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Mobile Devices: Utilization and enhancing the learning of Phonology among English Language Education Students at Universities in Ekiti State

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how mobile devices were used to support the learning of phonology among English Language Education students in universities across Ekiti State. With the growing presence of digital tools in the classroom, the research aimed to understand how students made use of their mobile phones and tablets to better grasp the sound systems of the English language. A descriptive survey method was used for the study with a population of 150 ELE students from three universities in Ekiti State. The face and content validity of the instrument were confirmed by experts in English Language Education, and a reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained from a pilot test conducted outside the study area. The instrument was distributed to the respondents, and their responses were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research question, and the hypotheses were analyzed using a T-test. The findings showed that students regularly used mobile devices to access phonology apps, YouTube videos, podcasts, and other interactive materials. These tools made it easier for them to understand difficult topics like articulation, stress, rhythm, and intonation. Students also reported that using mobile devices helped them learn at their own pace and stay more engaged in their studies. The study identified challenges like the high cost of internet data, occasional distractions from social media, and the lack of compatibility of some devices with certain learning applications. It was recommended that Mobile devices be effectively utilized to enhance the learning of phonology among English language education students in universities in Ekiti State; lecturers be encouraged to integrate mobile-friendly content into their teaching, and that universities find ways to support students with affordable access to digital learning resources.

Keywords: Phonology: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Pronunciation Apps Linguistic Interference, Digital Literacy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mobile devices now shape university classrooms everywhere, and their impact is especially clear in English Language programmes; phonology classes have grown richer through mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). In Ekiti State and elsewhere in Nigeria, these courses once followed a rigid lecture routine that emphasised theory and memorisation over actual speaking and listening practice. Teachers wrote phonetic symbols and transcription rules on chalkboards and expected students to teach them by heart, yet the learners seldom heard the sounds outside the classroom. This gap left many graduates unable to produce or interpret English speech as fluently as they needed. Okebukola (2021) recently noted that without interactive audio-visual tools, Nigerian students still struggle to transcribe words or pronounce them accurately, a skill central to any serious study of phonology.

A significant limitation of current classroom strategies is the lack of immediate pronunciation feedback, which allows persistent errors to harden into permanent habits over time (Adebisi & Olayemi, 2022). Phonological skills improve best in an interactive, hands-on environment, yet most university language programmes in Nigeria lack dedicated laboratories outfitted with phonetic software and reliable speech-recognition systems, hampering refinement (Ojo & Fasasi, 2023). Because instructors emphasise phonetic charts and theoretical rules, rather than auditory drills and guided speech exercises, the uniform syllabus treats all learners alike, ignoring widely varying styles and pace of learning (Adeoye & Olajide, 2023). Adding to the challenge, many Ekiti students transfer sound systems from Yoruba and other indigenous tongues that lack certain English phonemes, so their pronunciation inevitably deviates from the target model. In contrast, mobile-assisted language-learning tools deliver speech-recognition programs, targeted pronunciation drills, and instant, personalised feedback, enabling learners to tackle troublesome sounds whenever they choose, without waiting for a tutor (Sung et al., 2020). Absent such resources, students in Ekiti State continue to struggle with phonological accuracy because traditional methods offer neither frequent exposure to native speaker input nor a generous supply of purposeful practice hours.

Considering these limitations, mobile technology now emerges as a practical pathway for phonology teaching. Smart devices can deliver quizzes, record student speech, and stream native examples, all of which support the fine-tuning of sounds. For learners in Ekiti State, who rarely find well-stocked phonetic labs nearby, this mobile approach is both affordable and easy to reach. When universities embrace the technology, they close the gaps left by lectures and drills, making the study of English segments and suprasegmentals more interactive and effective.

Technological tools help connect what learners know with how they use that knowledge. Chen and Hsieh (2020) argue that pronunciation apps craft a near-real setting by mimicking everyday conversations, so learners practice in the same kind of context they will later face. Programs like WhatsApp or Telegram let students hold group talks, share voice notes, and give one another feedback, steadily turning private study into something communal. Liu and colleagues (2021) remark that these digital hubs build interactive communities where peers trade tips and polish their pronunciation through simple social contact. Al-Munawwarah (2022) adds that working together on mobile devices boosts learners' confidence and makes them keener to join speaking tasks.

