

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**SPELLING PRONUNCIATION IN SPOKEN ENGLISH IN GHANA: AN
EXPLORATION OF EDUCATED SPEAKERS' ENGLISH IN UEW**



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Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
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SEPTEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Sena Kwaku Kumah, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of the thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Amma Abrafi Adjei

Signature:

Date:

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DEDICATION

To my parents and siblings



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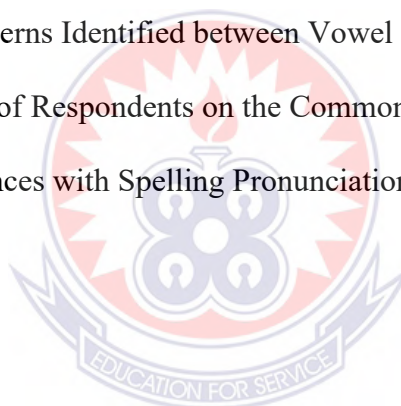
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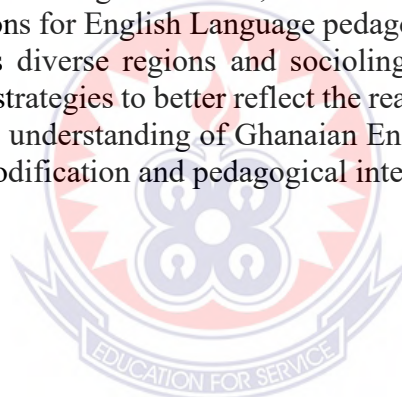
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ABSTRACT

While Ghanaian English has attracted scholarly attention for its phonological features, spelling pronunciation remains underexplored despite its recognition as a distinct pronunciation pattern. This study explores spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English, focusing on factors that influence its usage, some phonological patterns, and its common practices of usage. Grounded by Flege's Speech Learning Model (1995), which highlights the role of first-language phonology in second-language acquisition, the study adopted a qualitative approach, and a descriptive research design. Ten participants, including three lecturers and seven MPhil students from the Department of English Education, University of Education, Winneba, were purposively sampled. Data were collected through questionnaires, and audio recordings of mock viva presentations. Findings reveal that spelling pronunciation is commonly used among participants, with pronunciations frequently influenced by the orthographic form of English words. Key phonological features identified include vowel and consonant modification, diphthongization, monophthongization, and epenthesis. These reflect the influence of Ghanaian language systems and the transparent nature of their orthographies. Participants generally viewed spelling pronunciation as both natural and acceptable in formal and informal contexts. The study concludes that spelling pronunciation, rather than being a deviation, is a normative feature in Ghanaian spoken English with implications for English Language pedagogy and literacy. It recommends further research across diverse regions and sociolinguistic groups, as well as a re-evaluation of teaching strategies to better reflect the realities of Ghanaian English. This work contributes to the understanding of Ghanaian English as a legitimate variety and supports its potential codification and pedagogical integration.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, and organisation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The global spread of English has led to the rise of many new varieties, especially in countries where it is spoken as a second language. Over the last fifty years, scholars have paid growing attention to these varieties. Kachru (1998) notes that new forms of English emerge as the language moves beyond its original home. Koranteng (2006) refers to these as “New Englishes”, “non-native Englishes”, or “World Englishes”, now seen as legitimate forms that deserve independent study. Jenkins (2003) also describes these varieties as evolving to meet different local needs, with examples including Indian, Pakistani, Malaysian, Singaporean, Filipino, South African, Liberian, Nigerian, and Ghanaian English.

1.1.1 Overview of English Used in Ghana

In Ghana, English is classified as a Second Language (ESL) under Kachru’s (1983) concentric circles of English use. Its usage differs from that of native contexts, as indicated by Sey (1973), Bobda (2000), and Adjei and Logogye (2016). Adika (2012) traces the introduction of English to the colonial period in the 16th century. Since then, it has remained Ghana’s official language, used in government, education, religion, law, media, and administration.

The term “Ghanaian English” emerged in pre-independence times, first mentioned by Brown and Scragg (1948) and later popularised by Sey (1973) as “Gold Coast English”. Grieve (1964) considered it a variation of Standard British English, while Sey (1973) argued that educated Ghanaians base their speech on British English, but make errors not due to their native languages, but through analogy. Though Sey did not define the variety, Koranteng (2006) describes Ghanaian English as the form spoken and written by Ghanaians.

Ghanaian English is a dynamic variety that blends Standard English with indigenous linguistic expressions, accents, grammatical structures, creativity, and pidgins, forming a communicative medium that is mutually intelligible and it is accepted in both formal and informal settings, and widely used in schools, churches, homes, and public spaces. Its uniqueness lies in its strong connection to local languages, which shape its pronunciation and vocabulary. Boateng and Awere (2016) observe the influence of pidgin and Creole elements in Ghanaian English.

In phonology, Ghanaian English features distinct intonation and prosody. It often differs from British or American standards, particularly in pronunciation. Sey (1973) highlights spelling pronunciation as one of its core features, with examples like “about” pronounced ‘/abaut/’ instead of ‘/əbaut/’, and “constable” as ‘/konstabul/’ rather than ‘/kənstabl/’. Asante (1996) also notes that final letters in words like “comb” and initial letters like “h” in “what” and “where” are often pronounced due to spelling influence.

Koranteng (2006) explains that the irregularities in English spelling cause confusion for Ghanaian speakers. She illustrates how letters like “g” vary between /g/ in “girl” and /dʒ/ in “giant”, or “s” being pronounced /s/ in “some” and /ʃ/ in “sugar”. These

inconsistencies encourage reliance on spelling when pronouncing words, contributing to the phonological distinctiveness of Ghanaian English.

1.1.2 The State of the Received Pronunciation (RP) in Ghanaian English

Over the years, the influence of Received Pronunciation (RP) in Ghana has waned. RP, described by Jones (1997) as the accent of educated Southern English speakers, became widespread due to its use in British media. However, its status has dropped, with many speakers now mixing regional accents with RP to create “modified RP” (Crystal, 1999:10-20)

Studies show that RP has never been dominant in Ghana. Sackey (1997) explains that early forms of English brought into the country were varied and not strictly RP. Sey (1973) confirms that the British who interacted with Ghanaians did not always speak RP, which means Ghanaians had no consistent RP model to follow. Additionally, Dolphyne (1988) points out that Ghanaian English lacks several RP vowel and diphthong sounds. It uses only seven out of twelve RP pure vowels and six out of eight RP diphthongs. Koranteng (2006) also agrees that Ghanaian English deviates from RP and American standards in its pronunciation.

Adjei and Logogye (2016) also observe that Ghanaian English is especially different from RP due to spelling pronunciation, a feature even common among university students of English. This supports Yule’s (1998) argument that second-language learners rarely achieve native-like pronunciation. Thus, Ghanaians tend to adopt a nativised pronunciation with unique features.

1.1.3 The Concept of Spelling Pronunciation

Spelling pronunciation refers to pronouncing words based on their spelling rather than their usual phonetic forms (Ngula, 2011). Wells (1982) describes it as the creation of new forms from spelling. It is found in various English varieties worldwide, including Nigerian, Indian, Chinese, Singaporean, and Ghanaian English.

Though often critiqued as an error, spelling pronunciation is now accepted in native Englishes. For instance, “forehead” was once /'fɒrɪd/ but is now also /'fɔːhɛd/, and “often” now includes the /t/ sound as /ɒf.tən/. Wells (1982) notes such shifts, like “tortoise” evolving from /'tɔːtəs/ to /'tɔːtɔɪs/ or /'tɔːtɔɪz/. These changes show that spelling pronunciation is not limited to non-native contexts. Ngula (2011) argues that since both native and non-native English varieties use spelling pronunciation, RP and General American (GA) should not be the only accepted standards. Kachru (1992) supports this, stressing that second-language users should not aim to copy native forms exactly, especially since these models lack global uniformity. Rather, English should be understood within its cultural and communicative context.

In Ghana, spelling pronunciation plays a major role in spoken English. It helps speakers navigate the mismatch between English spelling and pronunciation, making communication more intelligible. Globally, languages like German, Spanish, Twi, Ewe, and Yoruba align spelling closely with pronunciation, which encourages spelling pronunciation in English too.

By focusing on spelling, pronunciation becomes easier for learners, enhancing fluency and reducing confusion. It also helps avoid mockery or misunderstanding, making it a useful tool for making English more inclusive and practical across diverse communities.

1.1.4 Factors that Contribute to Spelling Pronunciation in Spoken Ghanaian English

Spelling pronunciation is common across languages and can be useful for learning new words, although it may cause errors. In Ghana, it appears at all levels of education and is widely used by teachers, media professionals, and government officials, often without conscious awareness. Scholars like Bamgbose (1971, 1998), Bobda (2000), Koranteng (2006), and Ngula (2011) all confirm the use of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian English. Its widespread use suggests it is a normal part of the local speech system.

A major reason for this phenomenon is phonological influence. Ghanaian speakers often draw on their native languages, which tend to have a strong connection between spelling and pronunciation. Ngula (2011) notes that in languages like Twi, Ewe, Ga, and Konkomba, words are generally pronounced as they are spelt. This encourages similar behaviour when using English. Owusu-Ansah (2016) explains that speakers transfer this pattern into English, causing them to pronounce words according to spelling. For example, in Twi, the word ‘ɔɔɔ’ is both spelled and pronounced as [ɔɔɔ]. This allows a Twi speaker of English to apply this knowledge to the pronunciation of English words, particularly in cases where orthography does not align with phonology, leading to spelling pronunciation. This transfer is evident in words like ‘quay’, pronounced as [kwei] instead of /ki:/, ‘bomb’ as [bɒmb] instead of /bɒm/, and ‘principal’ as [prɪnsɪpa:l] rather than /prɪnsɪpəl/. Bamgbose (1971) mentions that certain patterns of local languages which are phonological, grammatical, and lexical tend to be transferred into English.

Orthographic transparency also contributes to the use of spelling pronunciation. English spelling can be inconsistent and irregular, making it challenging for non-native speakers to grasp its pronunciation patterns. Ngula (2011) points out that the gap between the ‘standard’ pronunciation of words and their orthography in modern English can be significant. This inconsistency illustrates that there is often no direct relationship between how words are spelled and pronounced, indicating a lack of grapheme-phoneme correspondence in English. “A phoneme in English may be represented by two letters in different words; or a single phoneme may be represented by a sequence of two letters, each of which may denote a different phoneme elsewhere” (Giegerich, 1992:37).

Giegerich’s argument supports Ngula’s (2011) claim regarding the complexities of English phonetics. For instance, the letter ‘g’ can represent different sounds in various phonetic environments or depending on its position within the spelling of words. The table below illustrates examples of how the letter ‘g’ can manifest as different phonemes in English.

Table 1.1: Orthographic and Phonetic Realisations of ‘g’ in English Language

Letter ‘g’ in orthography	Phonetic realisation in standard British English
<u>G</u>aol	/dʒeɪl/
<u>G</u>um	/gʌm/
<u>G</u>ite	/ʒi:t/
<u>G</u>naw	/nɔ:w/

It is observed in the examples listed in the table above that English has a complex spelling system that has no direct phonological correspondence to its letters of the alphabet. However, this fact makes it evident that it will be difficult, especially for those among who speak English as a second language or foreign language (ESL or EFL) to know the exact pronunciations of all the words in English according to their phonetic transcriptions. This makes it possible for these speakers in the institutionalised varieties such as Ghanaian English speakers who have different phonological and graphological structures which are closely related and have been acquired before English, tend to use spelling pronunciation in their spoken English.

1.1.5 Phonological Patterns in Ghanaian English Spelling Pronunciation

Spelling pronunciations in second language acquisition highlight the complex relationship between written representations and spoken language. One of the numerous techniques in overcoming complexities of second language acquisition involves the various phonological techniques employed by learners as they manage the influence of written forms on spoken language. The diverse phonological patterns observed in Ghanaian English spelling pronunciations shed light on how Ghanaian speakers and learners of English transfer between written and spoken forms.

Research indicates that in Ghanaian English spelling pronunciations, various phonological patterns emerge, including epenthesis, the pronunciation of silent letters, emphasised letter combinations, vowel alterations, adjustments to consonant clusters, and phoneme substitutions (Asante, 1996; Koranteng, 2006; Ngula, 2011). These patterns contribute to a rich mashup of linguistic adaptation. However, recognising these patterns is crucial for educators and learners, fostering a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between written and spoken language. The following are

explanations of the distinguished phonological patterns in spelling pronunciations, particularly in Ghanaian English.

One common and interesting pattern identified in spelling pronunciation is the pronunciation of silent letters (consonant and vowel epenthesis). Silent letters play a pivotal role in Ghanaian English spelling pronunciations. Studies, such as those by Ngula (2011), reveal that in spelling pronunciation, some or all silent letters are articulated, which draws attention to the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation. This pattern is also prevalent in Ghanaian English due to the influence of indigenous Ghanaian languages and their orthographic systems. All Ghanaian languages are tonal and belong to the Kwa and Gbe language families of Niger-Congo, which lack silent letters or unstressed syllables. Consequently, all letters or phonemes are articulated in the pronunciation of words across these languages. For instance, in articulating the word ‘xevi’ (meaning ‘bird’ in Ewe), every phoneme, letter, or sound is articulated. Ghanaians thus transfer their knowledge from their first language into English, resulting in spelling pronunciation. An example is the pronunciation of “debt” as [debt] instead of /det/, where the ‘b’ /b/ sound is retained despite being absent in phonetic transcription.

Another pattern is vowel pronunciation. Alterations in vowel sounds significantly contribute to spelling pronunciations. For instance, pronouncing all words with ‘a’ as /a:/ reflects the learner’s attempt to integrate the written form into the spoken pronunciation. Likewise, pronouncing ‘vague’ [veig] as /vagju:/ illustrates a shift in vowel pronunciation influenced by the written ‘a’ and ‘u.’ Certain vowel sounds in Ghanaian English may also deviate from standard English pronunciation; for instance,

the vowel sound /æ/ in words like ‘bag’ or ‘sat’ may be pronounced with a quality closer to /ʌ/ or /a:/, influenced by local accents and languages.

Lastly, consonant clusters also create a pattern. Spelling pronunciation often involves the simplification of consonant clusters. For example, pronouncing “handkerchief” /hænkətʃi:f/ as [hand.keʃi:f] exemplifies the learner’s inclination to simplify complex consonant groupings in alignment with the written representation. Consonant clusters in orthographic forms such as ‘stl’, ‘ttl’, ‘mb’, ‘tl’, and ‘bt’ in words like ‘bomb’, ‘bottle’, ‘little’, and ‘debt’ contribute to spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian English. This pattern arises from the phonological influences of native languages, as seen in Ewe, where all consonant clusters are articulated. For instance, in words like ‘agbe’, ‘akpe’, and ‘Elikplim’, every sound is pronounced distinctly, as in Twi words like ‘ntontom’ and ‘nantwie’ or in Ga like ‘diɛntɛ’ and ‘nyɔɲmɔ’.

1.1.6 Educated Speakers of Ghanaian English

Spelling pronunciation may be linked to the influence of literacy, orthographic transparency, and the sociolinguistic environment in which English is acquired and used in Ghana. It is often reinforced through the educational system where reading and writing are given prominence, sometimes at the expense of oral fluency and exposure to native or international models of English pronunciation.

In this study, attention is given to educated speakers of Ghanaian English. Educated speakers are those who have attained at least secondary education or hold higher education certificates and who, by virtue of their social and academic roles, function as models of language use in Ghana. Ngula (2011) observes that educated speakers are often regarded as linguistic models in formal and academic settings, where adherence to recognised norms of English is essential for effective communication. Their speech

habits, including pronunciation, exert considerable influence on how English is taught, assessed, and transmitted in educational and professional domains. Similarly, Bamgbose (1998) emphasizes that the educated variety of English in postcolonial contexts often serves as the reference point for codification and acceptability. Focusing on educated speakers is therefore crucial because their pronunciation patterns reflect not only personal linguistic choices but also broader trends in the shaping of Ghanaian English.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As English continues to evolve as a global lingua franca, region-specific varieties have emerged, shaped by the linguistic and cultural contexts of the speakers. Ghanaian English, as one of these distinct varieties, has received considerable scholarly attention, particularly in the study of its phonological features and how they differ from Received Pronunciation (RP) (Sey, 1973; Dolphyne, 1988; Bobda, 2000; Koranteng, 2006; Quartey, 2009; Adjei & Logogye, 2016; Owusu-Ansah, 2016; Akpanglo-Nartey, 2020). One notable yet underexplored feature of Ghanaian English is spelling pronunciation, where words are pronounced based on their written form rather than their conventional phonetic representations.

Previous studies (Asante, 1996; Bobda, 2000; Koranteng, 2006; Ngula, 2011; Adjei & Logogye, 2016; Asante-Nimako, 2018) have acknowledged the presence of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English, identifying it as one of the distinctive pronunciation patterns employed by Ghanaians. However, much of the literature has either treated spelling pronunciation as a secondary feature or merely mentioned it in passing. The works of Asante (1996), Bamgbose (1998), Bobda (2000), and Koranteng (2006), while foundational, have only touched on spelling pronunciation without

offering detailed analysis or data to support its prominence as a defining feature of Ghanaian spoken English. Even Ngula (2011), who provides a more focused examination of spelling pronunciation, limits his analysis to the influence of L1 (first language) on its use without exploring the broader phonological patterns or its prevalence and acceptability among different speaker groups.

Given the centrality of educated speakers in shaping language norms in Ghana, understanding the factors that influence the use of spelling pronunciation and its phonological patterns is essential for understanding the dynamics of Ghanaian spoken English. The question of how prevalent this feature is, particularly among educated speakers, remains largely unanswered. This is critical because educated speakers are often considered linguistic models in formal and academic settings, where the norms of English are crucial for effective communication (Ngula, 2011). The potential impact of spelling pronunciation on intelligibility and its implications for the codification and standardisation of Ghanaian English warrant a comprehensive investigation.

Thus, this study seeks to build upon existing scholarship by specifically investigating the factors influencing spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English, identifying the unique phonological patterns it presents, and assessing its prevalence among educated speakers in English Education. By addressing these areas, the research aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the description of Ghanaian English and offer new insights into its evolving pronunciation norms. Ultimately, the findings will not only enhance our understanding of the phonological structure of Ghanaian English but also provide important evidence for its standardisation and acceptability as a legitimate variety of English.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore spelling pronunciation as one of the innovative divergent features of pronunciation of Ghanaian spoken English. The study is purposely carried out to investigate and unearth some of the unique pronunciation patterns that characterise spoken Ghanaian English from the RP.

1.4 Research Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study. To:

1. investigate factors that influence the use of spelling pronunciation among educated speakers of Ghanaian English.
2. identify phonological patterns in the spelling pronunciation of educated Ghanaian speakers of English.
3. investigate the common practices of usage of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What factors influence the use of spelling pronunciation among educated speakers of Ghanaian English?
2. What phonological patterns are identified in the spelling pronunciation of educated speakers of Ghanaian English?
3. What common practices of usage of spelling pronunciation are observed in Ghanaian spoken English?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is significant in its contribution to the understanding of spelling pronunciation as a distinctive feature of Ghanaian spoken English. By identifying the

factors influencing its use, the study provides an understanding of the linguistic and sociocultural dynamics that shape Ghanaian English.

The analysis would also provide insights into the phonological processes and language variation in Ghanaian spoken English, adding to the existing body of knowledge on world Englishes and the description of the norms of usage of the English Language in Ghana, which would help in the codification of Ghanaian English. It can also assist English learners from Ghana in improving their English pronunciation skills, which are crucial for effective communication in various contexts, including education, business, and social interactions.

Moreover, the study's findings can provide meaning to the sociocultural aspects of language use in Ghana. Spelling pronunciation can be influenced by factors such as Ghana's history, local languages, and educational system. The study's analysis of Ghanaian English pronunciation can shed light on how language and culture intersect in Ghana, providing a deeper understanding of the sociocultural dynamics of language use in the country. Ultimately, the findings of the study can inform language policy and planning in Ghana.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

While the study offered valuable insights, certain limitations were noted. The research was conducted within a single academic department, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other contexts or institutions.

The relatively small sample size of ten participants, though appropriate for qualitative analysis, constraints the extent to which findings can be generalised. Also, the data collection focused exclusively on mock viva presentations, which may not fully represent pronunciation patterns in other formal or informal settings.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

This study is delimited to the study of spelling pronunciation among educated speakers of Ghanaian English in the Department of English Education at University of Education, Winneba, focusing on factors influencing its use, phonological patterns, and prevalence, excluding other suprasegmental features such as regional accents or variations in intonation and stress patterns.

Additionally, the study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, and it is limited to the qualitative analysis of data collected through audio recordings and questionnaires, without examining other forms of data such as quantitative. The findings are specific to the context of Ghanaian English and should not be generalised to other English varieties without appropriate caution.

1.9 Organisation of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the topic, explains the importance of studying English pronunciation in Ghana, and outlines the research objectives and questions. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature on English pronunciation and phonetics, including studies on Ghanaian English pronunciation and spelling pronunciation, and discusses theories and concepts related to spelling pronunciation. Chapter Three describes the research design, including participants, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures, and provides details on the demographic information of participants. Chapter Four presents the findings of the analysis of Ghanaian English spelling pronunciation, supported by examples and illustrations. Chapter Five summarises the main findings, discusses the study's limitations, and suggests directions for future research, providing concluding remarks and recommendations for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers.

1.10 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has so far presented the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, and organisation of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related literature on the topic of study. The review includes the theoretical framework underpinning the study. It also reviews what researchers and linguists have researched based on the relationship between English graphology and phonology, the gap between spelling and pronunciation in English, the concept of spelling pronunciation, spelling pronunciation in English varieties, and previous studies on Ghanaian English spelling pronunciation.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that underpins this study is Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model (henceforth SLM). Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model offers a comprehensive framework for understanding second language acquisition, particularly in pronunciation learning. This model has emerged as a framework that exposes the realistic language acquisition challenges and phenomena in second language learning.

This model posits that the acquisition of second-language speech becomes increasingly challenging as learners' phonetic space becomes entrenched in their first language (L1). Central to Flege's model is the concept of "equivalence classification", which suggests that the perceived phonetic distance between second language (L2) sounds and their closest L1 counterparts influences learners' ability to detect and categorise phonetic differences. The SLM claims that the greater the perceived phonetic distance between an L2 sound and the closest sound in the first language is, the more likely it is that phonetic differences between the sounds will be detected and a phonetic category established eventually (Guion et al., 2000). To operationalise the distinction between

new and similar L2 sounds, the SLM employs three criteria for classification: First, the IPA symbols used to identify sounds of the L1 and L2 are considered. Then, acoustic measurements and, finally, the listener's perceptual judgments of sounds in L1 and L2 are employed.

According to the model, an identical sound has the same IPA symbol in the L1 as well as in the L2. The acoustic measurements of these identical sounds in the L1 and the L2 are not significantly different. The identical sound is usually produced authentically because of a process which is called “positive transfer” (Flege, 1995) cited in Deterding & Mohamad (2016:19). A similar sound can have the same IPA symbol but some acoustic differences between the sounds in the L1 and L2 must exist. Similar sounds must be auditorily discriminable in phonetic categories, for example, formant frequencies or duration. A new L2 sound differs acoustically and perceptually from the L1 sound. Other than the similar sound, a new L2 sound has no equivalent IPA symbol in the L1 language (Flege, 1996). Reed & Michaud (2011) employed this model in their study. He asserts that Flege's SLM aids in designing learners' pronunciation instructions, especially in the L2 context.

