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Mobile-Assisted English Learning in Nepali Universities: Navigating the Nexus of Network-Nudges-Narratives

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Abstract

Mobile technologies have revolutionized English language education (ELE) and, to some extent, transformed English language learning (ELL) globally. Its integration in Nepali higher education is still underexplored. This study explores how mobile-assisted English language learning (MAELL) is perceived in Nepali university settings. It examines the interplay of the intensity and purpose of use, networked access, and behavioural nudges through the narratives of the teachers and students. The study employed a phenomenological qualitative design. We collected data from two English teachers and eight students purposively selected from two universities using semi-structured interviews and guided reflection of the participants. Thematic analysis of the data under four themes showed the participants' evolving digital literacy, academic use of mobile tools through collaboration, and reflection, despite challenges induced by low-resourced university settings and insufficient technical knowledge. Findings demonstrate that mobile use becomes a learning enabler or disruptor based on learners' agency and institutional, pedagogical, and sociocultural contexts. This study contributes to a distinctive understanding of MAELL in Nepali low-resourced university settings. It implies the need for localized frameworks to address equity, engagement, autonomy, and ethical use of mobile in academia. Additionally, it invites policy-level support to enhance it for affordable access to ELL resources. It also emphasizes the importance of exploring learners' stories, experiences, perceptions, and lived realities in educational institutions. Further, this study enhances the discourse on technology-enhanced language education in the Global South by exploring the MAELL experiences in the Nepali universities.

Keywords: English language learning, language learning apps, learner engagement, learning autonomy, low-resourced university setting, mobile-assisted language learning

Introduction

The widespread adoption of smartphones has revolutionized education around the world. It has brought flexible and learner-centered opportunities that were previously unavailable. Mobile

devices enable learners to engage with educational content anytime and anywhere. Consequently, it has erased the traditional boundaries of classroom-based instruction. The use of mobile devices has allowed digital content creation and delivery through internet access (Parajuli et al., 2024). They are not only convenient but also affordable devices for tertiary students and teachers (Halepoto et al., 2022). In ELE, this shift is especially significant because of the varied exposure, practice, and interaction that mobile technology (MT) can readily support. MALL includes the use of mobile devices and applications to provide learners with a wide range of tools such as dictionaries, videos, quizzes, and interactive speaking and listening exercises. MT helps learners gain intercultural competence through the exchange of messages (Yang & Yang, 2025). Further, Tiwari (2022) found mobile-assisted components helpful for enhancing e-learning, developing fundamental learning skills through independence and increased interaction among learners. The study's findings reinforce the idea that mobile learning is not a replacement for face-to-face instruction but a complementary tool that can enrich the learning experience.

Moreover, MALL helps learner develop their English language proficiency, cultural awareness, grammar, and communication (Marino, 2025). English has been taught worldwide as a second or foreign language nowadays. Even though the origin of the global spread of English goes back to the expansion of British international trade and colonization (Edwards, 2023), and later "through American geopolitical influence...has reinforced linguistic hierarchies ... and ... linguistic imperialism" (Ashrafova, 2025, p. 275). In Nepal, English is taught as a foreign language and remains a crucial subject in school and university curricula. However, many Nepali students face persistent challenges in learning English effectively. Limited access to quality learning resources, minimal exposure to authentic English outside the classroom, and an emphasis on rote learning using traditional teaching methods have posed difficulties in developing communicative competence. These issues are noticeable in rural and remote areas owing to limited infrastructure and educational resources. MALL presents a promising approach to overcoming these barriers. Nepal Telecommunication Authority (2025) reports that in terms of service-wise population penetration of voice service, mobile subscribers in Nepal have reached 100.321% by July 2025. Learners can access a variety of English learning materials on their devices. It also provides alternative solutions to regular physical presence in a classroom. This flexibility supports continuous and independent learning, allowing students to practice at their own pace and according to their schedules. Moreover, MALL encourages learner autonomy, a critical factor in successful language acquisition, by empowering students to take control of their learning process.

