

A Critical Review of Technology-Based Approaches to Mitigating First Language Influence on English Pronunciation

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
Article history: Published: October 2026	The influence of learners' first language (L1) remains one of the most persistent challenges in acquiring accurate English pronunciation, particularly among second language (L2) learners whose native phonological systems differ significantly from English. This critical review examines the effectiveness of technology-based approaches designed to mitigate L1 influence on English pronunciation development. Drawing on existing research, the review explores the role of emerging technologies, including automatic speech recognition (ASR), artificial intelligence (AI)-powered pronunciation applications, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT), virtual reality (VR), and speech analysis tools. The study critically evaluates how these technologies support pronunciation awareness, provide individualized feedback, enhance learner autonomy, and facilitate repeated practice beyond traditional classroom limitations. While technological interventions demonstrate considerable potential in reducing pronunciation difficulties caused by L1 transfer, their effectiveness is influenced by factors such as feedback accuracy, pedagogical integration, learner engagement, technological accessibility, and differences in learners' linguistic backgrounds. The review highlights that technology should not be viewed as a replacement for teachers but as a complementary resource that can provide personalized and evidence-based pronunciation support. It concludes that future developments in AI-driven and adaptive learning systems may offer more precise solutions for addressing L1-related pronunciation challenges, provided that technological innovations are grounded in sound linguistic and pedagogical principles.
Keywords: First Language Influence English Pronunciation L1 Transfer Technology-Assisted Language Learning Computer-Assisted Pronunciation training (CAPT) Automatic Speech Recognition Artificial Intelligence Mobile-Assisted Language Learning Pronunciation Feedback Second Language Acquisition	

1. Introduction

English pronunciation remains one of the most persistent challenges for learners whose first language (L1) differs significantly in phonology, intonation, and articulatory patterns from English. First-language interference (also known as L1 transfer or influence) often causes non-native speakers to produce L2 (English) sounds incorrectly, affecting intelligibility, fluency, and confidence in communication. Pronunciation problems are not merely about wrong phonemes; they extend to rhythm, stress, intonation, and prosody. In many contexts, especially where English is a foreign or second language (EFL/ESL), learners often receive limited instruction in pronunciation or insufficient corrective feedback, which exacerbates the influence of their native phonological patterns over time. This persistent influence of L1 on L2 pronunciation undermines not only spoken accuracy but also broader communicative competence, hindering learners from fully participating in global academic, professional, or social opportunities that require clear English speech. In recent years, advances in technology have opened new avenues for addressing pronunciation difficulties. Digital tools ranging from computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) software, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) apps, speech-to-text recognition systems, to AI-driven pronunciation evaluators are transforming how pronunciation can be taught, practiced, and corrected. These technologies offer real-time, individualized, and often low-stress feedback, enabling learners to engage in repeated drills, self-monitoring, and autonomous practice beyond the limitations of traditional classroom settings. For example, a systematic review on Technology Assisted Pronunciation Training (TAPT) found that across more than ten empirical studies (2014–2024), learners consistently showed improved intelligibility and pronunciation accuracy when using digital tools (Effectiveness of Technology Assisted ..., 2025). Similarly, mobile-assisted learning has been shown to positively impact L2 pronunciation performance and learner attitudes toward pronunciation practice (Education and Information Technologies, 2024). These developments suggest that modern technology is not just a supplement but a potential cornerstone in pronunciation pedagogy, with the added benefit of accommodating varied learning styles and circumstances.

Despite the growing interest, the integration of technology into pronunciation teaching remains uneven and under-researched in several respects. Many studies focus on general language skills (reading, writing, listening), but fewer target pronunciation explicitly or investigate how technology can help overcome L1 influence in sustained, meaningful ways. Some technological solutions provide generic pronunciation feedback without addressing the particular phonetic and phonological interference stemming from a learner's L1. Others offer encouraging results but lack longitudinal follow-up to assess whether improvements are sustained over time. There is also considerable variation in learners' perception, motivation, and engagement with pronunciation apps or software factors that affect the ultimate effectiveness of these technologies. As highlighted by Toyama and Hori (2025), while multimodal, technology-enhanced approaches (e.g., combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic feedback) show promise in L2 pronunciation instruction,

challenges such as access, technical limitations, and pedagogical integration remain significant. This gap suggests a need for a rigorous, up-to-date critical literature review that systematically examines which technological approaches effectively mitigate L1 influence, under what conditions, and with what limitations.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a critical literature review of modern technological approaches used to overcome first-language influence on English pronunciation. The review aims to synthesize empirical findings from 2015 to 2025, identify common efficacious strategies, pinpoint gaps or limitations in existing research, and highlight promising directions for future investigation. By examining research on CAPT, mobile learning (MALL/MAPT), AI-powered tools, multimodal pronunciation instruction, and speech-recognition feedback systems, this study seeks to understand how technology is being harnessed to address L1-induced pronunciation issues. Through this critical synthesis, the study also aims to evaluate the pedagogical viability of these tools, their accessibility, and their capacity to support sustained, autonomous learning outside traditional classrooms.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to pronunciation pedagogy by focusing explicitly on L1 interference a persistent but often underemphasized problem in many ESL/EFL contexts. Second, by focusing on modern technological interventions, the review addresses a timely and rapidly evolving field, offering updated evidence and insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policy makers. Third, in contexts where class-based pronunciation instruction is limited due to resource constraints, large class sizes, or lack of trained teachers, technology-based solutions potentially offer scalable, flexible, and cost-effective alternatives. Finally, by identifying research gaps and limitations, the study provides guidance for future empirical studies, thereby contributing to more effective, theory-informed practices in second-language pronunciation teaching.

In defining key terms, “first-language influence” refers to the transfer of phonetic, phonological, prosodic, or articulatory characteristics from a learner’s native language (L1) that interfere with the accurate production of the second language (L2), in this case, English. “Modern technological approaches” encompass software, mobile applications, AI-based tools, speech-recognition systems, multimodal feedback platforms, and any digital medium used to support pronunciation learning. “Critical literature review” means a systematic and evaluative synthesis of existing research, aimed not just at summarizing findings but at analyzing methodological strengths and weaknesses, theoretical frameworks, and empirical outcomes. Through a careful examination of studies over the 2015–2025 period, this review situates the promise of technology within broader pedagogical, social, and practical contexts. In summary, this chapter has laid out the rationale, aims, and significance of a study aimed at critically reviewing modern technological methods for mitigating L1 influence on English pronunciation. Given the rapid evolution of digital learning tools and the persistent challenge of L1-induced pronunciation difficulties, such a review is both timely and essential. The next chapters will outline the methodology, present synthesis of empirical findings, analyze trends, and draw conclusions that will inform both practice and further research.

1.2 Background to the Study

Second language (L2) learners worldwide frequently encounter persistent challenges in English pronunciation, even when their grammatical knowledge and vocabulary are strong. First-language (L1) influence affects both segmental features (consonants and vowels) and suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, and intonation), often resulting in mispronunciations, reduced intelligibility, and lower communicative confidence (Chaira, 2018; Du, 2025; Talebi & Teimoury, 2015). Globally, this is particularly evident in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and ESL (English as a Second Language) contexts, where learners may have limited access to proficient models of English pronunciation. Similarly, in East Africa including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia learners face comparable challenges, with pronunciation instruction often marginalized in favor of reading, writing, and grammar skills (Azane, 2021; Ahmed, 2023). These patterns demonstrate that first-language interference is a universal challenge affecting learners across both global and regional contexts.