The relevance of the SLM is well-supported by contemporary research that emphasises its applicability in diverse linguistic contexts. Flege et al. (1996) applied the SLM to examine the production of English vowels by speakers of different L1s (first languages). Their study showed that speakers who learned English later in life had greater difficulty achieving native-like production of English vowels. This was particularly evident in vowel categories that were phonetically distinct from their L1s. On the other hand, Saito (2021) investigated the effects of form-focused instruction on the pronunciation of the English /ɪ/ sound among adult Japanese learners. His study

utilised the SLM to analyse the interaction between L1 (Japanese) and L2 (English) phonetic categories, revealing that while L2 learners initially struggled with pronunciation due to L1 influence, targeted instruction led to significant improvements. Saito's findings align with the SLM's prediction that while L2 phonetic learning is challenging, especially when L2 sounds are similar to L1 categories, improvement is possible with structured and focused learning interventions.

However, the SLM has also been applied to the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation in second language acquisition. Numerous studies have applied SLM to investigate how L2 learners develop phonetic categories. For instance, Flege et al. (1996) divulge through their research on L2 learners of English whose L1 is Spanish that learners often struggle with English vowel sounds that do not have direct equivalents in Spanish. This study demonstrated that Spanish-speaking learners tend to assimilate these unfamiliar English sounds into their closest Spanish phonetic categories, leading to accented pronunciation. The SLM provided a framework for understanding these patterns by highlighting the role of L1 phonetic influence on L2 sound perception and production. Similarly, research on Japanese learners of English has utilised the SLM to explain difficulties in distinguishing between the English /l/ and /r/ sounds, which are not phonetically distinct in Japanese (Aoyama et al., 2004). The findings indicated that these learners often merge the two sounds into a single category, influenced by their L1, which lacks the /r/ and /l/ distinction. The SLM was instrumental in explaining how the learners' L1 phonetic system interferes with their acquisition of new L2 phonetic categories.

Research by Bassetti (2006) explored how native language influences L2 phonetic learning, specifically examining how Italian learners (whose L1 vowel system is

different from English) perceive and produce English vowel contrasts. Thus, exploring how L1 phonetic categories affect both the perception and production of L2 vowels. The study utilised the SLM and found that Italian learners of English had difficulties in perceiving and producing English vowels that did not exist in Italian. Also, the findings found that English words were often pronounced based on their spelling, leading to non-standard pronunciations that reflect the influence of Italian orthography.

In the context of Ghanaian spoken English, where English is learned as a second language, the SLM can be applied to understand how speakers navigate the challenges of pronouncing English words that contain sounds not found in their indigenous languages. The influence of the L1 on L2 pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English often results in unique spelling pronunciations, where speakers rely heavily on the orthographic form of English words to guide their pronunciation. This phenomenon can be understood within the SLM framework as a reflection of the difficulty in establishing new phonetic categories in the L2, particularly when the L1 lacks similar sounds.

Ghanaian spoken English presents a rich field for applying the SLM, given the country's multilingual context and the variety of indigenous languages spoken by English learners. Studies on Ghanaian English, such as those by Sey (1973), Bobda (2000), Koranteng (2006), and Ngula (2011), have documented variations in pronunciation that reflect the phonetic influence of Ghanaian languages. Flege's SLM provides a valuable framework for analysing the pronunciation patterns observed in Ghanaian English spelling pronunciation. The influence of the L1 phonological system, particularly the native Ghanaian languages, on the pronunciation of English words can be understood through Flege's model. Ghanaian English speakers may apply their L1 phonetic rules to English words, resulting in phonetic substitutions or insertions.

Again, the concept of perceptual learning in Flege's model can explain why Ghanaian English speakers rely on spelling rather than Standard English phonetic rules. As learners are exposed to English words predominantly through their written form, they may rely on visual cues and develop a mental representation of words based on their spelling. This perceptual learning process can contribute to the emergence and maintenance of the spelling pronunciation phenomenon in Ghanaian English.

2.2 English Grapheme-Phoneme Relationship and the Concept of Spelling Pronunciation

English is a complex language known for its irregularities in spelling and pronunciation, posing challenges for both native speakers and learners (Giegerich, 1992). The study of English orthography (spelling) and phonology (sound patterns) reveals a fascinating and often confusing relationship between the written and spoken forms of the language. Like many languages, English Language is both written and spoken. However, studies reveal that the lexicon of the language is a composition of phonemes that are arranged per the rules of English phonotactics and are written in the alphabet of the English Language. These two sections about the language bring about its phonology and orthography.

However, research has established that English orthography (the spelling system of English) is highly irregular, causing discrepancies between how words are written and how they are pronounced. This irregularity can be attributed to a variety of historical, linguistic, and cultural factors. One major influence, according to Crystal (2003), is the Great Vowel Shift, a significant phonetic change that occurred between the 14th and 18th centuries. This shift resulted in a divergence between the spelling and

pronunciation of many words, as the English language underwent significant sound changes that were not adequately reflected in its writing system.

Furthermore, the English Language has borrowed extensively from other languages, incorporating words with diverse etymological origins (Stockwell & Minkova, 2000). As a result, English has absorbed spelling conventions from various sources, leading to a patchwork of spelling patterns that can be traced back to Old English, Latin, Greek, French, and other languages. These borrowed words often retain their original spelling, even if the pronunciation has changed over time.

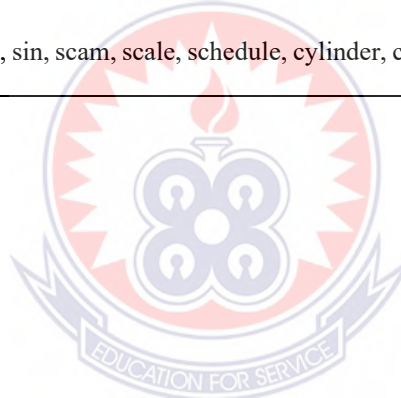
On the other hand, the phonology of English encompasses the sounds and sound patterns used in the spoken language. However, English phonology is not a direct reflection of its orthography, leading to a disparity between written and spoken forms. This incongruity arises from historical sound changes, regional accents, and variations in individual speech patterns (Ngula, 2011). English phonology is characterised by a wide range of vowel and consonant sounds, often represented by multiple letters or combinations of letters in the written form. For instance, the vowel sounds in words like “bed”, “head”, and “said” may be spelt differently, but they are all pronounced similarly. Conversely, some letters or letter combinations can be pronounced differently depending on the context. The letter ‘c’ in “cat” is pronounced as /k/, but in “city”, it is pronounced as /s/.

The table below displays the inconsistencies between English Language spelling and phonology by showcasing how some English phonemes are diversely represented in orthography.

Table 2.1: Some Phonemes in English and how they are Inconsistently Represented in Orthography

PHONEME	LETTERS IN ORTHOGRAPHY	WORDS	RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION TRANSCRIPTIONS
1. /ɪ/	i, e, a, y, u, ie, ui,	sit, pity, bucket, village, symbol, minute, guild,	/sɪt/, /'pɪti/, /'bʌkɪt/, /'vɪlɪdʒ/, /'sɪmbəl/, /'mɪnɪt/, /ɡɪld/
2. /e/	e, a, u, ea, ai, ay, ie, eo	pest, net, men, bury, bread, said, says, friend, Geoffrey	/pest/, /net/, /men/, /'beri/, /bred/, /sed/, /sez/, /frend/, /'dʒefri/
3. /i:/	ee, ea, oe	sweet, feet, heat, meat, phoebe	/swi:t/, /fi:t/, /hi:t/, /mi:t/, /'fi:bi/
4. /ɑ:/	ear, ar	parch, heart, bark, pardon	/pɑ:tʃ/, /hɑ:t/, /bɑ:k/, /'pɑ:dn/
5. /ɜ:/	or, ur, er	word, burn, herd	/wɜ:d/, /bɜ:n/, /hɜ:d/
6. /ə/	a, er, o	again, sister, content, farther	/ə'gen/, /'sɪstə/, /'kəntent/, /'fɑ:ðə/
7. /ʊ/	u, oo, ou	foot, could, pull, push	/fʊt/, /kʊd/, /pʊl/, /pʊʃ/
8. /u:/	oo, ew	food, hewed, wooded, cooled	/fu:d/, /hju:d/, /wu:d/, /ku:ld/
9. /æ/	a	ban, pan, hat, cat	/bæn/, /pæn/, /hæt/, /kæt/
10. /ɒ/	o, au, a	hot, knot, slot, caught, tot, mock, want	/hɒt/, /nɒt/, /slɒt/, /kɔ:t/, /tɒt/, /mɒk/, /wɒnt/
12. /ɔ:/	or, au, a, al, ar, aw, oa, or, oo, ou, oar, oor, ore, our	port, taught, war, Paul, saw, soar, horse, door, sought, oar, moor, bore, pour	/pɔ:t/, /tɔ:t/, /wɔ:/, /pɔ:l/, /sɔ:/, /sɔ:/, /hɔ:s/, /dɔ:/, /sɔ:t/, /ɔ:/, /mɔ:/, /bɔ:/, /pɔ:/
13. /ʌ/	u, on	pun, bud, sun, pluck, suck, stuck	/pʌn/, /bʌd/, /sʌn/, /plʌk/, /sʌk/, /stʌk/
14. /b/	b	ban, best, bless, beast	/bæn/, /best/, /bles/, /bi:st/
15. /d/	D	dust, down, dimple	/dʌst/, /daʊn/, /'dɪmpl/
16. /f/	f, ph	fish, fine, fly, fast, fin, fought, physical, phone	/fɪʃ/, /faɪn/, /flaɪ/, /fɑ:st/, /fɪn/, /fɔ:t/, /'fɪzɪkəl/, /fəʊn/
17. /g/	g	gun, got, girl, ghost, get	/ɡʌn/, /ɡɒt/, /ɡɜ:l/, /ɡəʊst/, /ɡet/
18. /h/	h	home, his, happy, help, house	/həʊm/, /hɪz/, /'hæpi/, /help/, /haus/

19. /k/	c, ck, k	cat, cook, clock, stick, king, keys	/kæt/, /kʊk/, /klɒk/, /stɪk/, /kɪŋ/, /ki:z/
20. /l/	l	little, low, blast, life, long, click	/'lɪtl/, /ləʊ/, /blɑ:st/, /laɪf/, /lɒŋ/, /klɪk/
21. /m/	m	man, small, mortar, milk, meek	/mæn/, /smɔ:l/, /'mɔ:tə/, /mɪlk/, /mi:k/
22. /n/	n, gn, kn	nose, niece, snow, gnaw, know, knife, knee	/nəʊz/, /ni:s/, /snəʊ/, /nɔ:/, /nəʊ/, /naɪf/, /ni:/
23. /ŋ/	nk, ng	sing, wing, thing, think, twinkle, wink	/sɪŋ/, /wɪŋ/, /θɪŋ/, /θɪŋk/, /'twɪŋkl/, /wɪŋk/
24. /p/	P	please, speak, pain, piss, spray	/pli:z/, /spi:k/, /peɪn/, /pɪs/, /spreɪ/
25. /r/	R	rain, rake, rice, strain, rest, rock, right	/reɪn/, /reɪk/, /raɪs/, /streɪn/, /rest/, /rɒk/, /raɪt/
26. /s/	s, sc, sch, c, cy	six, small, sin, scam, scale, schedule, cylinder, ceremony	/sɪks/, /smɔ:l/, /sɪn/, /skæm/, /skeɪl/, /'fedju:l/ /'sɪlɪndə/, /'serəməni/



These inconsistencies arising from the lack of grapheme-phoneme relationship in English Language results in spelling pronunciation. Spelling pronunciation is a phenomenon observed in various English varieties around the world. In a general sense, spelling pronunciation arises from the mismatch between English spelling and pronunciation as indicated in the table 2.1 above. A result of the language's complex history of borrowing and sound changes. Studies reveal that spelling pronunciation as a linguistic phenomenon can be attributed to both historical and contemporary perspectives, such as the Great Vowel Shift and other notable developments of the English Language.

Historically, studies like Nevalainen (2012) are of the view that spelling pronunciation can be traced back to Middle English, where spelling inconsistencies and language contact with French led to the emergence of new pronunciation patterns. Nevalainen's analysis highlights how spelling pronunciation gradually became entrenched in certain dialects, resulting in distinct pronunciation variations across English-speaking regions. Similarly, Crystal (2011) also explores the impact of spelling on pronunciations of regional accents and notes that they often serve as markers of local identity. Gimson (1962) also highlights that spelling pronunciation can be influenced by changes in the language over time and the introduction of new words. Gimson notes that spelling pronunciation tends to arise when words are borrowed from other languages, and the spelling is retained.

Algeo (2014), on the other hand, examined the historical and sociolinguistic factors contributing to spelling pronunciation. He discussed how spelling pronunciation can result from language change, dialectal influences, or educational practices. Algeo suggested that spelling pronunciation is a natural part of language evolution and can

vary regionally. He postulates that Spelling pronunciation is a natural outgrowth of the creative processes of language (Algeo, 2014). Crystal (2003) points out that English orthography often preserves older pronunciations that no longer correspond to the current pronunciation of words. As a result, speakers unfamiliar with the historical development of English may rely on the written form to guide their pronunciation, leading to what is known as spelling pronunciation.

2.3 Scholarly Perceptions about Spelling Pronunciation

Studies reveal that there been several scholarly perceptions about spelling pronunciation as a linguistic phenomenon. Contemporary research on spelling pronunciation in the English Language emphasises its role as both a helpful strategy and a potential obstacle in second-language acquisition. Scholars like Bassetti (2008) argue that spelling pronunciation is notably prevalent among L2 learners, who may lack familiarity with the phonological rules of the target language. Research indicates that L2 learners often rely on the orthographic representation of words as a guide for pronunciation, especially when they encounter unfamiliar or complex phonetic structures. This reliance on orthography can be worsened by the learners' native language (L1) phonetic and orthographic systems, which may differ significantly from those of the L2. For example, in languages with more transparent orthographies, such as Spanish or Italian, learners are more likely to transfer their expectation of one-to-one grapheme-phoneme correspondence to their L2, leading to spelling pronunciation in English, which has a less consistent orthographic system.

Again, Bassetti and Atkinson (2015) postulate that spelling pronunciation in language may serve as a temporary strategy that helps learners navigate the complexities of L2 pronunciation. On the other hand, persistent reliance on spelling pronunciation can

hinder the development of native-like pronunciation and may lead to misunderstandings in communication. For instance, learners may produce non-standard pronunciations that do not conform to native speaker norms, which can affect their intelligibility and fluency in the L2.

Furthermore, some scholars are of the view that the rise of digital communication and the increasing use of text-based mediums have also influenced spelling pronunciation. According to Hinrichs (2016), the digital age, with its reliance on written forms of communication (for example, texting and social media), has contributed to the visibility and persistence of spelling pronunciation. Learners who frequently engage in text-based communication may become more accustomed to the orthographic forms of words, which can reinforce spelling-based pronunciations in speech.

Additionally, scholars share the view that educators and language instructors should address spelling pronunciation in the L2 classroom by raising awareness of the differences between orthography and pronunciation in English. Setter and Jenkins (2005) posit that instructional strategies that emphasise phonetic training and listening exercises can help learners develop a more accurate phonological system that aligns with native speaker norms. Moreover, the use of phonetic transcription and exposure to native speaker models can aid learners in overcoming the challenges posed by spelling pronunciation.

From cross-linguistic perspectives, studies like Szpyra-Kozłowska (2014) have also explored the variations in spelling pronunciation across different L1 backgrounds. Szpyra-Kozłowska's study on Polish learners of English reveals that learners from languages with more phonetic orthographies are more prone to spelling pronunciation in English.

In addition, spelling pronunciation is particularly common among second-language learners of English, who may not have extensive exposure to native speakers. In such contexts, the written form of the language becomes a primary source of input, and learners often use it as a basis for constructing their pronunciation (Jenkins, 2000). His work suggests that this phenomenon is a natural outcome of the language learning process, especially in environments where reading and writing are emphasised over speaking and listening.

Bobda (2000) also asserts that spelling pronunciation is prevalent in African Englishes and can serve as a bridge between local languages and English. In many African contexts, English is introduced through formal education, where literacy is prioritised. Bobda argues that spelling pronunciation reflects the local linguistic realities, where English is adapted to fit the phonological patterns of indigenous languages. This adaptation process can lead to the emergence of stable pronunciation norms that are distinct from standard varieties but function effectively within the local context.

2.4 Factors Influencing the Use of Spelling Pronunciation

Research findings have corroborated that spelling pronunciation is not uniform across all English varieties but varies according to social, regional, and cultural factors. Research in the field of psycholinguistics has shed light on the cognitive mechanisms underlying spelling pronunciation. Jenkins (2000) argues that the human brain naturally seeks regularity and consistency, leading individuals to pronounce words as they appear in writing. This tendency is reinforced by the prevalence of spelling-focused education, which emphasises the importance of adhering to written conventions (Jenkins, 2000). Jenkins' findings highlight the interplay between

cognitive processes, educational practices, and the emergence of spelling pronunciation.

Again, Ehri (1997) highlights that spelling and pronunciation have a connection ‘amalgam’ in which when readers read, their knowledge of the alphabetic system is activated and computes the connection between graphemes in the spelling and phonemes detected in the pronunciation of the words. He explains further that the repetition of this process fewer times bonds the spelling of the word to its pronunciation and meaning in memory, forming an amalgam.

Phonological awareness is also one of the psycholinguistic factors that influence spelling pronunciation (Dich & Cohn, 2013). Phonological awareness refers to the ability to recognise and manipulate the sounds of language. It plays a crucial role in spelling pronunciation as individuals rely on their understanding of phonemes (speech sounds) to map them onto written letters. According to Koranteng (2006), phonological awareness is an essential precursor to reading and spelling development.

Furthermore, the morphological structure of a word may also contribute to the use of spelling pronunciation. The structure of words and their constituent morphemes can influence spelling pronunciation. Affixes (such as prefixes and suffixes) and word roots can provide cues for pronunciation. Rastle et al. (2004) demonstrated that morphological structure influenced the pronunciation of pseudowords in an experiment.

Another psycholinguistic factor is orthographic regularity. Koranteng (2006) reveals that the regularity of spelling patterns can affect spelling pronunciation. In languages with consistent grapheme-phoneme mappings (e.g., Spanish), spelling pronunciation

tends to be more accurate. In contrast, irregular orthographic patterns (e.g., English) pose challenges, leading to spelling pronunciation errors.

Spelling pronunciation has also been studied from various sociolinguistic perspectives. Labov (1972), in his seminal study on American English accents, identifies spelling pronunciation as a salient feature of certain dialects and demonstrates its correlation with social class. According to Labov (1972), spelling pronunciation can be viewed as a form of linguistic change that arises when individuals attempt to align their pronunciation with the written form of a word. This perspective suggests that the influence of literacy and the desire to conform to standard spelling conventions can lead to the emergence of new pronunciations. For example, the word “often” is traditionally pronounced with a silent “t”, but speakers of, for example, GA, may pronounce it as “of-ten” /ɔːftən/ due to the presence of the letter “t” in the spelling.

Moreover, Cheshire’s (2000) research on spelling pronunciation in British English demonstrates that spelling pronunciation often occurs in areas with low social mobility, reinforcing the notion that language variation is intertwined with social dynamics. These sociolinguistic investigations underscore the importance of considering social factors when examining spelling pronunciation. Furthermore, sociolinguistic research has explored how spelling pronunciation can vary regionally.

Trudgill (1999) found that regional accents and dialects can influence the prevalence of spelling pronunciations. In some regions, certain spelling pronunciations may be more common due to local dialectal features. For example, in certain dialects of English, the word “schedule” may be pronounced as /skɛdʒuːl/ (with a /s/ sound) rather than the traditional /ʃɛdjuːl/ (Labov, 1972; Crystal, 2003). These regional variations in spelling

pronunciation demonstrate the intricate relationship between language variation and geographic factors.

Cultural factors also significantly affect how individuals pronounce words, especially in multilingual societies. The phenomenon of bilingualism is prevalent in many regions, where speakers navigate multiple languages daily, often switching between them. This code-switching can result in phonetic interference, where the phonological rules of one language impose themselves on another (Weinreich, 1953). Such interactions shape how spelling is perceived and pronounced.

Furthermore, cultural attitudes towards the target language, such as English, can either facilitate or hinder learners' adherence to standard pronunciation norms. Studies suggest that positive perceptions of a language are associated with better adherence to its pronunciation rules, while negative attitudes may foster resistance to adopting such norms (Lippi-Green, 2012). As individuals develop their language identities, these attitudes significantly influence their linguistic choices and consequently affect spelling pronunciation.

Additionally, the rapid advancement of technology has transformed how English is written and pronounced globally. The rise of digital communication platforms, including social media and mobile messaging, has introduced informal language practices that impact learners' understanding of standard spelling and pronunciation. Research indicates that the casual nature of online communication often encourages the use of abbreviations and phonetic spellings, leading to potential misunderstandings of conventional English (Thurlow, 2003). While these platforms provide opportunities for linguistic creativity, they also pose challenges for learners striving to grasp standard spelling and pronunciation.

Moreover, access to online resources, such as pronunciation guides and educational videos, plays a critical role in shaping language learning experiences. Although numerous tools are available, learners may inadvertently rely on non-standard representations found online, reinforcing mispronunciations (Sakyi, 2021).

2.5 Implications and Attitudes towards Spelling Pronunciation

Studies highlight that implications and attitudes towards spelling pronunciation can vary. According to Gardner (1985), attitudes toward language learning are crucial as they directly affect motivation and overall proficiency in the language. Learners with positive attitudes toward pronunciation tend to excel in oral communication, while negative attitudes can inhibit their linguistic development (Gardner & Lambert, 1959). Some language purists may view it as a deviation from correct pronunciation and advocate for adhering to established norms (Roach, 2009).

Others may see spelling pronunciation as a natural and legitimate development in language, reflecting the evolving nature of communication (Labov, 1972). Attitudes are also shaped by regional and cultural factors, with some communities valuing the preservation of traditional pronunciation (Roach, 2009). It is important to note that the implications and attitudes toward spelling pronunciation are not fixed and can change over time. Language usage and acceptance of pronunciation variants are influenced by various social, cultural, and linguistic factors. This is especially relevant in contexts like Ghana, where pronunciation can be influenced by L1 interference, leading to unique spelling pronunciations.

Teachers and learners often hold different beliefs regarding pronunciation, which can impact the teaching and learning process. Nguyen et al. (2021) suggest that both teachers and students view pronunciation as a key element of communicative

competence. However, attitudes towards spelling pronunciation can vary depending on whether the emphasis is on intelligibility or native-like fluency. Many teachers in second language settings prioritise communicative success over perfect pronunciation, which may contribute to the persistence of spelling pronunciation among learners. Moreover, these attitudes reflect a broader acceptance of English as a global language with multiple varieties, including Ghanaian English (Foote & Trofimovich, 2018).

Additionally, spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian English and, more broadly, in other second-language contexts have both pedagogical and communicative challenges. As Foote and Trofimovich (2018) argue, learners who struggle with pronunciation, especially due to orthographic influences, may find it difficult to understand in conversation. This can hinder effective communication and reduce their confidence in spoken English, reinforcing the need for targeted pronunciation instruction in the classroom (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Teachers, therefore, must balance the need for fostering clear communication while acknowledging the legitimacy of local English varieties, such as Ghanaian English, which reflects unique spelling pronunciation tendencies (Gardner, 2010).

Incorporating spelling pronunciation into teaching can also have broader implications for identity and self-perception. Attitudes towards local English varieties, such as Ghanaian English, can be shaped by socio-political factors, where speakers might feel stigmatised or marginalised for not conforming to “standard” pronunciation norms. However, encouraging positive attitudes towards local varieties may empower speakers to embrace their linguistic identity without sacrificing intelligibility (Heugh et al., 2019). Therefore, rather than viewing spelling pronunciation purely as an error, it can be seen as part of the natural evolution of English in different regions.

Ultimately, promoting positive attitudes towards pronunciation and addressing spelling pronunciation can help learners improve their spoken English while acknowledging the sociolinguistic realities of English in Ghana and other multilingual contexts (Haukås et al., 2021).

