Enhancing English Speaking Skills through Mobile-Assisted Language Learning: A Case Study from Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

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| --- |
| **Aims:** To investigate the effectiveness of mobile applications for English language speaking skill development among university students in western Saudi Arabia, examining learner attitudes, perceived benefits and challenges of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), and identifying specific features driving student engagement.**Study design:** Descriptive quantitative research approach.**Place and Duration of Study:** Western Saudi Arabia; duration from January 2024 to September 2024.**Methodology:** Data was collected through questionnaires administered to 227 English language learners at the university level. The study was framed within Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and constructivist learning theory.**Results:** 1. Mobile applications helped learners acquire vocabulary, improve speaking fluency, and build confidence through individualized interactive learning experiences.2. Duolingo, Hello Talk, and WhatsApp were recognized for their user-friendly design and motivational features.3. Three main barriers to mobile learning were identified: device limitations, technical skill requirements, and teacher resistance to technology adoption. 4. Mobile technology was found to transform traditional teacher-led passive instruction into student-centered dynamic learning practices.**Conclusion:** The study demonstrates the potential of mobile applications in English language learning and provides recommendations for formal curriculum integration. It emphasizes the need for teacher training to maximize MALL educational benefits. This research contributes to the digital language learning literature while offering guidance to policymakers, educators, and developers seeking to improve English speaking abilities through mobile technology. |

*Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Educational Technology in Saudi Arabia, EFL, English Speaking Skills, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of digital technology has significantly transformed the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, especially in the post-pandemic era (Susanty et al., 2021). With face-to-face interactions disrupted by the COVID-19 outbreak, reliance on digital tools, particularly mobile applications, surged. These tools have reshaped English Language Teaching (ELT), making language learning more accessible, flexible, and student-centered (Jeong, 2023). Among these, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has emerged as a pivotal approach that allows learners to practice English speaking skills in diverse and authentic contexts (Rahim & Chandran, 2021).

In the Saudi Arabian academic landscape, English language proficiency is a strategic educational priority (Alhebshi & Gamlo, 2022). However, traditional approaches to language instruction, often rooted in grammar translation and rote memorization, have proven insufficient in developing communicative competence (Al-Khresheh, 2024). Consequently, learners increasingly seek out alternative tools, such as mobile apps, to bridge this gap. These apps provide engaging, gamified environments where learners can practice vocabulary, pronunciation, and conversational skills with real-time feedback (Panmei & Waluyo, 2022).

The current study investigates the role of mobile applications in improving English speaking skills among preparatory year students at a mid-sized university in western Saudi Arabia. It aims to explore learners' attitudes, identify commonly used applications, assess motivational factors, and evaluate barriers to usage. This research is grounded in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) framework and constructivist learning theory, both of which support learner-centered, interactive, and context-driven language education. CLT emphasizes real-world communication and encourages students to use language authentically and spontaneously. It aligns with the affordances of mobile applications that simulate natural conversations and allow learners to engage in meaningful interactions (Ibrahim Mohamed, 2021). Constructivist theory further underscores the value of learning through experience, collaboration, and reflection. Mobile apps support this paradigm by offering opportunities for self-directed learning, peer collaboration, and personalized language practice (Saleem et al., 2021).

Previous studies (Chen et al., 2020; Rajendran & Yunus, 2021) have shown that mobile applications can significantly enhance learners' speaking skills by providing ubiquitous access to interactive language resources. Applications like Duolingo, Hello Talk, WhatsApp, and YouTube facilitate engagement with authentic spoken English and promote learner autonomy (Muhammad et al., 2020). Moreover, the integration of gamification elements, speech recognition, and real-time feedback mechanisms helps to maintain learner motivation and improve fluency and pronunciation (Ibrahim Mohamed, 2021). Despite these advantages, several barriers hinder the optimal integration of MALL in formal educational contexts. Limited access to mobile devices, digital literacy gaps, and inconsistent internet connectivity can impede effective use. Additionally, some educators expressed reluctance to adopt mobile technologies due to concerns over classroom management, lack of training, or skepticism about educational efficacy. These issues are particularly salient in Saudi Arabia, where digital transformation is still uneven across educational institutions.