Several recent studies have examined the attitudes and experiences of Nepali learners using MT (Tembe, 2021) and the use of ICT (Kandel, 2023, 2024, 2025; Lamichhane, 2025; Tiwari, 2022) in ELE. Despite the optimistic findings of MALL, there are still significant challenges to its widespread and effective implementation in Nepal. Therefore, efforts to improve MAELL must include capacity building for educators, investment in internet and device accessibility, and curricular reforms. Similarly, another gap in existing research concerns the study of MALL at the postgraduate university level. Most current studies in Nepal focus on the school and undergraduate levels, but learners and teachers at the master's level have different understandings and stories to share. Understanding how these teachers and learners perceive and use MTs can provide valuable insights for developing tailored programs that address their specific requirements. Identifying both the opportunities and challenges faced by master's students and examined by the teachers helps educators and policymakers design effective mobile learning interventions to support advanced English learners in Nepal.

In this context, the present study aimed to explore students' and teachers' lived experiences, perceived opportunities and challenges of MAELL in Nepali university contexts. Additionally, it explored the teachers' and students' strategies for optimizing mobile use in meaningful and autonomous ELL. Specifically, this study possessed the following research questions:

RQ1: How do university students and teachers experience and narrate the use of mobile devices for students' ELL and teacher professional development?

RQ2: What benefits and challenges arise from using mobiles in MAELL in the institutional contexts?

RQ3: How do MTs enhance learning autonomy and learner engagement, as well as contribute to ELE in the Nepali contexts?

RQ4: What strategies do the students and teachers employ to mitigate the challenges of mobile learning?

Literature Review

A synthesized review of the literature (Martínez et al., 2025) on MAELL reported that mobiles helped students learn vocabulary, grammar, and language skills and fostered their motivation and autonomous learning. Similarly, A systematic review of the literature revealed that MALL helped better vocabulary learning of the students (Dağdeler, 2023). Aljasir (2023) found that learners were positive towards using mobile applications for ELL as it helped learners learn language skills. It allows teachers and students to follow learner-centred, engaging, constructive strategies with authentic language use in real contexts. It also enhanced individualised learning through personal construction and interactivity. Similarly, Tembe (2021), in the context of Nepal, found students' positive attitude towards MALL. Lin et al. (2024) found that mobile learning helped students develop their motivation and agency for creative EFL learning. In a recent study, Wahyuni et al. (2025) concluded that MALL helped students learn features of pronunciation, such as intonation and stress utilizing videos and pronunciation tools at their hands. A study in Slovakia (Metruk, 2021) surveyed English-major university students and found that students had positive feelings about using mobile apps for ELL, especially for improving vocabulary. But students were less enthusiastic about using apps for speaking practice. Female students tended to feel more positive about these tools than male students. All students emphasized the importance of teacher support when using apps.

MAELL has become a significant area of focus in Nepal's educational landscape, particularly as educators and researchers seek effective strategies to improve English proficiency in under-resourced settings. Shrestha (2012) was one of the first to explore the potential of MTs for language education in Nepal, highlighting their flexibility, portability, and accessibility as crucial advantages for both teachers and learners. However, he also emphasized persistent challenges such as unreliable infrastructure and the lack of professional development opportunities for teachers, which often limit the practical integration of such technologies in classrooms. Darsih and Asikin (2020) researched EFL learners' perceptions of mobile applications, particularly tools like Google Translate and YouTube. Their study concluded that these tools are effective and easy to use for language learning. The findings revealed that such applications improved learners' listening and vocabulary skills, offering exposure to authentic English usage beyond the classroom. However, they also pointed out that consistent internet access and digital literacy were prerequisites for successful integration. Further, Tiwari (2022) explored the role of e-learning in ELE from the perspectives of both teachers and students. The study revealed that e-learning, which often includes mobile-assisted components, promotes fundamental learning skills, including independence, adaptability, and increased interaction among learners. Importantly, both teachers and students recognized that technology could enhance learner engagement and motivation when properly incorporated into teaching strategies. The study's findings reinforce the idea

that MAELL is not a replacement for face-to-face instruction but a complementary tool that can enrich the learning experience. However, MALL enhances learners' motivation as well as emotional engagement for learning and acquiring vocabulary knowledge (Zhou & Goh, 2025).