2.6 Empirical Review of Spelling Pronunciation in Ghanaian Spoken English

Spelling pronunciation is a phenomenon observed across various English varieties, including Ghanaian spoken English. Previous studies on Ghanaian English acknowledge spelling pronunciation as a defining feature of Ghanaian spoken English. Ankomah (2017) discourses that since the inception of English as an official language in Ghana, some localised forms of the language have drawn some scholarly works to comprehensively look into the description of such characteristic features. Some of these works include those by Koranteng (2006), Ngula (2011), Bobda (2000), Sey (1973), Asante-Nimako (2018), Adjei and Logogye (2016), Asante (1996) and Bamgbose (2000) among others.

Sey (1973) and Koranteng (2006) trace the origins of Ghanaian English spelling pronunciation back to this colonial context, where English was primarily learned through written materials such as textbooks and newspapers that adhered to British English spelling conventions. Over time, the phonological structures of local Ghanaian languages, particularly tonal languages like Twi, Ewe, Kaseem, and Ga, influenced the pronunciation of English words, leading to unique patterns of spelling pronunciation that persist today. For example, the silent “h” in words like ‘honesty’ and ‘honour’ is often pronounced in Ghanaian English, reflecting the influence of local languages on English pronunciation.

Koranteng (2006) states that one aspect of the English Language that impacts the spoken English of Ghanaians is its spelling, usually resulting in letter-to-sound pronunciations. Koranteng says that English, unlike some languages in the world, has a complex spelling system. She argues that through an illustration, the letter ‘g’ is /g/ in girl, ghost, goes, begin but /dʒ/ in gentle, giant, and gem, whereas /s/ is either /ʃ/ or /s/ in words like see, sure, some, sugar and others, it confuses Ghanaian speakers of English. She mentions that the problems of sound-to-letter correspondent divergencies are more complex in vowels, where each of the vowel letters of the alphabet, which are ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘u’, has more than one sound pronunciation. Some of these letters can correspond to about eight or ten different pronunciations. Illustrating with examples shows how the letter ‘o’ is represented by many sounds:

“/ʌ/ as in love, colour, mother

/ɔ/ as in got, hot, god

/ɔ:/ as in more, sword

/ʊ/ as in good, woman, book

/u:/ as in food, approve, moon

/ɪ/ as in women

/ɔɪ/ as in boy, noise

/aʊ/ as in out, vowel, row

/əʊ/ as in go, those, over

/ʊə/ as in poor tour

/ə/ as in actor, today, provide” (Koranteng, 2006:50)

She argues from the examples that the letter ‘o’ has up to twelve pronunciations, so without proper guidance, a learner could make a mess of learning to pronounce English. She postulates that it makes it difficult for Ghanaian speakers of English to accurately

predict the sound of any letter in any context. Therefore, this results in analogy which leads to spelling pronunciation.

Furthermore, Adjei and Logogye (2016) assert that educated Ghanaian English pronunciations are characterised by the influence of written text, which results in the clear pronunciation of vowel and consonant sounds that are not normally pronounced in native English.

Asante-Nimako (2018), citing Rodman and Fromkin (1978:159), states that “Writing has, however, affected speech only marginally and most notably in the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation”. Asante-Nimako’s (2018) reveals that many English words are not pronounced the way they are spelt. However, without knowing their correct pronunciation, one may pronounce the words as they are spelt. For example, the word ‘island’ /aɪlənd/ is not pronounced as [ɪslənd], neither is the word ‘pneumonia’ /nju: məʊniə/ pronounced [pənuj: məʊniə]. The study, however, discovers that the issue of spelling is a pronunciation problem; in terms of teaching, when the teacher himself/herself is not well abreast of the changing trends and does not have a good grasp of comfortably intelligible pronunciation, it becomes another problem altogether. Rodman and Fromkin’s (1978:159) tells that the most important of such changes can be traced from the eighteenth century under the influence and decrees of dictionary-makers and the school teachers. This shows how instrumental teachers especially are in terms of language in general and pronunciation in particular. The study revealed that one of the characteristics of the English spoken by teacher-trainees in Ghana is spelling pronunciation.

Bobda (2000) mentions that one distinctiveness of Ghanaian English is the patterns of restructuring phonemes, which may occur as a result of orthography, some assimilation

process, the ethnic group of the speaker, and age. His study divulges that the sporadic occurrences of the phoneme /ɔ/ in words like ‘love’ [lɒv], ‘cover’ [kɒvə], ‘ton’ [tɒn], ‘honey’ [hɒni:] are the influence of spelling on pronunciation. He opines that the pronunciation or assimilation of the phoneme /a:/ is also a result of the orthographic influence of the English language in Ghanaian English pronunciation.

Asante (1996:27) postulates that Ghanaian English pronunciation is characterised by spelling-induced pronunciation which yields in the pronunciation of the last letter in words like “comb” and “sting” or of /h/ heard in “what”, “when”, “where”. Bamgbose (1998) also reveals that the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation in Educated Ghanaian English (EGE) satisfies two important criteria non-native varieties of English ought to meet: it maintains international intelligibility and retains local and cultural identities. Spelling pronunciation has become the most convenient and comfortable way of pronouncing English words among Ghanaian speakers of English (Torto, 2013).

Glover-Quartey and Yamoah (2023) in their research about the deviation among Ghanaian basic school pupils' use of English in the classroom found that spelling pronunciation is among one of the innovations basic school pupils use in classroom communication. Also, Adjaye (2005) states that spelling pronunciation arises as a phonological feature of Ghanaian English.

Finally, Ngula (2011) also discloses in his study that spelling pronunciation is a distinctive feature of Ghanaian English pronunciation. Ngula's study collected data from fifty words of English based on observation of their use by different groups of educated speakers. The selected words were further tested as readings in sentences by sixty graduate students of the University of Cape Coast, recorded, observed and phonetically transcribed. However, Ngula (2011) limits his analysis to the influence of

L1 (first language) on its use without exploring the broader phonological patterns or its prevalence and acceptability among different speaker groups. His study posits that spelling pronunciation is pervasive in the English spoken by educated Ghanaians, and it is largely influenced by two inseparable factors, which are the inconsistent relationship between English orthography and sound and the converse situation in the L1 language, which the majority of Ghanaians first acquire. He then asserts that spelling pronunciation qualifies as one of the innovative features of pronunciation that gives Ghanaian English a character that is different from standard native English. The table below displays the results of typical Ghanaian spelling pronunciation from Ngula (2011).

Table 2.2: Common Ghanaian English Spelling Pronunciations Versus the Received Pronunciation

Orthography or Spelling	Received Pronunciation	Ghanaian English Spelling Pronunciation
1. Won	[wʌn]	[wɒn]
2. Tomb	[tu:m]	[tumb]
3. Nose	[nəʊz]	[no:s]
4. Gold	[gəʊld]	[go:d]
5. Gaol	[dʒeɪl]	[gaol]
6. Push	[pʊʃ]	[pu:ʃ]
7. Digit	[dɪdʒɪt]	[dɪɡɪt]
8. Potato	[pəteɪtə]	[pota:to]
9. Provocation	[prɒvəkeɪʃən]	[provokeɪʃɪn]

Source: Ngula (2011:29)

2.7 Characteristic Differences and Similarities in Spelling Pronunciation among Non-native Varieties of English

Statistics based on English speaking by Crystal (1997; 2003), discover that English is a major language of the world and is spoken by about one billion and 850 million around the world only 350 million are native speakers and others in the majority are non-native speakers.

Koranteng (2006) asserts that the striking feature of the use of English based on Kachru's (1983) "Concentric Circles" informs that the forms used in all these countries are different from the mother tongue variety. She further states that wherever there is an English-speaking community, another variety has arisen. Based on this literature, literature is reviewed on other varieties of English to ascertain the presence of spelling pronunciation among other non-native varieties.

Bamgbose (1998) points out that in Nigerian English, for instance, spelling-based pronunciations have become a feature because formal education emphasises written English over oral proficiency.

Basseti (2008) is of the view that L2 orthography has effects on L2 phonology, which he postulates is a major cause of orthography-induced non-target-like pronunciations, which he concurrently referred to as spelling pronunciation. His study uncovers that some of the various non-target-like pronunciations L2 learners of English produce include phone additions, omissions, and substitutions, which are caused by the orthographic representation of L2 phonology. He opines that sometimes L2 learners realise phonemes for which there is no evidence in acoustic input they are exposed to, causing, for example, phone additions in spelling pronunciation. Basseti reports that orthography-induced non-target-like pronunciations are characterised by the following: "All the studies reported in the previous section show that L2 orthographic input affects

L2 pronunciation, leading on-target-like realisations of phonemes, syllables and words” (Bassetti, 2008:6).

This implies that while orthographic input can help L2 learners produce target L2 pronunciations, it can also lead to some non-target-like pronunciations, which would probably never occur if learners were only exposed to acoustic input. Some of the various non-target-like pronunciations L2 learners produce, including some phone additions, omissions, and substitutions, may be caused by the orthographic representation of L2 phonology. He theorises that L2 learners sometimes realise phonemes for which there is no evidence in the acoustic input they are exposed to (phone additions). For instance, Spanish learners of English can add a vowel before ‘Spain’, pronouncing it as ‘Espain’, which is due to their L1 syllable structure, which does not allow the sequence /sp/ in the word-initial position.

Again, the study reveals that there are cases of additions that can only be explained by orthographic input, as L2 learners realise phonemes that do not exist in native speakers’ speech but correspond to ‘silent letters’ in the orthographic input. These spelling pronunciations, whereby learners pronounce silent letters (for instance, pronouncing a /b/ in ‘debt’ or ‘climb’), are probably the most obvious example of orthography-induced non-target-like pronunciations. The study found out that the Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (Wells, 2000), which targets advanced and upper-intermediate learners of English, warns learners against such errors in pronunciation. That learners do so is shown in a study of 13 Italian children (Browning, 2004), which found that all children pronounced the L2 English word “walk” with an /l/.

According to Young-Scholten (1998), adults prefer epenthesis over omission because they want to retain all the consonants they see in the orthographic input (Young-

Scholten, 1998); rather than omitting consonants, learners then add vowels. This is in line with the predictions of Weinberger's (1987) 'recoverability', where L2 learners who cannot yet pronounce consonant clusters will add vowels rather than omit consonants because adding vowels allows them to retain all consonants in their underlying representations.

Interestingly, Young-Scholten (1999) finds that adults use epenthesis when they learn a word by both hearing it and seeing its orthographic form. When only acoustic input is provided, L2 learners primarily simplify consonant clusters by omitting consonants, as native-speaking children do (Young-Scholten, 1999). This again reinforces the possibility that this case of epenthetic vowel addition may be due to orthographic input. Second language learners not only add phones; they also omit phones that are present in the L2 acoustic input (phone omissions). For instance, L2 learners can omit one consonant from consonant clusters, pronouncing 'hold' as 'hol'. Omissions may be due to universal patterns of phonological acquisition, which also appear in the early phonologies of native speakers as well as in all L2 learners regardless of the characteristics of their L1 phonology (Tarone, 1987). However, some omissions are better explained as a consequence of orthographic input, as L2 learners omit phones that are not represented in the orthographic input.

Another possible case of omission due to orthographic input was found in a study of Korean ESL users (Lee, 2004). In Korean, the glide /w/ is sometimes omitted in speech. Lee found that Korean ESL learners reading an English text aloud sometimes omitted /w/ when preceded by a consonant and followed by a vowel. This omission only occurred when /w/ was spelt as 'u', but rarely when it was spelt as 'w'; for instance,

learners omitted /w/ in 45% of occurrences of ‘quickly’ but in only 5% of occurrences of ‘twin’, where learners instead added an epenthetic vowel to retain the /w/.

Lee claims that this difference is due to orthography, as Korean ESL learners perceive /w/ as the consonantal onset of a syllable when it is spelt with ‘w’ but not when it is spelt with ‘u’ because of characteristics of the Korean Romanisation system. It appears that at least some cases of phone omission may be due to L2 orthographic input. Second-language learners can also replace a phone with another one (phone substitutions). For instance, Italian learners of English can pronounce ‘thin’ as ‘tin’ because the phoneme /θ/ does not exist in Italian phonology and is therefore realised as the phone [t].

There is anecdotal evidence that some substitutions are caused by the L2 orthographic representation because learners incorrectly assimilate an L2 phoneme with an L1 phoneme when they are represented by the same grapheme (i.e., letter or letter combination). For instance, Italian ESL learners can pronounce ‘special’ (/speʃəl/) as [spetʃəl], substituting [tʃ] to /ʃ/, because in their L1 orthography the grapheme ‘ci’ represents the phoneme /tʃ/ (D'Eugenio, 1985; Kenworthy, 1987), although /ʃ/ exists in their L1 phonology; while in the opposite direction, French learners of Italian can substitute [s] to /tʃ/ and pronounce the L2 word center ([tʃentro]) as [sentro] (Costamagna, 2000) because of the French pronunciation of the grapheme ‘c’ (as in ‘celle’, pronounced [sɛl]).

Similarly, Speck (2001) reveals that Spanish learners of English sometimes realise /j/ as an affricate similar to /dʒ/ in words spelt with the word-initial ‘y’ (for example, ‘you’ pronounced as [dʒu:]), presumably because in Spanish (L1) a word-initial letter ‘y’ represents a voiced affricate although the target /j/ exists in their L1 phonology. The

possibility that orthography leads L2 learners to equate L2 and L1 sounds was suggested by Pennington (1996), who noted that misleading associations of L1 and L2 sounds could be caused by the written language. Some systematic evidence comes from a study by Zampini (1994). In this study, English learners of Spanish pronounced various Spanish words with a [v] instead of a /b/, even though the Spanish language does not have the phoneme /v/. While the phoneme /v/ was not present in the acoustic input, or indeed in the phonological repertoire of the target language, the letter 'v' was present in the orthographic input (where it is pronounced [b]). Interestingly, these substitutions occurred not only in reading but also in conversation (albeit less frequently).

Furthermore, these substitutions were more frequent in students who had four semesters of L2 learning compared with students who had two semesters. While this did not support Zampini's expectation that more proficient learners should be less affected by orthography, she pointed out that the more advanced students had been exposed to more orthographic input.

Another example of orthography-induced phone substitution can be found in a paper by Piske et al. (2002), which found effects of orthographic representations on the pronunciation of English vowels in Italian-English bilinguals. A group of Italians who had moved to an English-speaking country in childhood pronounced a series of English words that they heard and saw as a written list, followed by a series of pseudowords. Words and pseudowords contained target vowels, which were later rated by native speakers for accuracy of pronunciation. Results showed that those Italian-English bilinguals who were frequent users of L1 Italian pronounced non-target-like English vowels in pseudowords because they pronounced these English vowels according to the

Italian pronunciation of their vowel letter. For example, when bilinguals were asked to produce a word containing the same vowel as /red/, /dead/, and /bed/, they pronounced [e] instead of [ɛ] because all these words are spelt with /e/, which in Italian is generally pronounced [e]

Another literature in this regard is Okoro (2017), in his study of Nigerian English pronunciation. The study verifies that one of the most difficult and confusing aspects of the English Language is its spelling system. The study postulates that there is often a discrepancy between the pronunciation of a word and its spelling, and one cannot always tell how to spell a word by its pronunciation nor how to pronounce it by its spelling. He cited that, for example, there are twelve different ways to spell the sound /ʃ/ in English: shoe, nation, schist, ocean, sure, mission, machine, special, mansion, nauseous, conscious, and anxious. To give an opposite example, the vowel letter combination 'ou' can be pronounced in at least five different ways, as in the words through, although, thought, tough, and out. Okoro (2017) claims that the local Nigerian languages are generally spelling-pronounced. That is, words are usually spelt exactly as pronounced or put the other way around, they are pronounced exactly as spelt. He mentions that one implication of this is that in these languages, the same sequence of sounds occurring in any expression is spelt the same way. Incidentally, the English language itself is not spelling-pronounced. However, many Nigerians unconsciously transfer the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation from their L1 to English.

Bobda (2007) also discusses that one of the characteristics of Nigerian spoken English at the segmental level is the use of spelling pronunciation. Bobda reveals that Nigerian English applies rules in English but does others differently, which some result in the

pronunciation of building /brʊldɪŋ/ as [bjud,-ɪŋ, -ɪn] where /u/ may also be perceived as spelling pronunciation.

Hilte and Reitsma (2005) reveals that several researchers like Ormrod and Jenkins (1989), Drake and Ehri (1984), and Holmes and Malone (2004) contend that spelling pronunciation is a very effective strategy to improve spelling ability.

Ormrod and Jenkins (1989) examined the effect of seven distinct strategies that most students use while trying to remember the spelling of difficult words. The strategy of spelling pronunciation appeared to be the most effective method to learn the correct spelling. Spelling pronunciation was especially effective for skilled spellers. This finding is supported by others, who argue that poor spellers rarely come up with strategies themselves, suggesting that they are less likely to adopt a spelling pronunciation strategy on their own (Drake & Ehri, 1984). When they do adopt a spelling pronunciation strategy, they often form incorrect spelling pronunciations, which are generally misleading and rarely bring about the correct spelling (Holmes & Malone, 2004).

This particular problem can easily be solved by using explicit instructions on spelling pronunciation or by simply providing these artificial (spelling) pronunciations (Graham, 2000; Graham et al., 2002). Further empirical evidence showed that providing spelling pronunciations was more effective than providing standard pronunciation to spellers in both normal and special education (Hilte et al. 2005).

Additionally, Adepoju (2022) also discovers in his analysis of grapheme and phoneme problems in the pronunciation of Yoruba learners of English in Nigeria. He establishes that the inconsistency of the English spelling causes the analogy to map Yoruba letters

to English, usually resulting in the use of grapheme and phoneme pronunciation among Yoruba speakers of English in Nigeria.

Ultimately, Koranteng (2006) and Ngula (2011) divulge that one aspect of the English Language that impacts the spoken English of Ghanaians is its spelling, usually resulting in letter-to-sound pronunciations. Koranteng (2006) discloses that English, unlike some languages in the world, has a complex spelling system. She argues that through an illustration, the letter ‘g’ is /g/ in girl, ghost, goes, begin but /dʒ/ in gentle, giant, and gem, whereas /s/ is either /ʃ/ or /s/ in words like see, sure, some, sugar and others, it confuses Ghanaian speakers of English. Additionally, she mentions that the problems of sound-to-letter correspondent divergencies are more complex in vowels, where each of the vowel letters of the alphabet, which are a, e, i, o, and u, has more than one sound pronunciation. Some of these letters can correspond to about eight or ten different pronunciations. The literature reveals that spelling pronunciation is indeed a linguistic phenomenon that occurs and is used by almost all non-native varieties of English spoken around the world. However, some similarities exist amongst them.

On the level of similarity between these non-native varieties, such as Ghanaian English, Nigerian and Cameroonian English, the literature reveals that speakers often pronounce words based on their spelling. For example, Bobda (2000) highlights that in Cameroonian English, words like “debt” are pronounced with the silent “b” articulated, which is also common in Ghanaian English and Nigerian English, where the same word ‘debt’ is pronounced with the “b” distinctly heard. This tendency results from the heavy reliance on the written form of English in educational systems across many African countries.

Phonological constraints arising from the speakers' native languages also contribute to similarities in spelling pronunciation between non-native varieties. In both cases, the phonological systems of local languages influence the way English words are pronounced. Deterding and Mohammad (2016) explains that in Singaporean English, for instance, certain consonants and vowels are pronounced differently due to the influence of local languages. This is also evident in Ghanaian English and Nigerian English, among Korean-English speakers, Italian-English speakers and Pakistan-English, where sounds that do not exist in local languages are replaced with similar ones from the local phonetic inventory, often guided by the spelling of the words.

Spelling pronunciation is also retained in these varieties because it aids comprehensibility in communication. Bamgbose (1998) also observes that while spelling pronunciation may diverge from native English norms, it can enhance clarity, particularly among listeners who are familiar with the orthographic forms of words. This functional role of spelling pronunciation ensures mutual intelligibility among speakers in multilingual contexts.

Despite these similarities discussed above, there are also some notable differences in how spelling pronunciation manifests across non-native varieties. For example, in Ghanaian English, certain consonants tend to be overpronounced based on their spelling, while in other non-native varieties, they may be dropped or altered. For example, in Ghanaian English, words like “castle” are pronounced with the “t” clearly articulated, whereas in Nigerian English, there is a tendency to drop the “t” in similar contexts (Bamgbose, 1998). This contrasts with Singaporean English, as described by Deterding and Mohammad (2016), where final consonants such as the “t” in “next” are often dropped, a feature that is less common in Ghanaian English.

In addition, the pronunciations of phonemes, such as vowel articulation, may exhibit different patterns in non-native varieties, such as in Ghanaian English and Cameroonian English. Bobda (2000) notes that in Cameroonian English, there is a greater tendency to substitute vowels based on their spelling, particularly in unstressed syllables. For example, the vowel in “village” may be pronounced as /i/ in Cameroonian English, following the spelling, whereas Ghanaian speakers often approximate the vowel sounds more closely to British Received Pronunciation, although variations exist (Koranteng, 2006). This demonstrates a phonetic difference in how vowels are treated in spelling pronunciation across African Englishes.

Another key difference is the impact of native language phonology on English pronunciation. While all non-native varieties are influenced by the phonological systems of their native languages, the specific effects vary. For example, in Ghana, the influence of Akan and other local languages is significant. Koranteng (2006) notes that the tonal patterns and prosodic features of Akan, for example, can result in distinct stress and intonation patterns in Ghanaian English. In contrast, Nigerian English, which is influenced by languages such as Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo, has distinct phonetic outcomes, particularly in the articulation of nasal sounds and consonant clusters (Bamgbose, 1998). These differences create a divergence in the way spelling pronunciation manifests in different non-native varieties of English.

Lastly, the acceptability of spelling pronunciation varies across non-native varieties. In South Africa, where there is greater exposure to native English varieties through media and social interaction, spelling pronunciation is less prevalent and less socially acceptable (Mesthrie, 2006). The sociolinguistic context of each country shapes whether spelling pronunciation is viewed as a norm or a deviation from Standard

English. Though, there are similarities and differences regarding spelling pronunciation in non-native varieties, its recognitions as discussed above indicate that it is a prevalent feature of the English Language that needs to be adopted as a standard form of pronunciation of English.

2.8 The Impact of Spelling Pronunciation on Comprehensibility in

Communication, Teaching, and Learning

Spelling pronunciation, while a notable feature in various English, raises significant questions regarding its impact on comprehensibility in communication, as well as its implications for teaching and learning. Comprehensibility is a key factor in effective communication, particularly in multilingual settings where English often serves as a lingua franca. The pronunciation of words based on their spelling can sometimes hinder mutual understanding between speakers from different linguistic backgrounds, especially when their pronunciation deviates from widely accepted norms. Spelling and reading share similar processes and pupils use similar skills and knowledge whether they read or write words (Ehri, 1997). Ehri argues that these are two sources that help with spelling and can be categorised as systematic knowledge and word-specific knowledge.

Moreover, research by Munro and Derwing (1995) demonstrate that deviations from standard pronunciation can negatively affect listeners' ability to understand speech, particularly in international contexts where English is used as a global language. Spelling pronunciation, when it introduces unfamiliar sounds or stresses into words, can create barriers to communication. For example, pronouncing "receipt" as [rɪsɪpt] instead of /rɪ'si:t/ might confuse listeners unfamiliar with such variations (Jenkins, 2000).

However, in certain local contexts, such as within Ghana or other West African countries, spelling pronunciation might not significantly impede communication. Huber (2008) argues that within a community where similar spelling pronunciations are common, mutual intelligibility remains high, and such pronunciations may even be seen as markers of local identity.

Bamgbose (1998) also divulges that the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation in Educated Ghanaian English (EGE) satisfies two important criteria non-native varieties of English ought to meet: it maintains international intelligibility and retains local and cultural identities. This suggests that the impact of spelling pronunciation on comprehensibility is context-dependent and varies according to the linguistic background of the interlocutors.