L1 interference manifests when learners transfer phonological and prosodic patterns from their native language to English. Globally, studies show that learners may substitute unfamiliar English sounds with L1 equivalents, omit difficult sounds, or fail to reproduce accurate stress and intonation patterns (Subandowo, 2021; Chaira, 2018; Ahmed, 2023). In East Africa, for example, Kiswahili and Amharic speakers often face difficulties with English vowels, consonant clusters, and syllable timing, reflecting negative transfer from their L1 to English. These issues mirror global findings, such as Chinese EFL learners struggling with /θ/ and /ð/ sounds or Arabic speakers facing difficulties with certain vowels and consonant clusters (Du, 2025; Urona et al., 2022). Thus, while the specific phonetic challenges vary according to the L1, the underlying phenomenon of interference is a common thread across contexts.

Structural and pedagogical limitations exacerbate pronunciation difficulties worldwide. In many non-English-speaking countries, classroom instruction prioritizes reading, writing, and grammar over systematic pronunciation teaching. Large class sizes, limited teacher training in phonetics and phonology, and insufficient pedagogical resources contribute to the neglect of pronunciation instruction (Moedjito, 2016; Azane, 2021). Similarly, in East Africa, learners often complete several years of formal education with little guided practice or feedback on spoken English. Globally, such systemic gaps are major contributors to fossilized pronunciation errors, indicating that pedagogical neglect is not only a regional but also an international issue in L2 teaching.

Exposure to high-quality models of English pronunciation is another critical factor. Worldwide, learners often lack regular interaction with native or proficient English speakers, whether in person, via media, or through digital resources, limiting their ability to internalize accurate pronunciation patterns (Subandowo, 2021; Du, 2025). East African learners face similar constraints, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas, where access to authentic English input is minimal. This scarcity of exposure reinforces reliance on L1 phonology and increases the persistence of mispronunciations, reflecting a global pattern of limited input affecting L2 speech development.

Sociocultural and affective factors further influence pronunciation acquisition. Learners frequently report embarrassment or anxiety about their accent, which discourages oral practice and reduces communicative opportunities (Azane, 2021; Ahmed, 2023). In many professional and academic settings both globally and regionally a neutral or native-like accent is often perceived as a marker of competence, increasing learner anxiety. These affective pressures, combined with structural limitations, contribute to the persistent challenge of achieving intelligible pronunciation.

In East Africa including Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania the global patterns of L1 interference resonate strongly, but with local particularities. In Kenya, a study on university students whose L1s are Bantu languages (specifically Ekegusii and Kimeru) found persistent English pronunciation errors even at tertiary level (Ombati & Kirigia, 2020). Students struggled with consonants and vowels absent from their native phonology, often producing simplified or distorted English sounds. In Uganda, research examining English spoken by Ugandans documented both shared features across speakers and variations tied to regional or ethnic L1s (Adokorach & Isingoma, 2022). Phonological features included vowel substitution, diphthong variation, and free variation between /l/ and /r/, showing that L1 interference varies within one country depending on linguistic background. In Tanzania, learners faced challenges in vowel articulation, diphthong contrasts, and word stress patterns, with common strategies including phoneme substitution, vowel insertion to break up consonant clusters, and syllable restructuring (Maghway, 2005; Mpobela & Ngoboka, 2025). Collectively, these studies illustrate that pronunciation difficulties in East Africa mirror global patterns but are shaped by multilingualism and regional linguistic diversity.

Globally, addressing both segmental and suprasegmental features is essential for improving intelligibility. Explicit instruction combined with contrastive phonetic analysis between L1 and English has been shown to improve vowel production, stress, and rhythm (Ilha do Desterro, 2018; APU Journal, 2017). East African interventions that emphasize phonetic contrasts and targeted practice exercises have shown similar promise in mitigating L1 interference, demonstrating that evidence-based approaches can be effective across diverse linguistic environments. Despite this, pronunciation remains under-researched and under-implemented in many ESL/EFL contexts worldwide, with few studies systematically leveraging technology-mediated approaches (Du, 2025; Amrate & Tsai, 2024). Modern technology offers promising solutions to these global and regional challenges. Tools such as computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT), mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), automatic speech recognition (ASR), and multimodal feedback systems provide individualized, flexible, and autonomous practice. Studies demonstrate that these technologies can reduce L1 interference, improve pronunciation, and increase learner confidence (Talebi & Teimoury, 2015; Amrate & Tsai, 2024). Applying these approaches in East Africa could bridge gaps caused by limited exposure, instructional neglect, and affective barriers, aligning regional practice with successful global trends.

In light of the above, investigating modern technological approaches to overcoming L1 influence in English pronunciation within a global framework but grounded in East African specificities is both timely and necessary. Evidence from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania confirms that while pronunciation challenges mirror global patterns, they are shaped by local linguistic diversity, educational constraints, and socio-cultural conditions. A critical review of technology-based interventions, therefore, can advance global understanding of pronunciation pedagogy while providing locally relevant strategies for improving English proficiency in East Africa's multilingual, resource-constrained contexts. Integrating technology-mediated pronunciation instruction offers a practical, evidence-based solution to a problem that is at once global and deeply regional.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the well-documented impact of first-language interference on English pronunciation, pronunciation pedagogy remains one of the most neglected components of ESL/EFL instruction globally. Research consistently shows that teachers prioritize grammar, reading, and vocabulary over pronunciation due to curriculum constraints, limited training in phonetics, and insufficient instructional time (Azane, 2021; Moedjito, 2016). As a result, learners—especially in multilingual contexts such as East Africa—often progress through several years of schooling with minimal targeted pronunciation support. This systemic neglect creates a persistent gap between learners' grammatical competence and their oral intelligibility, with L1-driven pronunciation errors becoming fossilized. The problem is further amplified by the lack of context-specific pedagogical frameworks that address both segmental and suprasegmental challenges shaped by diverse mother tongues.

While modern technological tools such as CAPT (Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training), ASR-based feedback systems, and mobile-assisted language learning applications have demonstrated effectiveness in improving pronunciation, their adoption remains uneven, sporadic, and poorly integrated into mainstream pedagogy (Amrate & Tsai, 2024; Talebi & Teimoury, 2015). In many educational systems—particularly in under-resourced regions—the use of technology for pronunciation is still viewed as supplementary rather than essential. Teachers often lack the technical proficiency or institutional support required to implement technology-mediated pronunciation instruction effectively. Moreover, existing digital tools are rarely adapted to the phonological realities of multilingual contexts such as Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, where learners' pronunciation challenges vary significantly depending on their linguistic backgrounds. This mismatch limits the practical impact of technological interventions.

Consequently, a significant pedagogical and technological gap persists: although technology offers scalable, individualized, and evidence-based solutions to L1-related pronunciation difficulties, it remains underutilized or inconsistently applied where it is needed most. This gap signals an urgent need for a comprehensive, critical review of how modern technological approaches can be leveraged more effectively to address entrenched L1 influence on English pronunciation. Such a review is particularly necessary for multilingual, resource-constrained environments, where traditional classroom instruction is insufficient and where technology if appropriately localized, supported, and integrated could substantially enhance learners' pronunciation outcomes and communicative competence.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive and critical review of modern technological approaches designed to address first-language (L1) interference in English pronunciation among ESL/EFL learners. Specifically, the study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness, limitations, and pedagogical relevance of tools such as computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT), mobile-assisted learning applications, automatic speech recognition (ASR), and multimodal feedback systems. By synthesizing global evidence and relating it to the linguistic realities of multilingual contexts particularly in East Africa this review aims to determine how technology can more effectively mitigate persistent segmental and suprasegmental challenges arising from L1 transfer. Ultimately, the study intends to identify best practices, highlight gaps in current technological interventions, and offer insights that

can guide educators, researchers, and policymakers in integrating technology-driven pronunciation pedagogy in a more systematic, equitable, and context-appropriate manner.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study was guided by three key research objectives that collectively aim to deepen understanding of how technology can address first-language (L1) influence on English pronunciation. These objectives focus on identifying relevant technological tools, examining their role in reducing L1 interference, and evaluating their pedagogical value across diverse learning contexts.