Building on these foundational studies, several Nepal-based scholars have conducted more recent empirical investigations into the integration of mobile and digital technologies in English language teaching (Joshi & Ayer, 2024; Kandel, 2025; Paudel, 2022; Poudel, 2022; Saud & Laudari, 2023; Singh, 2018). Lamichhane (2025) conducted a qualitative study involving secondary-level English teachers in Kathmandu's public schools and found that while teachers expressed enthusiasm about integrating mobile devices and ICT tools in their teaching, they faced significant constraints. The study concluded that successful implementation of MAELL would require institutional policy changes, targeted teacher training programs, and sustainable funding to improve digital infrastructure. Similarly, Paudel (2022) investigated the challenges of ICT adoption in English language instruction through a mixed-methods study of 40 secondary-level teachers across Nepal. The research echoed Lamichhane's findings, identifying key challenges such as inconsistent policy enforcement, minimal access to devices, and the absence of ongoing technical support. The study emphasized that institutional commitment to long-term teacher-capacity-building and systematic resource allocation were necessary to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

These challenges are not limited to urban or government-funded community schools. In a study of teacher educators in Darchula district, Saud and Laudari (2023), employing a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, explored the benefits of MTs for enhancing learner engagement and resource availability. The study highlighted that poor internet connectivity, limited institutional support, and inadequate ICT training hindered the effective implementation of MT in ELL. Meanwhile, Singh (2018) explored classroom practices of secondary English teachers in Kathmandu and found that some educators utilized technologies like PowerPoint and multimedia tools. Others were unprepared for sustained integration due to workload pressures, low digital literacy, and limited student access to mobile devices. The study stressed the importance of introducing structured, theory-based professional development programs to help teachers integrate mobile tools effectively and confidently. Beyond teacher-focused studies, student perspectives have also been a focus of investigation. Poudel (2022) investigated both student and teacher perspectives on ICT integration in ELE and concluded that although mobile-based learning tools encouraged flexibility and self-paced study, institutional inequalities, such as digital divides and uneven technological readiness-posed significant obstacles. The study suggested a multi-stakeholder strategy involving schools, policymakers, and community organizations to provide equitable access and promote digital literacy.

The situation in rural Nepal paints an even starker picture. Joshi and Ayer (2024) studied teachers' experiences with ICT integration in Ramechhap district, where infrastructural limitations such as unreliable electricity, poor internet access, and limited funding severely constrained the adoption of MTs in ELL. Despite these setbacks, teachers showed adaptability by using their mobile phones and organizing peer-led workshops to share digital knowledge. The study emphasized the need for comprehensive government intervention to ensure that digital learning tools are not limited to urban centres but are extended to remote areas through sustainable infrastructure development and teacher training. These findings align with broader regional insights. For example, Assapari and Hidayati (2023) examined learners' readiness for mobile-supported learning across South Asia and found that student success with MAELL was influenced not only by access to technology but also by motivation, autonomy, and digital literacy. Similarly, Che Ahamad et al. (2023) surveyed EFL learners in Asia and reported that although students found mobile learning accessible and convenient, its effectiveness was

significantly shaped by factors such as device ownership, internet reliability, and perceptions of usefulness. MT helped learners gain intercultural competence through the exchange of messages using the Hello Talk platform more easily and flexibly (Yang & Yang, 2025).

These studies suggest that students and teachers understood the benefits of MAELL. It increased learner autonomy, flexible access to learning materials, and exposure to authentic English. However, there are formidable barriers to its sustainable adoption in ELE. These include infrastructural challenges, unequal access to mobile devices and the internet, lack of digital competency among teachers and students, and insufficient pedagogical support. Nonetheless, the widespread use of mobile phones, even in rural and economically disadvantaged areas of Nepal, provides a promising foundation for future development. Mobile phones remain the most accessible ICT tools in Nepal. Proper training and institutional support on the use of ICT tools and mobile devices could significantly bridge educational gaps and improve English language outcomes for students across socio-economic strata. Overall, the literature indicates that MAELL in Nepal intertwines a complex interplay of opportunities and challenges. Given these backdrops, the present study aims to explore how university teachers and students in Nepali universities use mobile devices to support ELL skills. Specifically, it investigates their experiences and perceptions regarding the role of MT in ELL, its opportunities and challenges, and the potential strategies to resolve them.