Spelling pronunciation also has implications for teaching. In educational contexts, spelling pronunciation present both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, it can complicate the teaching of English pronunciation, particularly when learners are exposed to Standard English varieties through media or educational materials that do not align with local pronunciation patterns. Teachers may need to address these discrepancies explicitly, helping students understand the differences between local pronunciation habits and standard norms.

Studies by Kachru (1992) and Crystal (2003) emphasise the importance of recognising local varieties of English in the classroom while also preparing students for global communication. This dual focus can help students navigate both local and international contexts effectively. For example, teachers might encourage the use of standard pronunciation in formal settings while acknowledging the legitimacy of local variations in more informal or culturally specific contexts (Bamgbose, 1998).

In practice, teaching strategies that integrate both phonetic instruction and an understanding of orthography can be effective. Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) suggest that phonics-based approaches, which emphasise the relationship between sounds and letters, can help learners develop a more accurate pronunciation while also becoming aware of common spelling pronunciation pitfalls. Such approaches can be particularly useful in contexts where English is learned primarily through reading and writing.

Furthermore, the linguistic phenomenon also has implications for Learning. For learners, spelling pronunciation can serve as both a learning aid and a challenge. On one hand, relying on spelling can help learners approximate the pronunciation of unfamiliar words, especially in the early stages of language acquisition. Studies by Hilte and Reitsma (2005) and Kumah (2021) also highlight the benefits of spelling pronunciation in improving spelling and pronunciation accuracy, further underscoring its role in the educational context in Ghana. The common practice of “syllabising” in Ghanaian schools exemplifies how spelling pronunciation is used to strengthen language proficiency, particularly at the foundational stages of English education. This can boost learners’ confidence and fluency as they navigate the complexities of English phonology.

However, as learners progress, an over-reliance on spelling pronunciation can lead to fossilised errors and persistent pronunciation mistakes that are difficult to correct later on. Derwing and Munro (1995) caution that without sufficient exposure to spoken English, learners may internalise incorrect pronunciation patterns, which can affect their oral proficiency and overall communicative competence.

Furthermore, in contexts where English serves as a second or foreign language, spelling pronunciation can influence learners’ perceptions of what constitutes “correct”

pronunciation. If local spelling-based pronunciations are widely accepted, learners might resist adopting standard pronunciations, viewing them as less authentic or overly prescriptive. This highlights the need for a balanced approach to teaching, where both local and standard varieties are valued and taught.

2.9 Summary of Chapter

This literature review has explored the various dimensions of Ghanaian English spelling pronunciation and its implications for communication, teaching, and learning. The review highlights the prevalence of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English, its roots in the educational system, and its sociolinguistic significance. It has also examined the broader phenomenon of spelling pronunciation across different English varieties, its challenges for comprehensibility, and its impact on language instruction.

The discussions presented in this chapter underscore the complexity of spelling pronunciation as a linguistic feature and emphasise the importance of considering local contexts in teaching and learning English. Moving forward, the next chapter will delve into the research design and methodology employed in this study, outlining the methods used to investigate the spelling pronunciation patterns among educated speakers of Ghanaian English.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology, which serves as the foundational conceptual framework for the research. It comprises the research design, philosophical underpinnings, data collection procedures, data collection instruments, sampling methods and sample size, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Philosophical Underpinnings

Every research is guided by a set of theories about how knowledge is formed and understood. These theories shape the methods used and how findings are interpreted. This study, which focuses on the pronunciation patterns of Ghanaian spoken English particularly spelling pronunciation is grounded in the Social Constructivist worldview. Social constructivism suggests that knowledge is not fixed or discovered in isolation but is shaped through human experiences, social interaction, and cultural context (Vygotsky, 1978; Creswell, 2014). In this case, the way people speak, pronounce words, and understand language is seen as something that develops from their surroundings and experiences, not just from formal learning.

Using this worldview allows the study to explore how educated Ghanaian speakers construct their understanding and use of English pronunciation, especially when it comes to how they pronounce words based on spelling. This section will explain the philosophical foundations of the study by focusing on three related ideas: linguistic relativity, the social construction of meaning, and language acquisition in context.

One of the key ideas supporting this research is the theory of linguistic relativity, often known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. This theory argues that the language we speak affects how we think and perceive the world (Whorf, 1956). In relation to Ghanaian English, this idea suggests that pronunciation patterns such as spelling pronunciation may be shaped by the structure of local languages or by the way English is taught and used in Ghana. For instance, when speakers rely heavily on spelling to guide pronunciation, it may reflect their educational background, their first language, or the way English is presented in schools. The way they pronounce words may not only be about how the words sound, but also about how they have learnt to connect letters and sounds within their own cultural and linguistic environment.

Another useful concept is the social construction of meaning. Language is more than a set of sounds and rules; it is a social practice. People use language to express identity, show group membership, and respond to social expectations (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In the case of spelling pronunciation, some speakers may pronounce words the way they are written because it is seen as more formal, educated, or correct within their community. Others might adopt such pronunciations to show their level of schooling or their command of the English language. This shows that pronunciation is not just a matter of right or wrong, but often depends on social meaning, cultural values, and personal or group identity.

In addition, the idea of language acquisition in context is important in understanding spelling pronunciation. Social constructivists like Vygotsky (1978) emphasise that learning, including language learning, happens through interaction with others and within social settings. In Ghana, English is often learned in classrooms where written texts dominate, and oral language may not always be given equal attention. As a result,

learners may form pronunciation habits based on spelling, rather than natural spoken input. This learning environment contributes to the development of spelling pronunciation, especially among those who rely on formal education for their English exposure.

Altogether, these philosophical foundations support the use of a qualitative research approach to explore spelling pronunciation. They help the researcher understand not just what the speakers say or how they pronounce words, but why they do so based on their experiences, environments, and social influences. This approach recognises the complexity of language use and gives room to consider multiple viewpoints and meanings.

By grounding the study in the Social Constructivist worldview and drawing on related ideas such as linguistic relativity, social meaning, and contextual language learning, the research aims to provide an understanding of spelling pronunciation among educated Ghanaian speakers. These philosophical perspectives will inform the data collection, analysis, and interpretation throughout the entire study.

3.2 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach because it provides a rich, detailed exploration of pronunciation patterns within real-life contexts. As Dörnyei (2007) explains, qualitative methods are appropriate when the goal is to analyse language use in natural settings, making them suitable for this study's focus on spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English.

A qualitative approach was particularly fitting for this study because it allowed for an examination of how and why spelling pronunciation occurs among educated speakers,

capturing their attitudes, experiences, and linguistic behaviours. Creswell (2013) supports this by emphasizing that qualitative research helps explore social and linguistic factors shaping pronunciation variations, which aligns with this study's objective of analysing pronunciation across different educational levels.

Furthermore, qualitative research is essential for understanding the complexity of linguistic behaviours in context, as emphasized by Yin (2012). Given that this study investigates how pronunciation is influenced by sociolinguistic factors, a qualitative approach was necessary to capture speakers' perspectives, interactions, and speech patterns in a way that quantitative methods could not.

Additionally, this study's use of structured questionnaires that were made up of both open and close-ended questions, and audio recordings emphasises the appropriateness of a qualitative approach. By analysing transcribed speech and participants' reflections, the study unearths patterns, perceptions, and variations in pronunciation, reinforcing Mackey and Gass' (2015) argument that qualitative research offers the flexibility to identify emergent themes in natural language use.

3.3 Research Design

The study used a descriptive research design to examine pronunciation patterns among participants. This design was chosen because it allowed for observing, documenting, and describing pronunciation features without changing any conditions. It was useful for studying naturally occurring speech behaviours in Ghanaian spoken English. Specifically, the study combines the use of questionnaire and audio-recordings. The questionnaire served as a survey instrument to collect participants' view on factors influencing the use of spelling pronunciation, and its commonness in terms of usage among educated speakers of English. This provided attitudinal and perceptual data that

could not be captured through observation. On the other hand, the audio-recording functioned as an observational tool, allowed for obtaining authentic spoken language for phonological analysis.

A descriptive research design is often used to study specific groups or language use in real situations. In this study, it was helpful in examining how participants pronounce words based on spelling. Yin (2018) explains that descriptive research is suitable for studying current language patterns in real-life settings, which fits this study's focus on spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English among educated speakers.

This design also made it possible to organise data systematically and analyse pronunciation patterns alongside social and linguistic influences. Babbie (2010) states that descriptive research helps researchers record language features clearly, ensuring that findings provide a full picture of the pronunciation patterns studied.

Descriptive research is also useful for studying people's views and experiences, which made it helpful in examining participants' opinions on spelling pronunciation in different situations. As Bloomfield and Fisher (2019), Creswell (2014), and Vaske (2019) suggest, descriptive research allows researchers to gather information about people's language behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs. This supports the study's aim of understanding how spelling pronunciation is perceived in formal and informal communication.

3.4 Setting

The study was conducted in the Department of English Education at the University of Education, Winneba. The choice of this location was appropriate because it serves as one of the centers for teacher preparation for English Language education and linguistic

research in Ghana. The department provides a suitable setting for observing pronunciation patterns among educated speakers of Ghanaian spoken English.

Furthermore, the department attracts students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds who are trained in English studies. This diversity created an environment where various pronunciation patterns could be examined. These considerations align with Marshall and Rossman (2014), who state that an appropriate research site should be accessible and contain the relevant people, processes, and interactions needed to address the research objectives.

3.5 Population

The population of this study consisted of educated speakers of Ghanaian spoken English, specifically Master of Philosophy (MPhil) students and lecturers in the Department of English Education. This group was chosen because of their strong academic background in English studies specifically phonetics, phonology, and spoken English. Their exposure to these courses at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels makes them ideal participants for studying pronunciation patterns.

Furthermore, a key reason for selecting this population was their professional experience as educators. Apart from the lecturers, many of the MPhil students were also teachers at Colleges of Education and Senior High Schools, responsible for teaching English Language courses like phonetics and phonology and oral English. This made them an important group for investigating whether they adhere to Received Pronunciation (RP) in teaching or whether their speech is influenced by spelling pronunciation.

In conclusion, the selection of this population aligns with Ngula (2011), who notes that educated speakers are often considered as linguistic models in formal and academic settings, where maintaining the norms of English are crucial for effective communication. This made them the most relevant group for examining spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English since they represent a category of educated speakers whose language use is shaped by formal education and professional expectations.

3.6 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

To ensure that the study gathered relevant data, a purposive sampling technique was used to select participants. This technique was chosen because it allows for deliberately selecting individuals who possess specific characteristics relevant to the study. In this case, participants were selected based on their involvement in mock viva presentations, which provided a structured and natural setting for observing spelling pronunciation in the Ghanaian spoken English of educated speakers.

The sample comprised ten (10) participants: seven MPhil students and three lecturers. The MPhil students were the presenters at the mock viva, while the lecturers served as assessors on the panel. A mock viva is a pre-defence exercise in which postgraduate students present their research work before a panel of lecturers in order to receive feedback and guidance ahead of the final thesis defence. The selection of this group was not arbitrary but was based on their active role in the postgraduate academic environment, where pronunciation plays a crucial role in academic discourse.

The decision to use this mock viva session was influenced by practical and methodological considerations. It was the only available postgraduate seminar in the Department of English Education at the time of data collection, making it the most

appropriate event for observing pronunciation patterns. Furthermore, the principle of data saturation (Guest et al., 2006) supported the sample size. Since all participants shared similar linguistic and academic backgrounds, it was expected that no new pronunciation patterns would emerge beyond what was observed in this setting. Although the sample size was small, it was sufficient for a qualitative study, as it allowed for an exploration of pronunciation features within an authentic academic context. The selection ensured that the study captured pronunciation variations within a relevant and natural academic environment, making the findings meaningful for understanding spelling pronunciation among educated speakers of Ghanaian spoken English.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The study employed a multi-faceted approach in utilising the following data collection instruments:

First, a Digital Audio Tape (DAT) Integrated Circuit recorder (Sony ICD-PX333) was used to capture participants' spoken English during their mock viva presentations. This Integrated Circuit recorder was chosen because it can record clear sounds with minimal background noise. It also has a noise reduction feature, which enhances the clarity of recorded speech. The use of an audio recorder in data collection allows for the accurate capture of authentic linguistic data, which is essential for analysing pronunciation variations (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2015).

In addition, a structured questionnaire was developed and administered to the study participants to gather qualitative insights into the factors influencing spelling pronunciation, and its common practices of usage. Questionnaires are valuable tools for identifying trends and patterns in language use, making them useful for exploring

linguistic attitudes (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions, covering key areas such as; participants' language exposure, social influences on pronunciation, awareness of spelling pronunciation, frequency of usage, and others.

3.8 Validity of Research Instruments

Creswell and Clark (2017) opine that reliability looks at the consistent and stable nature of the instrument over time when it is administered repeatedly, validity, on the other hand, is concerned with the research instrument measuring what it is intended to measure. Before these instruments were used for data collection, they were given to the supervisor for auditing. The validity, therefore, checks if the research instruments are doing what they were intended to do. Again, the use of inter-rater reliability checks for transcription helped in checking reliability and validity.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The following are procedures that were employed for data collection:

1. Audio Recordings and Transcriptions: During the mock viva presentations, participants' oral presentations were audio-recorded to facilitate analysis of pronunciation patterns. This method was chosen because it preserves the natural flow of speech, allowing the researcher to identify spontaneous and recurring instances of spelling pronunciation. Additionally, audio recordings allow for data to be revisited multiple times, ensuring a thorough and accurate analysis of the pronunciation features observed. After the recordings, the data was carefully transcribed to provide a textual representation of participants' speech. The transcription process involved repeated listening to ensure accuracy and consistency, particularly in capturing phonetic details relevant to the study. Any

unclear segments were reviewed multiple times to ensure a precise reflection of the participants' spoken language. This approach aligns with Ladefoged and Johnson (2015), who emphasise the importance of high-quality linguistic data in pronunciation studies.

2. Administration of questionnaires: Participants were also provided with structured questionnaires, which included a mix of closed and open-ended questions. These questions were designed to elicit insights into participants' experiences with spelling pronunciation; their observations of its commonness in terms of usage, their language exposure, social influences, and their perceptions of its acceptability. To ensure clarity and accuracy, participants received clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. The researcher remained available throughout the process to clarify any ambiguities and address any concerns raised by the participants. This interactive approach ensured that responses were thoughtfully provided, enhancing the quality and reliability of the data. The responses obtained were later analysed to identify trends and patterns, providing valuable insights into the role of spelling pronunciation among educated speakers of Ghanaian spoken English.

3.10 Methods and Procedures of Analysis

The data collected for this study were analysed using thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2017). This approach involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. Given the study's focus on spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English, thematic analysis was appropriate for systematically categorising participants' responses. Themes were derived inductively based on patterns emerging from participants' responses, guided by the research questions, questionnaire structure and audio-recordings. The data were grouped in

broad thematic categories. Also, the thematic analysis was informed by empirical literature and guided by Flege's Speech Learning Model (1995), which provides a theoretical framework for understanding how second-language learners acquire and apply pronunciation patterns. This model was useful for interpreting the influence of participants' linguistic backgrounds on their pronunciation choices.

For the analysis, Tesch (1990)'s advice was followed, and configurations in the data that suggested that certain pieces of data belonged together were constantly sought. Common properties in coding were looked for to derive analytical conclusions. The following are some examples of the emerging issues that served as themes for the analysis. Some examples of themes include; education and language exposure, sociolinguistic factors, comfort with spelling pronunciation, and correction in educational or professional settings. Some sub-themes were developed from the audio-recording responses for analysis.

The analysis of the audio recordings on the other hand, followed a structured approach to identify instances of spelling pronunciation among participants' pronunciations. First, all transcribed data from the recordings were examined to identify how words were articulated in comparison to Received Pronunciation (RP). The phonological data for this study comprised a total of three-hundred pronunciations of words extracted from participants' spoken English through audio recordings. However, due to the extensive nature of the data and the focus of the study, a purposive selection of seventy words was made for detailed phonemic transcription and analysis. This decision was informed by the need for manageability, depth of analysis, and representativeness of the key phonological patterns under investigation. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research often requires the selection of data that best illuminates the research

objectives rather than exhaustive coverage. In this light, the seventy words were selected based on their frequency of occurrence, phonological relevance, and diversity in terms of spelling pronunciation representation. The selection was also guided by the principle of data saturation (Guest, et al., 2006), whereby further analysis of additional words was not yielding new phonological patterns or insights.

The selected words were then transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) based on the Received Pronunciation (RP) model to maintain standardisation and comparability with existing literature on pronunciation patterns influenced by sociolinguistic factors and the principles of Flege's Speech Learning Model (1995). Particular attention was given to phonological variations that emerged in participants' speech, leading to the identification of the following key features: vowel modifications (changes in vowel quality, including shifts in length and articulation), monophthongization and diphthongization of sounds (instances where diphthongs were pronounced as monophthongs and vice versa), consonant substitution, deletion, and epenthesis (substitution of one consonant for another, omission of certain consonants, and the insertion of additional sounds to ease pronunciation).

To further understand these phonological variations, participants' pronunciations were also compared with phonetic patterns found in local Ghanaian languages. This comparison revealed traces of local language influence, demonstrating how speakers' native linguistic backgrounds contributed to their pronunciation tendencies. By comparing these findings with examples from Twi, Fante, Ewe, and other indigenous languages, the study was able to establish a link between spelling pronunciation and the phonological structures present in these languages.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Halai (2006) opined that there are laid down principles and guidelines for conducting studies in an ethically appropriate manner which require researchers to obtain approval from gatekeepers and the participants. While conducting the study, the researcher considered all research directives. Before commencing the data collection process, ethical approval (introductory letter) was obtained from the University of Education, Winneba, specifically from the Department of English Education.

Moreover, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their rights. Informed consent was obtained from the participant, and measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of their data. Pseudonyms were used in place of participants' real names, and the audio recordings were securely stored to prevent unauthorised access.

3.12 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has outlined the needed methodology employed in the study of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian Spoken English. The chapter described the philosophical underpinning of the study which is the Social Constructivist Worldview. The design adopted for the study is the descriptive research design which drew on audio recordings and questionnaire for presenting a systematic account of language use without manipulating natural setting. The approach adopted for the study is qualitative, data collection procedures included audio-recordings of participants' presentations, and administered questionnaires. The setting was the Department of English Education of the University of Education, Winneba. Sample size comprised of ten participants (seven MPhil students and three lecturers). Sampling technique was purposive sampling. Procedures for analysis was thematic. The next chapter present, and discuss the results obtained from the questionnaires and recordings.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents results, analysis and discussions of the findings of the study. The findings are carefully identified, presented, interpreted and discussed based on the three research questions of the study. The results are discussed in view of the theory underpinning the study, and previous studies.

4.1 Research Question One: What factors influence the use of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English?

To investigate this question, data was collected through a questionnaire administered through the seven MPhil students and the three lecturers in the Department of English who took part in the mock viva presentations. The responses are categorised into themes that reflect the factors influencing the use of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English. The summary of responses is presented in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Factors that Influence the Use of Spelling Pronunciation in Ghanaian Spoken English

Items (Themes)	Responses	Percentage
1. Frequency of Reading English Materials		
- Daily	10	100%
- Several times a week	0	0%
- Once a week	0	0%
- Rarely	0	0%
- Never	0	0%
2. Encounter with Unfamiliar English Words		
- Yes	10	100%
- No	0	0%

3. Pronunciation of Unfamiliar English Words		
- Based on how they are spelled	5	50%
- Based on how they think they should sound	3	30%
- Other: (combination of both, mimicry of native speakers)	2	20%
4. Consultation of Dictionary for Phonetic Transcriptions		
- Yes	3	30%
- No	7	70%
5. Formal Education in English Language Pronunciation or Phonetics		
- Yes	3	30%
- No	7	70%
6. Contexts of Spelling Pronunciation		
- Informal conversations	10	100%
- Formal presentations	10	100%
- Educational settings	10	100%
7. Belief in the Influence of Regional Dialects		
- Yes	8	80%
- No	2	20%
8. Impact on Communication Clarity		
- Responses indicating that spelling pronunciation enhances clarity by providing visual cues	7	70%
- Responses expressed concerns about potential confusion	3	30%
9. Comfort with Spelling Pronunciation		
-1	0	0%
-2	0	0%
-3	1	10%
-4	2	20%
-5 (Very comfortable)	7	70%

Table 4.1 presents a breakdown of the participants' responses, revealing key trends in their pronunciation habits. The findings indicate that spelling pronunciation is influenced by various linguistic, educational and sociocultural factors, which are analysed under the following themes.

Theme 1: Education and Language Exposure

This theme investigated the impact of participants' educational backgrounds and exposure to the English Language on their tendency to use spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English. The responses presented in table 4.1 reveal a significant relationship between educational attainment and pronunciation practices. Notably, all respondents possessed tertiary-level education, indicating substantial formal instruction in English. However, despite this advanced education, 60% (6) of the respondents reported relying on spelling pronunciation when faced with unfamiliar words. This suggests a potential disconnect between formal education and the development of phonetic competence in English.

The findings also reveal that all respondents regularly encounter unfamiliar English words during reading, which suggests that even educated speakers face challenges with certain vocabulary. Interestingly, the majority (60%) of answers to the various approach participants employ in pronouncing unfamiliar words, indicated a reliance on spelling-based pronunciation. This reliance shows the strong influence of orthography on pronunciation practices among Ghanaian English speakers.

These trends align with Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model (SLM), which posits that language learners are more likely to acquire accurate pronunciation when exposed to diverse linguistic inputs, particularly during critical language acquisition periods. However, the findings suggest that even at the tertiary level, consistent exposure to

standard phonetic models may be lacking. As a result, participants' frequent engagement with written English, seen in their daily reading habits (60%), reinforces their reliance on spelling for pronunciation, shaping a distinctive feature of Ghanaian spoken English. To further illustrate this trend, some pronunciations both from the data and those not directly from the study's data, which commonly exhibit spelling pronunciations in everyday Ghanaian spoken English support this pattern. For example, words like 'purposive', 'analysis', 'lexicon', 'lexical', 'English', 'language' as well as English names such as 'Leonard', 'Naomi' and 'Anthony' are commonly pronounced as [ləzɪkən], [ləzɪkəl], [ɪŋɡlɪʃ], [læŋɡwɪdʒ], [leona:d], [naomi], and [antoni], rather than their standard forms /ləksɪkən/, /ləksɪkəl/, /ɪŋɡlɪʃ/, /læŋɡwɪdʒ/, /lenəd/, /naɪ.əʊmi/, and /æn.tə.ni/. These examples, common even among educated speakers, reveals a habitual default to spelling pronunciation, particularly for names and words that deviate from expected grapheme-phoneme correspondences. Furthermore, they demonstrate the tendency of educated Ghanaian speakers to vocalise every visible letter in a word. This habitual pattern overlooks conventional phonetic norms, and reinforces the notion that spelling-based pronunciation strategies dominate pronunciation in contexts where standard pronunciation is not actively reinforced through listening and practice.

The findings also reveal the absence of phonetic training within Ghana's formal education system. Only 30% of participants reported receiving formal education in English pronunciation, while 70% indicated no exposure to phonetic rules until they read phonetics and phonology as a course in the university. Furthermore, a majority (70%) admitted to rarely consulting pronunciation materials such as dictionaries for phonetic guidance. These findings suggest that phonetic competence is not adequately addressed in the educational curriculum, a concern echoed by Koranteng (2006), who

observed that teachers, students, and curricula often deprioritise pronunciation training in English instruction.

Despite their tertiary education, participants' reliance on spelling pronunciation indicates that advanced education may prioritise literacy and vocabulary over oral proficiency. This reveals the need for a balanced approach to English Language instruction that incorporates pronunciation training alongside literacy skills. Phonetic training, introduced as early as primary school, could help address this shortfall, equipping students with tools for effective pronunciation and communication.

