkins, F. P. (2018). Curriculum: Foundations, principles and issues (7th ed.). Pearson, 2018
- [26] J. C. Richards, and T. Rodgers, Approaches and methods in language teaching (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press, 2017
- [27] A. Rogers and N. Horrocks, Teaching adults (5th ed.). Open University Press, 2019
- [28] D. H. Schunk, Learning theories: An educational perspective (8th ed.). Pearson, 2020
- [29] G. M. Slavich and P. G. Zimbardo, Transformational teaching: Theoretical underpinnings, basic principles, and core methods. Educational Psychology Review, 2012 24(4), 569–608.
- [30] C. A. Tomlinson, The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners (2nd ed.). ASCD, 2014
- [31] A. Udosen, Curriculum overload and instructional fatigue in secondary school English Language classrooms. Journal of Educational Thought and Practice, 2018, 10(2), 64–79.
- [32] UNESCO, Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education. UNESCO Publishing, 2021
- [33] L. L. Van, The ecology and semiotics of language learning: A sociocultural perspective. Springer, 2004
- [34] N. Wa Thiong'o, Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature. Heinemann, 2018