



ESL Learners' Praxis of Asynchronous and Synchronous Modes for Spoken English: Notions and Optimizations

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author EMD designed the study, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author FEJ performed the statistical analysis, managed the analyses of the study and managed the literature searches. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript

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ABSTRACT

ESL learners are faced with spoken English deficiencies such as mispronunciation, misrepresentation of phonetic sounds and poor intonation which have debarred them from approximating a degree of the standard form of Received Pronunciation. Since previous studies have investigated the effectiveness of asynchronous and synchronous tools on students' learning, the present study investigates ESL students' understanding of asynchronous and synchronous modes as tools for learning spoken English, and students' use of the resources of asynchronous and synchronous e-learning tools for spoken English. To achieve these aims, an empirical study on 300 ESL university undergraduate students' praxis of asynchronous and synchronous modes for spoken English was conducted. The results revealed that respondents had the knowledge of asynchronous and synchronous features as e-learning tools and as veritable means of teaching and learning spoken English, but they did not employ these tools with the purpose of learning academic contents. A number of pedagogical implications and recommendations were discussed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have given a new shape and increasing functions to the art of teaching and learning. Today, teachers can impart knowledge to their students without distance posing threat and students can push back the frontiers of English language in the comfort of their homes. Presently, the seismic shift occasioned by COVID-19 has caused a rethink and transformation of teaching/learning situation into technology-support mode which could cater for various categories of learners. The modes are either asynchronous or synchronous. Examples are radio/television school on-air programme, e-learning, virtual learning, online learning and distance learning [1]. However, Onyema et al. [2] note that this transformation is confronted by some deficiencies such as lack of technological know-how; lack of constant local power supply; lack of digital technologies; and lack/poor internet connectivity.

Nevertheless, through ICT, ESL learners have the opportunity to learn the target language when they communicate directly with native speakers and are exposed to authentic examples of everyday English, unlike the traditional classrooms where students can only interact with their immediate ESL teachers and peers [3]. Eaton [4] affirms that getting started with simpler tools may be a more appropriate way for them to explore and incorporate new technologies. Simpler technologies allow users to minimize their apprehensions, risks and performance anxieties.

However, observation reveals that ESL learners are faced with spoken English deficiencies in spite of the multifarious solutions at their disposal. One of the solutions is learning spoken English through the use of a/synchronous modes. It can be observed that some a/synchronous tools could be effortlessly accessed, utilized, subscribed to at a cheap rate and used as learning supplements. Some ESL learners who are abreast of a/synchronous tools as e-learning modes appear not to optimize them for tackling their spoken English deficiencies. Asynchronous communications have been considered as facilitative potential and innovative means for critical reflective thinking and for speaking fluency. Currently, the use of

synchronous communications is gaining popularity due to technological advancement and growing bandwidth capabilities [5]; Kinshuk & Nian-Shing, 2006 as cited in Hrastinski [6].

1.1 Features of Teaching Spoken English

Language is so important that between humans it might be difficult to think of a society without language [7]. Through spoken language, a speaker can share his/her thoughts, experiences, culture, and beliefs. Students are able to maintain good social relationships and are able to communicate fluently when they have good command of English. Speaking might be acquired naturally in L₁ situations when one is exposed to the target language, but in L₂ situations, it could be learnt by drilling, imitation and could be improved upon through constant practice, authentic conversation experiences with native speakers and guidance [8]. ESL learners can develop confidence and use the target language appropriately and fluently if exposed to the various aspects that constitute problems in spoken English. In Nigeria some of the problematic areas of spoken English are: segmental elements such as phonemic units (consonants and vowels); prosodic features (pitch, stress, tone, syllable and syllabic structure, intonation, loudness, tempo, rhythm); phonotactics, phonological processes and patterns of English language [9-11].

Akindede [12] affirms that the Spoken English course is a technical course that requires some technicalities in its teaching. The associated-technicalities lie in the differences between the target language and the speaker's L₁. Nigerian languages are tonal and syllable-timed while the Standard British English is stress-timed. Consonant clusters exist in English, but they are conspicuously absent in most Nigerian languages. In addition, some Nigerian languages do not attest to some English sound inventories and hence, ESL learners substitute the nearest sounds in their mother tongue for the affected consonants in English [13,14]. ESL bilinguals are not coerced to speak the way native speakers do but to approximate towards proficiency, fluency, and good communicative competence and performance in order to avoid communication breakdown [12]. For the proper acquisition of sound pronunciation and intelligible communication, it is expected that phonological,

phonemic and metaphonological awareness of language learners/teachers should be raised in order to develop their linguistic competences [15].