The use of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English also reflects sociocultural and educational factors unique to the Ghanaian context. English serves as a second language and the medium of instruction in Ghana, but phonetic competence is often secondary to literacy skills. This emphasis on reading and writing, while beneficial, may unintentionally promote spelling pronunciation in the absence of corrective phonetic input. As a result, educated speakers often exhibit a unique linguistic pattern where orthography strongly influences their spoken English, creating a distinct characteristic of Ghanaian English.

Theme 2: Sociolinguistic Factors

The findings also reveal that sociolinguistic factors influence the use of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English. Per the findings, participants' regional backgrounds and socialisation processes significantly shape their pronunciation choices. A notable 80% of respondents acknowledged that their local languages' pronunciations and orthography directly impact their English pronunciation patterns. This supports Algeo's (2014) argument that language evolution is deeply tied to

sociolinguistic contexts, underlining how local linguistic environments influence English phonology in Ghana.

The results suggest that participants often unconsciously transfer phonetic features from their native languages into their English pronunciation. For example, words like “cat” /kæt/ and “mat” /mæt/ are commonly pronounced as [kat] and [mat], respectively, reflecting the phonological influence of indigenous Ghanaian languages, where grapheme-phoneme correspondence tends to be more direct. This substitution, particularly the simplification of /æ/ to /a/, reflects structure in local languages such as Twi, where phonemes like /a/ are consistently associated with the letter ‘a’. Examples include words like ‘bra’ [bra], ‘afa’ [afa], and ‘dan’ [dan] in Twi, which maintain direct grapheme-phoneme relationships. These findings align with Flege’s (1995) Speech Learning Model, which posits that second-language learners often transfer phonemes from their first language into their second language when grapheme-phoneme symbols appear similar.

The interaction of multiple linguistic systems within Ghana’s multilingual landscape further enhances this phenomenon. English, as an official language, interacts dynamically with numerous indigenous languages, enabling phonetic borrowing in pronunciation. This interaction exemplifies the adaptive nature of language use in multilingual contexts, where speakers draw on their linguistic repertoires to navigate communicative needs.

In addition to regional languages, socialisation processes were identified as key factors influencing pronunciation practices. Participants reported that societal and cultural factors shape their English pronunciation, resonating with linguistic relativity theories proposed by Sapir and Whorf (1956). These theories, along with Flege’s (1995)

framework, suggest that linguistic environments significantly influence cognitive and phonological processes. In Ghana, where English functions as a medium of education, professional interaction, and social communication, its pronunciation is often mediated by the phonetic norms of indigenous languages.

The study highlights that these sociolinguistic factors are not incidental but are deeply embedded in language acquisition and use. Participants' acknowledgement of their sociolinguistic environments as a primary influence on pronunciation emphasises the need for educational systems to address these realities. Current language instruction practices, which largely emphasise written proficiency, may inadequately account for the impact of regional dialects and socialisation on phonetic competence.

The findings suggest that Ghana's language curricula should integrate strategies that acknowledge the coexistence of regional linguistic influences and Standard English norms. Such approaches could include explicit instruction on the phonological differences between indigenous languages and English, as well as practical exercises to reinforce Standard English pronunciation. Moreover, incorporating code-switching strategies into teaching methods could allow students to integrate their knowledge of indigenous languages while learning English pronunciation. This approach not only validates students' linguistic backgrounds but also fosters better retention of pronunciation skills.

Eventually, educators could adopt context-sensitive language instruction methods that balance recognition for regional dialects with the promotion of Standard English proficiency. By doing so, learners would develop the ability to navigate both local and global communicative contexts effectively. This dual approach would empower

students as multilingual speakers while improving their pronunciation and communicative competence in English.

Theme 3: Language Attitudes and Identity

The investigation into language attitudes and identity regarding spelling pronunciation highlights the perception of pronunciation as a key component of cultural and linguistic identity among Ghanaian English speakers. The findings reveal that pronunciation is not solely a matter of phonetic accuracy but a deeply ingrained aspect of self-expression, reflecting speakers' cultural affiliations and personal identities.

Despite all participants reporting daily engagement with English texts, 60% rely on spelling rather than phonetic rules to pronounce English words. This reliance suggests that pronunciation practices are shaped by conscious or subconscious efforts to align with cultural and linguistic heritage. This aligns with Adjaye (1987) and Sey (1973), who documented the enduring influence of local linguistic norms and native-speaker models on the evolution of Ghanaian English. Spelling pronunciation thus becomes a cognitive and cultural strategy, enabling speakers to pronounce unfamiliar words while expressing their linguistic authenticity.

Spelling pronunciation serves as a significant marker of cultural identity among participants, who view their pronunciation choices as authentic expressions of their linguistic heritage. By favouring spelling pronunciations, speakers communicate effectively while asserting their belonging to a specific cultural and linguistic community within Ghana. This perspective reflects the broader role of language as a social construct, where pronunciations carry meanings that extend beyond phonetics, intertwining with identity and cultural expression.

From a pragmatic perspective, the reliance on spelling pronunciation among educated Ghanaian English speakers highlights its utility as a strategy for articulating unfamiliar words. This approach is particularly relevant in Ghana's multilingual context, where speakers frequently navigate between English and indigenous languages. The familiarity with English orthography offers a practical framework for pronunciation, reducing the cognitive demands of mastering phonetic norms that may not correspond with their linguistic backgrounds.

However, this reliance on orthography raises questions about language attitudes and perceptions of linguistic authority. The prioritisation of spelling over phonetics suggests a societal tendency to view English pronunciation through the lens of orthography rather than standardised phonetic norms. This approach may reflect an intentional effort to resist the dominance of native-speaker norms while maintaining cultural ties within the Ghanaian linguistic context. Participants' reliance on spelling pronunciation, therefore, signifies both a pragmatic adaptation and an assertion of cultural identity within the global English landscape.

The findings further highlight the implications of these attitudes for language education in Ghana. Recognising the relationship between pronunciation, cultural identity, and societal perceptions can guide the development of culturally relevant and linguistically effective teaching strategies. Language educators should create inclusive learning environments that validate students' linguistic identities while equipping them with tools to navigate standard English pronunciation confidently.

Incorporating discussions about language attitudes and identity into the curriculum can help students understand the sociolinguistic factors influencing their pronunciation choices. By encouraging students to reflect on their linguistic identities and the cultural

significance of their pronunciations, educators can foster pride in linguistic heritage while promoting a more inclusive approach to English as a global language. Such strategies can bridge the gap between local linguistic realities and global communication demands, empowering students to navigate diverse linguistic contexts effectively.

Theme 4: Correctness

The analysis of participants' perceptions of correctness regarding their use of spelling pronunciation reveals a complex relationship between standardised pronunciation norms and 'vernacular' speech patterns within the context of Ghanaian English. This theme emphasises how speakers navigate their identities and the sociolinguistic landscape while also contending with varying perceptions of what constitutes "correct" pronunciation.

The data indicates that while 70 of participants predominantly base their pronunciations on spelling, a significant minority (30) draws upon their perceptions of how words should sound. This contrast in pronunciation strategies reflects a balance between conformity to established norms and individual linguistic expression. Participants who rely on spelling pronunciation do so as a practical tool, often grounded in their educational experiences and familiarity with English orthography. This approach, while functional, may lack alignment with standardised phonetic norms. In contrast, those who trust their auditory perceptions may exhibit a more intuitive grasp of pronunciation that resonates with their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

This phenomenon aligns with Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model, which emphasises the adaptability of language to the unique contexts of its users. The framework posits that speakers adjust their language use according to the linguistic

environment and personal experiences. For Ghanaian speakers of English, this means navigating the complexities of English pronunciation while remaining rooted in their cultural identities and linguistic heritages. The reliance on spelling pronunciation can thus be seen as a pragmatic strategy that enables speakers to assert their identities while striving for intelligibility in their spoken English.

Spelling pronunciation serves as a bridge between the phonetic challenges posed by English and the cognitive strategies developed by speakers within their sociocultural environment. By relying on spelling, speakers are often able to articulate English words more confidently, even if the resulting pronunciations diverge from standard phonetic expectations. This practice not only facilitates communication but also reinforces the speakers' sense of identity within the Ghanaian linguistic landscape.

The intersection of spelling pronunciation and perceptions of correctness suggests that participants view their pronunciation choices through a lens that values both intelligibility and individual expression. For many, adhering to spelling-based pronunciation provides a sense of security, particularly in contexts where linguistic competence is evaluated against standardised targets. However, for those who prioritise their perceptions of how words should sound, there is an implied recognition that pronunciation is fluid and subject to personal and cultural interpretation.

The diverse perceptions of correctness among participants have significant implications for the teaching and learning of English in Ghana. Language educators must acknowledge the complex relationship between spelling pronunciation, individual perception, and standardised norms. This recognition requires a shift in pedagogical approaches, encouraging educators to create inclusive environments that validate

students' unique linguistic identities while also guiding them toward an understanding of standard pronunciation norms.

Furthermore, discussions around the perception of correctness in pronunciation should be integrated into English language curricula. By encouraging students to reflect on their pronunciation choices and the sociocultural factors influencing them, educators can promote a deeper understanding of language as a dynamic and adaptive system. Such an approach fosters a more nuanced appreciation of the variations inherent in English pronunciation, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive understanding of what it means to speak English in Ghana.

Theme 5: Comfortability

This theme explored the comfort levels of participants with the practice of spelling pronunciation, examining its acceptance in everyday communication. The results, as presented in Table 4.3, illustrates a high level of comfort with spelling pronunciation among participants, indicating its strong presence in the linguistic practices of Ghanaian English speakers.

On a scale of 1-5, participants were asked to place their comfort level with spelling pronunciation. The results show that no participant rated their comfort level below 3, with 70% of participants feeling “very comfortable” (5), 20% feeling “comfortable” (4), and 10% reporting “moderate comfort” (3). This distribution underscores the widespread acceptance and familiarity of spelling pronunciation, positioning it as a standard practice for most speakers within the study group. The absence of significant discomfort or resistance suggests that spelling pronunciation has become an ingrained element of everyday communication in Ghanaian English.

The widespread comfort with spelling pronunciation can be understood from both cognitive and sociocultural perspectives. As Ngula (2011) and Bamgbose (1998) have noted, spelling pronunciation has evolved as a key feature of Ghanaian English, influenced by the sociolinguistic context in which it is spoken. Ghana's multilingual environment, where English functions as a second language, makes spelling pronunciation a practical solution for learners. By aligning spoken forms of English with written orthography, speakers reduce the cognitive challenges associated with learning complex phonetic patterns that do not align with their native language structures. Flege's Speech Learning Model (1995) supports this view, suggesting that second-language learners adapt their pronunciation based on cognitive and environmental factors, ultimately making pronunciation choices that feel more intuitive and culturally relevant.

Furthermore, the comfort with spelling pronunciation aligns with broader postcolonial linguistic practices, where speakers of English in postcolonial societies often adapt the language to reflect their cultural and linguistic identities. Rather than strictly adhering to native-speaker norms, Ghanaian English speakers embrace spelling pronunciation as part of their local linguistic identity, marking a distinctive feature of Ghanaian English. This adaptation exemplifies the dynamic and evolving nature of language, demonstrating that English, as spoken in Ghana, is not just a means of communication but also a tool for asserting cultural identity.

From an educational perspective, the findings suggest the need for a more inclusive approach to teaching English in Ghana. The widespread comfort with spelling pronunciation signals that it should be recognised as an integral feature of Ghanaian English rather than viewed as a deviation from standardised norms. Adopting such an

inclusive framework could help reduce the stigma associated with non-standard pronunciations and promote a more nuanced understanding of English that acknowledges and respects the linguistic diversity of its speakers. Language education, therefore, must evolve to support the cultural and cognitive factors that influence pronunciation, fostering greater acceptance and understanding of regional variations in English.

4.2 Research Question 2: What phonological patterns are identified in the spelling pronunciation of Ghanaian spoken English?

This section explores the phonological patterns observed in the spelling pronunciation of educated Ghanaian English speakers in the study. The analysis focuses on four main patterns thematised as vowel modifications, monophthongization and diphthongization, consonant substitution, deletion and epenthesis. These patterns highlight the influence of orthography and local phonological systems on the pronunciation of English words. Table 4.2 below displays the results of participants' pronunciation, which comprises orthographic forms of words alongside their RP pronunciations and participants' spelling pronunciations.

Table 4.2 Results from Participants' Pronunciations of Words in their Presentations

Words	Standard Pronunciation (RP)	Spelling Pronunciations
1. Category	[kætəgəri:]	[katɪ:gɔɾɪ]
2. Quantity	[kwɒn.tɪ.ti:]	[kwa:nti:ti:]
3. Quality	[kwɒ.lɪ.ti:]	[kwa:li:ti:]
4. Graduate	[gradʒuet]	[gra:dwet]
5. Chose	[ʃəʊs]	[ʃos]
6. Mixed	[mɪskt]	[mɪskd]
7. Of	[əv]	[ɔf]
8. So	[səʊ]	[so]
9. Names	[neɪmz]	[nems]
10. The	[ðə]	[dɛ]

11. Character	[kærətə]	[karata]
12. According	[əkɔ:diŋ]	[akɔdiŋ]
13. Qualitative	[kɔlɪteɪtɪv]	[kwalitetiv]
14. Data	[deɪtə]	[deta]
15. Collection	[kələʃən]	[kələʃɪn]
16. Theory	[θɪəri:]	[tɪri:]
17. Methodology	[məθədɒlədʒi]	[metɒdɒlədʒi:]
18. Same	[seɪm]	[sem]
19. Is	[əz]	[ɪs]
20. Purposive	[pəpəsɪv]	[pəpəsiv]
21. Analysis	[ənælɪsɪs]	[analɪsɪs]
22. Lexicon	[ləksɪkən]	[ləzɪkən]
23. Lexical	[ləksɪkəl]	[ləzɪkəl]
24. English	[ɪŋɡlɪʃ]	[ɪŋɡliʃ]
25. Language	[læŋɡwɪdʒ]	[læŋɡwedʒ]
26. Coinage	[kɔɪnɪdʒ]	[kwɛɪnedʒ]
27. Coin	[kɔɪn]	[kwɛɪn]
28. Are	[a:]	[a:]
29. Suit	[su:t]	[si:ut]
30. Novel	[nɒvəl]	[novul]
31. Pronounced	[prənaʊnst]	[pronaʊnsd]
32. Introducing	[ɪntrədʒusɪŋ]	[i:ntrodrusi:ŋg]
33. Conclusion	[kɒŋklu:ʒən]	[kɒŋklu:ʃɪn]
34. Recommendation	[rɛkəməndeɪʃən]	[rɪkəməndeʃɪn]
35. Recommended	[rɛkəməndəd]	[rɪkəməndəd]
36. Concentrating	[kɒnsentretɪŋ]	[kɒnsentreti:n]
37. Expressions	[ɪkspreʃən]	[ɛspreʃɪns]
38. Writer	[waɪtə]	[wraɪta]
39. Saying	[seɪ.ɪŋ]	[seyi:ŋ]
40. Author	[ɔ:θə]	[ɔ:ta]
41. Convey	[kənveɪ]	[kənve]
42. Message	[mesɪdʒ]	[mesedʒ]
43. Graphological	[græfɒlədʒɪkəl]	[grafɒlədʒɪkəl]
44. Foregrounded	[fɔ:graʊndɪd]	[fɔ:graʊndəd]
45. Local	[ləʊkl]	[ləkəl]
46. Imperatives	[ɪmpɛrətɪv]	[ɪmpɛreti:vs]
47. Declarative	[dɪklærətɪv]	[dɪklareti:vs]
48. Interrogatives	[ɪntəʁɒgrətɪv]	[ɪnterogetivs]
49. Introduction	[ɪntrədʌkʃən]	[ɪntrodakʃɪn]
50. Woman	[wʊmən]	[wuman]
51. Associated	[əsəʊʃɪetɪd]	[asoʃɪetəd]
52. Sentences	[sentənsɪs]	[sentensɪs]
53. Nouns	[naʊns]	[naʊns]
54. Abstract	[æbstrækt]	[abstrat]
55. Sure	[ʃʊə]	[ʃɪə]
56. Tailor	[teɪlə]	[te:la]
57. Phonological	[fɒnɒlədʒɪkəl]	[fɒnɒlədʒɪkəl]
58. Cohesion	[kəʊhi:ʒən]	[koheʃɪn], [kɒhi :ʃɪn]
59. Social	[səʊʃəl]	[soʃɪəl]
60. Growth	[grəʊθ]	[grot], [grof]

61. About	[əbaʊt]	[abaʊt], [ebaʊt]
62. Digital	[dɪdʒɪtl]	[dɪɡɪtəl], [dɪɡɪtə:]
63. Roles	[rəʊls]	[rols]
64. Context	[kɒntɛskt]	[kɒntest]
65. What	[wɒt]	[hwat], [hwɔ:t]
66. Numerous	[nʌmərəs]	[numi:rəs],
67. Education	[ɛdʒukeɪʃən]	[edukeʃi:n]
68. Vision	[vɪʒən]	[vi:ʃi:ŋ]
69. Framework	[freɪ mwɛk]	[fremwɛk]
70. Inaugural	[ɪnəɡərəl]	[i:nəɡoral]

The results above vividly illustrate that participants' pronunciations did not align with the Received Pronunciation (RP) but were predominantly spelling pronunciation. This finding indicates that even among educated speakers used for this study, spelling pronunciation is used over RP. This finding corroborates with Sey (1973), Bobda (2000), Koranteng (2006), Ngula (2011), Adjei and Loggogye (2016), Akpanglo-Nartey (2020), all of whom argue that educated Ghanaians typically do not use RP and that their pronunciations are characterised with Ghanaian English pronunciations including spelling pronunciation.

The following sections provides analysis and discussions of phonological patterns in participants' spelling pronunciations according to the themes mentioned above.

Table 4.2.1 Phonological Patterns Identified between Vowel Sounds and Letters

The table below shows examples of phonological patterns identified in the spelling pronunciations of vowel sounds and letters.

Letters that Caused Spelling Pronunciation	Words found in them	How the letters are pronounced in Received Pronunciation	RP Pronunciations	Phonetic Transcriptions of pronunciations	How the letters were pronounced in Spelling Pronunciation
1. letter 'O'	1. Category	/ə/ and /ɒ/	[kætəgəri]	[katigəri]	[ɒ]
	2. Chose	/əʊ/	[tʃəʊs]	[tʃos]	[o]
	3. of	/əv/	[əv]	[ɒf]	[ɒ]
	4. so	/əʊ/	[səʊ]	[so]	[o]
	5. Collection	/ɒ/	[kələkʃən]	[kələkʃɪn]	[ɒ]
	6. Theory	/iə/	[θiəri:]	[tɪəri:]	[ɒ]
	7. Methodology	/ə/ɒ/	[məθədɒlədʒi]	[metɒdɒlədʒi]	[ɒ]
	8. Purposive	/ɛ/ə/	[pəpəsɪv]	[pəpəsɪv]	[ɔ]
	9. Lexicon	/ɛ/	[ləksɪkən]	[ləzɪkən]	[ɒ]
	10. Novel	/ɒ/	[nɒvəl]	[nɒvəl]	[ɒ]
	11. Pronounced	/ə/əʊ/	[prənaʊnst]	[pronaʊnsd]	[o]
	12. Introducing	/ə/	[ɪntrədʒusɪŋ]	[ɪntrodʒusɪŋ]	[o]
	13. Conclusion	/ə/	[kənkluzən]	[kənkluzɪn]	[ɒ]
	14. Recommendation	/ə/	[rekəməndeɪʃən]	[rekəməndeɪʃɪn]	[ɒ]
	15. Concentrating	/ə/	[kənsəntreɪʃən]	[kənsentɾeɪʃɪn]	[ɒ]
	16. Graphological	/ɒ/	[græfɒlədʒɪkəl]	[grafɒlədʒɪkəl]	[ɒ]
	17. Interrogative	/ə/ɒ/	[ɪn.tərɒ.gətɪv]	[ɪn.tərɒ.getɪv]	[ɒ]
	18. Cohesion	/ə/	[kəʊhi:ʒən]	[kəʊhi:ʃɪn]	[o]
	19. Social	/əʊ/	[səʊʃəl]	[soʃɪəl]	[o]
	20. Growth	/əʊ/	[grəʊθ]	[grot]	[o]
	21. Context	/ə/	[kəntɛkst]	[kəntest]	[ɒ]
	22. Numerous	/ə/	[nju:mərəs]	[nu:mərəs]	[ɒ]
2. Letter 'A'	Character	/æ/ə/	[kærəktə]	[karata]	[a]
	Qualitative	/ɒ/ɛɪ/	[kɒlɪteɪtɪv]	[kwalitetɪv]	[a]
	According	/ə/	[əkədɪŋ]	[akədɪŋ]	[a]
	Quality	/ɒ/	[kwɒ.lɪ.ti:]	[kwali:ti:]	[a]
	Quantity	/ɒ/	[kwɒn.tɪ.ti:]	[kwa:nti:ti:]	[a]
	Graduate	/a/ ɛɪ/	[grədʒueɪt]	[gra:dwet]	[a], [e]
	Data	/ɛɪ/ə/	[deɪtə]	[deta]	[e], [a]
	Graphological	/ɒ/ ə/	[græfɒlədʒɪkəl]	[grafɒlədʒɪka:l]	[a]
	Local	/ə/	[ləʊkəl]	[loka:l]	[e], [ɪa]
	Social	/ə/	[səʊʃəl]	[so:ʃɪəl]	[a]
	Message	/ɪ/	[mesɪdʒ]	[mɛsedʒ]	[a]
	Imperatives	/ə/	[ɪmpɛrətɪv]	[ɪmpɛretɪv]	[a][e]
	What	/ɒ/	[wɒt]	[wat]	[a]
	Woman	/ə/	[wɒmən]	[wuman]	[a]
	As	/ə/	[əz]	[as]	[a]

Author

3. Letter 'I'

Quality	/ɪ/ /i:/	[kwɒ.lɪ.ti:]	[kwali:ti:]	[i:]
Quantity	/ɪ/ /i:/	[kwɒn.tɪ.ti:]	[kwa:nti:ti:]	[i:]
Mixed	/ɪ/	[mɪskt]	[mɪskd]	[ɪ]
According	/ɪ/	[əkə:dɪŋ]	[akə:dɪŋ]	[ɪ]
Qualitative	/ɪ/ /ɪ/	[kwɒlɪtətɪv]	[kwalitetiv]	[ɪ], [i:]
Collection	/ə/	[kələʃən]	[kələʃɪn]	[ɪ]
Is	/ə/	[əz]	[ɪz]	[ɪ]
Analysis	/ɪ/	[ənəˈlɪsɪs]	[analɪsɪs]	[ɪ]
Lexicon	/ɪ/	[lɛksɪkən]	[lɛzɪkən]	[ɪ]
Lexical	/ɪ/	[lɛksɪkəl]	[lɛzɪkəl]	[ɪ]
English	/ɪ/	[ɪŋɡlɪʃ]	[ɪŋɡlɪʃ]	[ɪ]
Coinage	/ɪ/	[kɔɪnɪdʒ]	[kwɔɪmedʒ]	[ɔɪ]
Coin	/ɪ/	[kɔɪn]	[kwɔɪn]	[ɔɪ]
Suit	-	[su:t]	[siu:t]	[i:]
Conclusion	/ə/	[kənkluzən]	[kənklufɪn]	[ɪ]
Introducing	/ɪ/	[ɪntrədʒusɪŋ]	[ɪntrodusɪŋ]	[ɪ]
Recommendation	/ɪ/	[rɛkəməndeɪʃən]	[rɛkəməndeʃɪn]	[ɪ]
Concentrating	/ɪ/	[kənsentrətɪŋ]	[kənsentretɪŋ]	[i:]
Expressions	/ɪ/	[ɪkspreʃən]	[ɛkspreʃɪn]	[ɪ]
Writer	/aɪ/	[waɪtə]	[waɪta]	[aɪ]
Graphological	/ɪ/	[græfɒlədʒɪkəl]	[grafɒlədʒɪkəl]	[ɪ]
Imperative	/ɪ/	[ɪmpɛrətɪv]	[ɪmpɛretɪv]	[i:]
Declarative	/ɪ/	[dɪklərətɪv]	[dɪklaretɪv]	[i:]
Interrogative	/ɪ/	[ɪntəʁgrətɪv]	[ɪntəʁɡretɪv]	[ɪ], [i:]
Introduction	/ɪ/	[ɪntrədʌkʃən]	[ɪntrodakʃɪn]	[ɪ]
Associated	/i/	[əsəʊʃɪetɪd]	[asoʃɪetəd]	[i:]
Phonological	/ɪ/	[fɒnɒlədʒɪkəl]	[fɒnɒlədʒɪkəl]	[ɪ]
Cohesion	/ə//ɪ/	[kəʊhi:ʒən]	[kəhi:ʃɪn]	[i:]
Social	/ɪ/	[səʊʃəl]	[soʃɪəl]	[i:]
Education	/ɪ/	[ɛdʒukeɪʃən]	[ɛdukeɪʃɪn]	[i:]
Vision	/i:/ /ɪ/	[vɪʒən]	[vɪʃɪŋ]	[i:], [ɪ:]
Digital	/ɪ/ /ɪ/	[dɪdʒɪtl]	[dɪɡɪtl]	[ɪ], [i:]