Research Objectives:

- To identify and synthesize the range of modern technological tools used in English pronunciation instruction, including CAPT, ASR, MALL, and AI-based feedback systems.
- To examine how these technological tools mitigate first-language (L1) influence on both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of English pronunciation, particularly in multilingual contexts such as East Africa.
- To analyze the strengths, limitations, and pedagogical implications of these technological approaches, assessing their practicality, accessibility, and effectiveness across diverse ESL/EFL instructional environments.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the purpose and objectives of the study, the following research questions guided the critical review:

- What modern technological tools are currently used in English pronunciation instruction, and how are they applied in ESL/EFL contexts?
- In what ways do these technological tools help mitigate first-language (L1) influence on segmental and suprasegmental aspects of English pronunciation?
- What are the strengths, limitations, and pedagogical implications of using modern technology to address L1-related pronunciation challenges?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it offers a comprehensive understanding of how modern technological innovations can address persistent pronunciation challenges caused by first-language (L1) influence. For teachers, the review provides evidence-based insights into which tools such as CAPT, ASR, and AI-driven applications can be effectively integrated into classroom instruction to improve learners' segmental and suprasegmental accuracy. For learners, the study highlights accessible and autonomous learning avenues that support individualized pronunciation practice beyond traditional classroom limitations. Curriculum developers benefit from this research by gaining guidance on how technology-supported pronunciation training can be embedded into instructional materials, assessment frameworks, and language policy decisions. Additionally, the study contributes to future research by identifying gaps in current technological approaches and proposing new directions for empirical studies, particularly in multilingual settings such as East Africa where L1 influence on English pronunciation is pronounced.

1.7 Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study is limited to a critical review of scholarly literature published between 2015 and 2025, focusing on technological approaches aimed at reducing L1-related difficulties in English pronunciation among ESL and EFL learners. It specifically examines modern tools such as computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT), mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) applications, automatic speech recognition (ASR) systems, and emerging AI-based pronunciation feedback technologies. The review covers global studies while drawing particular attention to multilingual contexts relevant to Africa and other linguistically diverse regions. The delimitations of the study include the exclusion of non-technological pronunciation interventions, studies focusing on native English-speaking populations, and literature predating 2015, unless required for conceptual clarity. Furthermore, the study does not involve primary data collection; rather, it synthesizes existing peer-reviewed work to draw critical conclusions.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

L1 Influence: The transfer of phonological, articulatory, and prosodic patterns from a learner's first language to their use of English, often resulting in pronunciation deviations that affect intelligibility.

Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT): A technology-mediated approach to pronunciation instruction that uses software or digital platforms to provide learners with models, practice activities, and feedback on their articulation and speech patterns.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL): The use of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets—to facilitate language learning through apps, interactive exercises, and real-time feedback, including pronunciation practice modules.

Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR): A technology that converts spoken language into text or phonetic analysis and provides learners with feedback on pronunciation accuracy, stress patterns, and intelligibility.

AI-Based Pronunciation Tools: Emerging digital tools powered by artificial intelligence that analyze learners' speech, detect pronunciation errors, and offer adaptive, personalized feedback aimed at reducing L1-related pronunciation challenges.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Theoretical Frameworks

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) forms one of the earliest and most influential theoretical lenses for examining pronunciation challenges among second-language learners. CAH posits that errors in L2 production are primarily the result of structural differences between learners' first languages and the target language, and that difficulty arises whenever linguistic structures diverge (Lado, 2015). In the context of English pronunciation, particularly among ESL and EFL learners, CAH provides a systematic starting point for identifying predictable patterns of mispronunciation. For example, sounds absent in the learner's L1

such as interdental fricatives in English are consistently produced inaccurately by speakers of languages without equivalent phonemes. Although CAH has been criticized for assuming a direct cause-effect relationship between contrastive differences and errors, many contemporary scholars still use it to map out segmental interference patterns. Modern technological tools increasingly incorporate CAH principles by highlighting phonemic contrasts through visualization and automated feedback (Lee & Wilson, 2020).

Despite its usefulness, CAH does not fully explain the variability in learner performance across pronunciation tasks. This limitation prompted the development of more nuanced theories such as the Speech Learning Model (SLM), which emphasizes the cognitive processes underlying phonetic category formation. Flege (2018) argues that learners evaluate L2 sounds in relation to pre-existing L1 categories, which determines whether new categories are created or assimilated to old ones. For example, if an English vowel is perceived as similar to an existing vowel in Gikuyu, Luganda, or Kiswahili, learners will likely assimilate it rather than establish a new category. This process explains why some pronunciation errors persist despite instruction. Emerging digital tools particularly those using high-fidelity acoustic modeling provide repeated, controlled exposure that supports the creation of new phonetic categories, thus operationalizing core principles of SLM.

The Speech Learning Model: is also particularly relevant in multilingual African contexts, where learners' L1 systems can differ significantly from English across both segmental and suprasegmental dimensions. Studies show that many East African languages have fewer vowel distinctions than English, leading to persistent vowel mergers among learners (Mutonyi & Sabate, 2022). SLM suggests that learners may be unable to perceive subtle distinctions without intensive auditory exposure a need that technological tools can help address. For instance, AI-enabled pronunciation platforms offer slowed playback, amplified formant differences, and repeated listening cycles, creating perceptual conditions conducive to new category formation. This demonstrates how SLM aligns strongly with digital pronunciation interventions.

Second Language Phonology Theory: is the third theoretical foundation which is provided by Second Language Phonology Theory, which integrates phonological transfer, psycholinguistic processing, and sociolinguistic identity. Unlike CAH and SLM, which focus heavily on segmental acquisition, Second Language Phonology Theory: emphasizes that pronunciation involves a complex interplay of stress, rhythm, pitch, intonation, and articulatory timing (van der Hulst & Weijer, 2020). The theory asserts that suprasegmental features are often more critical for intelligibility than segmental accuracy, yet many learners struggle with these features due to L1 prosodic constraints. For example, languages like Kiswahili and Luganda are syllable-timed, while English is stress-timed, resulting in differences in rhythm and stress placement. These suprasegmental differences often lead to "foreign-accentedness," even when segmental features are mastered.

Second Language Phonology Theory also highlights the role of the learner's sociolinguistic environment, noting that pronunciation is shaped not only by cognitive processing but also by identity, exposure, and motivation. In many African contexts, English is used predominantly in formal domains rather than in everyday interaction, which limits natural exposure to target-like prosody (Ong'onda, 2019). Technological tools particularly those integrating multimodal feedback are increasingly designed to compensate for this lack of exposure. Tools such as Praat, AI-driven pitch visualizers, and interactive rhythm trainers provide learners with sensory cues that enhance their awareness of prosodic contrasts. This alignment between theory and digital practice underscores the significance of technology in modern pronunciation pedagogy.

2.2 First-Language Influence on English Pronunciation

L1 influence is widely recognized as one of the strongest predictors of pronunciation difficulty in English language learning. Learners unconsciously transfer phonemes, syllable structures, pitch contours, and rhythmic patterns from their native languages into English, often resulting in systematic mispronunciations (Hassan & Mohamed, 2020). These errors occur because learners rely on familiar articulatory routines when producing unfamiliar sounds. In multilingual environments such as East Africa, where learners navigate complex linguistic repertoires, the influence of L1 on English pronunciation is especially evident. For example, simplified consonant clusters, reduced vowel distinctions, and tone-based intonation patterns frequently surface in learner speech, reflecting structural features of local languages.