Classroom pedagogical activities ought to be characterized by multi-way and multi-media exchanges rather, but they are rather replaced by frontal teaching coupled with heavy reliance on textbooks, non-availability of ICT tools in schools, unqualified ICT compliant-teachers, over enrolment of students, dearth of networked computers and servers, poor ICT policies [16-20]. Usman and Mustafa [21] attest that interference of mother tongue, poor teaching methodology, poor background, lack of constant practice bedevil the teaching of spoken English. Epileptic power supply is another challenge. Without electricity supply, English teachers cannot get connected to a computerized speech laboratory that can provide practical learning of the segmentals and supra-segmentals of the English language.

Although, the various synchronous e-learning tools such as Instant messaging, Internet forums, Zoom, Skype and Videoconferencing, and asynchronous e-learning tools such as Email, Facebook, YouTube and Podcasts [22,23] have contributed significantly to the teaching of the English, but this has not always translated into significant improvement in students' spoken English.

1.2 The Study

One of the problems besetting the spoken English of ESL learners seems to be the lack or insufficient motivation received outside classroom. It can be observed that, when ESL learners are not exposed to the target language outside the classroom, authentic materials and interaction with native speakers of English, the acquisition of language proficiency may be hampered. Worldwide, there are studies on a/synchronous e-learning modes as tools for English language learning such as Jung [24]; Tri & Nguyen [25]; Caruso et al. [26], but the focus of these studies does not specifically center on ESL learners' knowledge, and utilization of and preference for a/synchronous e-learning modes as tools for learning spoken English. There is several empirical evidence on the benefits of a/synchronous e-learning modes as tools for English language learning, but sparse empirical research has been gathered on undergraduate English language students' knowledge and,

utilization of and preference for a/synchronous e-learning tools on spoken English. To fill this researchable gap, this study investigates whether ESL learners have knowledge about a/synchronous e-learning modes as a solution to their spoken English deficiencies and how they make use of these tools.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The main aim of the present study is to promote the use of a/synchronous modes in teaching and learning spoken English in ESL classrooms by investigating the understanding and practical use of a/synchronous e-learning tools for spoken English. For this purpose, a descriptive research design of survey type was adopted.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. Do English language students have the knowledge of a/synchronous modes as e-learning tools?
2. What are the perceptions of English language students on the use of a/synchronous e-learning tools for learning spoken English?
3. How frequent is the use of a/synchronous e-learning tools for academic and non-academic purposes among English language students?
4. For what purpose do English language students make use of a/synchronous e-learning tools?

2. PARTICIPANTS

The population of the study comprised undergraduate students of Ekiti State University, Nigeria. A total sample of 300 undergraduate students of English language was randomly selected from 2 departments in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. The departments are the Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education and the Department of English and Literary Studies, Faculty of Arts using purposive sampling technique. This study centers on spoken English, hence 100 Level, 200 Level and 300 Level undergraduate students of English language of these departments were selected because they offer phonetics and phonology as part of their courses. 100 Level students are in the first year, 200 Level students are in the second year and 300 Level students are in their third year of their

studies respectively. 120(40%) students from the Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education and 180(60%) students from the Department of English and Literary Studies, Faculty of Arts, who took part in the study were selected using simple random sampling technique. The age range of the respondents was between 17-24 years. 168 (56%) participants were female, while 132(44%) were male.

2.1 Instruments and Procedure

To elicit information, two instruments were constructed on a scale. On the scale, Aspect A was a self-structured questionnaire and Aspect B was a survey checklist. In Aspect A, the questionnaire consisted of two parts: 1 and 2. Part 1 gave information about the respondents' demographic information: age, current level of study, sex and department. Part 2 was subdivided into 3 sections; Section A, B and C. Section A with 4 statements focused on the extent to which English language students have the knowledge of a/synchronous modes as e-learning tools. Respondents were required to give their opinions by ticking either *Yes* or *No* against each statement. Section B centered on the perceptions of English language students on the use of a/synchronous e-learning tools for learning of Spoken English. This section was measured through a four-point Likert scale (*Strongly Agree (SA)*, *Agree (A)*, *Disagree (D)* and *Strongly Disagree (SD)*) with 12 statements. Section C presented the frequency of usage of a/synchronous e-learning tools for academic and non-academic purpose among English language students. This was measured by means of time frames as respondents ticked some time spans when they used these e-learning tools.

