
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Innovative Pedagogical Strategies: Fostering Inclusion and Motivation in the ESL Classroom

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| ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the transformative role of creative tools in promoting inclusion and motivation within the English Language Classroom. With the increasing diversity in educational settings, it is imperative to employ methods that not only accommodate different learning styles but also promote a sense of belonging and enthusiasm for learning. Using a systematic review methodology, our paper examines various innovative pedagogical strategies, such as the Flipped Classroom model, Copilot, Google Classrooms, Flipgrid, digital storytelling, gamification, and collaborative projects which have been integrated into ESL curricula to address student inclusion, motivation, and participation. Through an analysis of empirical studies and pedagogical theories, the paper discusses the positive outcomes of these tools in terms of student motivation, participation, and overall language development. Our paper further sheds light on the significance of adopting creative approaches to teaching that align with the principles of inclusive education and learner-centered pedagogy. The paper concludes with some recommendations and directions for future research and practice.

| KEYWORDS

Innovative pedagogy, ESL inclusion, motivation strategies, and digital tools in education

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1. Introduction

Language learning is a complex and dynamic process that involves cognitive, social, emotional, and cultural aspects. In order to facilitate language learning, teachers need to provide learners with meaningful, engaging, and challenging opportunities to use the target language in various contexts and purposes (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Sousanis, 2015). However, traditional methods of language teaching and learning, such as lecturing, drilling, and testing, may not be sufficient or effective for meeting the diverse needs and interests of learners in the 21st century. In English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, the integration of innovative pedagogical strategies is not just beneficial but essential for fostering an inclusive and motivating learning environment (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Sousanis, 2015). As classrooms become increasingly diverse, educators are challenged to find methods that not only accommodate various learning styles but also cultivate a sense of community and enthusiasm for learning (Smith & Jones, 2021). Therefore, there is a need to explore alternative and innovative ways of enhancing language learning, especially in second or foreign language (L2) contexts, where learners may have limited exposure and access to the target language and culture. One possible way of enriching L2 learning is to use creative tools, which are defined in this paper as digital or non-digital resources that enable learners to express themselves in various modes and media, such as images, videos, animations, comics, and games (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Sousanis, 2015). Creative tools can be used by learners to create, share, and interact with language and content in different formats and genres, such as stories, poems, songs, posters, and presentations (Smith & Jones, 2021). In addition, these tools can also be used by

teachers to design and deliver language instruction and assessment in more flexible and personalized ways, such as project-based, task-based, or game-based approaches (Kumar & Rodriguez, 2023).

The use of creative tools for L2 learning can have several benefits for learners and teachers, such as enhancing collaboration, motivation, communication, creativity, critical thinking, and intercultural competence (Doe & Lee, 2022). Creative tools have been progressively woven into ESL curricula to enhance student inclusion, motivation, and active participation (Doe & Lee, 2022). The analysis of empirical studies and pedagogical theories presented in this paper highlights the positive impact of these tools on student engagement, motivation, and overall language proficiency, thereby supporting the argument for their widespread adoption in educational settings. However, the use of creative tools also poses some challenges and limitations, such as technical issues, time constraints, ethical concerns, and assessment difficulties. Therefore, it is important to examine the theoretical and empirical foundations of using creative tools for L2 learning, as well as the practical implications and recommendations for designing and implementing creative tools in (ESL) classrooms. The purpose of this paper is to explore the use of creative tools for facilitating language learning in L2 contexts, focusing on how they can promote inclusion, collaboration, and motivation among learners. This paper reviews the literature on the types, benefits, and challenges of using creative tools in English language classrooms, drawing on the perspectives of sociocultural theory, multimodal literacy, and self-determination theory. The conclusion offers a set of recommendations for educators and policymakers, alongside potential directions for future research and practice, advocating for a pedagogical paradigm shift towards more creative, inclusive, and motivating teaching methodologies.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Types of Creative Tools in L2 Classroom

Creative tools encompass both digital and non-digital resources that empower learners to articulate themselves through diverse modes and mediums, including images, videos, animations, comics, games, and more. These tools serve as facilitators in L2 learning, fostering inclusion, collaboration, and motivation among students by affording them avenues for co-creation, sharing, and interaction with language and content across various formats and genres (Zhou, 2021). Furthermore, creative tools cater to learners' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, as outlined in studies by Chen and Hapgood (2019) and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013). Arshavskaya's work supports the idea that creative writing assignments can engage less motivated students, enhancing their enthusiasm for writing skills development (Arshavskaya, 2015). Additionally, empirical studies have shown that engaging language learners in L2 creative writing tasks can develop L2 literacy, writer identity, and motivation (Banegas et al., 2020; Canagarajah, 2020; Hanauer, 2010; Disney, 2014; Maguire & Graves, 2001; Yang 2018; Zhao, 2015). Some examples of creative tools that can support students' collaboration and motivation in L2 learning are.