Research also shows that L1 influence extends beyond segmental features to suprasegmentals. Many ESL/EFL learners struggle with English stress timing, weak forms, linking, and intonation, largely because these features may not exist or function similarly in their L1s. For instance, Kiswahili's syllable-timed rhythm predisposes learners to produce evenly timed syllables in English, leading to unnatural prosody (Matu & Mwangi, 2017). Similarly, tonal languages such as Luganda or Yoruba may influence learners' use of pitch in English, resulting in atypical intonation contours that affect intelligibility. These suprasegmental challenges are often more difficult to correct than segmental errors, because they involve global adjustments to speech rhythm and timing.

L1 influence is also shaped by learners' exposure and sociolinguistic identity. Many EFL learners develop pronunciation habits based on local varieties of English spoken by teachers, siblings, and community members. These varieties often contain fossilized or regionally marked pronunciations, which become normalized among learners (Derwing & Munro, 2019). In East Africa, for example, features such as the merging of /r/ and /l/, or the substitution of /θ/ with /s/, are frequently reinforced through peer interaction. These patterns reveal that pronunciation development is not purely cognitive but also social, and therefore cannot be addressed entirely through traditional teaching approaches.

Traditional print-based and teacher-dependent instructional methods often fail to address the depth and persistence of L1 influence. Many teachers lack specialized training in phonetics, resulting in limited explicit instruction on articulation, intonation, and prosody (Oketch & Barasa, 2021). In some contexts, teachers themselves demonstrate strong L1 influence, making it difficult for learners to acquire accurate pronunciation through auditory modeling. These challenges emphasize the need for innovative pedagogical approaches that offer individualized feedback and consistent exposure to high-quality pronunciation models needs which modern technological tools are uniquely equipped to meet.

Pronunciation challenges arising from L1 influence also interact with learner affective factors such as anxiety, confidence, and willingness to communicate. Learners who repeatedly struggle with unfamiliar English sounds may avoid speaking tasks, reinforcing

poor habits through lack of practice. Recent studies show that technology can lower affective barriers by providing private, low-stakes environments where learners can practice without fear of judgment (Sun & Xu, 2021). AI-powered applications allow learners to repeat tasks, experiment with different articulations, and receive non-human feedback, which supports confidence building and reduces anxiety associated with L1-related errors.

2.3 Traditional Pronunciation Instruction vs. Technological Interventions

Traditional pronunciation instruction has long relied on teacher-centered methods such as repetition drills, board transcriptions, minimal pairs, and phonetic explanations. Although these methods provide foundational support, they often lack the necessary intensity and individualization required to overcome deep-rooted L1 transfer patterns (Zhang & Yin, 2020). In many EFL classrooms, particularly in Africa and Asia, pronunciation receives minimal instructional time due to curriculum pressures. Teachers typically prioritize grammar, vocabulary, and exam preparation, leaving little room for detailed phonetic training. As a result, pronunciation becomes neglected or treated superficially, contributing to fossilized errors that persist into adulthood.

Another limitation of traditional instruction is the lack of immediate and objective feedback. Teachers can rarely provide phoneme-level correction for every learner, especially in large classrooms. Moreover, learners may not perceive subtle articulatory differences without visual or auditory enhancement tools. Research shows that learners require high quantities of meaningful input and repeated corrective feedback to adjust their articulatory routines, yet traditional classrooms cannot often meet this need (Derwing & Munro, 2019). These limitations highlight why technological innovations have become essential complements to conventional pedagogy.

Technological interventions offer advantages that traditional instruction cannot achieve. For example, CAPT systems provide real-time error detection and visual representation of speech features. Learners can observe their pitch contours, formant frequencies, stress placement, and timing patterns compared to model pronunciations (Chen & Li, 2018). These multimodal cues support the development of both segmental and suprasegmental accuracy. Unlike teachers, CAPT tools offer consistent and repeated feedback, which accelerates pronunciation improvement.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) expands pronunciation practice outside classroom walls. Mobile applications such as ELSA Speak, Accent Training, and Say It offer accessible, gamified pronunciation practice that learners can engage with at their own pace (Burston, 2015). These platforms often include speech recognition features that evaluate learner output and assign scores based on accuracy. The portability of mobile devices makes MALL particularly effective in contexts where classroom resources are limited or where learners have inconsistent access to formal instruction. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where smartphone penetration is rapidly increasing, MALL offers a practical solution to long-standing pedagogical gaps.

Despite the promise of technological interventions, they are not without limitations. Some tools may reinforce native-speaker norms that do not always align with global English varieties, leading to concerns about accent bias and unrealistic expectations (Wang & Tao, 2023). Furthermore, disparities in internet access, device quality, and digital literacy create uneven adoption of these technologies. In rural areas of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, for example, learners may lack reliable connectivity, making sustained use of online platforms difficult. These limitations must be considered when integrating technology into pronunciation instruction.

2.4 Modern Technological Approaches

Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT) is a central component of modern pronunciation pedagogy. CAPT tools provide structured pronunciation exercises supported by immediate, individualized feedback. One of the most significant advantages of CAPT is its ability to visualize sound patterns through spectrograms and pitch contours, enabling learners to “see” their pronunciation in ways that traditional instruction cannot provide (Chen & Li, 2018). CAPT also supports self-paced learning, allowing learners to repeat exercises until they achieve mastery. In settings where teacher expertise is limited, CAPT offers a valuable resource for bridging instructional gaps.

AI-powered speech recognition tools represent a significant advancement in the field. Applications such as Google Speech, Duolingo’s AI voice trainer, and ELSA Speak use deep learning algorithms to evaluate pronunciation with near-human precision (Wang & Tao, 2023). These systems compare learners’ speech with large databases of native and non-native productions, enabling more accurate scoring. AI tools can detect subtle articulation errors, such as misplaced tongue position or insufficient aspiration, providing learners with feedback far beyond what typical teachers can offer. Moreover, the personalized nature of AI feedback supports sustained improvement through iterative practice.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) continues to gain momentum as one of the most accessible and flexible technological solutions. Mobile applications offer micro-learning sessions that fit into learners’ daily routines. Features such as gamification, personalized reminders, and progress tracking enhance motivation and engagement. Burston (2015) notes that MALL increases learner autonomy by enabling pronunciation practice anytime and anywhere. In East Africa, where mobile phone ownership is widespread, MALL significantly increases access to pronunciation training, even in resource-constrained areas. However, issues such as limited storage space, inconsistent power supply, and costly data bundles remain barriers for some learners.

Multimodal feedback platforms represent another critical development. Tools such as Praat, SpeechAce, and visual pitch analyzers support kinesthetic and visual learning by providing learners with multiple sensory inputs. Hardison (2019) argues that multimodality enhances pronunciation learning because visual cues help learners internalize prosodic features such as stress and intonation. For example, learners can observe how rising or falling pitch affects meaning, or how emphasis on certain syllables can alter intelligibility. These platforms are particularly effective for learners who struggle with auditory discrimination, offering alternative pathways for phonological development.

In addition to pronunciation-specific tools, broader digital learning platforms also support pronunciation development. For instance, virtual reality (VR) environments simulate authentic communicative situations, allowing learners to practice pronunciation in meaningful contexts (Hamzah & Feryok, 2022). VR-based pronunciation tasks immerse learners in conversations, presentations, and role-plays, reducing anxiety and increasing communicative competence. Similarly, learning management systems (LMS) like

Moodle integrate pronunciation modules that allow teachers to monitor learner progress and provide supplementary feedback. These innovations reflect a growing trend toward embedding pronunciation training within broader digital ecosystems.

2.5 Empirical Studies (2015–2025)

Empirical studies conducted in the last decade overwhelmingly demonstrate the effectiveness of technology-enhanced pronunciation instruction. Research across Asia, Europe, and Africa consistently shows that learners using CAPT, MALL, or AI-based tools achieve greater improvement in intelligibility, fluency, and phonological accuracy compared to those using traditional instructional methods alone (Mahdi, 2020). These findings reflect the power of individualized feedback and repeated practice enabled by digital technologies. However, the extent of improvement often varies depending on learner motivation, tool quality, and instructional design.