Aspect B consisted of a self-structured survey checklists with one section. This section investigated the purpose for which English language students make use of a/synchronous e-learning tools. Two columns were provided - one for non-academic purposes and the other for academic purposes with 7 items each. Respondents marked their intentions by ticking either *Applicable to Me (AM)* or *Not Applicable to Me (NAM)*.

2.2 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The face and content validity of the instrument was ascertained by experts in the Departments

of Information Communication and Technology, Languages, and Tests and Measurement. The final drafts of the instruments were adjudged valid for the study after thorough ratification of the instruments and after corrections were carried out. To test for reliability, the instruments were administered on 100 ESL undergraduate students who were not part of the study. Through the test-retest method using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, the reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. All research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages.

3. RESULTS

After applying the questionnaire and having a survey checklist ready for the research questions raised, the results were subdivided into four main subparts which are as follow:

3.1 English Language Students' Knowledge of A/synchronous as E-learning Tools

In order to answer the first research question concerning the extent to which English language students have the knowledge of a/synchronous modes as e-learning tools. Respondents were required to give their opinions by indicating with either *Yes* or *No* against each statement.

The results in Table 1 showed that 298(99.3%) and 300(100%) of the participants have the knowledge of a/synchronous as e-learning tools respectively. It was shown that 160(53.3%) and 183(61%) of the participants knew that a/synchronous e-learning tools can be used for the teaching/learning of Spoken English respectively.

3.2 Students' Perceptions of the Use of A/synchronous E-learning Tools for Learning of Spoken English

The second research question centers on the perceptions of English language students on the use of a/synchronous e-learning tools for learning of Spoken English. This section was measured through a four-point Likert scale: *Strongly Agree (SA)*, *Agree (A)*, *Disagree (D)* and *Strongly Disagree (SD)* with 12 statements.

156(52%) respondents disagreed with the statement, "synchronous e-learning tools would enhance the teaching and learning of English

language more than asynchronous tools". It was attested by 180(60%) of the respondents that synchronous e-learning tools would improve speaking skills more than asynchronous tools. In respect to item 3, 152(50.6%) disagreed that synchronous e-learning tools would promote learning of English consonants and vowels. Respondents 190(63.3%) disagreed with the statement, "synchronous e-learning tools would foster learning of supra-segmental features of English". 195(65%) of the respondents negated the statement that synchronous e-learning tools would improve students' knowledge of phonological processes and patterns of English language. 156(52%) respondents opined that learning spoken English through asynchronous e-learning tools is interesting more than synchronous tools.

At the convenience of the respondents, 189(63%) preferred learning spoken English with asynchronous e-learning tools. 250(83.3%) do not have preference for asynchronous e-learning tools for learning spoken English in tertiary institutions to synchronous tools. In item 9, 185(61.7%) of the respondents countered the statement that synchronous e-learning tools give them access to more recent learning materials on spoken English. It was confirmed by 170(56.7%) of the respondents that synchronous e-learning tools enhance teacher- student interactions. 186(62%) respondents showed that they prefer asynchronous e-learning tools because they give room for critical thinking, reflection and motivation more than synchronous tools, while 200(66.6%) affirmed that they prefer asynchronous e-learning tools because they can replay lessons taught at their convenience.

3.3 Frequency of the Use of A/synchronous E-learning Tools for Academic and Non-Academic Purpose

The third research question presented the frequency of usage of a/synchronous e-learning tools for academic and non-academic purposes among English language students. This was measured by means of time frames as respondents ticked some time spans when they used these e-learning tools.