Yet mobile learning is easily derailed by competing distractions on the very same screen. Notifications from social feeds and entertainment apps vie for attention, producing the constant tug-of-war Lee and

Xie (2021) describe between study goals and play. Studying begins to fragment as Adeoye and Olajide (2023) observe; endless multitasking weakens focus and stifles the deep learning that comes when thoughts are not pulled in several directions at once.

To make mobile learning truly beneficial, universities in Ekiti State need to set specific policies and run workshops showing both staff and students how to use digital tools wisely, turning phones from distractions into real study partners.

Money, however, is still a big worry. Although entry-level smartphones are cheaper than before, many learners still lack quality devices or generous data plans that stream phonology podcasts and videos without long pauses. UNESCO (2021) warned that this lingering "digital divide" deepens inequality in poorer areas, leaving some students unable to dive fully into mobile-assisted courses. Similar doubts appear in Ojo and Fasasi's (2023) recent study, which points to spotty networks and steep costs as daily hazards for Nigerian digital classrooms. In response, Ekiti universities must offer on-campus Wi-Fi, start gadget-loan schemes, and package core materials for offline use so every student gets a fair chance to learn.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Phonology occupies a central place in English-language teacher training because it underpins listening, speaking, and constructive linguistic awareness. Yet, when instruction leans exclusively on teacher-centred lectures, students receive only a fraction of the rich auditory and interactive practice that phonological skill-building demands. Many students thus memorise rules instead of hearing, imitating, and refining sound patterns through adaptive feedback.

Mobile-assisted learning has the promise to address that imbalance, but a persistent digital divide still drags progress. Inconsistent internet coverage, steep data costs, and reliance on personal devices exclude many learners from streaming phonology drills or downloading pronunciation podcasts, leaving homespun answers or guesswork as poor substitutes while widening the educational gap.

Teachers are essential mediators of technology, yet inadequate training and shaky digital confidence often prevent them from exploiting mobile materials creatively. Few institutions in Ekiti State have crafted clear policy roadmaps or ownership frameworks that embed mobile learning into day-to-day pedagogy, so apps, videos, and quizzes are applied sporadically and usually in isolation.

Against that backdrop, this study investigates how English Language Education students in Ekiti State universities use everyday mobile devices-and how that use shapes the learning of phonology. Data will clarify opportunities that learners seize, hurdles they encounter, and support that helps both students and instructors turn pocket-sized technology into consistent phonological practice rather than a sporadic distraction.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The aims of this study are:

1. To examine the effectiveness of mobile devices in enhancing the learning of phonology among English language education students in Ekiti State universities.
2. To identify the challenges faced by both students and lecturers in integrating mobile technology into phonology education.

3. Examine the influence of linguistic interference from indigenous languages on students' ability to use mobile devices for phonology learning.
4. To evaluate the role of access to mobile technology and digital literacy in the adoption of mobile devices for phonology education.

1.3. Research Questions

The following Research questions will be answered in the study.

1. How can mobile devices be effectively utilized to enhance the learning of phonology among English language education students in universities in Ekiti State?
2. What are the challenges faced by students and lecturers in integrating mobile devices into the teaching and learning of phonology in Ekiti State?
3. To what extent does linguistic interference from indigenous languages impact students' ability to utilize mobile devices for phonology learning?
4. How does access to mobile technology and digital literacy affect the adoption of mobile devices for phonology education in Ekiti State universities?