4. Letter 'U'

Quality	/ʊ/	[kwɒ.lɪ.ti:]	[kwali:ti:]	[w]
Quantity	/ʊ/	[kwɒn.tɪ.ti:]	[kwa:nti:ti:]	[w]

Graduate	/u:/	[gradʒueɪt]	[gra:dwet]	[w]
Purpose	/ɛ:/	[pəpəsɪv]	[pəpəsi:v]	[ɔ]
Language	/w/	[læŋgwiɪdʒ]	[langwedʒ]	[e]
Suit	/u:/	[su:t]	[siu:t]	[u]
Pronounced	/aʊ/	[prənaʊnst]	[pronaʊnsd]	[aʊ]
Introducing Qual	/u:/	[ɪŋtrədʒusɪŋ]	[ɪntrodakʃɪŋ]	[a:]
Conclusion	/u:/	[kənkluzən]	[kɒŋklu:ʃɪn]	[u]
Author	/ɔ:/	[ɔ:θə]	[ɔ:ta]	[ɔ:]
Foregrounded	/aʊ/	[fɔ:graʊndəd]	[fɔ:graʊndəd]	[aʊ]
Introduction	/ʌ/	[ɪŋtrədʌkʃən]	[ɪntrodakʃɪn]	[a]
Nouns	/aʊ/	[naʊns]	[naʊns]	[aʊ]
Sure	/ʊə/	[ʃʊə]	[ʃɪə]	[ɪə]
About	/aʊ/	[əbaʊt]	[abaʊt]	[aʊ]
Numerous	/u:/ /ə/	[nju:mərəs]	[numrəs]	[u:], [v]
Education	/u:/	[edʒukeɪʃən]	[edukeʃɪŋ]	[u:]
Inaugural	/ɔ/	[ɪnəgrəl]	[ɪnəɡɔrə:l]	[ɔ], [ʊ]

5. Letter 'E'	Category	[ə]	[kætəgəri:]	[katɪ:gɔrɪ]	[i:]
	Graduate	-	[gradʒueɪt]	[gra:dwet]	-
	Chose	-	[tʃəʊs]	[tʃos]	-
	Mixed	-	[mɪskt]	[mɪskd]	-
	Names	-	[neɪms]	[nems]	-
	The	[ə]	[də]	[de]	[e]
	Character	-	[kærətə]	[karata]	-
	Qualitative	-	[kɔlɪteɪtɪv]	[kwəlɪteɪtɪv]	-
	Collection	[ɛ]	[kələʃən]	[kɒləkʃɪn]	[e]
	Theory	[ɪə]	[θɪəri:]	[tɪəri:]	[ɪə]
	Methodology	[ɛ]	[məθədɒlədʒi]	[metɒdələdʒ]	[e]
	Same	-	[seɪm]	[sem]	-
	Purposive	-	[pəpəsɪv]	[pəpəsɪv]	-
	Lexicon	[ɛ]	[lɛksɪkən]	[ləzɪkən]	[e]
	Lexical	[ɛ]	[lɛksɪkəl]	[ləzɪkəl]	[e]
	English	[ɪ]	[ɪŋɡlɪʃ]	[ɪŋɡlɪʃ]	[i:]
	Language	-	[læŋgwiɪdʒ]	[langwedʒ]	-
	Are	-	[a:]	[a:]	-
	Novel	[ə]	[nɒvəl]	[novʊl]	[ʊ]
	Pronounced	-	[prənaʊnst]	[pronaʊnsd]	-
	Recommendation	[ɛ]	[rɛkəməndeɪʃən]	[rɪkəməndeʃɪn]	[e]
	Recommended	[ɛ] [ɪ]	[rɛkəməndɪd]	[rɪkəməndəd]	[ɛ][e]
	Concentrating	[ɛ]	[kənsentretɪŋ]	[kɒnsentretɪŋ]	[e]
	Expressions	[ɪ] [ɛ]	[ɪkspreʃənz]	[ɛspreʃɪns]	[ɛ] [e]
	Writer	-	[wraɪtə]	[wraɪta]	-
	Theory	-	[ɔ:θə]	[tɪəri:]	-
	Convey	[eɪ]	[kənveɪ]	[kɒnve]	[e]
	Message	[ɛ]	[mesɪdʒ]	[məsedʒ]	[e]
	Foregrounded	[ɪ]	[fɔ:graʊndɪd]	[fɔ:graʊndəd]	[e]
	Imperatives	[ɛ]	[ɪmpɛrətɪv]	[ɪmpɛreti:v]	[e]
	Declaratives	[ɪ]	[dɪklɛrətɪv]	[di:klɛreti:v]	[i:]

Interrogatives	[ə]	[ɪntəʁgrəɪtɪv]	[ɪnterogetiv]	[ɛ]
Associated	[ɪ]	[əsəʃɪetɪd]	[asəʃɪetəd]	[ɛ]
Sentences	[ɛ][ə]	[sentənsɪs]	[sentensɪs]	[ɛ][ɪ]
Sure	-	[ʃʊə]	[ʃɪə]	-
Cohesion	[i:]	[kəʊhi:ʒən]	[koheʃɪŋ]	[ɛ]
Roles	-	[rəʊls]	[rɒls]	-
Context	[ɛ]	[kɒntɛskt]	[kɒntɛst]	[ɛ]
Numerous	[ə]	[nɜ:ʊ:mərəs]	[numrɒs]	[-]
Education	[ɛ]	[ɛdʒukeɪʃən]	[ɛdukeɪʃɪn]	[ɛ]
Framework	-	[freɪ mwek]	[fremwek]	-

Theme 1: Vowel Modifications

The results displayed in table 4.2. reveal that vowel modifications played a significant role in the spelling pronunciation patterns exhibited by participants. Specifically, vowel sounds were frequently modified to correspond closely with their orthographic representations. This process led to the emergence of spelling pronunciations that diverged from the expected forms in Received Pronunciation (RP). The following are sub-themes for the analysis and discussions of the various phonological patterns identified under vowel modifications in participants' spelling pronunciations.

Sub-theme 1: Modifications of Vowel Letter “a”

The findings displayed in table 4.2 show consistent phonological patterns in the pronunciation of the vowel letter “a”. In fifteen words containing the letter “a”, participants exhibited spelling pronunciation tendencies. These words included ‘quantity’ [kwa:ntɪ:ti:], ‘graduate’ [gra:dwet], ‘data’ [deta], ‘graphological’ [grafbɒldʒɪka:l], ‘local’ [loka:l], and ‘social’ [so:ʃɪəl]. In Received Pronunciation (RP), the letter “a” is associated with at least four distinct phonemes: /ə/, /æ/, /ɒ/, and /ɪ/. However, the findings revealed that participants predominantly pronounced “a” as [a] across all fifteen words. Additionally, “a” was realised as [e] in five instances and as [ɪa] in one instance. These patterns disclose the influence of orthography on Ghanaian

English and reflect the dominant impact of local phonological systems on participants' pronunciations.

In many Ghanaian languages, including Twi, the letter “a” has a stable and fixed pronunciation as [a]. For instance, words such as ‘twa’ (cut) [twa], ‘aseda’ (thanksgiving) [aseda], ‘ate’ (thorn) [ate], and ‘nam’ (fish) [nam] consistently feature the [a] sound. Similarly, the letter “a” is occasionally pronounced as [e], as in words like ‘anuonyam’ (glory) [anuonyam], ‘anigye’ (happiness) [anigye], and ‘afurum’ (donkey) [afurum]. This consistency in the realisation of “a” differs markedly from the inconsistency observed in RP. Bobda (2000) explains this phenomenon within the broader framework of West African English, asserting that vowel sounds from native languages are frequently transferred into English, leading to predictable spelling pronunciations. This linguistic transfer accounts for the dominance of /a/ in participants' pronunciations, reflecting a preference for orthographic similarity over RP's phonetic diversity.

The uniform adoption of /a/ in Ghanaian English pronunciation is further supported by the phonological structures of local languages, which typically feature a more stable and limited vowel inventory. As a result, the consistent realisation of “a” as /a/ aligns with the simplicity and systematic nature of local vowel systems. This observation affirms Dolphyne's (1988) assertion that the phonological systems of native languages exert a profound influence on the articulation of L2 vowels. Such deviations from RP norms highlight the significance of linguistic transfer and the shaping of L2 pronunciation by L1 phonological patterns. Moreover, these findings align with Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model, which posits that L2 learners' phonetic categories are preoccupied with their L1 sounds before acquiring the L2. Consequently,

the participants' reliance on the /a/ sound for the letter "a" illustrates how Ghanaian English adapts L2 pronunciation to the phonetic patterns of L1. This relationship between orthographic influence and local phonology exemplifies the distinctiveness of Ghanaian English and its divergence from RP norms.

Sub-theme 2: Modifications of Vowel Letter "e"

The findings also reveal interesting patterns in the pronunciation of the vowel letter "e" within the Ghanaian English context. While "e" is a vowel letter in English with multiple phonetic representations in Received Pronunciation (RP), its variations in spelling pronunciation among participants were limited compared to other vowels. As shown in table 4.2.3, the letter "e" appeared in 43 words out of the 70 used for the study. RP transcriptions of these words showed that "e" could represent various phonemes, including /ɛ/, /ɪ/, and /ə/. These phonetic realisations were evident in only 23 words, including 'imperative' [ɪmpəretɪv], 'declarative' [dɪkləretɪv], and 'sentences' [sentənsɪs]. In these instances, participants' pronunciations closely aligned with RP standards ('imperative' /ɪmpərətɪv/, 'declarative' /dɪklærətɪv/ and 'sentences' sentənsɪs/).

However, in many of the remaining words, the presence of "e" did not significantly influence pronunciation in either RP transcription or spelling pronunciation. This pattern suggests that while the letter "e" might not exhibit extensive phonological variability, it still reflects distinct orthographic influences, a characteristic feature of Ghanaian English, as noted by Dolphyne (1988) and Bobda (2000). The study found that "e" was pronounced as [ɛ] in 26 words, a realisation consistent with RP in words such as 'recommendation' /rɛkəməndeɪʃən/, 'recommended' /rɛkəməndɪd/, 'concentrating' /kənsentretɪŋ/, and 'expression' /ɪkspreʃən/. Participants'

pronunciations, such as [rɪkɒməndeʃɪn], [rɪkɒməndəd], [kɒnsentretɪŋ], and [ɛspreʃɪns], closely mirrored these RP forms. This relative consistency indicates that the pronunciation of “e” as [ɛ] might be less susceptible to native language interference, unlike other vowel sounds.

Nevertheless, several deviations were observed. For instance, “e” was pronounced as /ɪ/, /i:/, or /ɛ/ in words such as ‘recommended’ [rɪkɒməndəd] instead of /rɛkəməndɪd/, ‘expression’ /ɪkspreʃən/ for [ɛspreʃɪns], and ‘English’ /ɪŋɡlɪʃ/ for [i:ŋɡli:ʃ]. These variations illustrate a reliance on orthographic cues, where the letter “e” is pronounced based on its visual representation rather than RP conventions. Such adaptations align with the broader phonological tendencies observed in Ghanaian English, where orthographic influence often overrides phonemic diversity. Bobda (2000) and Koranteng (2006) have previously highlighted how spelling pronunciation emerges as a defining feature of West African English, attributing this phenomenon to the interaction between orthography and L1 phonological systems. The findings, also support Flege’s (1995) Speech Learning Model, which posits that L1 phonological constructs significantly shape L2 sound acquisition. In this context, participants’ reliance on the entrenched phonological features of their native languages, such as Twi and Fante, limits the accurate realisation of L2 sounds like the English “e”. These L1 influences manifest in the simplification of vowel inventories and the substitution of RP vowel sounds with locally familiar sounds, as seen in the frequent use of [ɛ] and [ɪ].

Additionally, Dolphyne (1988) corroborates this observation by noting that vowel sounds in Ghanaian languages, including those represented by “e”, often have fixed realisations that lack the variability seen in English. For example, in Ewe, or Fante, “e” is consistently pronounced as [ɛ] or [e], as seen in words like ‘edze’ (salt) [ɛdze], ‘ese’

(heard) [ese], ‘enyim’ (front) [enyim], and ‘esuom’(midnight) [esuom], with no alternative phonetic realisations. This consistency influences Ghanaian speakers’ pronunciation of English, leading to the dominance of [ɛ] and [ɪ] for the letter “e”.

Furthermore, the findings highlight how spelling pronunciation serves as a satisfying strategy for dealing with the complexities of English phonology. As Bobda (2000) explains, the tendency to rely on orthography stems from limited exposure to native English pronunciation models and the influence of a predominantly written English environment. This is particularly evident in Ghanaian English, where spelling often dictates pronunciation patterns, reinforcing deviations from RP norms.

Sub-theme 3: Modifications of Vowel Letter “i”

The findings also reveal intriguing patterns in the pronunciation of the vowel letter “i” within the context of Ghanaian English. In Received Pronunciation, the letter “i” is associated with various phonetic realisations, including /i:/, /ɪ/, and /ə/, depending on the linguistic environment. However, among the participants in this study, these variations were predominantly limited to /i:/ and /ɪ/. This indicates a restricted range of phonetic realisations influenced by spelling conventions and interference from native language phonology.

The results showed that the vowel letter “i” occurred in 32 of the 70 words used in the study. According to the RP transcriptions of these words, “i” can represent phonemes such as /i:/, /ɪ/, and /ə/. For instance, in words like ‘mixed’ /mɪkst/, ‘according’ /əko:dn/, and ‘lexicon’ /ləksɪkən/, participants’ pronunciations closely mirrored RP conventions. These accurate realisations reflect a higher level of phonological competence among a subset of the participants, with only ten participants consistently aligning with RP standards in words such as ‘lexical’ /ləksɪkəl/, ‘expressions’

/ɪk'spreʃənz/, and 'digital' /dɪdʒɪtl/. However, these instances of RP-aligned pronunciation were exceptions rather than the norm.

For many participants, the presence of the letter “i” in the spelling of a word significantly influenced their pronunciation. This influence was particularly evident in the substitution of the schwa /ə/ with /ɪ/ or /i:/ in syllables ending with “-ing” or “-tion”. Words such as ‘concentrating’ /kɒnsəntreɪtɪŋ/, ‘expressions’ /ɪkspreʃənz/, ‘introduction’ /ɪntərədʌkʃən/, and ‘collection’ /kəleɪʃən/ frequently exhibited this pattern. In many cases, participants replaced RP’s schwa with [ɪ] or [i:], producing forms such as ‘concentrating’ [kɒnsəntreɪtɪŋ] and ‘introduction’ [ɪntərədʌkʃɪn]. Similarly, in the pronunciation of words like ‘vision’ [vɪʒən] and ‘is’ [əz], participants substituted the schwa or short vowel with [i:], resulting in forms like [vɪʃi:n] and [ɪs]. These deviations highlight the role of orthographic cues in shaping pronunciation, with participants relying on visual representations rather than phonological rules.

The study further identified instances where participants pronounced /ɪ/ as [i:], deviating from RP norms. For example, in words like ‘qualitative’ [kwɒlɪtətɪv], ‘quality’ [kwɒlɪti], and ‘purposive’ [pɜ:pəsɪv], the RP realisation of /ɪ/ was replaced with [i:]. These deviations also appeared in words like ‘cohesion’ [kəʊhi:ʒən], ‘interrogatives’ [ɪntərəgətɪvz], and ‘imperatives’ [ɪmpərətɪvz]. For example, participants produced forms like ‘qualitative’ [kwali:teti:v] and ‘imperatives’ [ɪmpereɪti:vz]. This pattern suggests that native language interference plays a significant role in pronunciation. In many Ghanaian languages, such as Twi, Kusaal, Fante, and Ewe, high front vowels like [i:] are predominant in words such as ‘siw’ (pound) [siw], ‘dzi’ (sing) [dzi], and ‘ti’ (head) [ti]. This linguistic transfer likely influences English pronunciations, leading to overgeneralisations in the substitution of /ɪ/ with [i:].

Despite the frequency of non-standard realisations, some participants demonstrated accurate pronunciation of /ɪ/ in alignment with RP. For instance, words like ‘lexicon’ [lɛzɪkən], ‘mixed’ [mɪksd], ‘phonological’ [fɒnɒlədʒɪkə:l] and were pronounced correctly as /ɪ/ in /lɛksɪkən/, /mɪkst/, and [fɒnɒlədʒɪkə:l] respectively. These accurate pronunciations suggest that certain phonological features are less susceptible to interference from native languages. Such realisations point to the influence of formal education and exposure to RP norms on the participants’ phonological competence.

These findings align with prior research on Ghanaian English pronunciation. Bobda (2000) observed that spelling pronunciation is a pervasive feature among non-native English speakers, often stemming from a reliance on orthographic forms. Similarly, Koranteng (2006) highlighted that in multilingual contexts, spelling exerts a strong influence on pronunciation, particularly when learners prioritise visual forms over phonological conventions. The findings of this study corroborate these observations, underscoring the role of orthography as a primary cue in pronunciation.

Sub-theme 4: Modifications of Vowel Letter “o”

The findings in table 4.2.3 align with earlier studies, notably those by Bobda (2000) and Koranteng (2006), which emphasise the challenges posed by the letter “o” in Ghanaian English pronunciation. While British Received Pronunciation (RP) represents the letter “o” with multiple phonemes, such as /ɒ/, /əʊ/, and /ɔ:/, the participants in this study predominantly utilised only three phonetic realisations: /o/, /ɒ/, and occasionally /ɔ:/. This limited choice corroborates Bobda’s (2000) assertion that English spelling is often assimilated into the phonetic system of the speaker’s first language (L1), resulting in unique pronunciation patterns.

The findings revealed that the vowel “o”, which Koranteng (2006) identifies as problematic due to its diverse phonemic representations, played a significant role in spelling pronunciations among the participants. While RP assigns up to twelve phonemes to the letter “o”, including /ɒ/, /əʊ/, and /ɔ:/, the study identified only four instances where the participants’ pronunciations aligned with RP norms. These included [ɒ] in the pronunciation of ‘methodology’ [metədɒlədʒi], ‘concentrating’ [kɒnsentrefɪn], ‘graphological’ [ɡrafɒlədʒɪkəl], ‘interrogative’ [ɪn.tər.ɡetɪv], and ‘novel’ [nɒvəl]. However, in eighteen instances, the participants used phonemes /o/, /ɔ:/, and /ɒ/, which deviated from RP norms. The phoneme /o/, in particular, emerged as a direct spelling pronunciation of the orthographic letter “o”. This phoneme, though absent in RP, reflects a characteristic feature of Ghanaian English, influenced by the phonological structures of local Ghanaian languages. This pattern highlights the influence of orthography on Ghanaian English pronunciation, a phenomenon Bobda (2000) attributes to the integration of English orthographic forms into L1 phonetic systems.

The analysis further revealed that “o” appeared in 22 words out of the 70 used in the study. In seven instances, it was pronounced as /o/, as observed in words like ‘cohesion’ [kəhiːʃɪn], ‘social’ [soʃiəl], and ‘growth’ [ɡrɒt]. The phoneme /ɒ/ was recorded in words such as ‘theory’ [tɪəriː], ‘methodology’ [metədɒlədʒi], ‘lexicon’ [lɛzɪkɒn], ‘novel’ [nɒvəl], and ‘conclusion’ [kɒnklʊʃɪn]. The phoneme /ɔ:/ was less common, appearing only in ‘purposive’ [pɜːpɔːsɪv].

These pronunciations result from the influences of local languages on English in for example Fante ‘osuanyi’ [osuanyi] (learner), ‘kurom’ [kuro] (town), ‘Ofori’ [ɔfori] (name) feature the phoneme [o] which was manifested in participants’ spelling

pronunciation. Also, the analogy from influence of anglicized spelling of some Ghanaian words and names like ‘Oppong’ [ɔpɔŋ] (name), ‘odo’ [ɔdɔ] (love), ‘donkor’ [dɔnkɔ] (name), ‘osofo’ [ɔsɔfo] (pastor) contributes to participants pronunciations.

These findings support Dolphyne’s (1988) observation that the pronunciation of “o” as /o/ in Ghanaian English reflects the influence of local languages. According to Dolphyne, Ghanaian speakers often substitute RP vowel sounds with vowels from their native languages, leading to spelling pronunciations that deviate from RP norms. This phenomenon is consistent with Flege’s (1995) Speech Learning Model, which posits that L2 learners’ phonetic categories are initially shaped by their L1 phonological systems. Consequently, the L1 influences learners’ L2 phonetic realisations, particularly in contexts involving orthographic influences.

Sub-theme 5: Modification of the Vowel Letter “u”

The analysis of words containing the vowel letter “u” reveals significant variations between Received Pronunciation (RP) and Ghanaian English spelling pronunciation. A total of 18 words with the vowel “u” were examined, with 7 of them (e.g., ‘language’, ‘pronounced’, ‘author’, ‘foregrounded’, ‘introduction’, ‘nouns’, ‘about’, and ‘purposive’) aligning with RP pronunciations. These words did not undergo modification due to spelling pronunciation. However, the remaining words demonstrated notable changes, showcasing the influence of orthography on pronunciation.

In RP, the vowel “u” typically occurs with a glide /ju/ after certain consonants like /g/, /d/, or /t/, as seen in words like ‘graduate’, ‘education’, and ‘numerous’. However, in Ghanaian English spelling pronunciation, this glide is often simplified to /u/ or omitted entirely. For instance, the RP pronunciation of ‘graduate’ as /grædʒuət/ or /grædjuət/

transforms into [gra:dweɪt], where the glide /ju/ is replaced by the triphthong /weɪ/. This adjustment reflects a closer alignment with the orthographic representation of the word, highlighting the impact of spelling on pronunciation in non-native varieties of English. The simplification of the glide /ju/ is consistent in several examples. For instance, ‘suit’ (/su:t/ in RP) is rendered as [si:ut], introducing a diphthong absent in RP. Similarly, ‘numerous’ /nʃumərəs/ in RP becomes [numrəs], with the glide omitted and the schwa deleted. These shifts illustrate a preference in Ghanaian English for phonological transparency, where pronunciations closely align with the written form.

Words like ‘education’, ‘graduate’, and ‘numerous’ are frequently used in academic and professional discourse, amplifying the relevance of these patterns. For example, the RP pronunciation of ‘education’ /ədʒʊkeɪʃən/ transitions to [edukeʃɪn], where the glide /ju/ is dropped, and the vowel /u/ is emphasized. This simplification makes the word easier to pronounce for non-native speakers while adhering to its orthographic structure. Such transformations demonstrate how spelling influences pronunciation and shapes non-native varieties of English.