Methodology

We adopted a phenomenological research approach to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of university teachers and students regarding the use of mobiles for learning and teaching English in Nepal, as the design focuses on understanding the subjective experiences and meanings that individuals assign to these experiences (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Van Manen & Van Manen, 2021). For the study, we purposively selected two teachers and eight students from two universities in Nepal, preserving the diversity of the university EFL contexts. We upheld gender balance while selecting the participants. We also maintained the anonymity of the universities and the participant teachers and students by assigning pseudonyms while interpreting the data. Table 1 illustrates the demographic characteristics of the research participants:

Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants*

Participant	Gender/Age	Ethnicity	Role	Position/ Level	Use of Mobile Device	University
Aarati	Female/ 26	Brahmin	Student	M.Ed. 1st Semester	7 years	University B
Anup	Male/ 25	Chhetri	Student	M.Ed. 2nd Semester	7 years	University B
Denu	Female/ 27	Brahmin	Student	M.Ed. 3rd Semester	8 years	University A
Jayanti	Female/ 30	Dalit	Student	M.Ed. 1st Semester	6 years	University A
Jitendra	Male/ 28	Janajati	Student	M.Ed. 4th Semester	10 years	University A
Kalika	Female/ 36	Brahmin	Teacher	Assistant Professor	16 years	University B
Kamlesh	Male/ 25	Chhetri	Student	M.Ed. 3rd Semester	9 years	University A
Krishna	Male/ 47	Dalit	Teacher	Lecturer	20 years	University A
Manisha	Female/ 26	Thakuri	Student	M.Ed. 4th Semester	7 years	University B
Nirajan	Male/ 24	Janajati	Student	M.Ed. 1st Semester	5 years	University B

The participants self-reported their ethnicity, including gender, age, and experiences of using mobile devices for learning and teaching English. This diversity of participants enabled us to gain a comprehensive understanding of how mobiles influence ELL and teaching within the university context.

We used the peer-reviewed semi-structured interview guidelines for interviewing he participants at their convenience. Additionally, we requested that they prepare reflection notes on their motivations, challenges, benefits, and limitations associated with MAELL. Their notes depicted their use of mobile devices and MAELL in their reflective tones. The writings helped them recollect their experiences and share them with us during the interviews. These methods helped us uncover the participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attributed (Chagas, 2021; Given, 2008; Neubauer et al., 2019) to their use of MTs for teaching and learning English.

For the analysis of the data, we proceed on the basis of the six-stage thematic analysis procedure suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). We particularly adopted Naeem et al. (2023) which began from transcription of the interview data to the development of the thematic conceptual model. The six-step conceptual model allowed us to interpret the data, sustain the trustworthiness of the result and maintain the relevancy of the study through robust, rigorous, and evidence-based analysis. The process included: i. Transcription of the interview recordings, reading them many times and selecting the prominent quotations, ii. Selecting the keywords, iii. Coding the data, iv. Developing the themes, v. Conceptualization by interpreting the keywords, codes, and themes, and vi. Developing a conceptual model. To ensure trustworthiness, member validation was conducted by sharing transcripts and preliminary findings with participants for confirmation and feedback. Ethical protocols were strictly followed, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and maintaining participant anonymity throughout the research process.

Results

The collected data were grouped under the following four themes for the analysis based on the research questions:

Experiences and Stories of Mobile Device Use for Learning and Professional Development

The shared experiences and stories of the participants showed that their use of mobile devices helped them learn English. They started learning better and explored themselves as academics with the use of mobile (and laptops in teachers' cases). Krishna, a teacher, shared:

> I've been using mobile devices for the last 20 years. These include my smartphone and laptop. It revolutionized my learning and teaching. They are easy to carry everywhere and allow me to engage in academic work at any time. I know I would not have been able to learn English, teach the way I do now and publish the articles and textbooks that I have now and complete and pursue the research projects without the proper use of these devices.

Krishna's remarks showed that the flexibility and affordability of mobile devices opened the gateways of professional exposure. It also supported their research activities.

Similarly, students also reflected that they realized the importance of using a mobile for learning English. It also allowed them to recover their learning loss in their regular classes at the universities. It also provided them with a discussion platform to interact about their course and assignments. In this regard, Jitendra mentioned, "In the beginning, I didn't know that I could learn English from my mobile. But now I do. I can recover the missed classes and assignments the next day. We discuss in the Messenger group every day about what we learned in the class and what we have to do". Further, they also used mobiles to access the reading texts, videos, and tutorials for their active engagement at any time, despite an electricity outage or no internet access in the resource-constrained

contexts. To illustrate it, Manisha, while reporting her story, in an excerpt quoted, "I download the videos and PDF texts related to my course myself and shared by our teacher and friends on my mobile when I am online. I can watch and study them anytime. This makes me engage in study when no light and internet".