To address these gaps, this study is guided by the following objectives:

* To examine EFL learners' attitudes toward using mobile applications for developing English speaking skills.
* To identify the most frequently used mobile applications among learners.
* To explore factors that motivate learners to engage with these applications.
* To identify the barriers that limit the effective use of mobile applications in language learning.
* To assess the overall impact of mobile applications on learners' speaking skills development.

The research seeks to answer key questions such as:

1. What are learners' perceptions of mobile applications in improving speaking skills?
2. Which mobile apps are most effective and why?
3. What encourages or discourages the use of mobile apps in language learning?

**2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

This study is anchored in two key pedagogical theories: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and constructivist learning theory. These frameworks shape how learners engage with language and how mobile applications can be utilized to facilitate effective and autonomous speaking practice (Saleem et al., 2021; Suhendi, 2018).

**2.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

CLT promotes language use in authentic contexts, focusing on fluency, interaction, and functional communication rather than just grammatical accuracy. It is learner-centered, encouraging active participation through meaningful tasks. Mobile applications complement this by offering simulations of real-life communication scenarios, thus aligning well with the CLT approach (Rodríguez Vargas, 2021; Torres Duque & Argudo Garzón, 2024). Apps that facilitate spontaneous conversation, such as Hello Talk or Tandem, allow learners to practice the language in real-time with native and non-native speakers, building both competence and confidence.

**2.2 Constructivist Learning Theory**

The constructivist theory emphasizes that learners build knowledge through experiences and interactions. Mobile apps support constructivist learning by providing real-world tasks, collaborative features, and opportunities for reflection (Li, 2024). Learners can engage with language content at their own pace, revisit lessons, and receive instant feedback. This self-directed, interactive mode of learning promotes deeper understanding and retention.

**2.3 Evolution of Language Learning Technologies**

From early sound recording tools to modern mobile applications, technology has long played a role in language education. The integration of audio, video, and interactive features has enriched the learning process, especially for speaking skills. Tools such as YouTube, podcasts, and pronunciation apps now offer learners a wide array of authentic input and opportunities for output (Eshankulovna, 2021).

**2.4 Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)**

MALL represents a convergence of mobility, digital content, and pedagogical design. Defined by Tlili et al. (2023) as learning facilitated through handheld devices, MALL enables education anytime and anywhere. Its alignment with e-learning philosophies allows for continuous, flexible, and individualized language development. The portability of smartphones and tablets means learners can integrate language practice into their daily routines, enhancing exposure and consistency.

**2.5 Learner Motivation and Engagement**

Research has shown that learners are more motivated when they feel in control of their learning. Mobile apps often feature gamified elements, progress tracking, and social interaction, which contribute to increased engagement. Studies by Baptista and Oliveira (2019) and Darsih and Asikin (2020) highlight how such features foster persistence, enjoyment, and ultimately, better outcomes in speaking proficiency.

**2.6 Benefits of Mobile Applications for Speaking Skills**

Mobile applications offer multiple advantages for developing speaking skills:

* Accessibility: Learners can practice speaking from any location.
* Authenticity: Apps provide exposure to native accents, colloquial expressions, and real-life dialogues.
* Feedback: Speech recognition technologies offer immediate corrective feedback on pronunciation.
* Personalization: Adaptive learning paths cater to individual proficiency levels.
* Autonomy: Learners manage their own progress, fostering independent learning habits.

Apps like Duolingo and Cake use repetition, visual cues, and interactive speaking tasks to reinforce spoken language. WhatsApp and similar tools support asynchronous speaking practice, where learners can record and send voice messages, improving fluency without the pressure of live conversation (Ridhallah et al., 2024).

**2.7 Challenges in Implementing MALL**

Despite its advantages, the implementation of MALL faces several obstacles:

* Technological limitations: Issues such as small screens, limited device memory, and battery life can impact usability.
* Digital literacy: Not all learners possess the skills needed to navigate mobile apps effectively.
* Teacher readiness: A lack of training or reluctance to integrate mobile tools in teaching can hinder adoption.
* Infrastructure: Inconsistent internet connectivity and inadequate institutional support remain barriers, particularly in developing regions.

**2.8 Cultural and Pedagogical Considerations**

Effective integration of mobile apps requires sensitivity to learners' cultural and educational contexts. Content must be relevant and respectful, while instructional design should align with learners' goals and experiences. Saudi learners, for example, may benefit more from content that reflects local social norms and communication styles (Althiyabi, 2025).