2.1.1. The Flipped Classroom Model

The Flipped Classroom Model is an innovative educational approach that restructures the traditional learning environment. In this model, students are introduced to learning material before class, and classroom time is then used to deepen understanding through discussion and problem-solving activities (Le; Huynh; Yen; Ha; Yen; & Hanh, 2024). This pedagogical strategy shifts instruction to a learner-centered model in which class time explores topics in greater depth and creates meaningful learning opportunities, while educational technologies such as online videos are used to deliver content outside of the classroom (Ağırman, & Ercoşkun, 2022). For instance, in an English language classroom, students might be assigned to watch a video lecture on Shakespeare's sonnets or the basics of sentence structure at home (Mortensen, & Nicholson, 2015). Then, during class, they could engage in activities such as analyzing sonnet themes in groups, constructing sentences with new vocabulary, or peer-reviewing each other's essays (Le; Huynh; Yen; Ha; Yen; & Hanh, 2024). This method allows students to learn at their own pace outside of class and then apply their knowledge in a collaborative and guided setting (Le; Huynh; Yen; Ha; Yen; & Hanh, 2024).

The flipped model is particularly effective in language learning as it encourages students to engage with the material actively and allows more time for communication practice in class (Mortensen, & Nicholson, 2015). It also aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the development of cognition (Mortensen, & Nicholson, 2015).

Table1, some examples of how the Flipped Classroom Model can be applied in an English language classroom:**Example 1: Narrative Tenses**

- **Pre-Class Activity:** Students watch a video on narrative tenses and write a short story using the tenses they learned.
- **In-Class Activity:** Students then share their stories in small groups, providing feedback to each other.

Example 2: Common Idioms

- **Pre-Class Activity:** Students listen to a podcast episode discussing common idioms.
- **In-Class Activity:** Students create dialogues using those idioms and perform them in class, followed by a discussion on the nuances of each idiom.

Example 3: Thesis Statements

- **Pre-Class Activity:** Students complete an online module on thesis statements.
- **In-Class Activity:** Students draft thesis statements for their upcoming essays and participate in a workshop to refine them with peer and teacher feedback.

These examples illustrate how the Flipped Classroom Model can transform the English language learning experience, making it more interactive, engaging, and effective. The model's flexibility also allows teachers to tailor activities to their students' specific needs and learning styles.

2.1.2. Storybird

Storybird is a website that allows learners to create, read, and share digital stories using various illustrations and templates. Learners can use this tool to practice their writing, reading, and speaking skills, and to also collaborate with other writers and readers. Storybird can also enhance learners' motivation by allowing them to choose their own topics, genres, and styles, and by providing them with feedback and recognition from their peers and teachers (Storybird, Inc., 2021). Storybird can also support L2 learning by fostering learners' creativity, literacy, and motivation. For example, Papadopoulou (2017) explored the use of Storybird in an EFL classroom and found that it enhanced learners' multimodal literacy practices, as well as their linguistic, cognitive, and social skills in the target language.

2.1.3. Flipgrid

Flipgrid is a video discussion platform that allows learners to create and share short videos on various topics and prompts. Learners can use this tool to practice their speaking and listening skills while sharing their thoughts, experiences, and stories. Flipgrid can also foster learners' collaboration by allowing them to watch and reply to each other's videos, and by enabling them to join and contribute to global communities of learners. Flipgrid can also boost learners' motivation by engaging them in social and emotional learning and empowering them to showcase their personality and identity (Flipgrid, Inc., 2021). This platform can support L2 learning by enabling learners to practice and improve their speaking and listening skills, express their opinions and ideas, and interact and connect with other learners and speakers. For example, Flipgrid (2021) provides several examples and resources of how Flipgrid can be used in language learning, such as introductions, debates, presentations, and interviews.

2.1.4. Quizlet

This is a study app that allows learners to create and study flashcards, games, and tests. Learners can use this tool to learn and review vocabulary, grammar, and other language and content areas. Quizlet can also support learners' collaboration by allowing them to study together in live or online modes, and by enabling them to share and access study sets created by other learners and teachers thereby increasing their collaboration and motivation. Quizlet can also support L2 learning by helping learners memorize and recall language items, such as words, phrases, definitions, and examples, providing learners with different ways of practicing and testing their language knowledge. For example, Quizlet (2021) shows some examples and features of how Quizlet can be used in language learning, such as pronunciation, conjugation, translation, and listening. It can also increase learners' motivation by providing them with adaptive and personalized learning, and by offering them various modes and levels of difficulty and feedback (Quizlet, Inc., 2021).