Table 3, the results indicated that, per week 96(32%) of the respondents did not use synchronous e-learning tools at all. 86(28.7%) spent less than 1 hour, 46(15.3%) spent 1 to 2 hours, while 3(1%) spent 17 to 24 hours utilizing

synchronous e-learning tools for non-academic purposes. None of the respondents indicated that they used asynchronous e-learning tools for non-academic purposes per week. 3(1%) spent less than 1 hour, 3(1%) spent 1 to 2 hours while 74(24.7%) spent 13 to 16 hours using asynchronous e-learning tools per week for non-academic purposes. The results indicated that per week, 223(74.3%) of the respondents did not use synchronous e-learning tools for academic purposes. 44(14.7%) spent less than 1 hour, 21(7%) spent 1 to 2 hours while none of the respondents spent up to 17-24 hours using synchronous e-learning tools for academic purposes. None of the respondents indicated that they did not use asynchronous e-learning tools per week for non-academic purposes. 52(17.3%) spent less than 1 hour, 116(38.7%) spent 1 to 2 hours, while 10(3.3%) spent up to 17-24 hours using asynchronous e-learning tools for academic purposes.

3.4 Purpose of Students' Use of A/synchronous E-learning Tools

To answer the fourth research question a self-structured survey checklists was employed to investigate the purpose for which English language students make use of a/synchronous e-learning tools. The purpose was either for non-academic or academic issues.

In Table 4, for non-academic uses of both a/synchronous e-learning tools, the results indicated that 298(99.3%) used chat forums to discuss with friends, 289(96.3%) downloaded or watched movies and play games, 270(90%) downloaded/listened to online music and 265(88.3%) used chat forums to make new friends, 198(66%) transacted businesses, 186(62%) got updated on trendy issues and latest gist, 178(59.3%) checked, composed, sent mails and uploaded photos and online profiles, 157(52.3%) watched sports, 143(47.7%) surfed the Internet to get information on matters of interest.

For academic uses of both a/synchronous e-technologies, 280(93.3%) of the participants searched for online English language materials, 210(70%) sourced, shared and exchanged academic materials for exam and test, 186(62%) read newspaper online, 127(42.3%) discussed assignments and research work with friends, 45(15%) of the participants learnt productive skills (speaking and writing). 38(12.7%) used

online dictionaries, 35(11.6%) shared knowledge of English language topics with friends, 20(6.7%) submitted assignments online.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 English Language Students' Knowledge of A/Synchronous Modes as E-Learning Tools

The findings of the study disclosed that the majority of the participants had knowledge of a/synchronous modes as e-learning tools and as a solution to their spoken English deficiencies. This is supported by Kopinska [27], who emphasized that learners are fully aware of the usefulness of ICT to the learning of English language, while Khanom [28] affirmed that participants got update information and learn different aspects of English language through the Internet. However, Siddiquah and Salim [29] disagreed that students were less skilled on ICT programs like using the digital library, discussion forums, and blogs but were dexterous at some simple ICT programs like MS Word, searching and surfing the internet, social networking, and computer games.

4.2 Respondents' Perceptions on the Use of A/Synchronous E-Learning Tools for Learning of Spoken English

It was found that English language students perceived that the use of a/synchronous e-learning tools would facilitate and improve the learning of the English language. Moreover, the findings showed that participants perceived that the use of asynchronous e-learning tools would enhance learning more than synchronous modes in the following aspects: teaching and learning of English language, English consonants and vowels, supra-segmental features of English, phonological processes and patterns of the English language, provide recent learning materials on spoken English, allow playback of lessons taught and foster critical thinking, reflection and motivation. Supporting this view, Yunus, Lubis, and Lin [30] attested that ICT empowers students to improve on their vocabulary, grammar, writing, speaking and allows them to take greater control in their learning. Kopinska [31] regarded ICT as a supportive tool for learning and as means to improve English.

However, synchronous e-learning tools were perceived to enhance learning more than

asynchronous modes in these aspects: speaking skills, spoken English and teacher- student interaction. This outcome is supported by Hrastinski [32] who posited that synchronous communications serve as a complement to asynchronous communication, support personal participation, induce arousal and motivation, and provide support for social relations while Karal and Turgut [33] indicated that students perceived more clearly the opportunities that synchronous distance education can offer.

