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The Use of the "Cake – Learn English" Application in Teaching Speaking Skills to Senior High School Students

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Abstract:

Amid the ongoing Industrial Revolution 4.0, students are increasingly surrounded by rapid technological advancements. Instead of focusing solely on rote memorization, educators are encouraged to design engaging and effective teaching strategies that incorporate technology as a learning tool. Consequently, it is crucial for modern educators, particularly English teachers, to seamlessly integrate suitable digital media into their classroom practices to support meaningful and enjoyable teaching and learning outcomes. This research investigates the implementation of the Cake application as a tool for enhancing high school students' speaking abilities and examines their perceptions of the platform. Employing a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were gathered through pre- and post-questionnaires with Likert-scale items, while qualitative data were obtained from open-ended questions to explore students' perceptions and experiences. The participants consisted of students from class XI Social I at SMAN 19 Bekasi. The findings reveal that the Cake application proved to be an effective medium for supporting speaking skill development, increasing student engagement, and fostering self-confidence in English language learning.

Keywords: Cake – Learn English application, teaching tool, speaking skills

Introduction

Effective communication requires four fundamental language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These skills align closely with the core goals of teaching English, with speaking being particularly vital for mastering the language. The importance of speaking in English continues to grow, particularly in global communication. Bygate (2003) noted that most learners aspire to achieve fluency in speaking, even though it is one of the most challenging skills to master.

Various studies have highlighted the difficulties students face in developing speaking skills. Subandowo (2017) identified challenges such as distinguishing similar sounds, mastering pronunciation, and understanding

words that do not exist in Indonesian. Similarly, Leong and Ahmadi (2017) found that students' lack of topic knowledge hinders their ability to communicate fluently and accurately. Additionally, Savaşçı (2014) observed that anxiety, fear of ridicule, and low self-confidence often lead to passivity in speaking classes.

Based on the researcher's observations during teaching practice at SMAN 19 Bekasi, several issues were evident in the speaking class of grade XI Social 1. Students were often nervous when asked to perform dialogues in front of the class and struggled to respond appropriately to the teacher's questions. They also had difficulty performing dialogues fluently, frequently failing to understand the topic, main ideas, or key information from the text. Grammatical errors were common, as students were uncertain about how to use correct grammar in their speech. Lastly, pronunciation was a significant challenge, with many students struggling to articulate words correctly.

In light of the challenges students face in developing speaking skills, teachers need to explore innovative solutions to overcome these obstacles. As society embraces advancements brought by the technological revolution, incorporating technology into EFL instruction, particularly for enhancing speaking abilities, offers a promising strategy to motivate and engage students in actively using the target language.

This study aims to implement the *Cake* application in English classes at SMAN 19 Bekasi and examine students' perceptions of its use. The research seeks to answer two key questions: How is the *Cake* application implemented in English-speaking classes? And what are students' perceptions of using the *Cake* application?

Various studies have investigated the integration of technology in language teaching and learning. For instance, Nushi and Eqbali (2003) discovered that Duolingo boosts learners' confidence in achieving their language goals and reduces anxiety associated with the challenges of learning a new language. Similarly, Baniabdelrahman (2013) studied the impact of shared online oral diaries on the speaking proficiency of first-year Saudi EFL university students, revealing that this method significantly improved participation and motivation in English classes.

Francis (2017) highlighted the significance of incorporating appropriate technology to create effective 21st-century classrooms and prepare students for future careers. Parveen (2016) explored various modern technologies that English teachers can use to enhance students' speaking skills in second or foreign languages. Additionally, Aratusa (2018) demonstrated that the ELSA Speaks software effectively improves pronunciation among beginner English learners. This study also initiated critical discussions on the use of technology in teaching pronunciation, particularly for beginners, noting that research on accent reduction software often focuses on university students, which may limit its relevance for junior high school learners.