Despite these differences, some similarities between RP and spelling pronunciation persist. For instance, the vowel /u:/ in words like ‘conclusion’ remains consistent across both varieties, showing stability in certain phonological features. Stress patterns also remain largely intact, indicating that Ghanaian English speakers retain some elements of standard English phonology even as they adapt others. However, significant deviations are evident in the treatment of glides and schwas. In RP, the glide /ju/ is a defining feature of many words with “u”, but it is frequently simplified or replaced in Ghanaian English. Likewise, schwas in unstressed syllables are often substituted with

full vowels, as seen in ‘purposive’ [pɛpsɪv] and ‘numerous’ [numrəs], reflecting a preference for clearer vowel articulation.

The letter “u” also shows substantial variation beyond glides and schwas. In words like ‘quality’, ‘quantity’, and ‘graduate’, the results indicated that it adopts a labialised/w/ sound in [kwali:ti:], [kwa:nti:ti:], [gra:dweɪt] diverging from its typical RP realisation as /ʌ/ or /ʊ/. This labialisation reflects an adaptation of English phonemes to align with the Ghanaian phonetic inventory, where native linguistic features influence the pronunciation of foreign sounds. This phenomenon aligns with Flege’s Speech Learning Model (1995), which suggests that second-language speakers adapt target language sounds based on their native phonological system.

Labialisation of “u” to /w/ in Ghanaian English demonstrates a pragmatic adaptation of English phonemes. For example, the substitution of /u/ with /w/ may simplify pronunciation by aligning with familiar native sounds. This adaptation not only highlights the creative linguistic processes in bilingual contexts but also illustrates how spelling pronunciation serves as a bridge between English orthography and local phonetic systems.

These findings align with studies by Bobda (2000) and Koranteng (2006), which emphasise the influence of orthography on pronunciation among educated Ghanaian English speakers. Bobda notes that written forms often guide pronunciation, leading to deviations from RP norms, while Ngula (2011) identifies spelling pronunciation as a hallmark of Ghanaian English, reflecting the adaptation of English to local linguistic contexts. The theoretical insights of Flege (1995) further explain how interactions between native and target language phonological systems shape these unique pronunciation patterns.

Finally, the findings on the phonological patterns identified regarding vowel modifications reaffirms Koranteng (2006) that the vowel letters of the alphabet ('a', 'e', 'i', 'o', 'u') have more than one sound and causes spelling pronunciation.

Theme 2: Diphthongization and Monophthongization of RP Sounds

Another significant phonological pattern observed from the findings is the transformation of RP diphthongs into monophthongs and the occasional diphthongization of monophthongs. These transformations were evident in the pronunciations of participants, highlighting unique adaptations within Ghanaian English. For instance, the RP monophthong /u/ in the word 'suit' [su:t] was pronounced as a diphthong [ui] in [suit]. This shift suggests a tendency among participants to introduce glides between adjacent vowels, deviating from Received Pronunciation norms. Dolphyne (1988) explains that such changes often stem from the phonological systems of speakers' first languages (L1). In many Ghanaian languages, including Fante, Ewe, Nzema, and Frafra, vowel combinations often form glides, as seen in words like [tui] (flew) or [tue] (burst). This linguistic feature likely influences English pronunciation, especially when the phonetic inventory of L1 lacks a direct equivalent for the target L2 sound. This observation aligns with Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model, which posits that second-language learners tend to transfer phonological structures from their L1 to accommodate unfamiliar L2 sounds.

On the contrary, the findings also revealed instances of monophthongization, where RP diphthongs were simplified into single vowel sounds. For example, the RP diphthong [ei] in words such as 'graduate' [grædʒuert], 'names' [neims], and 'same' [seim] was pronounced as [e] in words like 'names' [nems], and 'same' [sem]. This simplified pronunciation reflects a tendency to substitute diphthongs with vowels more accessible

within the Ghanaian phonological system. Similarly, the RP diphthong [əʊ] in words like ‘chose’ /tʃəʊz/, ‘social’ /səʊʃəl/, and ‘growth’ /grəʊθ/ was replaced by the monophthong [o], producing pronunciations such as [tʃos], [soʃial], and [grot].

Another example is the RP diphthong [ɪə] in ‘theory’ /θɪəri/, which was altered to [ɪɒ], resulting in [tɪɒri:]. This change seems to reflect the influence of orthography, where the visual representation of the letter “o” influenced the replacement of the schwa [ə] with [ɒ]. Interestingly, the diphthong [aʊ], as in ‘about’ /əbaʊt/ for [abaʊt], was found to remain unchanged, indicating that not all RP diphthongs are affected in Ghanaian English spelling pronunciation.

The diphthongization and monophthongization observed in the findings emphasise the influence of orthography on pronunciation in Ghanaian English. The visual forms of English words often result in analogical phonetic responses, resulting in unique adaptations shaped by the learners’ linguistic environment. These findings highlight the dynamic interaction between written forms and spoken realisations, especially in multilingual contexts where speakers alternate in different phonological systems.

These patterns also strongly corroborate Flege’s (1995) Speech Learning Model, which provides a theoretical framework for understanding the phonological adaptations observed. According to the model, L2 learners experience phonetic interference from their L1 when encountering unfamiliar L2 sounds. In the context of this study, Ghanaian speakers rely on their L1 phonological structures to interpret English diphthongs and monophthongs, leading to the systematic transformations observed. Flege’s model also posits that learners create a new phonetic category for L2 sounds based on their linguistic experience, which explains the variability and unique realisations in Ghanaian English. The alignment of these findings with the theory underscores the role

of L1 influence in shaping L2 pronunciation and highlights the interaction between linguistic transfer and phonological adaptation.

Theme 3: Consonant Substitution, Deletion and Epenthesis

Sub-theme 1: Consonant Substitutions

The findings reveal that participants' spelling pronunciations led to consonant substitutions and epenthesis when compared to Received Pronunciation (RP). Unlike vowels, consonants showed fewer modifications. This aligns with Dolphyne's (1988) assertion that Ghanaian English retains most RP consonants, with exceptions such as the interdental fricatives. However, some substitutions occurred due to spelling influences and first language (L1) phonological constraints.

For instance, the voiced-palatal-alveolar affricate /dʒ/ was often substituted with the voiced-alveolar plosive /d/ in words like 'graduate' and 'digital'. Participants pronounced 'graduate' as [grad.wet] rather than the RP /grædʒuert/. Similarly, 'digital' was pronounced [dɪɡɪtəl] instead of /dɪdʒɪtəl/. This substitution can be attributed to the influence of the letter "d" and "g" in the spelling and the absence of /dʒ/, and also to L1 influence. In many Ghanaian languages, the phonemes /dʒ/ as in "graduate" /grædʒuert/ and 'digital' /dɪdʒɪtəl/ do not naturally occur in spelling, and Ghanaian speakers often substitute them with /d/ and /g/, respectively. For example, 'graduate' is frequently pronounced as [gra:dwet] rather than the RP /grædʒuert/. This substitution can be traced to L1 phonological limitations; languages like Kusaal, for instance, lack the phoneme /dʒ/, prompting speakers to substitute it with the closest available sound, /g/.

Additionally, even in Ghanaian languages that possess similar phonemes, such as Twi, Ga, and Ewe, there is no direct orthographic representation for /dʒ/. Instead, analogous sounds like /j/ in Ga, /gy/ in Akan dialects, or /dz/ in Ewe appear, none of which

perfectly align with the English /dʒ/. Consequently, the substitution of /dʒ/ with /g/ in words like ‘digital’ [dɪdʒɪtəl] for [dɪɡɪtəl] reflects a phonetic and orthographic analogy, where speakers rely on familiar L1 phonetic rules and orthographic cues when pronouncing unfamiliar L2 sounds. This pattern is consistent with Flege’s (1995) Speech Learning Model, which asserts that L2 sounds are influenced by the learner’s existing L1 phonetic inventory. The substitution pattern extends to the letter “d”, which typically represents /d/ in Ghanaian phonological systems. The letter “d” is rarely pronounced as /dʒ/, and Ghanaian English speakers tend to pronounce ‘graduate’ with a /d/ sound rather than the expected /dʒ/. The natural tendency to substitute /dʒ/ with /d/ aligns with the phonological conventions of Ghanaian languages, where “d” directly corresponds to /d/ in both orthography and phonology. As /dʒ/ is not represented by “d” in most Ghanaian languages, speakers default to /d/ when encountering ‘d’ in English words, even in cases where RP uses /dʒ/.

Another substitution involved the voicing of consonants. Participants replaced the voiced /z/ with its voiceless-alveolar fricative counterpart /s/ in words like ‘is’, pronounced as /ɪs/ instead of the RP /əz/ in weak form, and ‘names’, pronounced as [nems] rather than /neɪmz/. Similarly, the voiced-labiodental fricative /v/ in ‘of’ was replaced with the voiceless /f/, resulting in [ɔf] instead of /əv/ in weak form. These substitutions highlight the influence of spelling and L1 phonological constraints, as Ghanaian languages often lack the specific voicing distinctions present in English fricatives.

A further substitution involved replacing the voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ with the voiceless-alveolar plosive /t/ in words such as ‘author’ (/ɔ:θə/) and ‘methodology’ (/ˌmeθədɒlədʒɪ/). For example, ‘theory’ was pronounced as [tɪəri] instead of /ˈθiəri/.

The lack of interdental fricatives in most Ghanaian languages account for this substitution. As Dolphyne (1988) notes, Ghanaian languages generally replace interdental fricatives with alveolar plosives due to their phonemic inventories.

Finally, consonant clusters were substituted in various ways. In ‘lexical’ and ‘lexicon’, the cluster /ks/ was replaced with /z/, producing pronunciations like [ləzɪkəl] instead of /'ləksɪkəl/. This substitution reflects analogy, as “x” is often pronounced as /z/ in words like ‘xylophone’ [zaɪ.lə.fəʊn]. Similarly, phonologically conditioned endings such as ‘-ed’ in ‘pronounced’ (/prə'naʊnst/) and ‘mixed’ (/mɪkst/) were simplified to /d/, resulting in [prənaʊnsd] and [mɪksd], respectively. These deviations confirm the role of orthography in shaping Ghanaian English phonology.

Sub-theme: 2 Deletion of Consonant Sounds

Sound deletion was also evident in participants’ pronunciations. For example, the voiceless velar plosive /k/ was dropped in words like “context” (/ˈkɒntekst/), pronounced as /ˈkɒntest/, and ‘abstract’ (/æbstrækt/), pronounced as /abstra:t/. The absence of the letter “k” in the spelling influenced this omission. This phenomenon corroborates Bassetti’s (2008) argument that orthography significantly impacts L2 phonology, often leading to deviations from native norms.

Sub-theme 3: Epenthesis

Epenthesis, the insertion of additional sounds, was also a recurring feature. For instance, participants pronounced ‘what’ as /hwɒt/ instead of the RP /wɒt/, inserting a glottal fricative /h/ which is present in its spelling. Similarly, in “coin” (/kɔɪn/) and ‘coinage’ (/ˈkɔɪnɪdʒ/), the insertion of the bilabial approximant /w/ led to pronunciations like /kɔɪn/ and /kɔɪnɪdʒ/. This aligns with Bassetti’s (2008) findings, which suggest that spelling pronunciation encourages the insertion of phonemes to

match the visual structure of the word. These insertions highlight how L2 learners reconcile English pronunciation with familiar L1 orthographic and phonological frameworks.

The findings emphasize the influence of spelling and L1 phonology on Ghanaian English, highlighting unique consonant realisations and reinforcing its status as a distinct variety. The reliance on orthography leads to systematic deviations from RP, as evidenced by substitutions, deletions, and epenthesis. These phonological patterns align with the observations of scholars like Ngula (2011) and Bobda (2000), who describe Ghanaian English as a localised deviation influenced by orthography and ethnic linguistic features.

From an educational perspective, these findings underscore the need for targeted pronunciation instruction. By addressing specific patterns of consonant substitution and epenthesis, educators can help learners align their speech with RP norms while appreciating Ghanaian English's unique phonological identity. Such an approach would enhance pronunciation accuracy and promote linguistic diversity.

Ultimately, these findings confirm Bassetti's (2008) assertion that orthography profoundly affects L2 pronunciation and corroborate Flege's (1995) model, which highlights the role of L1 phonological structures in shaping L2 acquisition.

4.3 Research Question 3: What common practices of usage of spelling pronunciation are observed in Ghanaian spoken English?

This section sought to explore the common practices of usage of spelling pronunciation among Ghanaian English speakers and investigate their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to spelling pronunciation in various contexts. The questionnaire

results aimed at presenting responses of participants in the study. The results from the questionnaire are presented below for analysis. Also, in the analysis are extracts from participants responses coded as: “P1” to “P7” (MPhil Participant one to seven) and “L1” to “L3” (lecturer one to three).

Table 4.3: Data on the views of Respondents on the Commonness, Perceptions, Attitudes, and Experiences with Spelling Pronunciation

Item	Responses	Percentage
1. Frequency of Usage		
- Frequently	8	75%
- Occasionally	2	25%
- Rarely	0	0
- Never	0	0
2. Perception of Commonality		
- Yes	8	77.5%
- No	2	22.5%
- Unsure	0	0%
3. Observation in Formal Settings		
- Yes	10	100%
- No	0	0%
4. Influence on Perceptions of Education and Intelligence		
- Yes	3	32.5%
- No	7	67.5%
5. Effects on Writing and Reading Abilities		
- Yes	8	82.5%
- No	2	17.5
6. Correction in Educational or Professional Settings		
- Yes	7	75%
- No	3	25%
6. Efforts to Standardise or Regulate Spelling Pronunciation		
- Yes	1	10%
- No	9	90%

Theme 1: Frequency of Usage

In the quest to answer how widespread spelling pronunciation is in Ghanaian spoken English and among participants’ pronunciations, the researcher investigated its frequency of usage. The frequency of usage also reflects how often spelling pronunciation is used in spoken Ghanaian English, exploring its integration into

everyday communication. The results, as shown in table 4.3, indicate that spelling pronunciation is widely used, with 85% of respondents reporting frequent use and 15% using it occasionally. Notably, no participants indicated that they use spelling pronunciation rarely or never, highlighting its pervasive role in the speech patterns of Ghanaian English speakers.

The high frequency of spelling pronunciation suggests that it is deeply embedded in the linguistic practices of educated Ghanaians. This observation aligns with Ngula's (2011) assertion that spelling pronunciation is a hallmark of Ghanaian English, distinguishing it from other varieties of English that prioritise phonetic accuracy. In contrast, the frequent use of spelling pronunciation in Ghana indicates a preference for a more locally agreed form of English, where the written form plays a central role in guiding pronunciation. This shift reflects both cognitive strategies and cultural adaptations that shape language use in multilingual contexts.

Additionally, the frequent use of spelling pronunciation also highlights the interaction between English and indigenous languages in Ghana. As English is a second language for most speakers, it is often acquired through the phonological structures of native languages, making spelling pronunciation a practical cognitive strategy for aligning the written form of English with its spoken counterparts. Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model supports this view, positing that second-language learners adapt their pronunciation strategies based on the phonological features of both their native and target languages. In this case, the frequent use of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian English may be seen as a reflection of how local linguistic patterns influence English pronunciation.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the widespread use of spelling pronunciation is indicative of a strong sense of linguistic agency among Ghanaian speakers. It demonstrates a proactive assertion of local identity within the global English-speaking community. By adapting English to fit local linguistic and cultural norms, speakers assert their distinctiveness in a world where English serves both as a global lingua franca and a marker of educational status. This aligns with Bamgbose's (1998) view that English in postcolonial contexts is not merely a foreign language but a medium that undergoes modification to reflect the local context.

In terms of pedagogy, the frequent use of spelling pronunciation highlights the importance of integrating this feature into educational practices. Rather than viewing spelling pronunciation as a deviation from the "standard" English, language educators in Ghana should recognise it as a legitimate component of Ghanaian English. This could foster a more confident and authentic use of English in Ghana's multilingual society, enabling speakers to embrace their local variety of English with pride.

Theme 2: Commonality

Participants were also asked to share their perceptions of the commonality of spelling pronunciation among other Ghanaian English speakers. The results indicated that 77.5% of respondents believe it is widely used, suggesting that spelling pronunciation is deeply ingrained in Ghanaian English. This widespread perception underscores its normalisation as a feature of the language, present in both formal and informal settings. The perception of commonality was shaped by various factors, including regional dialects, informal communication, and the Ghanaian educational system. English education in Ghana often emphasises orthographic recognition over phonetic accuracy, providing an environment conducive to the prevalence of spelling pronunciation. This

aligns with Koranteng (2006) and Ngula (2011) that spelling pronunciation is not merely a curiosity but a characteristic feature of educated Ghanaian English.

However, 22.5% of participants expressed uncertainty about the widespread use of spelling pronunciation, highlighting potential variability in its perception across different social or educational backgrounds. This uncertainty may reflect differences in linguistic awareness or exposure to diverse English-speaking environments. Such findings suggest that linguistic standardisation in Ghanaian English is still evolving, and some speakers may not fully recognise the extent of spelling pronunciation's usage until they interact with speakers from different regions or backgrounds.

The perception of spelling pronunciation as common strengthens its legitimacy within the linguistic community, reinforcing its role as a marker of Ghanaian English identity. As a distinctive feature, it serves as a linguistic tool for negotiating cultural and communicative needs, demonstrating the postcolonial evolution of English in Ghana. By embracing spelling pronunciation, speakers assert their agency in shaping the English language to reflect their unique linguistic identity.

Furthermore, this perception positions spelling pronunciation as a sociolinguistic marker, similar to other regional varieties of English. It highlights how linguistic practices reflect the lived experiences and cultural realities of speakers, contributing to the development of Ghanaian English that is both functional and culturally resonant.

Theme 3: Observation in Formal Settings

The findings regarding the use of spelling pronunciation in formal settings provide valuable insights into its role in shaping Ghanaian English, especially in environments beyond casual conversations. As demonstrated in table 4.3, 100% of participants

confirmed observing spelling pronunciation in structured settings such as schools, workplaces, parliamentary sessions, and media platforms, including renowned outlets like the BBC. This widespread usage highlights that spelling pronunciation is not only common but also accepted in educated Ghanaian English, particularly in formal contexts. Participants shared that spelling pronunciation is frequently used by Ghanaian English speakers in formal settings. Some of the participants stated that:

“Almost every Ghanaian speaker of English uses spelling pronunciation in formal settings like parliament, media, classrooms, and international forums.” [P1]

“A lot of educated speakers of English in Ghana use spelling pronunciation in their workplaces.” [P7]

These responses indicate the widespread use of spelling pronunciation, which is embedded in Ghanaian English to such an extent that it is used across both informal and formal environments. The consistent presence of spelling pronunciation in formal contexts suggests that it is firmly established as a feature of Educated Ghanaian English (EGE). This trend is particularly evident in high-status settings such as parliamentary proceedings and media broadcasts, where spelling pronunciation is regularly observed. For example, participants pointed out that even in formal media broadcasts, including the BBC and local stations, spelling pronunciation is employed. One participant mentioned:

“In major media broadcasts, including this year’s election coverage, we heard a lot of election-related terms pronounced using spelling pronunciation, like ‘ballot’ ‘total casted votes’ and ‘electorates’, which are often pronounced in a way that aligns more closely with their spelling than standard English pronunciation.” [P2]

As the findings revealed, the use of spelling pronunciation during Ghana’s recent general elections, particularly in the media, further exemplifies the widespread use of spelling pronunciation. Throughout the election campaign and media coverage, several

key terms such as “ballot” /bælət/ “total”/təʊtəl/ “casted” /cæstɪd/ “votes” /vəʊts/ and “electorates”/ɪləktərəs/ were frequently pronounced in a way that mirrored their orthographic representations, deviating from the standard English phonetic pronunciation. For instance, terms like “ballot” were pronounced as “[balɒt]”, “casted” as “[kastɛd]”, “votes” as “[vɒts]”, as an “electorates” as “[ɪləktɪts]” These instances were also evident in the speeches of officials, such as the Electoral Commission officials’ declaration of results, presidential candidates, and parliamentary candidates where similar pronunciation patterns were used. A participant noted:

“During the announcement of election results by the Electoral Commission, you could hear officials using spelling pronunciation when mentioning terms like ‘electorates’, ‘results’ and ‘rejected ballots’ This trend was observed across various news stations and was not limited to informal broadcasts.” [P4]

The use of spelling pronunciation in these high-profile, formal settings illustrates its credibility within the Ghanaian linguistic context. Unlike regional features that might be considered informal or substandard, spelling pronunciation has gained acceptance in prestigious spaces, signalling its legitimate role in Ghanaian English. This corroborates Bamgbose’s (1998) observation that English varieties in non-native contexts must meet two criteria: ensuring intelligibility across international contexts and reflecting local cultural identities. By facilitating clear communication and representing local linguistic norms, spelling pronunciation fulfils both of these criteria, even in the politically charged context of elections.

Furthermore, the widespread use of spelling pronunciation in formal settings, especially in media broadcasts and official speeches during elections, demonstrates the adaptability of Ghanaian English. As English is not the native language for most Ghanaians, the use of spelling pronunciation serves as both a cognitive and cultural adjustment. It helps speakers manage complex, technical terms while remaining true to

their linguistic environment. By using spelling pronunciation, speakers navigate the linguistic challenges of English while still maintaining clarity and authority in formal settings.

Theme 4: Influence on Education and Intelligence

The investigation into whether spelling pronunciation affects people's perceptions of education and intelligence in Ghanaian society reveals a range of perspectives, reflecting both linguistic flexibility and the sociocultural norms of Ghanaian English. The results in table 4.3 show a clear division: 32.5% of participants believe spelling pronunciation influences how people perceive one's educational attainment and level of intelligence, while the majority (67.5%) do not view it as an indicator of these qualities. This contrast emphasises the unique sociolinguistic environment in Ghana, where non-standard features in English are interpreted differently compared to contexts with stricter linguistic norms.

Among the 32.5% who believe spelling pronunciation affects perceptions, their views align with traditional linguistic theories that associate "correct" pronunciation with higher education and intellect. Some participants' responses, such as:

“it helps one to spell well” [P4]

suggest that spelling pronunciation is seen as a tool for improving literacy skills, which in turn positively influences perceptions of education. This perspective reflects a broader understanding that values practical communication skills over strict adherence to native phonological norms. As Bamgbose (1998) and other scholars have noted, non-native varieties of English often evolve with linguistic adaptations that meet local communication needs without diminishing the speaker's intelligence or educational background.

On the other hand, the majority (67.5%) of participants do not believe that spelling pronunciation influences perceptions of education or intelligence. Some responses were:

“it doesn’t because we all have the same pronunciations.” [P3]

“it does not because we all don’t know and use the correct English pronunciations.” [P2]

indicate a societal acceptance of spelling pronunciation as a shared feature among educated Ghanaians. This view reflects a collective understanding of English in Ghana, where deviations from native norms are not stigmatised. Instead, spelling pronunciation is internalised as a common trait, suggesting that in Ghanaian society, intelligibility and cultural context are more important than conforming to external linguistic standards. This challenges the traditional notion of linguistic correctness, where variations from “standard” English might otherwise be seen as signs of lower education or competence. Interestingly, some participants noted that during their mock viva presentations, they observed that everyone used spelling pronunciation, but it was not remarked upon, nor did it affect the evaluations of their presentations. One participant mentioned:

“We all used spelling pronunciation in our presentations, but no one paid attention to it or used it against us.” [P6]

. This observation highlights the normalisation of spelling pronunciation in formal settings, where its use does not seem to detract from the perceived competence or professionalism of the speakers. In other words, the widespread use of spelling pronunciation in such settings appears to be accepted without negative judgment, reinforcing the idea that pronunciation variations do not directly influence perceptions of a speaker’s education or intelligence.