1.4. Research Hypotheses

The following Research hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

1. Mobile devices will not significantly influence the learning of phonology among English language education students in universities in Ekiti State
2. There is no significant difference in students' phonology learning outcomes based on the extent of their utilization of mobile devices.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Mobile learning, often referred to as M-learning, uses personal mobile devices to create more flexible and interactive educational settings, letting students read materials, join group chats, and consult instructors on phones, tablets, or lightweight laptops. Ally (2020) argues that the anytime-anywhere nature of M-learning deepens engagement, because learners can review course content outside formal class hours and move at a speed that suits their confidence and schedule. As people grow more dependent on mobile hardware and as cloud storage, streaming video, and artificial-intelligence tools become routine, M-learning is increasingly seen as a cornerstone of twenty-first-century pedagogy (Traxler, 2021).

Perhaps the strongest benefit of M-learning is its power to make learning both portable and student-driven. Kumar and Mohite (2021) point out that today's mobile platforms combine video clips, clickable quizzes, expandable glossaries, and even game-like scoring, all of which boost recall and hold attention longer than text alone. These features are especially handy in phonology classes, where students can open an app, listen to a word, mimic the sound, hear their own attempt, and watch a graph showing pitch or percentage accuracy. Zhao and Chen (2021) add that since learners can repeat exercises whenever they choose, mobile training steadily raises both phonetic precision and overall comprehension.

The Pronunciation App employs speech-recognition technology to analyses users' pronunciation and offer specific, real-time feedback (Chen & Zhang, 2023). By doing so, the programme helps learners build phonetic awareness and improve their speaking practices along personalized study paths. However, mobile learning is not without serious drawbacks. The most pressing issue is the digital divide; not every student owns a reliable smartphone or has consistent access to fast data. Garcia and Weiss (2023) contend that wealth-related gaps can prevent learners in poorer areas from engaging fully with mobile courses, especially where neither scholars nor teachers have had proper training in these apps. Chaka (2020) echoed this view, arguing that weak networks, limited batteries, and outdated operating systems still block many developing contexts from harnessing m-learning. Brown and Taylor (2022) warn that heavy multitasking may lower students' attention and harm their grades. To counter this, Adeyemi and Olanrewaju (2023) suggest universities adopt responsible mobile-learning policies such as digital-wellness workshops, fixed study timetables, and clear app-use limits. Bello and Akinyemi (2024) go further, advocating for course integration of m-learning, mobile-friendly content, and digital-skills training for students and staff.

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is increasingly valued for making language study more flexible and engaging, giving learners space to practice inside and outside the classroom (Wang & Gao, 2023). Alshammari et al. (2022) note that adding mobile tools has sparked strategies like YouTube videos, podcasts, game-like challenges, AI tutoring, and live pronunciation checks, all of which boost language skills. In contrast, traditional instruction typically confines feedback to the classroom, limiting rich, immediate exchanges.

Mobile apps like Duolingo and Babbel let learners practice on their own while getting immediate feedback and corrections (Zhang & Zou, 2021). AI-powered tools such as ELSA Speak and Speech let users compare their pronunciation to that of native speakers, creating a tailored learning experience that traditional classrooms seldom provide (Wang & Zhang, 2022).

Phonology, a central branch of linguistics, studies how sounds are organized and how they function within a particular language. Whereas phonetics looks at the physical qualities of speech, phonology asks how those sounds work together to signal meaning (Odden, 2020). It explores the ways sounds oppose one another, influence each other, and blend into larger speech units, thereby shaping the structure of words and longer stretches of talk. The field thus focuses on mental guidelines and abstract patterns that direct how people hear and produce spoken language.

Phonology as a field looks at sound patterns on several different levels, starting with segmental phonology, which studies single phonemes and the features that set them apart, like where and how they are produced (Ashby & Maidment, 2021). Beyond that, suprasegmental phonology shifts attention to larger running features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation, all of which help listeners judge meaning and the speaker's intention. In English especially, a small change in stress or pitch can turn a statement into a question or soften a demand, showing just how powerful these higher-level clues can be. English learners in multilingual settings, such as Nigeria, therefore, benefit greatly from careful work on suprasegmentals if they want their speech to flow naturally and be understood clearly worldwide (Adegbite, 2021).