**2.9 Summary of Previous Studies**

A growing body of empirical research supports the use of mobile applications in language learning. For example:

Rajendran and Yunus (2021) found that mobile apps improved speaking fluency and learner motivation in Malaysian EFL classrooms. Kusmaryani and Tanjung (2023) demonstrated the effectiveness of integrating mobile apps with project-based learning to develop speaking skills. Rocque (2022) highlighted the role of app evaluation in optimizing language learning outcomes. Moayeri and Khodareza (2020) showed that mobile-assisted conversation outside the classroom significantly enhanced Iranian EFL learners' speaking abilities.

These studies suggest that mobile learning, when thoughtfully implemented, can transform the language learning experience and lead to substantial improvements in speaking proficiency.

**2.10 Research Gap and Rationale**

While there is substantial evidence of the general benefits of MALL, fewer studies focus specifically on speaking skills in the context of Saudi Arabia (Al-Hassaani & Al-Saalmi, 2022). This study addresses that gap by examining the perspectives of university-level EFL learners and evaluating how mobile applications influence their speaking performance. By grounding the research in established theories and reviewing current literature, this research study establishes a strong foundation for the empirical investigation that follows.

In short, mobile learning presents both opportunities and challenges. When guided by sound pedagogical principles such as CLT and constructivism, and supported by appropriate technological infrastructure, mobile applications have the potential to revolutionize EFL speaking instruction in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

**3.0 Research Methodology**

**3.1 Methodological Approach**

This quantitative study employed a descriptive research design to examine how mobile applications develop English speaking skills among Saudi university students. Following Cooper and Schindler's (2014) framework, the methodology was structured to systematically investigate learner attitudes, effective applications, and implementation barriers.

**3.2 Participants and Sampling**

The study targeted 227 English language learners at a Western Saudi university, selected through simple random sampling (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This representative sample ensured all 2,100 preparatory-year students had equal selection probability. Participants averaged 19 years old, with 58% male and 42% female representation across beginner (25%), intermediate (60%), and advanced (15%) proficiency levels.

***3.3 Research Instrument***

The primary research instrument employed in this study was a validated questionnaire designed to capture participants' perceptions of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). The instrument consisted of 21 items, all structured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was divided into four distinct sections to measure key dimensions relevant to the study. The first section assessed learners’ attitudes toward MALL through six items. The second section evaluated the perceived effectiveness of mobile applications in enhancing speaking skills using four targeted items. The third section focused on encouragement factors, incorporating five items that explored motivations and preferences influencing mobile app usage. The final section addressed implementation barriers through six items that investigated technological, pedagogical, and infrastructural challenges. To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, a pilot study involving 30 participants was conducted. The results demonstrated high internal consistency across all scales, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients exceeding 0.70. Furthermore, item validity was confirmed through Pearson correlation analysis, with all correlation values surpassing the 0.60 threshold, indicating strong construct alignment.

***3.4 Data Collection and Analysis***

Data collection was conducted during the 2024 academic year using an online survey platform to distribute questionnaires. This method facilitated efficient and broad access to the target participant pool, enhancing response rates. The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The analytical process began with descriptive statistics, which included calculating means and frequencies to summarize participant responses across the different questionnaire items. To test the study's hypotheses and identify patterns among variables, inferential statistical methods were applied. This included analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Friedman's test to examine group differences and rank data respectively. Additionally, reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach’s alpha, which yielded an overall score of 0.878, indicating excellent internal consistency for the full instrument.

***3.5 Ethical Considerations***

The study was conducted in full compliance with ethical standards for research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the voluntary nature of their involvement. Informed consent was obtained digitally from each respondent, ensuring they were aware of their rights to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Anonymity was strictly maintained, with no identifying information collected or stored during the research process. Furthermore, the study protocol was reviewed and approved by the institutional review board of the participating university, affirming its adherence to ethical guidelines concerning participant welfare and data confidentiality.