The fact that spelling pronunciation does not significantly affect perceptions of education in Ghana is further supported by Nimako's (2018) findings, which show its prevalence even among teacher trainees. If trainee teachers, often regarded as role models for future generations, regularly use spelling pronunciation, it indicates the normalisation of this feature within the Ghanaian educational system. It also implies that their prospective students would be taught spelling pronunciation. This shift reflects a change in how pronunciation is perceived, with an emphasis on practical communication rather than rigid pronunciation standards. By using spelling pronunciation, Ghanaian speakers adapt English to suit local phonological preferences while maintaining intelligibility and expressing a distinct linguistic identity (Boateng & Awere, 2016).

Moreover, the majority opinion that spelling pronunciation does not affect perceptions of intelligence reflects an inclusive linguistic ideology in Ghana. This acceptance may arise from the understanding that English is a second language for most Ghanaians, and as such, prioritising clear and intelligible communication might be more important than achieving "native-like" pronunciation. In this way, Ghanaian English seems to embrace local linguistic innovations without devaluing the speaker's education or intelligence. This contrasts with contexts where non-standard pronunciation might lead to judgments about a speaker's competence, indicating that in Ghana, linguistic diversity within English is tolerated and even valued.

Theme 5: Effects on Writing and Reading Abilities

The investigation into how spelling pronunciation affects writing and reading abilities reveals a largely positive perception among Ghanaian English speakers. Findings from table 4.3 show that 82.5% of respondents view spelling pronunciation as beneficial for

improving literacy skills, particularly in spelling and reading. This strong agreement suggests that spelling pronunciation may play an important role as an educational tool, helping learners navigate the complexities of English spelling and phonetics.

Participants highlighted the educational value of spelling pronunciation, with many indicating that:

“Students write what they hear, which helps them to spell.” [P4]

“It helps one to read and express themselves.” [P7]

This perspective enlightens how spelling pronunciation serve as a bridge between phonetic and written forms of English. One participant pointed out that,

“In my classroom, students often struggle with spelling, but once we focus on spelling pronunciation (look and pronounce), they begin to write more confidently and accurately.” [P1]

This aligns with findings from studies that highlight how using spelling pronunciation in teaching improves both spelling and pronunciation accuracy. Another participant noted that spelling pronunciation positively impacts literacy in Ghanaian educational settings, as students tend to perform better in both reading and writing tasks when they practice this approach.

Spelling pronunciation plays a dual role in literacy development: it aids in spelling by helping learners break down words phonetically and supports reading fluency by aligning spoken English more closely with its written form. For example, the practice of “syllabising” words in Ghanaian schools is one effective approach. One participant mentioned:

“When we divide words into syllables, students can read and spell them more effectively, especially when they encounter long or unfamiliar words.” [P3]

This technique not only improves comprehension but also builds students' confidence, particularly in the early stages of English education. By breaking words into manageable units, students can decode unfamiliar vocabulary more easily, which strengthens their reading skills and enhances vocabulary retention.

A participant with significant teaching experience shared that:

“Many of my students come from non-English speaking backgrounds and could not express themselves in English well, spell nor read at all or fluently, but after we started focusing on spelling pronunciation, their reading and spelling improved.” [P2]

This highlights how, in the Ghanaian context, where English is learned as a second language, spelling pronunciation helps students build literacy skills without being hindered by the complexities of English spelling.

However, a minority of participants (17.5%) expressed concerns about the potential drawbacks of spelling pronunciation. Some participants argued that:

“It doesn't because it would not make students pronounce words well.” [P5]

This view suggests that spelling pronunciation may hinder learners from acquiring “standard” pronunciation, which could be important in formal or international contexts where intelligibility is key. A participant remarked:

“Although spelling pronunciation is useful for helping students with the basics of spelling, it may interfere with their ability to acquire standard pronunciation. This is a challenge when they need to communicate with native speakers in global settings.” [P4]

This critique is common for non-native varieties of English, where deviations from native norms are sometimes viewed as obstacles to clear communication. However, in the Ghanaian context, where spelling pronunciation is widely practised and accepted, this concern may be less significant. One participant who was a teacher commented:

“In Ghana, students are constantly exposed to multiple languages, we place greater emphasis on literacy skills through spelling pronunciation, rather than focusing solely on a native-like accent. This approach ensures that students can function effectively in their local environment while gradually improving their pronunciation over time.” [P6]

This reflects a practical approach to language teaching in a multilingual society, where developing literacy skills is prioritised over achieving native-like pronunciation.

The overall favourability toward spelling pronunciation as an educational tool highlights its pedagogical value, especially for young learners in Ghana. In a multilingual environment where students may not often interact with native English speakers, spelling pronunciation offers a consistent and accessible way to develop basic literacy skills. One participant shared:

“In our context, many students learn English without immersion in an English-speaking environment. Spelling pronunciation helps bridge that gap and allows students to improve their reading and writing on their own.” [L2]

This approach equips students with strategies for learning the language independently, fostering autonomy and confidence in their language acquisition.

Incorporating spelling pronunciation into Ghana’s education system through techniques like “syllabising” demonstrates how local linguistic practices have been adapted to meet the needs of English learners. A participant who is also a teacher reflected:

“We’ve found that students are more confident when we break down words into syllables. It’s a local strategy that works for our students and helps them keep up with their studies.” [P2]

This shows how integrating local practices into the curriculum can make the learning of English more relevant and effective for students.

These findings corroborate with studies by Hilte and Reitsma (2005); Kumah (2021); Ehri (1997); Huber (2008); Bamgbose (1998) who all emphasise that spelling

pronunciation have positive pedagogical influence, especially in non-native context of English.

Theme 6: Correction in Educational Settings

The study found that the correction of spelling pronunciation in educational settings reveals a complex relationship between the norms of standard language and the deeply entrenched nature of spelling pronunciation within Ghanaian English. According to the results in Table 4.3, 25% of participants reported being corrected for their spelling pronunciation, mainly by English language teachers. Responses such as:

“yes, in educational settings like the classroom.” [P7]

“yes, in group discussions.” [P4]

“not always.” [L1]

reflect the prevalence of corrections, though they are applied inconsistently. This suggests that while some educators emphasise the importance of adhering to standard pronunciation, others either overlook spelling pronunciation or even use it themselves, underlining how widespread this feature is within the Ghanaian linguistic environment. Several experienced participants, especially those who have been involved in teaching for years, observed the persistent presence of spelling pronunciation among students.

One participant noted:

“I have seen that students often pronounce words according to their spelling, and this has become second nature to them. It is something that we, as teachers, sometimes have to correct, but many of us use it ourselves, especially when speaking casually.” [L3]

This reflects the dual role that spelling pronunciation plays in Ghanaian English, both as a practical tool for communication and as a feature of everyday speech that some educators themselves use. Another participant, who is an experienced teacher, shared their perspective:

“Even when I correct my students for their pronunciation, I have to acknowledge that I, too, make similar mistakes in my speech. It is clear that spelling pronunciation is not just a student issue; it is part of the larger linguistic landscape in which we teach.” [P3]

This response highlights the internalisation of spelling pronunciation by both students and teachers, reinforcing the idea that the practice is widespread and accepted in Ghanaian English.

This inconsistency in correction practices indicates a broader issue in Ghana’s educational system. While there is some awareness of standard English pronunciation, the result shows that spelling pronunciation is so deeply embedded in both students’ and teachers’ speech that it becomes a form of “linguistic relativity” where language adapts to local norms. Even in contexts where standard English is promoted, spelling pronunciation remain an accepted method of communication. It seems to serve not only as a pronunciation form but also as a marker of identity and cultural expression (Boateng and Awere, 2016). One person pointed out:

“In some of my classes, I hear students pronounce words like ‘examine’ as ‘[eksamin]’, and honestly, I’ve never seen this as a major problem. It’s part of the language they speak every day, and it doesn’t affect their ability to understand the content.” [L2]

This reflects how spelling pronunciation is accepted in academic contexts, often without the stigma that it might face in more formal settings.

The majority of participants (75%) who responded with “no” to corrections indicated that some educators may view spelling pronunciation as a natural aspect of Ghanaian English rather than an error needing correction. A respondent who is also a teacher remarked:

“I’ve taught for years, and I’ve realised that students often feel more comfortable when they are not corrected every time they make a pronunciation mistake. Sometimes, we need to ask ourselves if the goal is to correct every single instance of non-standard pronunciation or to

help students understand the material and communicate effectively.”
[P4]

This comment underscores the tension between prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language, suggesting that some teachers may be more focused on practical communication rather than rigid linguistic correctness.

The persistence of spelling pronunciation, even among English educators, might stem from the sociolinguistic environment in which both teachers and students are immersed. Educators, who are products of the same system, may unconsciously replicate the linguistic norms they have internalised. This results in a continuous reinforcement of spelling pronunciation as an acceptable form. This finding aligns with the views of scholars like Bamgbose (1998), who note that non-native varieties of English evolve to fit local contexts, creating norms distinct from native English varieties. In Ghana, where spelling pronunciation is widespread, the educational system reflects this linguistic evolution, suggesting that what is considered “standard” English might be more flexible and contextually driven than traditional prescriptive norms.

A participant shared a similar sentiment:

“When I correct spelling pronunciation, I have to be mindful of the cultural context. It’s not just about speaking ‘correct’ English but about teaching in a way that connects with our students’ linguistic realities. In some cases, our students are more comfortable with spelling pronunciation because it aligns with their local understanding of English.” [L3]

This statement reinforces the idea that, in Ghana, linguistic flexibility allows both teachers and students to embrace spelling pronunciation as part of their educational experience.

The study also highlights the tension between prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language within Ghana’s education system. Some educators adhere strictly to

prescriptive norms by correcting spelling pronunciation, while others take a more descriptive stance, accepting or even using it themselves. This demonstrates linguistic pragmatism, where the primary concern is effective communication in a multilingual society. In Ghana, English serves as a second language, and this flexibility supports a more inclusive and accessible linguistic environment. It also fosters a sense of ownership among Ghanaian speakers, who shape English to align with local phonological and sociocultural realities.

Theme 8: Efforts to Standardise or Regulate Spelling Pronunciation

The findings indicate that there are currently no significant efforts to standardise or regulate spelling pronunciation in Ghana. The overwhelming response from participants was negative when asked whether there were any initiatives aimed at formalising spelling pronunciation in formal settings. Many expressed that:

“nothing like that has been introduced.” [P5]

“not yet” [P7]

“no” [P3]

we are not taught spelling pronunciation [P1]

Only a few participants acknowledged that research, such as the present study, could potentially contribute to recognising spelling pronunciation in formal contexts. 90% of respondents indicated that there are no official policies or educational programs designed to regulate spelling pronunciation, highlighting a notable gap in language planning and policy for Ghanaian English.

This absence of formal standardisation reflects broader challenges within Ghana’s language policy and curriculum development. Despite the widespread use of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian English, it remains unregulated, which suggests that this

linguistic feature has not been fully integrated into educational frameworks. Many participants noted that spelling pronunciation is commonly used informally in classrooms but not formally recognised or taught as part of the official curriculum. One teacher mentioned:

“We use spelling pronunciation in class all the time to help students with spelling and reading, but it’s never formally acknowledged by the curriculum. It’s just an informal practice.” [P6]

This points to an opportunity to incorporate spelling pronunciation into the educational landscape, which could provide significant benefits for students, especially in terms of their literacy development.

Some educators suggested that introducing spelling pronunciation into the curriculum could be an important step in recognising its role in language acquisition. One participant reflected:

“If we were allowed to teach spelling pronunciation as part of the curriculum, it could help students improve their writing and reading skills, and it would also make English more accessible to our students.” [P5]

This could not only help students develop more effective language skills but also create a more inclusive and culturally relevant approach to teaching English. Recognising spelling pronunciation formally could bridge the gap between the native norms of English and the distinctive features of Ghanaian English, fostering a more balanced view of English usage in the country.

However, the absence of formal regulation suggests that spelling pronunciation remains an organic and unregulated feature of Ghanaian English. Despite this, its widespread acceptance indicates that it has, in practice, become a standard feature of everyday communication. One participant noted:

“Spelling pronunciation is just how we speak English here in Ghana. It’s not something that needs to be regulated because it’s already understood and widely used.” [L2]

This view aligns with the concept of language evolution in multilingual societies, where linguistic norms naturally adapt to meet local communication needs. In Ghana, spelling pronunciation provides a form of English that is accessible and relatable to speakers, helping them to bridge the gap between their local languages and English.

While there is general recognition of spelling pronunciation as a key feature of Ghanaian English, some language educators and scholars argue that formalising or standardising it could bring it into the linguistic mainstream, enhancing its legitimacy and encouraging greater awareness. One educator argued:

“If spelling pronunciation were recognised officially, it could improve the understanding and acceptance of it, especially in schools. It would help students understand that it’s not incorrect, but just a local adaptation.” [P5]

Such formal recognition could also improve communicative effectiveness by promoting a clearer understanding of its role in language acquisition.

On the other hand, some caution that formal standardisation could limit the adaptability of spelling pronunciation to local linguistic influences. A participant mentioned:

“If spelling pronunciation is made too rigid, it could lose its natural adaptability and the flexibility that makes it so useful in our context.” [P7]

This concern reflects a broader debate about the balance between maintaining linguistic diversity and formalising language use. While formal regulation may increase awareness and legitimacy, it could also reduce the fluidity of the feature and its ability to evolve in response to the changing linguistic landscape.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the lack of formal regulation of spelling pronunciation in Ghana may be indicative of a broader acceptance of linguistic diversity

within the country's multilingual environment. Just as other English varieties around the world have gained recognition for their local forms, the normalisation of spelling pronunciation could eventually influence language policies that support the distinctive characteristics of Ghanaian English. This aligns with the work of linguists like Bamgbose (1998), who advocates for the recognition of “local Englishes” that blend global intelligibility with local cultural identities. A participant shared:

“Ghanaian English should be recognised for what it is: a variety that's shaped by our local languages and cultural context. If we acknowledge that, it will be easier for students to feel confident in their use of English.” [L2]

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study on spelling pronunciation among educated speakers of Ghanaian English. The analysis was guided by the research objectives and questions, focusing on the factors that influence spelling pronunciation, the phonological patterns that characterise it in spoken Ghanaian English, and the observed commonness in terms of usage among educated speakers. Data were drawn from responses from administered questionnaires and audio recordings from participants' presentations. Grounded by Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model, and empirical studies, the findings exposed that several factors like education and language exposure, lack of phonetic training in English, and the influence of local language phonology account for spelling pronunciation in educated Ghanaian English. Some phonological patterns that emerged were vowel modification, consonant substitution, deletion and epenthesis. These findings highlight how spelling pronunciation interact with segmental features of Ghanaian English, demonstrating that the phenomenon is systematic rather than random. Finally, the findings highlighted the role of spelling pronunciation as a linguistic norm within the Ghanaian educated settings. It revealed

that spelling pronunciation is accepted, common in terms of usage, and helps in developing literacy skills. The next chapter will offer overarching conclusions and suggest recommendations for future research.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter brings the study to its conclusion by providing a summary of the aims and objectives of the research, summary of the key findings, drawing conclusions, and offering recommendations, implications, and suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary of Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this study was to explore spelling pronunciation as a distinct feature of spoken Ghanaian English. The study sought to examine how orthographic representations influenced actual pronunciation. By focusing on educated speakers of English, the study aimed at revealing the extent to which spelling conventions influenced spoken forms to identify recurrent patterns that deviated from Standard British English norms (Received Pronunciations). The study was conducted based on three objectives: First, it aimed to investigate factors that influence the use of spelling pronunciation among educated speakers of Ghanaian spoken English. The second objective was to identify some phonological patterns that emerged from the spelling pronunciation of participants pronunciations. Finally, it sought to investigate the common practices of usage of spelling pronunciation among Ghanaian spoken English.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

This study investigated spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English, focusing on its, common practice of usage, underlying factors, and some phonological patterns among educated speakers (lecturers and MPhil students in the Department of English Education at the University of Education, Winneba). A qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through recordings and phonological analysis during

mock viva presentations. The sample consisted of ten participants, comprising three lecturers and seven MPhil students.

The findings discovered that several factors contribute to the widespread use of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian English. First and foremost, education and exposure to different varieties of English were significant influences. The study found that educated Ghanaians, regardless of their specific field of study or profession, tended to adopt spelling pronunciations as a result of formal education and interactions with the written form of English. Additionally, sociolinguistic factors, such as the impact of indigenous languages on English pronunciation, were highlighted as important contributors. In many cases, speakers adapted their pronunciation of English words based on their knowledge of local languages and the perceived need to align pronunciation with spelling.

Phonologically, findings revealed that spelling pronunciation is a notable feature of spoken Ghanaian English among both lecturers and MPhil students. Participants often relied on spelling when pronouncing unfamiliar words, reflecting the influence of orthography. Even in the pronunciation of familiar English words, spelling pronunciations were observed, deviating from standard phonetic norms. The study identified several patterns in the spelling pronunciation of Ghanaian English. These included vowel modifications, as well as diphthongization, monophthongization, epenthesis, consonant substitution and deletion. These patterns reflect an effort by speakers to make their pronunciation more consistent with the way words are spelt.

In terms of common practices of usage, the study found that spelling pronunciation is a common feature of spoken Ghanaian English, particularly among educated individuals. It is widespread across formal settings, and speakers generally view it as a

normal aspect of their language use rather than a mistake. The study further highlighted the role of spelling pronunciation as a linguistic norm within academic settings. Participants did not perceive it as an indicator of lower intelligence or educational attainment. Instead, it was viewed as a tool that facilitates literacy, especially in spelling. Ultimately, the findings revealed that efforts to standardise in Ghana are minimal. These findings align with Flege's Speech Learning Model, which emphasises the impact of L1 on second-language (L2) pronunciation.

5.3 Conclusions

The study sought to explore spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian spoken English, highlighting its common practices of usage, underlying factors influencing its usage, and some phonological patterns characterizing it.

From the analysis, the study concludes that spelling pronunciation is a defining feature of Ghanaian spoken English, shaped by a complex interplay between educational, sociolinguistic, and identity-related factors. Despite participants' high levels of formal education, a significant reliance of spelling pronunciation persists, largely due to limited exposure to phonetic instruction and prioritisation of literacy over oral proficiency in Ghana's educational system. The findings reveal that spelling native language influence, particularly through phonological transfer and sociocultural socialisation, plays a crucial role in shaping pronunciation habits. Spelling pronunciation also emerges as a pragmatic linguistic strategy and marker of cultural identity, enabling speakers to assert their linguistic heritage while navigating the demands of English communication. The study further establishes that the dominance of orthography in pronunciation practices reflects both a pedagogical gap and a broader societal orientation toward written language as a standard of correctness. Consequently,

the study highlights the need for a more balanced approach to English Language instruction in Ghana, especially one that integrates phonetic training from early stages, recognises the influence of indigenous languages, and affirms the legitimacy of local linguistic elements while promoting identities while promoting effective communication in Standard English.

Additionally, the study establishes that the phonological patterns observed in Ghanaian English spelling pronunciation are not mere errors but rather systematic adaptations shaped by the interaction between orthographic influences, L1 phonology, and the linguistic environment. These patterns, such as vowel modifications, diphthongization, monophthongization, and consonant substitutions, reflect the dynamic process of L2 acquisition and the role of orthography in guiding pronunciation. The findings suggest that while these adaptations may deviate from Received Pronunciation (RP), they contribute to the unique phonological identity of Ghanaian English. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of considering the specific phonological features of Ghanaian English when developing language teaching materials and pronunciation strategies. Recognizing these distinct features can help educators develop more effective pronunciation training that respects the linguistic diversity of Ghanaian English, while also helping learners navigate standard English pronunciation norms when necessary.

Also, the findings of the study confirm that spelling pronunciation is a salient and systematic feature of Ghanaian spoken English, particularly among educated speakers. It is neither arbitrary nor indicative of linguistic incompetence; rather, it represents a locally motivated linguistic adaptation that aligns with orthographic cues in the English Language. The study reveals that educated speakers across the sampled category, and

those revealed by the participants employ spelling pronunciation consistently, especially in formal settings such as classrooms, media broadcasts, public speeches, and academic presentations. Contrary to the widely held notion that deviation from native English pronunciation signals a lack of education or proficiency, the findings demonstrate that spelling pronunciation does not significantly influence perceptions of intelligence or educational attainment among Ghanaians. While a minority of participants associate it with enhanced spelling ability and literacy, the majority regard it as a normalised aspect of spoken English in Ghana, grounded in mutual intelligibility and shared linguistic context. This highlights the dynamic nature of second-language Englishes, where local usage patterns reflect both pedagogical realities and sociolinguistic identity. The study further establishes that spelling pronunciation is not restricted to informal registers but is evident in high-stakes, formal contexts such as political discourse, election reportage, and institutional communication. Its widespread use in these domains suggests a growing legitimisation of Ghanaian phonological patterns, which has implications for language teaching, curriculum development, and the broader conceptualisation of English in Ghana. The phenomenon exemplifies what scholars such as Bamgbose (1998) have described as the domestication of English, where linguistic forms are tailored to serve communicative needs without compromising intelligibility.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on World Englishes by foregrounding the phonological peculiarities of Ghanaian spoken English. It underscores the need to re-examine notions of linguistic correctness through the lens of sociolinguistic realities in multilingual contexts. The findings invite further exploration of how pronunciation norms are negotiated in postcolonial societies and

how such variations can be accommodated within the pedagogical and policy frameworks guiding English language use in Ghana.

5.4 Implications for Practice

This study presents several important implications for both linguistic scholarship and language education in Ghana and similar contexts. From a linguistic perspective, it contributes to the growing body of research on Ghanaian English phonology by offering deeper insights into the distinctive features and patterns associated with spelling pronunciation. This enriches the academic understanding of how English is spoken and adapted in multilingual societies.

In practical terms, the study offers useful guidance for English language learners and teachers. By understanding the influence of spelling on pronunciation, educators can better support students in developing clearer and more effective spoken English. This is particularly relevant in settings where pronunciation is often guided by written forms rather than exposure to native-like models.

On a broader scale, the findings highlight the close connection between language, education, and cultural identity. They demonstrate how historical experiences, language contact, and educational practices shape pronunciation habits in Ghanaian English. These observations underline the importance of recognising local linguistic realities in both curriculum development and language policy.

The study further aligns with Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model, reinforcing the idea that first language (L1) influence plays a significant role in the acquisition of second language (L2) pronunciation. It supports the call for context-sensitive

approaches to language teaching, which consider learners' linguistic backgrounds and the socio-cultural environment in which English is acquired.

Overall, the findings contribute meaningfully to the global discourse on World Englishes. They offer a basis for further investigation into Ghanaian English and support the ongoing effort to understand and appreciate non-native varieties of English in their own right.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Study

Based on the key findings and the limitations of this study, several recommendations are proposed to guide future research and enhance understanding of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian English.

To begin with, future studies should aim to broaden the scope of investigation by including participants from a wider range of academic disciplines and institutions. This approach would allow for comparative analysis across different educational, cultural, and linguistic settings, thereby providing a more diverse and representative understanding of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, future research should also consider exploring spelling pronunciation in various communicative settings. Examining how it occurs in both formal and informal contexts such as classroom discussions, academic presentations, casual conversations, and media interactions would help capture a fuller picture of the linguistic behaviours associated with spelling pronunciation in everyday speech.

In addition, it is recommended that future studies examine prosodic features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation in relation to spelling pronunciation. Understanding these suprasegmental features will contribute to a more complete phonological analysis and

may reveal further insights into how spoken English is structured and understood in the Ghanaian context.

Also, study recommends increased efforts toward the documentation and possible standardisation of Ghanaian English. Such initiatives would not only support effective teaching and learning of English in Ghana but would also promote fluency in communication. More importantly, they would contribute meaningfully to the development of linguistic scholarship on non-native varieties of English, helping to affirm their relevance and legitimacy on the global linguistic landscape.



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