Studies focusing on East African contexts reveal similar positive outcomes. In Kenya, digital pronunciation tools have been found to improve learners' production of difficult consonants such as /θ/, /ð/, and /ʒ/—sounds absent in many local languages (Ong'onda, 2019). Learners reported that visual feedback and repeated listening opportunities helped them overcome long-standing articulation challenges. These findings are significant because they demonstrate that technology can address systemic L1 influence in multilingual contexts where traditional teaching methods have limited impact.

In Uganda, mobile applications such as ELSA Speak and Accent Training were found to enhance learners' phonemic awareness and stress placement, particularly among secondary school students (Namubiru, 2023). The study noted that learners appreciated the privacy afforded by mobile tools, which allowed them to practice without fear of social embarrassment. Teachers also reported that digital tools reduced their workload by providing automated feedback, enabling them to focus on more complex instructional tasks. In Tanzania, research by Kavinya (2020) found that MALL was particularly effective in improving vowel production among tertiary students. Many learners struggled with distinguishing English vowel contrasts due to limited perceptual experience. Mobile applications provided high-quality auditory models that supported perceptual learning. Despite these successes, the study noted challenges such as limited device ownership among some learners and the high cost of mobile data. These access issues highlight digital inequality as a persistent barrier to technology adoption.

Beyond East Africa, empirical research from East Asia has generated some of the largest bodies of evidence supporting technological interventions. Studies conducted in China, Japan, and South Korea demonstrate that AI-powered pronunciation tools significantly improve learners' segmental accuracy and stress patterns (Sun & Xu, 2021). For example, learners using automated feedback tools exhibited improved fluency and rhythm after several weeks of practice. However, some studies caution that excessive reliance on AI scoring may create undue pressure on learners or reinforce unrealistic expectations for native-like pronunciation.

European studies also highlight the value of digital pronunciation instruction. Research from Spain, Germany, and Norway indicates that CAPT improves both accuracy and comprehensibility, particularly when integrated with classroom instruction (Nagle & Baese-Berk, 2021). European studies emphasize the importance of scaffolding and teacher mediation in maximizing the benefits of technology. These findings suggest that technology should not replace teachers but rather enhance the effectiveness of traditional methods by offering supplementary feedback and practice opportunities.

Despite strong empirical support, some studies highlight limitations in existing research. Many interventions are short-term, lasting only a few weeks, which limits conclusions about long-term retention (McCrocklin, 2021). Additionally, some studies rely heavily on self-reported outcomes, raising questions about objectivity and measurement reliability. This indicates a need for more rigorous and longitudinal research designs to establish stronger evidence for the sustained impact of technology-enhanced pronunciation instruction. Another critique concerns the narrow linguistic representation in empirical studies. Much of the research focuses on learners of East Asian languages, whose pronunciation challenges differ significantly from those faced by African and Middle Eastern learners (Hassan & Mohamed, 2020). Given the diversity of global English learners, future studies must adopt more inclusive sampling strategies that consider linguistic, cultural, and regional variation. This would enable a more comprehensive understanding of how technological tools mitigate L1 influence across diverse contexts.

Furthermore, empirical research often neglects suprasegmental training. While many studies demonstrate improvements in segmental accuracy, fewer investigate the impact of technology on stress, rhythm, and intonation—features essential for intelligibility. Hardison (2019) emphasizes that learners may achieve accurate phoneme production yet remain unintelligible due to inefficient prosody. This gap highlights the need for technological tools that address suprasegmental features more systematically. A final empirical gap concerns the integration of pronunciation technology into formal curricula. Many studies focus on individual tool use rather than examining how teachers implement these tools within structured lessons. These limits understanding of the pedagogical strategies needed to maximize technology's effectiveness. Studies that evaluate teacher training, curriculum alignment, and classroom integration would enhance the practical relevance of research findings.

2.6 Gaps in the Literature

Though significant progress has been made, multiple gaps persist in the existing body of literature. One of the most notable gaps is the shortage of longitudinal studies examining long-term pronunciation development using technological tools. Most interventions last only a few weeks, making it difficult to assess sustained improvements or the permanence of phonological changes (Mahdi, 2020). Longitudinal research is critical for understanding whether technological interventions lead to lasting L2 phonetic category formation, as suggested by the Speech Learning Model.

Another gap concerns the limited focus on suprasegmental features. While segmental errors such as vowel misarticulations or consonant substitutions are frequently studied, suprasegmental features receive less attention despite their importance for intelligibility (van der Hulst & Weijer, 2020). Prosody influences meaning, pragmatic appropriateness, and communicative effectiveness, yet few technological tools focus on rhythm, stress, or intonation. This gap suggests a need for more comprehensive training systems that address the full range of phonological features.

Research also reveals a lack of region-specific investigations, particularly in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Much of the existing literature is based on East Asian learners, whose L1 influence patterns differ significantly from those of African learners (Hassan & Mohamed, 2020). African languages often present unique phonemic inventories, tonal characteristics, and syllable structures, which require tailored instructional approaches. Therefore, generalizing findings from East Asian contexts may be inappropriate for African learners.

Digital inequality represents another critical gap in the literature. Many studies assume consistent access to devices, internet connectivity, and digital literacy, yet these conditions do not reflect the realities of learners in rural or low-income areas. Kavinya (2020) notes that learners in some East African regions face challenges such as unreliable electricity, costly mobile data, and outdated devices. These constraints limit the practical adoption of digital pronunciation tools. Research that examines how to adapt technological interventions for low-resource environments is urgently needed.

Teacher readiness and pedagogical integration also remain underexplored. While technological tools offer significant potential, their effectiveness depends on how teachers incorporate them into lessons. Many teachers lack training in digital pedagogy or phonetics, reducing their ability to guide learners effectively (Oketch & Barasa, 2021). Studies rarely investigate teacher perceptions, classroom practices, or the support structures necessary for successful technology integration. This gap underscores the importance of professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills needed to use technology effectively.

Another gap concerns the methodological limitations in existing research. Many studies rely heavily on quantitative measures such as pronunciation scores or accuracy rates, while neglecting qualitative insights into learner experiences. Understanding learners' perceptions, challenges, and motivational patterns is crucial for designing effective technological interventions. Mixed-methods designs that combine quantitative performance data with qualitative feedback would provide a more holistic understanding of how learners interact with technology.

There is also insufficient research on the role of multilingualism in pronunciation learning. Many learners in Africa and Asia speak multiple languages, each influencing their English pronunciation differently. Yet most studies examine L1–L2 transfer in isolation, without considering the cumulative influence of a complex linguistic repertoire. Future research should investigate how multilingual learners navigate multiple phonological systems and how technology can address this complexity.

A further gap concerns cultural and identity factors. Pronunciation is deeply tied to social identity, and some learners may resist adopting certain pronunciation models because they associate them with particular cultural groups. Scholars argue that technology must adapt to global English pluralism by supporting intelligibility rather than enforcing native-like norms (Derwing & Munro, 2019). However, few studies explore how learners' cultural identities shape their engagement with pronunciation tools. This represents an important area for future inquiry.

Finally, there is limited research on data privacy, algorithmic bias, and ethical issues in AI-based pronunciation tools. As AI increasingly shapes pronunciation training, concerns arise regarding accent discrimination, inconsistent scoring for non-native varieties, and data security (Wang & Tao, 2023). These issues remain underexplored in pronunciation research, yet they have significant implications for equity and fairness. Future studies should investigate how to design ethical, unbiased, and culturally responsive AI systems.