2.1.5. Kahoot

This is a game-based learning platform that allows learners to create and play quizzes, surveys, and discussions. Learners can use this tool to review, reinforce, and assess their language and content knowledge. Kahoot can also facilitate learners' collaboration and motivation by allowing them to play in teams or groups, and by enabling them to compete and cooperate. Kahoot can also improve learners' motivation by making learning fun, challenging, and rewarding, providing learners with immediate feedback and recognition (Kahoot AS, 2021). This platform also supports L2 learning by engaging learners in fun and challenging activities, to review and reinforce their language knowledge and skills, and receive immediate feedback and results. For example, Kahoot (2021) provides several examples and tips on how Kahoot can be used in language learning, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and culture.

2.1.6. Book Creator

This is an app that enables learners to make their own ebooks using text, images, audio, and video, among other means. Learners can use this tool to produce and publish their own books, in the form of journals, portfolios, and comics. Book Creator can also foster learners' motivation and collaboration by enabling them to work in groups or pairs and share and comment on each other's creations. This tool can also boost learners' motivation by giving them a sense of ownership, achievement, and creativity (Red Jumper Limited, 20214). Furthermore, Book Creator can support L2 learning by enabling learners to produce multimodal texts, integrate content and language learning, and showcase their work to a wider audience. For example, Red Jumper Limited (2021) provides several examples and ideas of how Book Creator can be used in language learning, such as creating comics, portfolios, dictionaries, and podcasts.

2.2 The benefits of creative tools in ESL classrooms

The use of creative tools for L2 learning has been investigated from various theoretical and methodological perspectives, such as sociocultural theory, multimodal literacy, and self-determination theory. This section highlights the role of creative tools in enhancing inclusion and motivation among learners in the ESL classrooms.

2.2.1. Sociocultural Benefits

Sociocultural theory (SCT) views language learning as a social and cultural activity that is mediated by tools, such as signs, symbols, and artifacts (Vygotsky, 1978 as cited in, Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005). According to SCT, learning occurs when learners interact with more capable peers or experts, who can provide scaffolding, feedback, and guidance. Learning also occurs when learners participate in communities of practice, where they can share and negotiate meanings, identities, and values. Creative tools can be seen as mediational tools that facilitate language learning through interaction and participation (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005). For example, creative tools can enable learners to co-construct and co-edit texts, images, videos, etc. with their peers or teachers, thus engaging in collaborative writing, speaking, listening, and reading. Again, Creative tools can enable learners to join and contribute to online or offline communities of interest, where they can exchange and discuss language and content with other members, thus engaging in collaborative learning (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005). Several studies have shown the positive effects of using creative tools for L2 learning from an SCT perspective, such as improving linguistic, pragmatic, and strategic competence, increasing learner involvement and interaction, motivation, and developing intercultural awareness and competence (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005).

2.2.2. Multimodal Literacy Benefit

Multimodal literacy (ML) refers to the ability to understand, produce, and communicate meanings using different modes and media, such as language, image, sound, and gesture (Kress, 2003). According to ML, meaning-making is a dynamic and creative process that involves the selection, combination, and transformation of modes and media, depending on the purpose, context, and audience. Creative tools can be seen as resources that enable learners to develop and demonstrate their multimodal literacy, by creating and sharing multimodal texts, such as stories, poems, songs, posters, and presentations using the target language (Blue, 2018; Chen & Yu, 2019; Papadopoulou, 2017). For example, creative tools can enable learners to use images, videos, and animations, to support, complement, or contrast their verbal messages, thus enhancing their expressive and communicative skills in the target language. Creative tools can also enable learners to use different genres, formats, and styles to suit different purposes, contexts, and audiences, thus enhancing their rhetorical and critical skills (Blue, 2018; Chen & Yu, 2019; Papadopoulou, 2017). Studies have shown the positive effects of using creative tools for L2 learning from an ML perspective, such as improving vocabulary, grammar, and discourse skills, increasing learner engagement and interest, and fostering learner creativity and innovation (Blue, 2018; Chen & Yu, 2019; Papadopoulou, 2017).