***3.6 Limitations***

Despite its methodological rigor and careful design, this study is not without limitations, which should be taken into account when interpreting its findings or attempting to generalize them beyond the study context. One primary limitation lies in the sample selection: participants were recruited solely from a single institution in Saudi Arabia. This narrow sampling frame restricts the extent to which the findings can be extrapolated to other educational settings, both within and outside the country. Differences in institutional culture, curriculum, and student demographics elsewhere may yield different results. A second limitation relates to the reliance on self-reported survey data, which is inherently susceptible to various forms of response bias. Participants may have provided socially desirable responses or may have had difficulty accurately recalling their behaviors or attitudes, thereby affecting the reliability of the data. Furthermore, the study’s cross-sectional design captures data at only one point in time. This temporal limitation precludes any ability to make causal inferences or to assess how perceptions, behaviors, or outcomes might evolve over a longer period. Longitudinal research would be more appropriate for uncovering trends and establishing causal links. These limitations, while common in educational research, highlight the need for cautious interpretation and for further studies to validate and extend the findings.

***3.7 Methodological Strengths***

Despite these limitations, the study design featured several methodological strengths that enhance its reliability and credibility. The use of a quantitative approach enabled precise measurement of participant attitudes and perceptions, allowing for statistical comparisons across key variables. The sampling technique ensured that a representative group of learners from the target population participated in the study, thereby increasing the relevance of the findings. Additionally, the questionnaire employed was both validated and reliable, as confirmed through pilot testing and statistical evaluation. Finally, the use of SPSS software for data analysis ensured analytical rigor and enabled the application of robust statistical procedures to interpret the data accurately and effectively.

This methodology provided systematic, empirical evidence about MALL's role in speaking skill development, aligning with the study's objectives while maintaining scientific rigor. The combination of random sampling, validated instruments, and robust statistical analysis ensured reliable findings applicable to similar EFL contexts.

**Results and Discussion**

The results of the study provide interpretations based on data collected from 227 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The findings address the study's main objectives: to examine learners’ attitudes toward mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), evaluate the effectiveness of specific applications, identify motivating factors, and explore the barriers hindering mobile app use for improving English speaking skills.

**Overview of Analytical Tools**

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, applying descriptive statistics, reliability and validity assessments, and inferential statistical tests. The Friedman chi-square test was used to determine the significance of differences in ranked responses (Riffenburgh, 2006). A high overall internal consistency was achieved, as indicated by Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.878.

**Instrument Reliability and Validity**

Table 1 presents the reliability and validity of the study's questionnaire across four key sections. Each section demonstrated acceptable to high internal consistency, with Cronbach’s alpha values ranging from 0.725 to 0.859. Validity scores, assessed via Pearson correlation, exceeded 0.85 in all categories, confirming the instrument’s robustness. The section measuring “Students’ encouragement to use mobile applications” achieved the highest reliability (α = 0.859), reinforcing confidence in the data.

**Table 1. Reliability and validity for the main hypotheses study**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Section statements | Reliability | Validity | Items | Interpretation |
| 1- EFL learners' attitudes towards using mobile applications in developing English language speaking skills. | 0.733 | 0.856 | 6 | Relatively High |
| 2- Mobile applications used to improve the speaking skills of EFL learners | 0.725 | 0.851 | 4 | Relatively High |
| 3- Students’ encouragement to use mobile phone applications. | 0.859 | 0.927 | 5 | Reliable |
|  4- Barriers obstructing EFL learners from using mobile applications. | 0.819 | 0.905 | 6 | Reliable |
| 5- for all questionnaires | 0.878 | 0.937 | 21 | Reliable |

**Learners' Attitudes Toward Mobile Applications**

Learners reported generally positive attitudes toward using mobile applications to improve their speaking skills. As shown in Table 2, the highest-rated statement was that mobile applications help learners acquire vocabulary for speaking (M = 4.52). This was followed by practicing speaking more frequently (M = 4.30) and enhancing fluency (M = 4.26). Learners also acknowledged improvements in pronunciation and confidence. However, the statement suggesting that mobile apps might cause distraction and lack of concentration received the lowest score (M = 2.85), reflecting general disagreement with this concern.