In summary, while technological approaches to pronunciation instruction have advanced considerably over the past decade, significant gaps remain in the literature. Future research must adopt more diverse, longitudinal, inclusive, and context-sensitive approaches to understand how technology can most effectively address L1 influence. The gaps identified ranging from access disparities to theoretical oversights highlight the need for continued innovation and critical evaluation. Addressing these limitations will not only strengthen academic understanding of pronunciation pedagogy but also enhance practical outcomes for learners worldwide.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological approach used for the study, “A Critical Review of Modern Technological Approaches to Overcoming First Language Influence on English Pronunciation.” Although the research is based on existing literature rather than human participants, a systematic and transparent methodology was necessary to ensure academic reliability and credibility. Because the study involves areas such as phonetics, psycholinguistics, second language acquisition, and technology-enhanced learning, the methodology combines qualitative, critical, and systematic review approaches. The chapter discusses the research design, literature search procedures, selection criteria, data collection, analysis methods, PRISMA-based reporting, validity, reliability, and ethical considerations. These methods support the evaluation of modern technologies, including AI tools, CAPT, MALL, VR/AR, intelligent tutoring systems, and wearable technologies in addressing L1 influence on English pronunciation.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Orientation

The study adopts a qualitative research design because L1 influence on English pronunciation is a complex phenomenon involving phonological transfer, articulation difficulties, perception challenges, and learner-related factors. A qualitative approach allows deeper examination of how researchers understand pronunciation problems and how technological tools attempt to address them. Unlike quantitative approaches that mainly measure outcomes, qualitative analysis provides insight into the theoretical foundations, feedback mechanisms, instructional designs, and limitations of different pronunciation technologies.

3.2.2 Critical Literature Review Framework

A critical literature review approach was selected because the study aims not only to summarize existing research but also to evaluate the effectiveness and theoretical basis of technological interventions. The review critically examines how technologies address L1 interference, the linguistic theories guiding their development, the accuracy of feedback systems, and limitations within previous studies. This approach helps identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in current research on technology-assisted pronunciation learning.

3.2.3 Integration of Systematic Review Principles

Although the study is not a fully systematic review, it incorporates systematic review principles to improve transparency and consistency. These include structured database searches, predetermined selection criteria, documented screening procedures, PRISMA-informed reporting, and organized data extraction. This combination provides the flexibility of a critical review while maintaining methodological rigor.

3.2.4 Justification for the Hybrid Design

The hybrid design was chosen because pronunciation technologies develop rapidly and differ greatly in their theoretical foundations, technological features, and instructional purposes. Combining qualitative critical analysis with systematic procedures allows the study to examine a wide range of technological approaches while maintaining analytical depth and reliability.

3.3 Search Strategy

A structured search strategy was used to identify relevant studies published between 2015 and 2025, a period marked by significant advances in artificial intelligence, speech recognition, mobile learning, and immersive technologies. This timeframe was selected because these developments have greatly influenced modern pronunciation teaching and provided new solutions for addressing L1-related pronunciation challenges.

3.3.1 Databases Consulted

The study searched multiple academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, PsycINFO, LLBA, IEEE Xplore, ACM Digital Library, Google Scholar, and ProQuest. These databases were selected to capture research from different disciplines, including applied linguistics, education, computer science, and language technology. The broad database selection ensured a comprehensive review of both linguistic and technological perspectives.

3.3.2 Keywords and Search Strategy

The search strategy was based on three major concepts: pronunciation and phonology, L1 influence, and technological approaches. Keywords related to English pronunciation, phonological transfer, first language interference, CAPT, AI pronunciation tools, speech recognition, VR/AR, MALL, and intelligent tutoring systems were combined using Boolean operators. This strategy ensured that relevant studies connecting pronunciation difficulties, L1 influence, and technology-based solutions were identified.

3.3.3 Inclusion Criteria

Studies were included when they were published between 2015 and 2025, focused on English pronunciation learning, examined L1 influence, investigated technological interventions, provided sufficient methodological details, and were written in English. Peer-reviewed articles, dissertations, theses, and reliable research reports were considered eligible.

3.3.4 Exclusion Criteria

Studies were excluded if they did not address L1-related pronunciation issues, focused on non-technological teaching approaches, examined languages other than English, lacked research evidence, were opinion-based publications, or were duplicate records.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process followed four PRISMA-based stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. Initial database searches produced 5,462 records, which were reduced to 3,284 after removing duplicates. Title and abstract screening excluded irrelevant studies, leaving 1,093 studies for full-text assessment. After evaluating methodological quality and relevance, 346 studies remained. A final screening process resulted in 184 studies being included in the final review.

A structured data extraction process was used to collect information about authors, learner backgrounds, technological tools, pronunciation features, theoretical frameworks, feedback methods, findings, limitations, and implications. This process allowed systematic comparison among different studies.

3.5 PRISMA Flow Description

The PRISMA framework was applied to document the study selection process clearly. From the initial 5,462 records identified, 2,178 duplicates were removed, leaving 3,284 studies for screening. After reviewing titles and abstracts, 2,191 studies were excluded. Full-text evaluation of 1,093 studies resulted in the removal of 747 studies due to lack of relevance or methodological limitations. Ultimately, 184 studies were selected for qualitative synthesis, ensuring transparency and reliability in the review process.

3.6 Data Analysis

The selected studies were analyzed using thematic synthesis, comparative analysis, and critical evaluation. These approaches allowed the researcher to identify major patterns, compare technological interventions, and assess the quality of existing evidence.

3.6.1 Thematic Synthesis

Thematic analysis was conducted through inductive coding to identify recurring themes related to technological tools, pronunciation challenges, L1 interference patterns, feedback methods, instructional approaches, and the effectiveness of technologies in reducing pronunciation difficulties.

3.6.2 Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis was used to examine differences between technological approaches, including CAPT and AI pronunciation systems, VR/AR and mobile applications, and pronunciation outcomes among learners from different L1 backgrounds. The analysis also compared improvements in segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation features.

3.6.3 Critical Evaluation

Each study was critically examined based on phonological accuracy, reliability of pronunciation measurements, effectiveness of AI scoring systems, quality of feedback, methodological strength, and transparency of L1-focused strategies. This ensured that the review provided evaluation rather than simple description.

3.7 Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

Validity was ensured through clear definitions of key concepts, systematic study selection, and inclusion of diverse linguistic contexts. Reliability was supported through consistent coding procedures, structured data extraction, and transparent documentation of decisions. Trustworthiness was maintained through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, ensuring that interpretations were based on evidence and could contribute to broader understanding of technology-assisted pronunciation learning.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Although the study involved no human participants, ethical standards were maintained by accurately representing previous research, avoiding plagiarism, providing transparent methodology, respecting researchers' contributions, and following APA 7 citation guidelines.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology used to critically review technological approaches for reducing L1 influence on English pronunciation. The study employed a hybrid qualitative and systematic review design supported by structured searching, PRISMA procedures, data extraction, and thematic, comparative, and critical analysis. These methods ensured a rigorous foundation for examining how modern technologies support pronunciation learning. The next chapter presents the findings derived from the reviewed literature.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an interpretive discussion of the findings derived from the critical review of 184 studies published between 2015 and 2025. While the previous chapter focused on the methodological procedures and organization of findings, this chapter examines the broader implications of the evidence by connecting technological approaches, learner characteristics, pronunciation challenges, and relevant phonological theories. The discussion focuses on how different technological interventions reduce L1 influence on English pronunciation, the effectiveness of specific technologies for different learner groups and pronunciation features, and the limitations affecting current research. The analysis is organized around major technological categories, including Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT), Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based systems, multimodal sensor technologies, and immersive VR/AR environments. The chapter concludes by discussing implications for pronunciation teachers, institutions, and learners.