2.1. Benefits and Challenges of Integrating Mobile Technologies into Phonology Education

The growing use of mobile devices in phonology courses is beginning to reshape the classroom experience in many universities and colleges across Ekiti State, Nigeria. Kukulska-Hulme and Viberg (2022) observe that mobile-assisted language learning, or MALL, gives students round-the-clock access to phonological practice stored on their phones, freeing them from the usual limits of timetables and lecture halls. Because the material is always available, Ekiti State undergraduates can rehearse troublesome sounds, test out new stress patterns, or listen to model intonation while commuting, waiting for class, or studying late at night. Such portability becomes even more valuable in institutions where large lecture groups and dwindling contact hours squeeze everyday pronunciation into brief segments. Aligned with this flexibility, mobile platforms deliver lessons that combine audio clips, on-screen graphs, and touch-sensitive exercises, presenting phonological concepts through several sensory channels at once (Stockwell, 2022). This multimodal delivery caters to different learner styles by blending auditory, visual, and hands-on inputs so that students can tackle both segmental features, individual phonemes-and suprasegmental qualities such as rhythm and pitch (Adegbite, 2021). Still, the real advantage lies in the almost immediate feedback mobile tools provide. Chung (2020) notes that well-designed apps like ELSA Speak or the Sounds Pronunciation App use speech-recognition engines to analyze a user's voice in real time, pointing out specific mispronunciations in articulation, stress, or melody.

Real-time feedback enables students to self-correct on the spot, which in turn promotes active oversight and self-guidance of their sound-system growth (García Botero, Questier, & Zhu, 2019). Such immediate coding in practice also creates room for individualized learning routes, letting each learner zero in on the precise trouble spots they still face.

Yet bringing mobile tech into university phonology classes across Ekiti State is far from problem-free. Stockwell (2022) notes that basic hardware flaws-poor mic depth, lack of noise cancelling, and speech engines that still mishear the odd phoneme-can cripple practice, especially in crowded hostels, off-campus rooms, or cyber cafés where steady chatter drowns out the learner's voice. When background din slips through, the erroneous clues students receive only widen their phonetic gaps.

2.2. The Role of Mobile Learning in English Language Education in Nigeria

Mobile learning (M-learning) is steadily reshaping English Language Education across Nigeria and, by extension, the larger African continent, a trend that closely follows advances in telecommunications and the swift rise in smartphone ownership. As Adegbite and Salami (2021) point out, the inherent flexibility of mobile devices allows learners to study whenever and wherever they wish, an advantage that becomes crucial in settings where full classrooms and textbooks are scarce. Affordability has improved so dramatically that students from semi-urban and rural districts—including those at Ekiti State University, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, and Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti—now routinely use apps, podcasts, and e-books to complement lessons held beyond lecture walls. Metruk (2024) add that such mobile tools excel in teaching pronunciation and sharpening phonological awareness in both state and federal universities, including the University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University. Through applications offering instant voice analysis, learners can listen to their spoken English, compare it with native samples, receive immediate correction, and keep a record of how their sound quality improves over weeks or months.

Adegoke and Cloete, writing in 2022, argue that for mobile learning to work well in English-language classrooms in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa, schools and colleges need strong official backing, especially policies that openly invite technology into everyday lessons. To complement such support, Chaka, in a separate study from 2020, insists that teacher-training courses and ongoing professional-development workshops must give instructors the skills they need to help students make the most of their mobile devices when learning English.

This study draws on Constructivist Learning Theory alongside the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge TPACK framework to examine how mobile devices can improve university English-Language Education ELE students' phonology skills in Ekiti State. Constructivist Learning Theory emphasizes that learners actively build knowledge through interaction, rather than merely receiving information from instructors Piaget, 1972. According to the theory, understanding deepens when students engage with materials, experiment through hands-on tasks, and refine insights over time as guided by reflection and social dialogue Vygotsky, 1978. Jonassen 1999 further suggests that classrooms structured for inquiry and experimentation position learners as co-creators of meaning. Because mastering pronunciation demands frequent practice, immediate feedback, and self-correction, mobile tools ideally complement these constructivist principles in the study of phonology.