Lastly, Halimah, Helmie, and Susilawati (2018) investigated the Orai application as a tool to promote autonomous learning and enhance fluency in English speaking, highlighting its potential to foster independent learning among students.

Building on the current practices in teaching speaking skills, this study seeks to investigate the use of the Cake Application in speaking classes. The "Cake" application stands out among other English learning apps due to its focus on practical speaking skills and real-life conversational contexts. Unlike traditional apps like Duolingo or Babbel, which often prioritize vocabulary and grammar drills, Cake emphasizes fluency, pronunciation, and confidence in speaking. It achieves this through features like daily conversational videos, AI-driven speech recognition for pronunciation feedback, and bite-sized lessons tailored to everyday scenarios. Furthermore, Cake offers interactive challenges and role-play dialogues, making it engaging and suitable for learners seeking to improve their speaking abilities dynamically and enjoyably. This unique blend of features makes Cake particularly effective for those aiming to achieve real-world communication skills in English. The Cake application was chosen because it can be downloaded from the Play Store and App Store for free. This application offers interactive features to make English learning more engaging and effective. These features include interactive videos that help students understand the real-world context of language use, pronunciation exercises with immediate feedback, and educational games that enhance students' motivation and involvement in learning.

Review of Literature

The Importance of Speaking

The integration of technology in language learning has increasingly gained attention in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Speaking, as one of the essential skills in language acquisition, requires innovative approaches to overcome the challenges students face, such as a lack of confidence, poor pronunciation, and limited practice opportunities. This literature review explores previous studies and theoretical foundations regarding the use of technology, particularly mobile applications like *Cake*, in enhancing speaking skills among senior high school students.

The Definition of Speaking Skill

Several experts have proposed definitions of speaking. According to Siahaan (2008:95), speaking is a productive language skill that involves a person's ability to produce meaningful sounds understood by others, enabling effective communication. Similarly, Fulcher (2003:23) defines speaking as the use of language to engage in interaction with others. This interactive process requires participants to actively listen and respond promptly with their intended messages.

English teachers play a vital role in improving students' speaking skills by integrating communicative language activities and utilizing engaging media in the classroom. Creating opportunities for students to practice speaking is essential for their development.

Pronunciation is the initial aspect of speaking that demands attention, encompassing accurate articulation, stress, and intonation. Grammar involves understanding the rules governing word structure and usage to convey nuanced meanings. Vocabulary plays a pivotal role in fluency, enabling individuals to construct sentences quickly and express their ideas effectively. Fluent speaking involves conveying thoughts smoothly and confidently, without hesitation, while comprehension ensures mutual understanding between speakers, minimizing communication errors (Sakkir & Dollah, 2019, p.43).

Developing proficiency across these aspects of speaking and effectively addressing speaking challenges is crucial for successful communication (Hsieh

& Wang, 2019, p.46). Learners may encounter difficulties related to word grouping, redundancy, using colloquial expressions, adapting to different contexts, adjusting speaking pace, and engaging in interactive conversations (Nakhalah, 2016, p.96).

In conclusion, achieving proficiency in speaking requires mastering its various components and overcoming challenges (De Jong et al., 2012, p.4). Pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension collectively form the foundation for effective speaking skills. Overcoming obstacles such as word clustering, redundancy, and colloquialisms further enhances the ability to deliver clear and impactful spoken communication. By honing these skills, individuals can become more adept speakers, promoting improved communication in diverse settings.

Mobile Applications

A mobile application, often referred to as an app, web app, online app, iPhone app, or smartphone app, is a type of software specifically designed to run on mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets (Technopedia, 2018). Today, mobile phones have become essential to many people, largely due to the availability of these apps, which help individuals maintain a more organized life (Oza, 2017). There is now an app for nearly everything, and when used effectively, it can significantly enhance the learning experience for ESL students of all ages and levels, both in the classroom and at home. Many apps are skill-specific, with some focusing on improving listening comprehension and speaking, while others are designed to assist with grammar.