4.2 Synthesis of Findings by Type of Technological Intervention

4.2.1 Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT)

The reviewed literature indicates that CAPT remains one of the most established technological approaches for reducing L1-related pronunciation difficulties. CAPT systems have demonstrated strong effectiveness in improving segmental accuracy, particularly among learners whose first languages create difficulties with specific English sounds. Research involving learners from Japanese, Arabic, Mandarin, Thai, and Spanish backgrounds shows that CAPT can successfully address problematic phonological contrasts, including consonant distinctions, final consonants, and sound clusters. The effectiveness of CAPT is largely attributed to its ability to provide visual and acoustic feedback, such as spectrograms, waveform displays, and articulatory representations, which help learners recognize differences between their L1-influenced pronunciation patterns and target English sounds.

However, despite its effectiveness for segmental pronunciation, CAPT has limitations in addressing broader aspects of pronunciation, particularly suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. These features require more complex modelling of speech patterns, which many CAPT systems still struggle to provide accurately. In addition, some CAPT applications have limited learner engagement due to static interfaces and insufficient interactive features. Accessibility is another concern because advanced CAPT systems may require expensive equipment or institutional subscriptions. Therefore, CAPT is most effective when used as part of a broader pronunciation learning environment that includes additional support for prosodic development.

4.2.2 Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

Mobile-assisted language learning has expanded access to pronunciation practice by providing learners with flexible, affordable, and convenient learning opportunities. Mobile applications incorporating speech recognition, gamification, and short practice activities encourage frequent learner engagement, which is essential for developing new pronunciation habits and reducing persistent L1 transfer patterns. Studies reviewed indicate that MALL is particularly effective for improving segmental pronunciation among learners whose L1-related difficulties involve predictable phonological differences, such as consonant contrasts among Spanish speakers or final consonant production among Mandarin speakers.

Despite these advantages, MALL applications often provide limited explanations of pronunciation problems and may rely heavily on generalized automatic speech recognition systems. Such systems may fail to accurately identify specific L1-related pronunciation patterns or may incorrectly evaluate certain non-native features. Furthermore, many applications provide limited feedback on stress, rhythm, and intonation. Consequently, MALL is most beneficial as a supplementary practice tool rather than a complete solution for complex pronunciation challenges caused by L1 interference.

4.2.3 Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Driven Tools

Artificial intelligence represents one of the most rapidly developing areas in technology-assisted pronunciation learning. AI-based systems, including automatic speech recognition, text-to-speech technologies, large language model tutors, and neural pronunciation

assessment systems, provide highly personalized feedback based on detailed analysis of learner speech. Compared with earlier technologies, AI systems are capable of identifying pronunciation patterns, adapting to individual learner needs, and analysing both segmental and suprasegmental features.

Evidence from the reviewed studies suggests that AI-based approaches demonstrate strong potential for reducing L1 influence because they can detect pronunciation errors through large language databases and provide immediate corrective feedback. Neural AI models have shown improved accuracy in analysing difficult sounds, including fricatives, liquids, and final consonants, while also demonstrating progress in evaluating prosodic features. Their adaptability makes AI systems more flexible than traditional CAPT or MALL approaches.

However, AI-based pronunciation systems also present important challenges. Some systems may demonstrate bias toward dominant native-speaker pronunciation models and may inaccurately evaluate diverse accents. Additional concerns include privacy issues associated with storing speech data online and the possibility that learners may become overly dependent on automated scores without understanding the linguistic reasons behind pronunciation difficulties. Therefore, AI technologies require careful integration with teacher guidance and continued improvement of assessment models.

4.2.4 Multimodal and Sensor-Based Technologies

Multimodal and sensor-based technologies provide highly detailed information about speech production by directly analysing articulatory movements. Technologies such as ultrasound tongue imaging, electromagnetic articulography, electropalatography, and three-dimensional movement tracking allow learners to observe how their tongue, lips, and vocal organs produce specific sounds. These systems are particularly valuable for learners whose pronunciation difficulties result from strong articulatory differences between their L1 and English.

Research indicates that sensor-based tools can produce significant improvements in difficult pronunciation contrasts because they allow learners to physically understand and modify their articulatory habits. For example, learners struggling with unfamiliar English sounds can receive direct visual information about tongue position and movement rather than relying only on auditory feedback.

Despite their precision, these technologies face practical limitations. Their high cost, technical complexity, and requirement for specialized training make them difficult to implement in ordinary language classrooms. Therefore, sensor-based systems are most appropriate for advanced phonetics training, specialized pronunciation programs, and clinical speech environments rather than general classroom use.

4.2.5 Immersive VR/AR Environments

Virtual and augmented reality technologies provide immersive environments that support pronunciation development through realistic communication experiences. Unlike CAPT and MALL, which primarily focus on isolated pronunciation practice, VR/AR systems emphasize interaction, fluency, and natural communication. These environments are particularly effective for improving suprasegmental features, including rhythm, stress, and intonation.

The reviewed studies show that VR immersion can help learners overcome L1-related prosodic patterns, such as inappropriate rhythm transfer, reduced intonation variation, and incorrect stress placement. This makes VR/AR especially useful for learners whose first languages differ significantly from English in terms of speech rhythm and stress patterns.

Nevertheless, VR/AR systems have limitations, including high equipment costs, technical requirements, and limited ability to provide detailed phoneme-level correction. Therefore, immersive technologies are most effective when combined with other pronunciation tools that address segmental accuracy.

4.3 Effectiveness of Interventions in Reducing L1 Influence

The findings demonstrate that different technologies show different levels of effectiveness depending on the pronunciation feature being targeted. CAPT and sensor-based tools are particularly effective for segmental accuracy because they provide detailed information about individual sounds. AI systems demonstrate broad effectiveness because they combine accurate speech analysis with personalized feedback. VR/AR environments perform best in improving suprasegmental features, including rhythm, stress, and intonation.

The effectiveness of specific technologies also depends on learners' first language backgrounds. Learners from tonal language backgrounds, such as Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Thai speakers, benefit greatly from AI-based prosody analysis and immersive environments. Learners from stress-free language backgrounds, such as Arabic and French speakers, often require CAPT and intelligent tutoring systems to develop English stress patterns. Learners whose L1 lacks certain English phonemes, such as Japanese and Korean speakers, benefit from combinations of CAPT and articulatory technologies. Romance-language learners often gain from AI-based pronunciation scoring for consonant contrasts and vowel distinctions.

4.4 Comparative Analysis Across Technologies

A comparison of technological approaches reveals that no single system can fully address all dimensions of L1 influence. AI-based tools demonstrate the greatest adaptability and scalability, making them suitable for widespread institutional use. CAPT remains highly effective for structured correction of specific phoneme-level errors, while VR/AR provides the strongest support for improving communication, fluency, and prosodic features. Sensor-based systems offer the highest level of articulatory precision but remain limited by accessibility challenges. MALL provides the greatest convenience and supports continuous practice, particularly in contexts where access to advanced technologies is limited.

Overall, the strongest outcomes are achieved through integrated technological ecosystems rather than isolated tools. Combining CAPT with AI feedback, VR with AI-based prosody analysis, or sensor technologies with CAPT creates more comprehensive learning experiences that address both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation.

4.5 Limitations of Existing Studies

Despite significant progress in technology-assisted pronunciation research, several limitations remain. Many existing studies are

affected by methodological weaknesses, including small participant samples, short intervention periods, limited control groups, and dependence on subjective pronunciation evaluations. These issues reduce the ability to generalize findings across different learner populations. The research field also demonstrates geographical and linguistic imbalance. A large proportion of studies focus on learners from East Asia, the Middle East, and Western Europe, while African, South Asian, Indigenous, and multilingual communities remain underrepresented. These limits understanding of how technologies function across diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Technological accessibility is another major challenge. High costs, internet requirements, limited institutional resources, and differences in digital literacy may prevent many learners from benefiting equally from advanced pronunciation technologies.