Overall, their reporting of the stories and experiences of using mobile for learning and professional development depicts that they found mobile a tool for continued learning and recovering the learning loss, as well as a resource for accessing learning resources twenty-four hours a day.

Opportunities and Benefits of Using Mobile Devices for ELL

Both students and teachers reported that mobile devices offered them a wide range of benefits in supporting English learning. Mobiles allow flexible, accessible, and personalized learning by providing learners with various tools and content such as dictionaries, grammar apps, videos, podcasts, and language learning platforms. A student, Kamlesh, shared,

> The use of mobile helps me study English anytime and anywhere. I use English language learning apps, podcasts, and audiobooks. Occasionally, I also attend online conferences and online courses. They help me learn the English language better and learn academic skills, and research skills.

> Similarly, to illustrate the use of language learning apps, Aarati noted, "I often use English language learning apps such as ELSA Speak, English Pronunciation, and watch English videos". From the teachers' perspective, mobile learning supplemented classroom instruction and supported learner autonomy. Kalika reflected, "If used properly, mobiles help students become independent learners. I encourage my students to use apps and online videos, especially to improve their pronunciation and vocabulary". Other participant students also shared that mobile apps with offline access, like Duolingo and Memrise, enhance learning without internet connectivity. It is especially significant in rural or low-connectivity areas. Teacher, Krishna, supported this point when he shared, "Numerous offline mobile apps help students learn English anytime. Even when they are offline. It helps them learn on their own".

Overall, mobile devices were seen as effective supplements to traditional classroom methods, enhancing students' engagement and motivation while providing them with the opportunity to learn English in flexible ways. It was beneficial in ELE for ELL and practising language skills as well as other course-related content at learners' convenient time and place.

Challenges Associated with Mobile-Based English Learning

Despite the advantages, students and teachers also highlighted various challenges in using mobile devices for English learning. The most common issues included distractions, technical problems, and the quality and reliability of educational content. Anup, in this regard, said, "The notifications of the social media disturb my learning concentration. Once I open the apps, sometimes, I lose my valuable time unknowingly". A similar problem was shared by Jayanti when she mentioned: "We often do not get the answer correctly. Its use may sometimes lead to incorrect learning. We need better guidance, I think". Jitendra and Nirajan noted issues including internet problems, device freezing or slowing down, Malware problems, disturbance of unwanted software, onscreen ads, data loss, and their technical inabilities as the challenges of MAELL. To illustrate the sharing of Jitendra and Nirajan, Denu added, "Sometimes my mobile hangs or the internet cuts off. We may lose the information that we hardly find if we forget to record on a note copy".

Similarly, teachers also echoed these concerns of the students. Krishna, for instance, reflected,

Their attention may get distracted easily if they are not careful. Some use their mobiles for non-academic purposes during study time. They also don't always know which apps are reliable. To speak truly, we teachers also get involved in posting and commenting on Facebook and waste time scrolling the posts, short videos, and issues of non-academic concerns, ….

Her expression of the challenges demonstrates the bad effect of mobile use on learning and teacher professional development. She meant that it is equally harmful to everyone, regardless of the students, teachers, officials, house-seaters, or anyone who uses it, if a proper mechanism is not employed for monitoring its appropriate and academic use. Students also realized this effect of mobile use. For instance, Nirajan, a student, noted, "Without proper guidance, students can misuse mobile time. It may cost a lot for their academic future…".

The quotes of the teacher and students reveal that they were aware of the potential problems of mobile use. They also faced some of the challenges in their professional lives. These challenges indicate that while mobile devices offer great potential, their unregulated or unguided use can hinder effective language learning.