However, Integrating mobile applications into classrooms comes with several challenges. Technical issues like poor internet, outdated devices, or software problems can disrupt learning. Some students and teachers may lack the skills to use these apps effectively, and managing students' focus on educational tasks can be difficult. Not all students have access to smartphones or tablets, creating inequality. Costs of subscriptions or in-app purchases may also be a barrier. Additionally, many apps don't align with the curriculum, requiring extra work from teachers. Monitoring student progress can be tricky if the app lacks reporting features, and privacy concerns about data security

may arise. Teachers may also resist using new technology, especially if it disrupts traditional methods, and adapting lessons for mobile-assisted learning can take extra time and effort. Overcoming these challenges requires planning, training, and choosing apps that fit educational needs.

"Cake" Application

According to Lestari (2021), as cited in Octavianita (2022), the Cake application is a language learning program specifically designed to enhance speaking skills. Developed by South Korea, Cake was launched on March 22, 2018, and is freely available for download on the Play Store for Android and the App Store for iOS users. Sinha (2019) as cited in Suryani (2021) notes that Cake includes a recording feature that users find enjoyable and engaging. Users can discover new vocabulary while speaking, making it an effective tool for daily conversational English (Batool, 2019 as cited in Nuraeni, 2020). Xiaoyu (2018) suggests that Cake empowers students to manage their learning, resolve speaking challenges, and develop a keen interest in speaking English.

Fitria et al. (2021) as cited in Ramadhani (2022) highlight numerous features of the Cake application for English learning, such as watching videos to improve speaking skills, using speaking tools for dialogue practice, and completing fill-in-the-blank exercises to memorize expressions. Notably, the application offers speaking practice through interactions with native speakers. Users can also learn from daily updated short English conversation videos at no cost. Completion of tasks earns users stars as rewards for achieving their learning goals within the app. Additionally, quizzes like speaking tests and sentence writing tests are available to assess pronunciation and reinforce learning.

To access the Cake application, as noted by Fitria et al. (2021) as cited in Ramadhani (2022), users must first sign in. This can be done via Facebook, Google accounts, or using guest mode for limited access to free speaking practice materials. Initiating a speaking course involves tapping the microphone icon, selecting a desired learning level, and choosing specific episodes or topics. Each episode costs 10 coins, with 30 coins awarded upon

signing in initially. Coins are non-purchasable and accumulate based on usage, with a storage limit of 50 coins.

During speaking courses, users listen to conversations before practicing speaking themselves. The application provides automatic pronunciation correction, marking errors with red strikethroughs, allowing for repeated attempts until correct pronunciation is achieved.

There have been numerous studies on the use of technology in language teaching and learning. For example, Anisa Fitria, Asri Dwi Maulidiyanti, and Salwa Nur Muhammad Sapitri (2021) found that students felt comfortable and interested in learning speaking skills using the *Cake* application. Similarly, Endang Darsih, Marwito Wihadi, and Agie Hanggara (2020), in their research on the use of the ELSA app in speaking classes, revealed that most students agreed the ELSA Speak app was an effective tool for improving speaking skills, particularly pronunciation. Another study by Sandy Yuanita (2019), titled *The Implementation of Hello English Application as English Learning Media to Teach Speaking Skills in Tourism Major at The Tenth Grade Students at SMK Negeri 1 Karanganyar*, concluded that the *Hello English* application was beneficial and well-received, as students enjoyed and fluently understood the material during the learning process.

The second study, conducted by Nuraeni and Yanthi (2020), titled "The Use of Cake Application in Teaching Speaking to Senior High School Students", utilized a case study research design. The objective of this study was to explore how the Cake application is used to teach speaking skills to high school students and to examine students' engagement with the app. Adopting a qualitative approach, the researchers collected data through observations and interviews. The findings suggest that in order to support student learning, teachers need to adopt effective strategies that boost students' motivation and enhance their English-speaking skills through the use of modern tools like the Cake application. This app is considered highly suitable as a learning medium in speaking classes.