4.3 Frequency of Usage of A/Synchronous E-Learning Tools for Academic and Non-Academic Purpose

Respondents made use of asynchronous e-learning tools frequently for several hours for both academic and non-academic purposes. Nevertheless, a larger percentage of respondents preferred to use asynchronous e-learning tools for several hours (3 to 24 hours) per week for non-academic purposes. For some of the respondents who used synchronous modes, they spent >1 hour to 8 hours for non-academic purpose. This view is supported by Tri and Nguyen [25] that all the participants spent time using ICT for general purposes per week; 55% of the subjects spent more than 20 hours, 30% spent from 6 to 15 hours, 12.8% spent between 6 and 10 hours, 16.8% used between 11 and 15 hours for non-educational purposes in a week respectively. Jung [24] concluded that most of the participants in his work spent 3 to 10 hours per week using ICTs for general activities like browsing the Internet for pleasure, downloading music and videos, checking and composing emails and instant messaging, almost 40% spent less than 1 hour per week on ICTs to learn English.

4.4 The Purpose of Students' Use of A/Synchronous Modes

The results indicated that participants made use of a/synchronous e-learning tools mainly for non-academic purposes: chat forums to discuss with friends, downloading/watching movies and playing games, downloading/listening to online music, using chat forums to make new friends, business transactions, to get updated on trendy issues and latest gist, and checking, composing, sending of mails, uploading photos and online profiles. For academic purposes, the participants were interested in using a/synchronous e-learning tools for the following purposes:

Table 1. Students' knowledge of a/synchronous as e-learning tools

Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
I am aware of synchronous e-learning tools such as Skype, Conferencing, Zoom, and Instant messaging.	298 (99.3%)	2 (0.7%)
I am familiar with asynchronous e-learning tools such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Weblogs, Messaging.	300 (100%)	0 (%)
I know that synchronous e-learning tools can be used for the learning of spoken English.	160 (53.3%)	140 (46.7%)
I know that asynchronous e-learning tools can be used for the learning of spoken English.	183 (61%)	117 (39%)

Table 2. Students' perceptions on the use of a/synchronous e-learning tools for learning spoken English

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1	Synchronous e-learning tools would enhance the teaching and learning of English language more than asynchronous tools	74 24.7(%)	70 23.3(%)	80 26.7(%)	76 25.3(%)
2	Synchronous e-learning tools would improve speaking skills more than asynchronous tools	88 29.3(%)	92 30.7(%)	55 18.3(%)	65 21.7(%)
3	Synchronous e-learning tools would promote learning of English consonants and vowels more than asynchronous tools	86 28.7(%)	62 20.7(%)	39 13(%)	113 37.6(%)
4	Synchronous e-learning tools would foster learning of supra-segmental features of English more than asynchronous tools	60 20(%)	50 16.7(%)	100 33.3(%)	90 30(%)
5	Synchronous e-learning tools would improve students' knowledge of phonological processes and patterns of English language more than asynchronous tools	52 17.3(%)	53 17.7(%)	98 32.7(%)	97 32.3(%)
6	Learning spoken English through asynchronous e-learning tools is interesting more than synchronous tools.	76 25.3(%)	80 26.7(%)	70 23.3(%)	74 24.7(%)
7	At my convenience, I prefer learning spoken English with asynchronous e-learning tools to synchronous tools.	94 31.3(%)	95 31.7(%)	31 10.3(%)	80 26.7(%)
8	I prefer asynchronous e-learning tools for learning spoken English in tertiary institutions rather than synchronous tools	23 7.7(%)	27 9(%)	120 40(%)	130 43.3(%)
9	Synchronous e-learning tools give me access to more recent learning materials on spoken English than asynchronous tools.	75 25(%)	40 13.3(%)	92 30.7(%)	93 31(%)
10	Synchronous e-learning tools enhance teacher- student interaction more than asynchronous tools.	90 30(%)	80 26.7(%)	66 22(%)	64 21.3(%)
11	I prefer asynchronous e-learning tools because they give room for critical thinking, reflection and motivation more than synchronous tools	90 30(%)	96 32(%)	54 18(%)	60 20(%)
12	I prefer asynchronous e-learning tools than synchronous because I can playback lessons taught at my convenience.	100 33.3(%)	100 33.3(%)	50 16.7(%)	50 16.7(%)

Table 3. Frequency of the use of a/synchronous e-learning tools for academic and non-academic purposes