When English-language learners use mobile apps to practice pronunciation, record their voice, and then listen alongside native examples, they are actively measuring their own progress and building new knowledge rather than passively consuming information (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2022). According to Vygotsky's sociocultural view of constructivism, learning deepens even more when students share voice notes, give each other feedback, and work together in online study groups that target specific sound patterns.

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model helps teachers figure out how to weave those devices into daily lessons in ways that Respect subject goals, practical classroom realities, and learners' needs all at once (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Within that view, Technology Knowledge (TK) reminds educators that success now depends not only on knowing what to teach and on effective instructional methods, but also on using every available tool purposefully so that learning improves (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). To be truly effective, teachers must keep Content Knowledge (CK-expertise in phonology), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK-an understanding of proven teaching practices), and TK exactly aligned, because meaningful progress happens only where those three domains overlap (Koehler et al., 2013).

3. METHODOLOGY

The study employs a cross-sectional survey design and targets undergraduate students enrolled in English Language Education at Ekiti State University, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, and Bamidele Olumilua University of Science and Technology. Data collection proceeded in three distinct, sequential phases. First, purposive sampling identified government-owned institutions within the state that offer the desired programme. Second, simple random selection pinpointed second-year, or 200-level, English-language students from these institutions (EKSU, FUOYE, and BOUESTI). Finally, an additional simple random draw extracted fifty individuals from the identified cohort, yielding a composite sample of 150 for questionnaire administration. A structured self-report instrument, grounded in literature, probes three domains-frequent mobile-device use, attitudes toward mobile-assisted phonology learning, and

encountered obstacles-using a four-point Likert scale to quantify responses. Face and content validity were ensured through expert review. Reliability was assessed using a test-retest method on a comparable group outside the study area. The analysis produced a reliability coefficient of 0.83, confirming the instrument's internal consistency and suitability for the main study.

4. RESULTS

Research Question 1: How can mobile devices be effectively utilized to enhance the learning of phonology among English language education students in universities in Ekiti State?

Table 1. Response on Mobile Devices can be Effectively Utilized to Enhance Learning

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Mobile devices provide interactive opportunities that make phonological concepts easier to understand.	150	3.39	0.75	Significant
2	The use of mobile applications has positively impacted my pronunciation and phonological awareness.	150	3.30	0.77	Significant
3	Accessing phonology materials through my mobile device has improved my study habits.	150	3.33	0.74	Significant
4	Learning phonology with the aid of mobile devices helps me retain concepts better than traditional methods.	150	3.30	0.90	Significant
5	Mobile-assisted learning has contributed significantly to my overall performance in phonology-related assessments.	150	3.18	0.76	Non Significant
Grand Mean		**3.30**			

The data in the above table revealed that the mean scores of items 1, 2, 3, and 4 are within the weighted average, while only item 5's mean score is below that weighted average. Hence, mobile devices can be effectively utilized to enhance the learning of phonology among English language education students in universities in Ekiti State.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges faced by students and lecturers in integrating mobile devices into the teaching and learning of phonology in Ekiti State?

Table 2. Response to Challenges Faced by Students and Lecturers in Integrating Mobile Devices

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Poor internet connectivity hinders the effective use of mobile devices for phonology learning.	150	3.10	0.93	Significant
2	High data costs limit my ability to consistently access phonology materials through mobile devices.	150	3.02	0.98	Significant

3	Lack of proper training prevents both students and lecturers from using mobile tools effectively in phonology education.	150	3.19	0.97	Significant
4	Mobile devices are often seen more as a source of distraction than a learning tool in phonology classes.	150	2.41	1.01	Non Significant
5	The absence of clear institutional policies makes it difficult to integrate mobile technology into phonological instruction.	150	3.07	0.98	Significant
Grand Mean			**3.00**		

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that the mean scores of items 1, 2, 3, and 5 are within the weighted average, while the mean score of items 4 is below that weighted average. Hence, poor internet connectivity, high data costs, lack of proper training, and absence of clear institutional policies are the challenges faced by students and lecturers in integrating mobile devices into the teaching and learning of phonology.