**Table 2. EFL learners' attitudes towards using mobile applications in developing English language speaking skills**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Statement  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Mean | Std. deviation | rank |
| 1- Mobile applications encourage me to speak English fluently. | 00.0% | 104.4% | 2711.9% | 8537.4% | 10546.3% | 4.26 | 0.834 | 3 |
| 2- Using mobile applications helps me learn new vocabulary for speaking English | 10.4% | 20.9% | 94.0% | 8135.7% | 13459.0% | 4.52 | 0.661 | 1 |
| 3- Using mobile applications helps me practice speaking English more. | 00.0% | 104.4% | 2711.9% | 7533.0% | 11550.7% | 4.30 | 0.846 | 2 |
|  4- Mobile applications help me build my speaking confidence. | 31.3% | 187.9% | 3415.0% | 8437.0% | 8838.8% | 4.04 | 0.998 | 5 |
| 5- Learning English through mobile applications improves my pronunciation. | 20.9% | 156.6% | 2912.8% | 9039.6% | 9140.1% | 4.11 | 0.929 | 4 |
| 6- Using mobile applications for English-speaking practice causes distraction and lack of concentration. | 3816.7% | 7332.2% | 4118.1% | 3615.9% | 3917.2% | 2.85 | 1.350 | 6 |

These findings suggest that mobile apps offer valuable opportunities for autonomous, real-time speaking practice. Learners found them effective in fostering fluency, accuracy, and lexical expansion.

**Effectiveness of Specific Mobile Applications**

Table 3 and Figure 1 both evaluate how various types of mobile applications contribute to speaking skill development. Social media and video streaming platforms (e.g., YouTube, and Instagram) were considered the most effective (M = 4.48). Learners also praised language-learning apps such as Duolingo and Babbel (M = 4.11), language exchange platforms like Tandem (M = 3.94), and voice messaging tools such as WhatsApp (M = 3.90). These applications provide accessible, authentic contexts for practicing English speaking and foster meaningful interaction.

**Table 3. Mobile applications used to improve the speaking skills of EFL learners**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Statement  | Strongly Disagree  | Disagree  | Neutral  | Agree  | Strongly Agree  | Mean  | Std. deviation | rank |
| 7- Using social media applications (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and video streaming applications (e.g., YouTube, Netflix) helps me improve my English-speaking skills. | 31.3% | 41.8% | 125.3% | 7131.3% | 13760.4% | 4.48 | 0.987 | 1 |
| 8- Using online English learning applications (e.g., Hello English, Duolingo, Babbel) helps me improve my English-speaking skills. | 20.9% | 146.2% | 4218.5% | 6830.0% | 10144.5% | 4.11 | 0.974 | 2 |
| 9- Using English language exchange applications (e.g., Tandem, Hello Talk) helps me improve my English-speaking skills. | 10.4% | 62.6% | 7633.5% | 6629.1% | 7834.4% | 3.94 | 0.908 | 3 |
| 10- Using voice messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp, LINE, WeChat) helps me improve my English-speaking skills. | 00.0% | 2511.0% | 2621.6% | 7633.5% | 7733.9% | 3.90 | 0.995 | 4 |



Figure 1. Diverging stacked bar chart with the survey data

The consistency in high mean scores across these tools suggests that learners benefit from diverse platforms, especially those offering user-friendly interfaces and multimodal content.

**Encouragement Factors**

Motivational aspects associated with mobile app use are summarized in Table 4 as well as figure 2. The highest-rated statement highlighted the role of contextual learning (M = 4.34), followed by usability (M = 4.29) and practicality (M = 4.24). Learners also appreciated how mobile applications supported interactive and collaborative learning. These findings align with both constructivist and communicative language teaching (CLT) theories, which stress the importance of learner autonomy and social interaction in language acquisition.

**Table: 4. Students’ encouragement to use mobile phone applications**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Statement  | Strongly Disagree  | Disagree  | Neutral  | Agree  | Strongly Agree  | Mean  | Std. deviation | rank |
| 11- Mobile phone applications enhance collaborative learning models and assist me in developing speaking skills in English. | 31.3% | 94.0% | 3013.2% | 8939.2% | 9642.3% | 4.17 | 0.898 | 5 |
| 12- Mobile phone applications encourage interactive learning and help me improve my speaking skills. | 10.4% | 104.4% | 3013.2% | 9541.9% | 9140.1% | 4.17 | 0.851 | 4 |
| 13- The usability of mobile applications helps me in developing my speaking skills in English. | 00.0% | 52.2% | 2410.6% | 9843.2% | 10044.1% | 4.29 | 0.743 | 2 |
| 14- Mobile phone applications are practical and effective in developing my speaking skills in English. | 10.4% | 94.0% | 2511.0% | 9140.1% | 10144.5% | 4.24 | 0.835 | 3 |
| 15- Mobile phone applications facilitate contextual learning of the English language which helps develop my speaking skills in English. | 20.9% | 52.2% | 2310.1% | 8135.7% | 11651.1% | 4.34 | 0.817 | 1 |



Figure 2 Diverging stacked bar chart with the student encouragement statements data.