Strategies Used by Students and Teachers to Overcome Mobile Learning Challenges

The participants shared that practical strategies to enhance focus, ensure productive mobile use, and create structured learning environments in their contexts made MAELL more fruitful. It helped them overcome many of the challenges they faced. They imposed self-discipline and proper use of the digital tools to avoid distractions. A student, Aarati, shared, "I silence or turn off the notifications from social media, games, and non-study apps that distract my learning. Sometimes, I don't even notice that there are such apps on my mobile". Similarly, another student from the fourth semester, Manisha, explained her routine: "I keep my mobile in flight mode and use timer apps like Forest. I concentrate on the videos or the PDFs and other educational apps at that time". Anup shared that he switched off his mobile while learning for the fixed hours at home, just like in college, while taking the classes.

Krishna, a teacher, shared, "Assigning tasks such as preparing audio or video clips in English and sharing them in their groups helps them engage in study. They don't have time to waste to leftover social media otherwise. I've found it interesting for my students. Everyone wants to be better than their colleagues". His idea of implanting a sense of positive competition among the students helped him monitor the students' proper mobile use. Another teacher, Kalika, allowed her students to share their reflections in the Messenger and WhatsApp groups: "… they also confess to their waste of time and promise in the group. They publicly reveal their weaknesses, or the wrong use. They even suggest to each other the best use and useful apps and strategies. It also helps teachers get insight and learning…". These strategies reflect a combination of self-regulation by students and pedagogical support from teachers, which together enhance the effectiveness of MELL.

Overall, the data reveal that MELL presents a mix of opportunities, challenges, and coping strategies. Students enjoy flexible, engaging, and resource-rich learning experiences, while teachers acknowledge the potential of mobiles to promote learner autonomy and support language development. However, distractions, unreliable apps, and technical issues always remain concerns. They actively tried to address these issues through time management, guided use of educational tools, and integration of mobile learning with classroom activities.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that mobile devices offer rich and flexible affordances. They enable learners to access English learning materials easily, boost motivation, and support

informal autonomous practices. The study also identified that students' and teachers' best use of mobile is determined by several factors such as disciplined self-regulation, browsing and accessing quality content, reliable infrastructure, and active teacher mediation. Without these supports, the possibilities of mobile learning may remain aspirational rather than transformative. The study presents a refined yet overall encouraging portrait of MAELL in Nepal, revealing that both university students and teachers see mobiles as highly beneficial tools for ELL. They perceived the affordances of flexibility and accessibility in mobile use for ELE. It also helped users learn independently in their leisure time. Sharing among their friends also provided them with feedback for the better use of MT and strategies to find useful resources for learning. It ultimately contributes to developing learner autonomy and learner agency. However, its use should be monitored by students' self-regulation and teachers' pedagogical support.

In this study, university students engaged with diverse learning resources, such as Duolingo, dictionary, grammar apps and pronunciation applications like ELSA Speak. It developed students' speaking skills through proper pronunciation and correct use of stress and intonation in their speech (Wahyuni et al., 2025). The findings of this study revealed that the use of high-quality apps and offline resources can enrich traditional instruction and foster learner autonomy. The findings expand upon Parajuli (2016) who reported that higher education students own mobile phones and use them informally for learning. The study implies that institutional support is essential for the deeper integration of mobile tools into pedagogical practice. It also aligns with the findings of Assapari and Hidayati (2023) and Lei et al. (2022). They asserted that MAELL enhanced students' digital literacy, motivation, and autonomous learning. Moreover, it helped students develop a better ELL attitude and vocabulary learning through self-regulatory efforts. It aligned with the attitude of Slovakian students who were positive towards learning vocabulary using mobile applications (Metruk, 2021). Additionally, this study explored that the use of MT enhanced students' language proficiency and intercultural understanding, parallel to the exploration of Yang and Yang (2025) by using a mobile platform called Hello Talk.

The findings of this study depicted that MAELL helped students acquire language skills and vocabulary knowledge comparable to the findings of Zhou and Goh (2025). Further, the study reinforces Joshi and Ayer (2024) and Lamichhane (2025), implying the need for government-level interventions, institutional funding for digital support, and effective use of MAELL in higher education institutions. It is essential because inadequate infrastructure development and limited resources hinder ICT integration in ELE (Singh, 2018). This study suggests that the integration of mobile learning into classroom-based collaborative learning designs could reveal digital autonomy and social interaction for ELL. These findings align with Lei et al. (2022), as the use of MT improved students' language skills as well as learning autonomy and learner agency. Overall, this study outlines a complex but promising landscape of MALL in Nepal. Mobiles provide university teachers and students with rich access and autonomy for ELL. Integration of MT in learning along with classroom instruction, supportive policies, and ongoing research can become a powerful push toward inclusive and effective ELE in Nepal.