Research Question 3: To what extent does linguistic interference from indigenous languages impact students' ability to utilize mobile devices for phonology learning?

Table 3. Response to What Extent Does Linguistic Interference from Indigenous Languages Impact Students' Ability to Utilize Mobile Devices

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Indigenous language patterns affect how English sounds are interpreted during mobile-based phonology learning.	150	3.37	0.75	Significant
2	The interference of native language structures often limits the effectiveness of mobile phonology tools.	150	2.57	0.86	Non Significant
3	Phonology apps and resources rarely account for the influence of local languages on English pronunciation.	150	2.69	0.75	Non Significant
4	Mobile devices do not adequately help in overcoming pronunciation issues rooted in indigenous language habits.	150	3.24	0.89	Significant
5	Exposure to indigenous language sound systems makes it difficult to fully benefit from mobile phonology instruction.	150	3.03	0.91	Significant
Grand Mean			**2.98**		

The data in Table 3 revealed that the mean scores of items 1, 4, and 5 are above the weighted average, while the mean scores of items 2 and 3 are below that weighted average. Hence, linguistic interference from indigenous languages impacts students' ability to utilize mobile devices for phonology learning.

Research Question 4: How does access to mobile technology and digital literacy affect the adoption of mobile devices for phonology education in Ekiti State universities?

Table 4. Response to How Does Access to Mobile Technology and Digital Literacy Affect the Adoption of Mobile Devices for Phonology Education

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Access to mobile devices makes it easier to engage with phonology learning materials.	150	2.83	0.93	Significant
2	Limited digital literacy skills can hinder the effective use of mobile tools for studying phonology.	150	2.70	1.09	Non Significant
3	Mobile learning platforms become more useful when students are familiar with how to navigate them.	150	3.02	0.99	Significant
4	Lack of access to mobile-friendly phonology content can affect the frequency of mobile device usage for learning.	150	2.41	1.02	Non Significant
5	The ability to use mobile technology confidently plays a significant role in enhancing the phonology learning experience.	150	3.07	0.96	Significant
Grand Mean		**2.81**			

Table 4 also revealed that the mean scores for items 1, 3, and 5 are higher than the weighted average, while the mean scores for items 2 and 4 are below that weighted average. Hence, access to mobile technology and digital literacy affect the adoption of mobile devices for phonology education in Ekiti State universities.

4.1. Results of the Analysis of Hypotheses:

Ho1: Mobile devices will not significantly influence the learning of phonology among English language education students in universities in Ekiti state

Table 5. Influence of Mobile Devices on the Learning of Phonology

Source of Variation	N	Mean	SD	r_{cal}	df	Sig.	Decision
Mobile devices	150	16.51	3.39				
				0.82	148	0.00	Significant
Phonology	150	14.91	2.59				

P<0.05

The Table above shows that the p-value is less than 0.05 (0.00<0.05). This means that the null hypothesis is not accepted. Hence, mobile devices significantly influence the learning of phonology among English language education students in universities in Ekiti state

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the utilization of mobile devices and the enhancement of phonology learning among English Language Education students in Universities in Ekiti State.

Table 6. -Test Comparing Students' Utilization of Mobile Devices and Their Phonology Learning Outcomes

Source of Variation	N	Mean	SD	t_{cal}	df	Sig.	Decision
Mobile devices	150	16.51	3.39				
				4.58	148	0.00	Significant
Enhancement of phonology	150	14.91	2.59				

P<0.05

T-test examined whether the level of mobile-device use significantly influenced students' achievement in phonology. Results show that $t(148) = 4.58$, $p < 0.05$, indicating a statistically significant relationship between mobile-device use and phonology learning outcomes. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Students who actively integrated mobile devices into their study routines performed better in phonology tasks than those who used them less frequently.