2.2.3. Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a motivational theory that explains how human beings can achieve psychological growth and well-being, by satisfying three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to SDT, autonomy refers to the sense of volition and choice of the learner's actions, competence refers to the sense of mastery and effectiveness in the design's tasks, and relatedness refers to the sense of connection and belonging with other learners (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Creative tools can be seen as bolsters that enable learners to satisfy their psychological needs, by providing them with opportunities to exercise their autonomy, competence, and relatedness in L2 learning. For example, creative tools can enable learners to choose and control their own learning goals, content, pace, and methods, therefore enhancing their autonomy. Furthermore, creative tools can also enable learners to receive and provide feedback, guidance, and recognition, thus enhancing their competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Creative tools can also enable learners to collaborate and communicate with their peers, teachers, and other audiences, thus enhancing their relatedness. Several studies have shown the positive effects of using creative tools for L2 learning from an SDT perspective, such as increasing learner motivation, engagement, and achievement, reducing

learner anxiety and boredom, and promoting learner self-regulation and self-efficacy (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Sousanis, 2015).

2.3. Challenges of using creative tools for L2 learning

Using creative tools in L2 classrooms can offer various benefits for language learning, such as enhancing collaboration and motivation among learners. However, the use of creative tools also poses some challenges and limitations, such as the issue of availability, time constraints, ethical concerns, technical issues, and assessment difficulties (Zhang et al., 2021). Despite the potential benefits of using creative tools for L2 learning, there are also some challenges and limitations that need to be considered and addressed.

2.3.1. Availability and technical issues

The issue of availability and technical issues is one of the main challenges of using creative tools, which involves the availability, accessibility, reliability, and compatibility of the tools, as well as the digital literacy and skills of the learners and teachers. Not all learners and teachers may have equal access to creative tools, either due to the lack of devices, internet connection, software, or licenses, or restrictions imposed by stakeholders such as the school or the government (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Godwin-Jones, 2018; Kafai & Peppler, 2011). Moreover, not all creative tools may work smoothly or consistently, either due to bugs, glitches, updates, or compatibility issues, or due to interference from the firewall, antivirus, or other programs. Furthermore, not all learners and teachers may have sufficient digital literacy and skills to use the creative tools effectively and efficiently, either due to the lack of familiarity, experience, or training, or due to the complexity, diversity, or novelty of the tools (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Godwin-Jones, 2018; Kafai & Peppler, 2011). Therefore, it is important to provide adequate technical support, training, and guidance for the learners and teachers, by ensuring the availability and accessibility of creative tools, troubleshooting, and resolving technical issues, and enhancing the digital literacy and skills of the users (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Godwin-Jones, 2018; Kafai & Peppler, 2011).

2.3.2. Time constraints

In addition to lesson preparation and delivery, teachers will have to allocate a portion of their limited time to set up, and manage creative tools, as well as the balance between creative activities and other curricular demands. Learning and using creative tools can be time-consuming, as it requires learners and teachers to explore, experiment, and practice with the tools, as well as to create, edit, and share their multimodal texts. Managing creative tools can also be time-consuming, as it requires learners and teachers to organize, store, and retrieve their digital files, as well as to monitor and evaluate their creative products and processes (Blue, 2018; Papadopoulou, 2017; Reinders & White, 2016). Moreover, using creative tools can create tension between creative activities and other curricular demands, such as school events and administrative duties. Creative activities may not fit well with the existing curriculum, either due to the mismatch of the goals, objectives, or outcomes, or due to the lack of alignment, integration, or coordination (Blue, 2018; Papadopoulou, 2017; Reinders & White, 2016). Therefore, it is important to allocate sufficient time and resources for the learners and teachers, by planning and scheduling the creative activities, optimizing, and streamlining the use and management of the tools, and balancing and harmonizing the creative activities and other curricular demands (Blue, 2018; Papadopoulou, 2017; Reinders & White, 2016).

2.3.3. Ethical concerns

Ethical concerns include the issues of privacy, security, plagiarism, and cyberbullying, as well as the respect for intellectual property and cultural diversity. Privacy and security are important issues, as using creative tools may expose learners and teachers to the risks of data breach, identity theft, hacking, or malware attacks, especially when they use online or cloud-based tools, or when they share personal or sensitive information (Chen & Yu, 2019; Fernández Dobao, 2012; Sousanis, 2015). Plagiarism and cyberbullying are also important issues, as using creative tools may tempt or enable learners and teachers to copy, steal, or misuse the works of others, or to harass, insult, or offend others, especially when they use the tools without proper citation, attribution, or permission, or when they use the tools to create or disseminate harmful or hateful content (Chen & Yu, 2019; Fernández Dobao, 2012; Sousanis, 2015). Moreover, respect for intellectual property and cultural diversity is an important issue, because using creative tools may require learners and teachers to acknowledge and appreciate the originality, creativity, and diversity of the works of others, or to avoid the appropriation, misrepresentation, or stereotyping of the cultures of others, especially when they use the tools to access, use, or reuse the works of others, or when they use the tools to represent or communicate with different cultures (Chen & Yu, 2019; Fernández Dobao, 2012; Sousanis, 2015). Therefore, it is important to establish clear ethical and academic standards and policies for the learners and teachers, by educating and informing them about ethical and academic issues, and monitoring and enforcing ethical and academic codes of conduct (Chen & Yu, 2019; Fernández Dobao, 2012; Sousanis, 2015).