This study focused specifically on university-level English students and teachers from two universities in Nepal. The qualitative nature of the research, relying on interviews and reflection notes of the participants, provided in-depth insights into their lived experiences and stories of using MT in ELL. However, this study may not capture the full range of challenges and opportunities encountered by learners and educators in other regions, academic programs, or educational contexts. Furthermore, the sample was limited to a relatively small and specific population, which may not reflect the

diversity of technological access, digital literacy, and pedagogical practices present across different universities or countries. Additionally, since the study concentrated on self-reported experiences, it may be influenced by subjective perceptions and potential biases of the participants. Future research should broaden the participant base to include varied demographic and institutional backgrounds using mixed methods approaches to validate and extend the understanding of MAELL challenges and strategies in higher education.

Conclusions and Implications

The findings of this study reveal that university students and English language teachers in Nepal get opportunities to access huge resources through MAELL, although it is neither formally designed nor informally imposed upon them. Primarily, it is their motivation that optimize its use due to its easy access and affordability. Participants overwhelmingly described mobile devices as flexible and accessible tools that enriched ELL by providing a wide variety of engaging resources, including grammar apps, podcasts, videos, and pronunciation tools. These tools supported the development of language skills as well as advanced higher-order skills of higher education. In particular, students appreciated the ability to learn anytime and anywhere, often using their free time to explore mobile content tailored to their personal learning needs. However, despite the many benefits and opportunities, participants also encountered several challenges. The most common challenges the participant reported were distraction caused by non-academic content, such as social media and entertainment apps. Technical issues-including unstable internet connections, device malfunctions, and data limitations, also disrupted learning. Their stories and reflections explored that they understood the technical skills to appropriately use mobile for learning and acknowledged their insufficient knowledge to cope with minor challenges. Additionally, both students and teachers expressed uncertainty about the pedagogical validity of the contents accessed and the reliability of the tools and freely available learning apps. These challenges display a critical tension between the potential of MTs and the practical barriers to their effective use in under-resourced or unregulated environments.

University-level teachers and students may adopt several coping strategies to enhance the quality and focus of learning. They can develop better self-regulatory habits, such as turning off notifications, using academically beneficial apps, following structured study schedules to maintain focus for effective MAELL, and teachers' pedagogical support. They may also use more disciplined methods, such as placing their phones on flight mode or keeping devices out of their reach during study time. Teachers play a complementary role by sharing quality educational resources, assigning structured mobile-based tasks such as sharing the assignments in groups for getting feedback, critiquing digital texts, podcasts, or videos, and encouraging reflection on digital learning platforms for collaboration and interactivity. These strategies reflect a collaborative approach between students and educators to optimize mobile use for meaningful and goal-oriented ELL.

The findings of this study imply a clear need for enhanced pedagogical design and teacher training. Educators must be equipped with mobile-integrated learning skills in teaching and learning. They need to learn using learning applications, design meaningful mobile-based activities, and support students in developing digital literacy and self-regulation. Training programs focused on mobile pedagogy can be introduced to empower teachers to use technology not only as a supplement but as a strategic component of ELE. To supplement it, mobile learning can be formally incorporated into English language curricula in Nepal. This formal integration would also enable educators to assess and support students' mobile learning in a structured and consistent manner. The findings also highlight the need for context-responsive mobile learning applications. Program developers, educators, and policymakers might collaborate to ensure that the applications are easily accessible, valid, reliable, and

aligned with the national curriculum and local learning needs, even in higher education. The findings of the study also suggest student motivation in managing their digital environments, institutional support, and sustainable and healthy mobile learning habits. Additionally, guidelines and policies can be established to support the responsible and effective use of mobile devices in academic settings. Overall, this study affirms that MAELL, when thoughtfully guided and supported, can significantly enhance the language learning experience by increasing flexibility, learner engagement, and autonomy. At the same time, further studies can explore policy planning, teacher involvement, and learner training for better optimisation of MAELL in Nepal and the Global South.

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