5. DISCUSSION

The study's results show that mobile devices play a major role in helping English-language education students at Ekiti State universities learn phonology well. Learners benefit when these gadgets are used for lesson-specific activities because professional literature agrees. Ally (2020) points out that purposeful and sustained use of mobile technology strengthens study sessions and learning tasks. Supporting this, Bello and Akinyemi (2024) argue that the same devices, as multipurpose tools, make the overall learning experience richer and more satisfying. Taken together, the evidence clearly indicates that mobile devices can and should be harnessed to further phonology instruction in the target student population.

The research revealed that weak internet signals, expensive data plans, insufficient training, and the lack of clear institutional rules remain stubborn barriers for both students and staff attempting to use mobile devices in the phonology classes at Ekiti State universities. This finding echoes Garcia and Weisss (2023) observation that learners in many developing contexts routinely confront multiple hurdles when trying to turn their phones and tablets into genuine study tools. Brown and Taylor (2022) further note that technical glitches, high costs, and unclear policies can restrict mobile use across the wider classroom, reinforcing the importance of a supportive infrastructure if classroom technology is to fulfil its promise.

Interestingly, while earlier studies such as Lee and Xie (2021) and Brown and Taylor (2022) identified digital distractions as a major obstacle in mobile-based learning, this research found otherwise. Students in Ekiti State did not rate distraction as a significant challenge (Mean = 2.41). This contrast suggests that learners may have developed stronger self-discipline or that their engagement with phonology apps overshadowed social-media temptations. It may also reflect the academic seriousness of English-

language education students, who use their devices purposefully rather than recreationally. This finding opens a new dimension of inquiry into how learner motivation and context influence the balance between productivity and distraction in mobile learning environments.

The study found that interference from students' native languages hampers their use of mobile devices for phonology practice in Ekiti State universities. Ashby and Maidment (2021) noted that English, presented as a second language, often locks learners into familiar speech patterns, making any shift to a new pattern challenging. When such learners turn to a phone or tablet for phonology drills, they usually encounter obstacles. Chung (2020), echoes this point by showing that students become confused when audio equipment highlights the gap between their mother-tongue sounds and those of English. Because of these overlapping issues, native-language interference continues to undermine phonology learning through mobile technology on Ekiti State campuses.

The research clearly showed that students in Ekiti State universities who are comfortable with mobile technology and who can navigate the digital world tend to adopt smartphones for phonology study more readily. This observation lines up with Al-Munawwarah's (2022) argument that learners who are versatile with such gadgets find the transition to mobile-based study almost effortless. On the other hand, Chaka (2020) noted that a weak grasp of digital skills often stops students from turning their phones into useful learning tools. Put simply, being digitally literate is a prerequisite for using mobile devices successfully in education.

6. CONCLUSION

The research suggests that mobile devices can meaningfully support phonology instruction for English education undergraduates in Ekiti State universities; in addition, reliable internet at a reasonable cost, consistent user training, and transparent institutional guidelines should be implemented, the interference of local languages during learning must be actively addressed, and students overall should be urged to improve their digital literacy and equitable access to mobile technology.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. Mobile devices can be effectively utilized to enhance the learning of phonology among English language education students in universities in Ekiti State.
2. Lecturers should be encouraged to integrate mobile-friendly content into their teaching,
3. Adequate internet connectivity, low data rates, proper training, and clear institutional policies should be made available for universities in Ekiti State
4. Linguistic interference from indigenous languages should be worked upon at the universities in Ekiti State
5. Universities could find ways to support students with affordable access to digital learning resources

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Etik, Beyan ve Açıklamalar

1. Etik Kurul izni ile ilgili;

◎◎Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları, Etik Kurul İznine gerek olmadığını beyan etmektedir.

☑ Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları, Uganda, Üniversitesi Kampala International University Etik Kurulu'nun tarih 16/05/2025 sayı KIU-2025-317ve karar Approved ile etik kurul izin belgesi almış olduklarını beyan etmektedir.

2. Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları, araştırma ve yayın etiği ilkelerine uyduklarını kabul etmektedir.

3. Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları kullanmış oldukları resim, şekil, fotoğraf ve benzeri belgelerin kullanımında tüm sorumlulukları kabul etmektedir.

4. Bu çalışmanın benzerlik raporu bulunmaktadır.