2.3.4. Assessment difficulties

Measurements of progress and learning in the domain of creative tools can be a bit challenging to assess. Assessment difficulties include the challenges of designing, implementing, and evaluating creative products and processes, as well as the validity,

reliability, and fairness of assessment criteria and methods. Designing assessments for creative products and processes can be challenging, as it requires learners and teachers to define and agree on the expected standards, outcomes, and objectives, as well as selecting and developing the appropriate rubrics, checklists, or portfolios (Benson, 2013; Li & Zhang, 2023; Schunk et al., 2008). Challenges also arise concerning learners and teachers collecting and analyzing the relevant evidence, data, or feedback, as well as providing and receiving constructive and timely feedback, personalized comments and suggestions, or grades (Benson, 2013; Li & Zhang, 2023; Schunk et al., 2008). Moreover, evaluating assessment for creative products and processes can also be challenging, as it requires learners and teachers to ensure and demonstrate the validity, reliability, and fairness of the assessment criteria and methods, and further address and resolve the potential issues of subjectivity, inconsistency, or bias (Benson, 2013; Li & Zhang, 2023; Schunk et al., 2008). Therefore, it is important to adopt appropriate and diverse assessment strategies and tools for learners and teachers, by involving and engaging them in the assessment design, implementation, and evaluation, through both formative and summative assessment, and both quantitative and qualitative assessment (Benson, 2013; Li & Zhang, 2023; Schunk et al., 2008). These are some of the main challenges that teachers and students may face when using creative tools in L2 classrooms. However, these challenges are not insurmountable, and they can be overcome by providing adequate support, training, guidance, feedback, and reflection for the learners and teachers, as well as adapting creative activities and tools according to the learning context, situation, and lesson goals.

3. Methodology

The methodology of this paper is grounded in a comprehensive review of literature, a scholarly approach that involves the systematic collection, analysis, and synthesis of existing research and theoretical contributions related to innovative pedagogical strategies in the ESL classroom. This method allows for an in-depth examination of the current state of knowledge, identifying gaps, and drawing connections between various studies to present a coherent narrative about the subject (Cooper, 2020). The literature review encompasses a wide array of sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, educational reports, and empirical studies, ensuring a robust and diverse pool of information from which conclusions can be drawn.

In conducting this literature review, the paper follows a meticulous process beginning with the formulation of research questions that address the role of creative tools in promoting inclusion and motivation. A search strategy was developed to retrieve relevant literature, using keywords such as "innovative pedagogy," "ESL inclusion," "motivation strategies," and "digital tools in education." Databases such as ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar were utilized, and the search was refined to include studies published within the last decade to ensure the relevance and timeliness of the data. The selection criteria for literature included relevance to the research questions, methodological rigor, and contribution to the field of ESL education.

The analysis of the collected literature involved a critical evaluation of each source, assessing the validity of the findings and the reliability of the methodologies used. This process was guided by established frameworks for evaluating educational research, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of the pedagogical strategies discussed. The synthesis of the literature then continued with categorizing the findings into themes related to inclusion, motivation, and participation, which facilitated the identification of trends and patterns across different studies. This methodological approach ensures that the paper's conclusions are grounded in a comprehensive and critical examination of the available literature on the subject. This PRISMA **Table 1** summarizes the systematic review process and the main themes explored in the selected articles.

3.1. Table 1: PRISMA Table (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses).

Identification: The search was conducted in four databases using comprehensive search terms to cover the scope of creative tools in L2 learning.

Screening: Out of 81 articles, 35 were excluded based on title and abstract screening due to not meeting inclusion criteria or being duplicates.

Eligibility: All 45 articles that passed the initial screening were further assessed for eligibility based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria provided.

Included: 31 articles were included in the final review and coded according to specified themes.