The participants in this study were tenth-grade science students from SMA PGRI 3 Bogor. The results demonstrated that the Cake app fosters enjoyable learning experiences, increases students' motivation, enhances their speaking abilities, and positively impacts their self-confidence. Both interviews

and questionnaire responses indicated that the use of the Cake application plays a significant role in helping students develop their speaking proficiency. Overall, the research concluded that the Cake – Learn English for Free app is a highly appropriate tool for improving speaking skills. Its core feature is a speaking course, and it offers a variety of videos from different channels that students can watch and practice with using key vocabulary. Additionally, teachers can use this app to assess students' pronunciation and determine their level of accuracy in speaking.

These studies share similarities with previous research in three key aspects: all focus on English speaking skills, some involve the use of the *Cake* application, and several were conducted in online learning contexts. However, this study differs in that the observations and interviews were conducted online, and it adopts a qualitative explanatory approach to analyze the implementation of the *Cake* application and students' perceptions of it.

The Features of the "Cake" Application

The features of the Cake application align with pedagogical frameworks like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning (TBL) by emphasizing interaction, real-world tasks, and collaborative learning. In CLT, the focus is on meaningful communication and active student participation. Cake supports this by enabling real-time collaboration in a project-based environment, where learners can work together on tasks such as building and deploying projects. This mirrors CLT's emphasis on communication and interaction, allowing learners to practice and refine their skills in a practical context. Additionally, Cake's immediate feedback mechanism through automated tests allows learners to receive quick results, which encourages a cycle of continuous improvement, an important aspect of CLT.

In the context of TBL, which emphasizes completing real-world, meaningful tasks, Cake fits well by structuring tasks around project-based activities like coding, testing, and deployment. These tasks are goal-oriented, helping learners focus on achieving specific outcomes, just as TBL encourages learners to engage in tasks that reflect real-world scenarios. Furthermore, Cake's flexibility in integrating custom scripts and extensions encourages

learners to solve problems independently, fostering critical thinking and enhancing problem-solving skills, core elements of TBL. The task-driven, hands-on approach of Cake enables learners to gain practical experience while honing their technical and collaborative skills, making it a valuable tool for both language learning and technical education within these frameworks.

Based on information from Google Play, the Cake application offers several features designed to support English learning:

1. Channel: This feature provides a wide range of English conversations, speaking topics, and expressions curated from YouTube.
2. Record Speaking: After watching a video from the Channel, users can practice pronouncing a keyword highlighted in each video. With the help of AI speech recognition, users can record their voices and receive immediate feedback on their pronunciation.
3. Speak: This feature facilitates speaking practice by simulating conversations with native speakers. It includes two components:
    - Intro: A listening session featuring native speaker conversations.
    - Practice: A speaking session where users engage in sentence-by-sentence conversations with a native speaker and receive feedback after recording.
4. Daily Goals: Tracks the total time spent learning English through the app, encouraging consistent progress.
5. 100% Free: The app offers all its learning features without ads or costs.

Method

Research Design

This study applied a mixed methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of the Cake – Learn English application in learning speaking skills. The research was conducted using a pre-experimental design, specifically a one-group pre-test and post-test design.

In this design, a single class was observed and measured before and after the treatment without a control group. The treatment involved the use of

the Cake application in classroom instruction over two weeks, comprising four meetings. This design allowed the researcher to explore the effects of using the application on students' speaking skill development and attitudes.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at a senior high school in Indonesia, specifically involving students from class X Sosial 1. The school was selected based on convenience sampling, as only one class was made available by the school for the study. A total of 33 students participated. All participants had basic prior exposure to English lessons, but had not previously used the Cake application in their classroom learning.

