

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In the rapidly advancing digital era, technology plays a crucial role in various aspects of life, including education. One of the most significant developments in the field of education is the emergence of technology-based learning applications designed to enhance language skills. In the context of learning English, mastering speaking skills is particularly important, as speaking serves as the primary indicator of successful communication in a foreign language. However, in Indonesia, English-speaking skills remain a significant challenge for students, including those at SMPN 1 Sungai Aur.

Based on preliminary data obtained by researchers at SMPN 1 Sungai Aur, it was found that the majority of seventh-grade students experience difficulties in speaking English. These difficulties encompass several aspects, such as limited vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, grammatical errors, and a lack of confidence when speaking. Additionally, anxiety and fear of making mistakes while speaking in front of the class further hinder the development of students' speaking skills. The limited English-speaking environment around them also poses a challenge, as students rarely have opportunities to practice speaking actively outside the classroom.

The English teaching methods applied in schools remain conventional and teacher-centered, where students receive material passively rather than actively practicing speaking. The lack of digital media usage in the learning process is another obstacle, preventing students from having adequate access to independently improve their speaking skills. As a result, students struggle to develop their abilities effectively.

Various studies, such as those conducted by Warschauer and Meskill (2000) and Blake (2008), have shown that integrating technology in language learning can help students improve their speaking skills. Technology-based learning applications, such as the Cake application, can serve as an effective alternative solution to overcome these challenges. Cake is an English learning application that offers various interactive features, including voice recognition, pronunciation feedback, and video- and audio-based speaking exercises. This application allows students to practice speaking more intensively, identify pronunciation errors, and boost their confidence in communicating in English.

Several previous studies have proven that using the Cake application in English learning positively impacts students' speaking skills. Research conducted by Suryani et al. (2021) found that the Cake application provides real-time feedback, helping students identify pronunciation errors and improve their articulation. Furthermore, Losi's (2022) study revealed that integrating mobile applications in English

learning can bridge the gap in speaking skills and increase students' learning motivation.

According to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social learning, interaction with technology can assist students in language acquisition by providing more contextual learning experiences and supporting independent learning. Additionally, Krashen's (1982) Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory states that comprehensible input and a supportive environment enhance students' language skills. In this context, the Cake application provides easily understandable English input through video and audio features, allowing students to learn independently without excessive pressure.

Moreover, Skinner's (1957) behaviorist theory emphasizes the importance of reinforcement in language learning. In the Cake application, direct feedback on pronunciation and speaking exercises provides positive reinforcement, helping students progressively improve their speaking skills. With automatic assessment features, students can track their progress immediately, increasing their learning motivation.

In line with previous studies, this research aims to re-examine the effectiveness of the Cake application in enhancing students' speaking skills, particularly at SMPN 1 Sungai Aur. Although this application has been tested by several researchers, no specific study has examined its effectiveness in this school as a medium for teaching English. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate how the Cake application contributes to

improving students' speaking skills in this school environment. By exploring the effectiveness of this application as a learning medium, this research is expected to provide evidence-based insights into how technology can enhance English language teaching.

The results of this study are also expected to serve as a foundation for developing more effective and innovative teaching methods to improve students' speaking skills in Indonesia. Thus, utilizing the Cake application can be one of the learning strategies that help students overcome barriers to speaking English and increase their confidence in verbal communication. By referring to language learning theories, this study will contribute academically to the utilization of technology in English language teaching in Indonesian schools.

B. Identification of the Study

In accordance with what the author wrote in the research background regarding the Effectiveness of the cake application in Learning Speaking Skills in Class VII SMPN 1 Sungai Aur. Problem identification includes :

1. Many seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Sungai Aur face difficulties in speaking English, particularly in vocabulary mastery, pronunciation accuracy, and grammatical structure.
2. Students lack confidence in speaking English due to anxiety and fear of making mistakes, especially when speaking in front of the class.

3. The conventional and teacher-centered teaching methods limit students' opportunities to actively practice speaking English in the classroom.
4. The limited integration of digital learning media in English lessons prevents students from engaging in independent speaking practice.
5. There is a need to explore the effectiveness of the Cake application as a technology-based learning tool to improve students' speaking skills, particularly in vocabulary and pronunciation.

C. Limitation of the Study

This research focuses on finding out the effectiveness of the Cake application on students' speaking skill at grade VII students of SMPN 1 Sungai Aur. This study was focused on monologue speaking with five components, namely vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency and comprehension. In addition, the material used in this study was “describing people”.

D. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the study above this research in formulated as follow is cake application effective toward students' speaking skills on vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency components of students at SMPN 1 Sungai Aur ?

E. Purpose of the Study

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of this study is to determine whether the Cake application is effective in teaching monologue to students at SMPN 1 Sungai Aur.

F. Significance of the Study

This study aims to explore the impact of using Cake app in improving students' speaking skills in English language learning. Theoretically, the results of this study can be a reference in identifying effective methods in technology-based teaching. Practically, this study is useful for teachers in integrating Cake application into learning to make it more interactive as well as for other researchers who want to continue their study in this field.

G. Definition of Key Terms

Media	defines media as various types of tools around students that can support the learning process (Gegne,1970)
Speaking skill	: An interactive process involving the production, reception, and processing of discourse with sound as the main medium (Brown, 2001)
Cake Application	: Cake app is a technology-based learning platform that utilizes a combination of video, audio, words and images to encourage students to produce specific language, especially through structured practice activities. (Winda, 2020)