Overall, motivation to use mobile apps stems from their flexibility, intuitive design, and capacity to simulate real-world communication.

**Barriers to Mobile Application Use**

Despite their advantages, learners also reported several challenges in using mobile applications, detailed in Table 5 as well as figure 3. The most pressing concern was the risk of device loss, damage, or misuse (M = 3.64), followed by inadequate teacher knowledge of technology (M = 3.41). Other barriers included short battery life, small keyboards, screen limitations, and the negative attitudes of some teachers toward mobile-assisted learning.

**Table:.5. Barriers obstructing EFL learners from using mobile applications**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Statement  | Strongly Disagree  | Disagree  | Neutral  | Agree  | Strongly Agree  | Mean  | Std. deviation | rank |
| 16- The rapid development of mobile phone applications limits my chances of using updated ones in the classroom for learning English. | 2711.9% | 6026.4% | 5423.8% | 3917.2% | 4720.7% | 3.08 | 1.319 | 6 |
| 17- Inadequate teacher knowledge and experience with technology limit my use of mobile phone applications in the classroom for learning English. | 229.7% | 3415.0% | 5323.3% | 6629.1% | 5222.9% | 3.41 | 1.260 | 2 |
| 18- Small screen size and limited memory hinder my use of mobile phone applications in the classroom for learning English. | 229.7% | 5122.5% | 4720.7% | 6026.4% | 4720.7% | 3.26 | 1.282 | 5 |
| 19- Short battery life and small keyboards hinder my use of mobile phone applications in the classroom for learning. | 187.9% | 5524.2% | 3415.0% | 6528.6% | 5524.2% | 3.37 | 1.298 | 3 |
| 20- The risk of losing, misusing, or damaging devices creates obstacles to using mobile phone applications in the classroom for learning English. | 135.7% | 2912.8% | 4821.1% | 7432.6% | 6327.8% | 3.64 | 1.179 | 1 |
| 21- The negative attitudes of teachers towards mobile phone applications prevent me from using such applications in English-speaking classes. | 2310.1% | 4419.4% | 5423.8% | 5323.3% | 5323.3% | 3.30 | 1.279 | 4 |



Figure 3. Stacked bar chart showing the distribution of responses for each barrier statement, overlaid with black dots representing the mean score for each statement.

The rapid pace of app development (M = 3.08) was also cited as a limitation, indicating that learners may struggle to keep up with newer tools or updated versions. These barriers, while not overwhelmingly negative, reflect the need for better digital infrastructure and teacher training.

**Hypothesis Testing and Inferential Findings**

Table 6 and figure 4 below summarize the results of hypothesis testing using Friedman’s chi-square analysis.

**Table 6. Hypothesis testing**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hypothesis  | Grand Mean  | Friedman's Chi-Square | Sig |
| EFL learners' attitudes towards using mobile applications in developing English language speaking skills | 4.01 | 409.688 | 0.000 |
| Mobile applications used to improve the speaking skills of EFL learners | 4.11 | 80.671 | 0.000 |
| Students’ encouragement to use mobile phone applications | 4.24 | 16.084 | 0.003 |
| Barriers obstructing EFL learners from using mobile applications | 3.34 | 39.969 | 0.000 |



Figure 4 Bar chart representing grand mean comparisons across the four categories.

All four hypotheses were supported with statistically significant results (p < 0.01):

* H1: Learners demonstrated strong agreement that mobile applications enhance their speaking skills (M = 4.01; χ² = 409.688; p < 0.001).
* H2: Learners identified specific applications as effective tools for speaking improvement (M = 4.11; χ² = 80.671; p < 0.001).
* H3: Students were highly motivated to use mobile apps (M = 4.24; χ² = 16.084; p = 0.003).
* H4: Barriers to mobile app use were recognized but did not overwhelm the generally positive attitudes (M = 3.34; χ² = 39.969; p < 0.001).