Technology tools	Weekly Hours Usage	Non Academic Purpose		Academic Purpose	
		Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)
Synchronous Technologies	None use	96	32	223	74.3
	<1 hour	86	28.7	44	14.7
	1-2	46	15.3	21	7
	3-5	30	10	8	2.7
	6-8	25	8.3	2	0.7
	9-12	9	3	1	0.3
	13-16	5	1.7	1	0.3
	17-24	3	1	0	0
	Weekly Hours Usage	Non Academic Purpose		Academic Purpose	
		Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)
17-24	58	19.3	10	3.3	0
	<1 hour	3	1	52	17.3
	1-2	3	1	116	38.7
	3-5	47	15.7	72	24
	6-8	55	18.3	23	7.7
	9-12	60	20	13	4.3
	13-16	74	24.7	14	4.7

Table 4. Purpose of students' use of a/synchronous e-learning tools

Non- academic use	F	%	Academic use	F	%
Using chat forums to discuss with friends	298	99.3	Searching for online English language materials	280	93.3
Downloading/watching movies and playing games	289	96.3	Source, share and exchange academic materials for exam and test	210	70
Online dating	52	17.3	Using online dictionaries	38	12.7
Downloading/listening to online music	270	90	Online studies/program	13	4.3
Using chat forums to make new friends	265	88.3	Learning productive skills (speaking and writing)	45	15
Business transactions	198	66	Using Google translation	15	5
To get updated on trendy issues and latest gist	186	62	Discussing assignments and research work with friends	127	42.3
To search for jobs	45	15	Reading newspapers online	186	62
Having personal relaxation and to while away the time	113	37.7	Sharing knowledge of English language topics with friends	35	11.6
Watching sports	157	52.3	Submission of assignments online	20	6.7
Surfing the Internet to get information on matters of interest	143	47.7	Sharing knowledge of English language topics with lecturers	10	3.3
Checking, composing, sending of mails, uploading photos and online profiles.	178	59.3	Sharing knowledge of English language topics with the native speakers	5	1.7
Checking the weather forecast	11	3.7	Learning receptive skills (listening and reading skills)	3	1

searching for online English language materials, source, share and exchange academic materials for examination and test, reading newspapers online, discussing assignments, and research work with friends. This finding is corroborated by Yunus, Lubis and Lin [30] who indicated that the participants did not use ICT mainly for learning English such as writing blogs in English, read English newspaper online, practising grammar exercises and practising vocabulary exercises. In contrast to the results of the present study, Nomass [34] remarked that 66% of the students preferred using technology to the learn English language.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper examined ESL learners' knowledge of a/synchronous e-learning modes as a solution to their spoken English deficiencies and the usage of these tools. A/synchronous tools enhance teaching and learning of English language course contents for students' optimal speaking fluency, yet ESL learners do not harness the potentials of these tools for language learning activities; students prefer to spend more time using a/synchronous modes for non-academic activities [26] rather than academic ones. It is opined that if lecturers interact with students through a/synchronous e-learning tools, this might broaden and deepen their horizons to grasp the realities of the vast opportunities that a/synchronous e-learning tools offer. Nevertheless, the paper does not present a/synchronous e-learning technologies as substitutes for actual classroom learning but as supplementary tools in learning the English language.

6. LIMITATIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study was limited by some factors such as restriction of samples and specificity of topic. This paper only gathered information on the present phenomenon and described the situation as opined by small number of respondents since the research design was descriptive. Presumably, other ESL students in 400 level and other students in other faculties in the university could be utilizing the modern day technologies as enhancements for their speaking skill, therefore restricting the sample of the study from 100level to 300level students majoring in English language limited this study. Also, deliberate specificity of topics in English language to the speaking skill without recourse to other language

skills posed limitation. The findings of the study provided clues to give a clear picture while the conclusion is tentative and cannot be generalized.

Despite the limitations, this study has provided insights into the under-researched topic, investigating notions and optimizations of ESL learners' praxis of asynchronous and synchronous modes for spoken English. Further studies need to be conducted on the notions and optimizations of a/synchronous e-learning modes on other students who do not major in English language. More research needs to be conducted on other language skills, larger number of samples could be deployed and a quasi-experimental research design could be adopted.

The findings of this study would be beneficial to students, lecturers, government and other education stakeholders. For students, this study could bring to mind the significance of a/synchronous e-learning modes as veritable tools to resolve problems associated to spoken English. ESL lecturers could diversify teaching processes and give room for e-learning. It could gear up the government of the concerned states on the need to build and equip language laboratories and language classrooms in the university with relevant and suitable e-learning tools for effective language teaching and learning. Therefore, based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, it is recommended that the culture of using ICT tools for academic purposes should be encouraged.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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