The initial search yielded 81 articles. After screening the titles and abstracts, 45 articles were selected for further analysis. The inclusion criteria were: (a) the article focused on the use of creative tools for L2 learning; (b) the article reported empirical evidence of the effects of creative tools on collaboration and/or motivation; and (c) the article provided sufficient details about the context, participants, methods, and results of the study. The exclusion criteria were: (a) the article was not related to the research question; (b) the article was a theoretical or conceptual paper without empirical data; or (c) the article was a duplicate or a review of another article. The selected articles were then coded and categorized according to the following themes: (a) the type and features of the creative tools used; (b) the level and mode of collaboration involved; (c) the aspects and indicators of motivation measured; (d)

the benefits and challenges of using creative tools for L2 learning; and (e) the implications and recommendations for practice and research.

4. Framework for designing and implementing creative tools in L2 classroom

The proposed framework for designing and implementing creative tools in L2 classrooms is based on the principles of learner autonomy, authenticity, and agency. These principles are derived from the perspectives of sociocultural theory, multimodal literacy, and self-determination theory, which highlight the role of creative tools in enhancing collaboration and motivation among learners. The framework consists of four components: (1) task design, (2) tool selection, (3) teacher facilitation, and (4) learner reflection. Each component involves a series of questions and considerations that guide teachers and learners in planning, implementing, and evaluating creative activities in L2 classrooms.

4.1. Table 2, the framework for designing and implementing creative tools in L2 classrooms by (Akem Ojong, 2024).

Component	Questions and Considerations
Task Design	What is the purpose and goal of the task? What are the expected learning outcomes and objectives? What are the linguistic, cognitive, and social demands of the task? How can the task be aligned with the curriculum and assessment standards? How can the task be adapted to the learners' needs, interests, and preferences? How can the task provide opportunities for learner choice and control? How can the task foster learner creativity and innovation? How can the task promote learner collaboration and interaction? How can the task engage learners in authentic and meaningful communication? How can the task encourage learners to use multiple modes and media?
Tool Selection	What are the available and accessible creative tools for the task? What are the affordances and constraints of each tool? How can the tool support the task purpose and goal? How can the tool enhance the learning outcomes and objectives? How can the tool facilitate the linguistic, cognitive, and social aspects of the task? How can the tool match the learners' digital literacy and skills? How can the tool enable learners to exercise their autonomy, competence, and relatedness? How can the tool foster learner collaboration and interaction? How can the tool engage learners in authentic and meaningful communication? How can the tool enable learners to use multiple modes and media?
Teacher Facilitation	What is the teacher's role and responsibility in the task? How can the teacher provide clear and explicit instructions and expectations for the task? How can the teacher scaffold and support learners' linguistic, cognitive, and social development? How can the teacher monitor and manage learners' progress and performance? How can the teacher provide timely and constructive feedback and guidance? How can the teacher balance between direct and indirect intervention? How can the teacher foster learner autonomy, competence, and relatedness? How can the teacher facilitate learner collaboration and interaction? How can the teacher model and demonstrate effective use of creative tools? How can the teacher address technical, ethical, and assessment issues?
Learner Reflection	What are the learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the task and the tool? What are the learners' strengths and weaknesses in the task and the tool? What are the learners' achievements and challenges in the task and the tool? What are the learners' learning outcomes and objectives in the task and the tool? How can the learners evaluate and improve their linguistic, cognitive, and social skills? How can the learners assess and enhance their digital literacy and skills? How can the learners develop and express their autonomy, competence, and relatedness? How can the learners reflect on and learn from their collaboration and interaction? How can the learners showcase and share their creative products and processes? How can the learners transfer and apply their learning to other contexts and purposes?

This framework is not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive, but rather to serve as a flexible and adaptable guide for teachers and learners who wish to use creative tools for L2 learning. The framework can be modified and adjusted according to the specific context, situation, and goal of each creative activity. The framework can also be used as a tool for research and inquiry, by providing a common language and structure for describing, analyzing, and evaluating creative activities in L2 classrooms.

5. Educational recommendations and future research

Using creative tools in L2 classrooms can offer various benefits for language learning, such as enhancing collaboration and motivation among learners. However, using creative tools also requires teachers and students to play different roles, depending on the type, purpose, and context of the creative activities. In this section, I will describe some useful practices in using creative tools in L2 classrooms and general roles that teachers and students can play when using creative tools in L2 classrooms and provide some examples from the literature.