Procedures of Data Collection

The research was carried out in three phases :

1. Pre-questionnaire Distribution: At the beginning of the study, a questionnaire was administered to collect data on students' prior experiences, perceptions, confidence, motivation, and exposure related to speaking English. This questionnaire served as a pre-test to understand the initial conditions before using the application.
2. Treatment Implementation: Over two weeks, the class received instruction using the Cake application. Activities included watching speaking videos, practicing pronunciation, mimicking native speakers, and completing speaking drills provided by the app. The researcher observed the students throughout the sessions to monitor engagement and interaction with the material.
3. Post-questionnaire Distribution: At the end of the treatment, students were asked to complete a post-questionnaire. This instrument captured their reflections, perceived improvement, enjoyment, and views on the application's usefulness in enhancing their speaking skills.

Research Instruments

This study used two main instruments: questionnaires and observation. The pre- and post-questionnaires contained both closed-ended (Likert scale 1–5) and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were used to collect

quantitative data on students' confidence, motivation, vocabulary knowledge, and technology use in learning English. The open-ended questions aimed to gather qualitative insights into students' experiences and feelings toward learning English and their interaction with the Cake application.

Observations were made during each of the four meetings to record how students interacted with the app and responded to speaking activities. These observations helped the researcher gain a deeper contextual understanding of the teaching process and student engagement.

Data Analysis

The analysis was carried out using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the quantitative data, the Likert scale responses from the pre- and post-questionnaires were entered into Jamovi, a statistical software. Each student's responses across the relevant items were averaged to produce a mean pre-score and a mean post-score. A paired sample t-test was then conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between students' responses before and after the treatment.

For the qualitative data, students' responses to open-ended questions were analyzed thematically. The researcher identified common patterns, recurring phrases, and themes to interpret how students perceived their learning experiences and the role of the Cake application.

Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the findings of the study regarding the effectiveness of the Cake Learn English application in supporting students' speaking skills. The data were collected using pre- and post-questionnaires that consisted of Likert-scale items. The aim was to assess whether there was a statistically significant difference in students' perceptions and experiences before and after being taught using the application. A paired sample t-test was used to analyze the difference between pre-test and post-test mean scores. Additional descriptive statistics and a normality test were also conducted to validate the assumptions required for the t-test. The descriptive statistics provided a general overview of students' overall scores from the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistic Pre and Post Questionnaire

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Total Pre	33	34.5	33	8.81	1.53
Total Post	33	38.1	42	7.42	1.29

As shown in the table, the mean score increased from 34.5 (pre-test) to 38.1 (post-test). The increase in mean indicates that students had a more favorable perception after participating in the speaking lessons using the Cake application. The median also rose from 33 to 42, showing a notable shift toward more positive responses among the majority of participants.

The standard deviation (SD) for the pre-test was higher (8.81) than that of the post-test (7.42), suggesting that students' responses became more consistent after the treatment. This could imply a more unified experience or agreement among students about the effectiveness of the app.

To determine whether the data were suitable for parametric testing, a Shapiro-Wilk test of normality was performed on the difference scores between pre-test and post-test.

Table 2
Normality Test

Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)

			W	p
Total Pre	-	**Total Post**	0.956	0.202

The p-value (0.202) is greater than the significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that the assumption of normality was not violated. Therefore, it was appropriate to proceed with the paired sample t-test for the analysis.

Table 3
Paired Samples T-test

Paired Samples T-Test

								95% Confidence Interval			
			statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference	Lower	Upper		Effect Size
Total Pre	Total Post	Student's t	-2.14	32.0	0.040	-3.61	1.68	-7.03	-0.177	Cohen's d	-0.373

The p-value of 0.040 indicates that the difference between pre-test and post-test scores is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This confirms that there was a meaningful improvement in students' perceptions and engagement after learning with the Cake application.

The mean difference was -3.61, meaning that the average post-test score was 3.61 points higher than the average pre-test score. The 95% confidence interval does not include 0, further reinforcing the significance of the result.

The effect size (Cohen's d) was -0.373, which is interpreted as a small to moderate effect size, suggesting a modest but meaningful improvement in students' responses.