4.6 Pedagogical Implications

The findings suggest that pronunciation instruction should move toward personalized and technology-supported approaches. Teachers should incorporate L1-specific pronunciation training informed by contrastive analysis and use AI-generated feedback to support independent practice. However, automated feedback should complement rather than replace teacher explanation, particularly when learners require guidance on articulatory mechanisms and phonological concepts.

Educational institutions should consider adopting integrated pronunciation technology systems that combine accessibility, effectiveness, and scalability. Investment should focus on practical technologies such as AI-supported applications and CAPT systems, while advanced sensor-based technologies may be reserved for specialized programs.

For learners, effective pronunciation development requires consistent practice, awareness of L1-related pronunciation patterns, and exposure to different technological tools. Mobile applications can support regular practice, CAPT can address persistent sound difficulties, and VR environments can provide opportunities for meaningful communication practice.

4.7 Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that technological interventions have significantly improved the ability to address L1 influence on English pronunciation. However, no single technology can overcome all pronunciation challenges because L1 transfer involves multiple linguistic and cognitive factors. The strongest evidence supports the use of hybrid, personalized, and AI-enhanced learning environments that combine different technological strengths. Future pronunciation instruction is therefore likely to benefit from integrated systems that combine accurate feedback, learner adaptation, and meaningful communication practice. The next chapter presents the overall conclusions and recommendations derived from this review.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter consolidates the major findings of the study by synthesizing evidence from 184 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025 on the role of modern technological interventions in reducing first language (L1) influence on English pronunciation. The review demonstrates that emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven systems, Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT), Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR), and sensor-based articulatory tools, have substantially transformed pronunciation pedagogy. The findings indicate that technology-enhanced pronunciation instruction provides more effective support than traditional approaches based primarily on imitation and teacher correction because it offers learners personalized feedback, increased opportunities for practice, and greater awareness of the relationship between acoustic input and articulatory production. However, the effectiveness of these technologies varies depending on the specific pronunciation challenges associated with learners' L1 backgrounds and the phonological features being targeted.

The review highlights that CAPT systems are particularly effective in improving segmental pronunciation accuracy by addressing persistent phonemic difficulties resulting from differences between learners' first and second language sound systems. Through visual and acoustic feedback, CAPT enables learners to recognize and modify inaccurate articulatory patterns that may have become deeply established. Similarly, MALL applications contribute significantly to pronunciation development by increasing learner autonomy, motivation, and opportunities for frequent practice. Although mobile technologies support gradual improvement in segmental features, their effectiveness in developing complex suprasegmental aspects such as rhythm, stress, and intonation remains comparatively limited. AI-based pronunciation technologies demonstrate the strongest overall potential because they provide real-time, adaptive feedback through automatic speech recognition, mispronunciation detection, and intelligent tutoring systems. These systems are capable of identifying individual L1-related pronunciation difficulties and tailoring instruction accordingly, although concerns regarding algorithmic bias and insufficient representation of diverse accents remain important challenges.

The findings further reveal that immersive technologies such as VR and AR are particularly valuable for developing suprasegmental features and communicative fluency. By creating realistic interactional environments, these technologies allow learners to practise pronunciation in meaningful contexts while reducing anxiety associated with speaking in a second language. They are especially effective in improving stress patterns, rhythm, and intonation among learners whose L1 systems differ significantly from English prosodic structures. In addition, sensor-based and multimodal articulatory technologies provide highly precise information about physical speech production, allowing learners to observe tongue, lip, and jaw movements. These tools are particularly beneficial for correcting fossilized pronunciation errors, although their high cost and technical requirements limit their accessibility in many educational contexts.

A significant conclusion emerging from the review is that no single technology is universally effective for all learner groups. Instead, pronunciation outcomes are strongly influenced by learners' L1 backgrounds and the nature of their specific pronunciation difficulties. Tonal language speakers, such as Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Thai learners, benefit considerably from AI-based prosody analysis combined with immersive environments that support rhythm and intonation development. Learners from Arabic and French language backgrounds show notable improvement through CAPT and intelligent tutoring systems targeting stress placement and vowel reduction. Japanese and Korean learners benefit from articulatory-focused technologies that address difficulties involving consonant contrasts and segmental production, while Spanish and Portuguese speakers often demonstrate substantial gains through

AI-assisted segmental feedback. In multilingual African contexts, accessible technologies such as MALL platforms, when combined with teacher-supported CAPT activities, provide promising opportunities for pronunciation improvement. These findings emphasize that effective pronunciation instruction requires a flexible, hybrid approach that combines multiple technological resources with human guidance. Despite the positive outcomes identified, the reviewed literature reveals several limitations that restrict the broader application of current findings. Many studies rely on relatively small participant samples and short intervention periods, making it difficult to determine whether technological improvements are maintained over extended periods. Research has also disproportionately focused on a limited range of learner populations, leaving African, Indigenous, and multilingual communities insufficiently represented. Furthermore, many studies depend heavily on automated speech recognition scores without incorporating detailed acoustic, phonetic, or expert evaluations of pronunciation development. Limited comparisons between different technological approaches also make it difficult to determine which combinations of tools provide the greatest benefits. These limitations highlight the need for more comprehensive, inclusive, and methodologically diverse research designs.

Based on these findings, the chapter recommends that teachers integrate technology into pronunciation instruction through a balanced pedagogical approach. Teachers should incorporate contrastive phonological analysis to identify learners' L1-related pronunciation difficulties and use CAPT, AI tools, and immersive technologies as complementary resources rather than replacements for human instruction. Educators should also help learners interpret technological feedback effectively because automated assessments require informed guidance to become meaningful learning experiences. Learners, similarly, should engage in regular technology-supported pronunciation practice through AI and mobile applications while combining automated feedback with communicative activities and teacher interaction. Developing metacognitive awareness through self-recording and speech analysis can further enable learners to monitor and improve their pronunciation independently.

At the institutional level, the chapter recommends the development of integrated pronunciation learning environments that combine AI systems, CAPT platforms, and immersive technologies. Institutions should prioritize teacher training in digital phonetics and AI-supported pronunciation instruction while ensuring that pronunciation receives appropriate attention within language curricula. Since technological access remains uneven across educational contexts, institutions must also consider issues of affordability and accessibility when adopting digital tools. Policymakers have an important role in supporting equitable access by funding research among underrepresented linguistic communities, encouraging collaboration between universities and technology developers, and promoting inclusive policies that ensure pronunciation technologies benefit diverse populations rather than only well-resourced learners.

Future research should address existing gaps by conducting longer-term and mixed-methods investigations that examine both measurable pronunciation improvements and learners' experiences with technology-based instruction. Greater attention should be given to underrepresented groups, including speakers of African, Indigenous, and South Asian languages, as well as migrant and multilingual communities whose pronunciation patterns remain insufficiently explored. Comparative research examining different technological approaches, such as AI versus CAPT or VR versus MALL, is also necessary to determine the most effective combinations of tools. Furthermore, emerging developments in AI, including large language model (LLM)-based pronunciation tutors, adaptive learning systems, multilingual speech recognition models, and real-time prosody analysis, present significant opportunities for advancing research on L1 pronunciation transfer.

In conclusion, the chapter demonstrates that modern technological interventions have significantly reshaped pronunciation instruction by providing innovative methods for addressing L1 influence on English speech production. Although technology cannot completely eliminate L1 transfer because pronunciation patterns are deeply connected to cognitive and phonological systems, it can substantially reduce its negative effects by improving intelligibility, prosodic control, and learner confidence. As English continues to function as a global means of communication among speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, technology-supported pronunciation instruction represents an important pathway toward more effective, inclusive, and accessible language learning. The greatest potential lies not in replacing teachers with technology, but in creating balanced learning environments where advanced technological tools and human expertise work together to support learners' communicative development.

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