These results confirm that while learners recognize challenges, the perceived benefits of mobile applications in language learning are significantly stronger.

The findings confirm and extend current literature that highlights the value of MALL for speaking skill development. Students expressed enthusiasm for mobile apps that support vocabulary development, conversational practice, and pronunciation improvement. Apps that are interactive, contextualized, and easy to use were especially favored.

Barriers such as technical limitations and teacher reluctance must be addressed to ensure broader adoption. Training programs that enhance teachers’ digital competence and a curriculum that supports mobile learning integration can improve overall outcomes.

**CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Conclusion**

The analysis confirms that mobile applications are seen as effective, practical tools for enhancing English speaking skills among EFL learners. Learners appreciate the autonomy, flexibility, and interactivity offered by mobile platforms. While certain obstacles remain, the overall sentiment is highly favorable, supporting the integration of mobile technology into language instruction—particularly within communicative and constructivist pedagogical models.

**FINDINGS**

Based on data analysis in the previous chapter, as well as answering the research questions, and testing the research hypotheses, the study concluded with the following findings:

To evaluate respondents' answers to the primary question "What are EFL learners' attitudes towards using mobile applications to develop English language speaking skills. The results demonstrate strong agreement among respondents that mobile applications encourage them to improve their speaking skills. Moreover, using mobile applications helps me learn new vocabulary for speaking English. Furthermore, the results show overwhelming agreement that mobile applications help respondents learn new vocabulary for speaking English. Also, the results show overwhelming agreement that mobile applications help respondents practice speaking English more. This indicates that EFL learner’ have positive attitudes towards using mobile applications to develop English language speaking skills. This analysis underscores the strong positive attitudes towards mobile applications for learning English, alongside the recognition of some barriers to their use.

To evaluate respondents' answers to the primary question: What are the Mobile applications used to improve the speaking skills of EFL learners? The results show overwhelming agreement that social media applications and video streaming applications help respondents improve their English-speaking skills.

To assess the respondents' answers to the question: What is the students’ encouragement to use mobile phone applications? The results show overwhelming agreement that Mobile phone applications enhance collaborative learning models and assist respondents in developing their English-speaking skills

To evaluate respondents' answers to the primary question: "What are the barriers obstructing EFL learners from using mobile applications? The results show that the risk of losing, misusing, or damaging devices creates obstacles to using mobile phone applications in the classroom for learning English. Ranking first overall, this highlights a major challenge in incorporating mobile applications into classroom learning for developing English-speaking skills.

This research focused on the role of mobile applications in developing English Language Learners’ speaking skills from the perspectives of English Language Learners in a Middle Eastern university. It employed a descriptive method and used the questionnaire for data collection the analysis of data revealed that: the use of mobile applications has many positive impacts on the development of speaking skills among English Language Learners. It encourages them to speak English fluently. Moreover, it helps in learning new vocabulary for speaking English. Also, it allows students to interact with the educational content, without having any space barrier in the real world. It helps the learners to practice speaking English more. This indicates that EFL learners have positive attitudes towards using mobile applications to develop English language speaking skills. Furthermore, mobile applications enhance collaborative learning models and assist participants in developing their English-speaking skills. Most of the participants emphasized that the most effective mobile applications are social media applications and video streaming applications. Finally, the majority of the respondents agreed that the risk of losing, misusing, or damaging devices creates obstacles to using mobile phone applications in the classroom for the learning process

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended the following recommendations.

**Recommendations**

* Mobile applications should be implemented in teaching all language skills due to the results of this study which indicate the significant effect of mobile applications in improving students' speaking skills.
* Collaborative learning systems and project-based learning models should be used in the development of Eli student’s English language skills.
* Suggestions for Further Studies

Further studies can be conducted as follows:

1. Teachers’ fear of using mobile applications in English language instruction might be the subject of future study.
2. Utilizing (AI) to enhance the students’ productive skills.
3. Factors Affecting Mobile Adoption in English Language Learning from Perspectives of Learners and Teachers
4. The Impact of digital technologies on the development of students' writing skills.

Consent

As per international standards or university standards, respondents’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

**COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:**

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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2.

3.

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