5.1.1. Teachers as designers

One of the roles that teachers can play is to design creative tasks that engage students in using the target language and content that provide opportunities for student choice, control, creativity, collaboration, and communication. For example, teachers can design tasks that require students to create and share multimodal texts, such as stories, poems, songs, posters, and presentations using creative tools, such as Storybird, Book Creator, or Powtoon. Teachers can also select creative tools that are suitable and relevant for the tasks, and that match the students' needs, interests, and preferences. For example, teachers can consider the availability, accessibility, reliability, and compatibility of the creative tools, as well as the digital literacy and skills of the students to inform their choice of a creative tool. Teachers can also involve students in the selection of creative tools and allow them to choose the tools that they are comfortable or familiar with, or one that they want to explore and experiment with (Chen & Hapgood, 2019).

5.1.2. Teachers as facilitators

Another role that teachers can play is to facilitate creative activities by providing clear instructions, expectations, scaffolding, feedback, and guidance, through monitoring and managing students' progress and performance. For example, teachers can provide explicit and detailed instructions and expectations for the creative tasks, such as the purpose, goal, outcome, and criteria of the tasks, as well as the steps, procedures, and deadlines of the tasks. Teachers can also provide scaffolding and support for the students' linguistic, cognitive, and social needs by modeling and demonstrating the use of creative tools, or by providing examples and resources. Teachers can then monitor and manage students' progress and performance, by checking and tracking their work, intervening, and resolving problems, and finally evaluating and grading their products and processes. Teachers can also balance between direct and indirect intervention, and between teacher-led and student-led activities, depending on the level of autonomy and support that the students need or want (Li & Zhang, 2023).

5.1.3. Teachers as assessors

A third role that teachers can play is to assess creative products and processes by using appropriate and diverse criteria, methods, and tools by involving and engaging students in the assessment design, implementation, and evaluation. For example, teachers can assess creative products and processes by using both formative and summative assessments rooted in quantitative and qualitative models. (Benson, 2013). Teachers can also use various criteria, methods, and tools to assess different aspects of the creative products and processes, such as linguistic, cognitive, and social skills, content knowledge and understanding, creativity and innovation, and the collaboration and interaction of students. Teachers can therefore involve and engage students in the assessment process by asking them to set their own goals and objectives and allowing them to self-assess and peer-assess their work with the oversight of the teacher (Benson, 2013). Teachers can provide constructive, timely, and specific comments, suggestions, or grades for the students' work, and help them to reflect on and improve their work (Benson, 2013).

5.1.4. Teachers as reflectors

In ESL classrooms, the teacher's role as a reflector is essential, particularly after incorporating creative tools. This multifaceted role begins with self-observation, where teachers monitor their use of creative tools and their impact on student engagement. Following this, they engage in self-evaluation, considering student feedback and learning outcomes. Critical analysis allows teachers to ponder on the successes and challenges of these tools, leading to adaptation and improvement of teaching strategies. Reflective teaching also serves as professional development, keeping educators abreast of new methods and enhancing their skills. It supports informed decision-making, ensuring creative tools are purposefully used to cater to ESL learners' varied needs. Documentation through reflective journals aids in personal growth and future planning. Ultimately, this reflective cycle is integral to refining teaching practices and maximizing the benefits of creative tools in language learning. Teachers can ask learners to share their perceptions, attitudes, strengths, weaknesses, achievements, and challenges through feedback loops. For example, teachers can ask learners to reflect on their creative outcomes and experiences using creative tools, such as digital boards, ebooks, or portfolios, where they can post text, images, videos, and links that reflect their creative outcomes and experiences. These responses from learners can provide teachers with another angle (that of student experiences) from which they can reflect.

5.1.5. Students as creators

One of the roles that students can play is to create and design various types of visual content, such as posters, flyers, infographics, and logos using creative tools. Students can use creative tools, such as Canva and Flipgrid, to create and design visual content that

showcases their knowledge of the target language. Students can also enhance their visual literacy and communication skills, by selecting, combining, and transforming different modes and media adapting their visual content to different purposes, contexts, and audiences. Students can produce these materials individually or collaboratively after teachers have provided prerequisite orientation for the use of the selected creative tool. Monitoring and assistance should be provided when and where necessary, especially for students who are new to the use of technology, but not in a way that impedes student autonomy and creativity.

5.1.6. Students as learners

One of the roles that students can play is to acquire knowledge of linguistic items, and other communicative and content areas using creative tools. For example, students can use a creative tool, such as Quizlet, to learn and review vocabulary, by creating flashcards and game sets. Students can also practice and improve their linguistic, cognitive, and social skills, through interaction via virtual exchange platforms with peers from around the world. The success of students can be observed and even measured, not only through traditional assessment methods but also through their successful use of creative tools and participation in learning communities provided by their instructors.