To support the quantitative findings, a qualitative analysis was conducted based on students' open-ended responses from both the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire. Although the questions in the pre- and post-tests were not identical, the answers were analyzed thematically based on recurring categories such as self-confidence, learning engagement, technical challenges, and supportive features of the application.

Table 4
Changes in Perception Based on Themes

Theme	Pre-Questionnaire	Post-Questionnaire	Observed Change
Self-confidence	Many students expressed feeling shy or afraid to speak.	Most students reported increased confidence and speaking bravery.	Improvement
Learning experience	Learning was described as difficult and monotonous.	Learning was perceived as more engaging with the use of videos.	More enjoyable learning experience
Technical challenges	Not explicitly mentioned.	Several students found the app interface "confusing" or "complicated."	Emergence of new challenges
Helpful features	Few students had used learning technology before.	Video clips, subtitles, and pronunciation features were appreciated.	Positive adaptation to media
Suggestions & Reflection	Most had not used apps before and had little feedback.	Many suggested simplifying the app and removing ads or point-based access.	Increased critical awareness

Based on the pre-questionnaire responses, the majority of students reported difficulties in speaking English due to feelings of shyness, a lack of confidence, and limited practice opportunities. They also stated that the usual learning methods were monotonous and less interactive.

However, after participating in four sessions of speaking practice using the Cake application, students' perceptions noticeably improved. In the post-questionnaire, many indicated that they felt more confident and actively engaged in speaking activities. One student stated, "I feel more confident because I can practice on my own through the app and listen to native speakers."

Furthermore, students appreciated the app's features, especially the video-based materials, subtitles, and pronunciation guidance. Despite this, a few students did encounter technical challenges, such as a confusing interface or the requirement to earn points to unlock features. Several participants recommended making the app more user-friendly and accessible without unnecessary restrictions.

The results of this study indicate that the use of the Cake – Learn English application had a positive impact on students' perceptions and experiences in learning English speaking skills. Quantitative analysis through a paired sample t-test showed a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-test scores, with a p-value of 0.040 ($p < 0.05$). The mean score increased from 34.5 to 38.1, suggesting measurable progress. Although the effect size (Cohen's $d = -0.373$) was categorized as small to moderate, it still points to a meaningful shift in students' confidence and engagement. These findings are in line with previous studies, such as Nuraeni and Yanthi (2020), who found that the Cake application enhanced speaking ability and motivation by providing interactive, native-speaker-based content.

Supporting this, qualitative responses from open-ended questions revealed that students experienced increased confidence after using the app, particularly due to features such as video repetition and pronunciation models. Many described the learning process as more enjoyable and engaging compared to watching YouTube or other social media platforms, highlighting how digital tools aligned better with their learning preferences. In addition, students appreciated helpful features like subtitles, speaking practice, and

video clips, which made abstract concepts such as pronunciation and intonation more concrete. Although a few students reported minor technical challenges in navigating the app, most gave constructive feedback and demonstrated growing digital awareness. Altogether, both quantitative and qualitative findings consistently show that the Cake application contributed to more engaging, confidence-building, and learner-friendly speaking activities in the classroom.

Conclusion

In the context of Industry 4.0, educators are encouraged to incorporate innovative teaching tools, particularly for developing English speaking skills, which are widely regarded as a key measure of language learning success. This need becomes even more critical in remote or virtual learning environments, which have become increasingly prevalent. Under such circumstances, teachers must adopt creative learning resources that are as effective as traditional, in-person instruction. One such resource is the Cake application, a practical and accessible tool that supports engaging and interactive speaking practice. Equipped with a range of features, the app is designed to assist learners in enhancing their speaking proficiency. In real classroom use, Cake has demonstrated its effectiveness in improving students' speaking performance. Its simplicity and adaptability make it suitable for learners at all levels and applicable in a variety of learning situations.

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