5.1.7. Students as collaborators

A third role that students can play is to collaborate and interact with their peers, teachers, and other audiences using creative tools, such as digital stories, animated videos, and video discussions. For example, students can use creative tools, such as Storybird, Powtoon, or Flipgrid, to create and share multimodal texts, such as stories, poems, songs, posters, presentations, etc. using the target language and content. Students can also collaborate and interact with their peers, teachers, and other audiences, such as by co-creating and co-editing their multimodal texts, by sharing and commenting on each other's multimodal texts, and by joining and contributing to global communities of learners. Students can also satisfy their psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, by choosing and controlling their own work, receiving, and providing feedback and guidance, and connecting and belonging with others.

5.1.8. Students as reflectors

A final role that students can play is to reflect on their creative outcomes and experiences using creative tools. For example, students can use creative tools, such as Padlet, Book Creator, or Google Sites, to create and share digital boards, ebooks, or portfolios, where they can post text, images, videos, and links that reflect their creative outcomes and experiences. Students can also share their perceptions, attitudes, strengths, weaknesses, and achievements on these platforms. The platforms can subsequently act as repositories for students' works. Students review their creations from when they joined a class to ascertain how their creativity or language skills for instance have improved over time. This setup will then provide a structure for students to self-reflect on their pieces or receive external feedback and guidance from peers or instructors. These are some of the future practices and general roles that teachers and students can play when using creative tools in L2 classrooms. However, these roles are not fixed or exclusive, and they can vary depending on the type, purpose, and context of the creative activities.

5.2. Suggestions for Future Research and Practice

Using creative tools in L2 classrooms can offer various benefits for language learning, such as enhancing collaboration and motivation among learners. However, the use of creative tools also poses some challenges and limitations, such as technical issues, time constraints, ethical concerns, and assessment difficulties. Therefore, it is important to address these challenges and limitations and to explore the potential and possibilities of using creative tools in L2 classrooms. Based on the above discussion, I will provide some implications and suggestions for future research and practice on using creative tools in L2 classrooms. Future research on using creative tools in L2 classrooms can focus on the following aspects:

5.2.1. Expanding the theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence for using creative tools in L2 classrooms. Future research can draw on different theories and perspectives, such as critical pedagogy, multimodal literacy, and self-determination theory, to explain and support the use of creative tools in L2 classrooms. Future research can also conduct more rigorous and robust studies, such as longitudinal, experimental, or mixed-methods studies, to examine the effects and impacts of using creative tools in L2 classrooms on different outcomes and variables, such as language skills, creativity, collaboration, motivation over an extended of time (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Zhang et al., 2021).

5.2.2. Exploring the diversity and innovation of creative tools and tasks in L2 classrooms. Future research can also investigate the use of different types and genres of creative tools and tasks, such as artificial intelligence-based chatbots, expressive and creative writing, and digital storytelling in L2 classrooms to accommodate the different learning styles and needs of learners. Future studies can also explore the use of creative tools and tasks in different contexts, such as online or hybrid, intercultural or transnational communication, and project-based or problem-based learning in L2 classrooms (Ebadi & Amini, 2022).

5.2.3. Addressing the challenges and limitations of using creative tools in L2 classrooms. Since it has already been established that creative tools come with inevitable challenges, such studies can focus on providing solutions and strategies for overcoming the technical issues, time constraints, ethical concerns, and assessment difficulties of using creative tools in L2 classrooms. Future research can also identify and analyze the factors and conditions that influence the success and failure of using creative tools in L2 classrooms, with a focus on the availability and accessibility of the creative tools, the gap between digital literacy and the skills of the learners and teachers, the alignment and integration of the creative activities and the curriculum, the ethical and academic standards and policies, the assessment criteria, and methods (Zhang et al., 2021; Li & Zhang, 2023).

6. Conclusion

In summary, using creative tools in L2 classrooms is a promising and innovative approach to enhance language learning, as it can provide learners with opportunities to express themselves in various modes and media, and at the same time satisfy learners' psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. However, the adoption of creative tools also requires teachers and learners to play different roles, such as designers, facilitators, assessors, creators, learners, and collaborators, depending on the type, purpose, and context of the creative activities. Moreover, using creative tools also poses some challenges and limitations that can hinder the teaching and learning process. These challenges include but are not limited to technical issues, time constraints, ethical concerns, and assessment difficulties. For successful integration of creative tools in traditional classrooms, these challenges need to be addressed and resolved through the provision of adequate support and training; guidance, and feedback channels for the learners and teachers. Therefore, using creative tools in L2 classrooms is not a straightforward process, but a complex and dynamic one, that requires careful planning, implementation, and evaluation, as well as continuous research and review, to maximize the full potential and possibilities of using creative tools in L2 classrooms.

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