ENHANCING ENGLISH LISTENING SKILLS: A CASE STUDY OF THE CAKE APPLICATION IN STUDENT LEARNING

Aldilla Rozias Eka Putri1, Deasy Yunita Siregar2
1,2English Education Department Faculty of Tarbiyah Science and Teacher Training
State Islamic University of North Sumatera, Indonesia
Email: aldilla0304201044@uinsu.ac.id, deasyyunita@uinsu.ac.id

ABSTRACT

In today's world of education, mastery of English is important for students all over the world, including in Indonesia. Despite its importance, many learners struggle with English language proficiency, particularly in listening comprehension. This research explores the effectiveness of the CAKE application in improving English listening skills among secondary school students in North Sumatra, Indonesia. Using qualitative case study methodology, data was collected from 10 participants through interviews and observations. Findings showed significant improvements in students' listening skills after using the CAKE app, as evidenced by their performance in listening tests and self-reported experiences. Participants reported improvements in the quality of English such as better vocabulary and listening skills than before, increased self-confidence, focus and motivation in learning English, and this was due to the interesting features of the application. Although there were some challenges, such as selecting videos and understanding unclear audio, students provided valuable suggestions to improve the app's effectiveness. Overall, the CAKE app offers a promising solution for improving English listening skills, providing students with an accessible and engaging platform for language learning outside the classroom. By meeting students' needs and incorporating their input, CAKE applications have the potential to further improve language learning outcomes and contribute to students' overall language proficiency in a globalized world.

KEYWORDS
CAKE application, English listening skills, Language Learning

INTRODUCTION

“In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, the pursuit of excellence in education is the cornerstone of countries' efforts to develop competent human resources. This is especially true for Indonesia, where the quality of education plays
an important role in shaping the country's future. It has become clear that education must continue to evolve to equip students with the skills necessary to navigate the educational field and real-world survival challenges, to make meaningful contributions to society, and in line with the constitutional mandate that highlights the importance of education for all citizens.

When education in Indonesia underwent a transformation, the superiority of foreign languages, especially English, emerged as an important aspect in educational discourse. English, as a global lingua franca, has a significant influence on international discourse, trade, and academic exchange. Countries around the world, including Indonesia, have realized the important role of English in the modern era, with the inclusion of English as a mandatory subject in the education curriculum. However, in fact despite its widespread presence in formal education, English is still limited to academic environments in Indonesia, with limited practical application in social interactions, as observed by scholars (Amankulova & Seisembieva, 2011).

The importance of mastering English goes beyond academic purposes, encompassing a wide range of benefits ranging from increasing employment opportunities to facilitating cultural exchange and international mobility. However, despite the importance of English education, both educators and students grapple with various challenges during the learning process, ranging from attitudes towards learning to levels of participation in the classroom environment (D.-N. Chen & Liang, 2016).

Indonesia, which realizes the important role of English as a second language, has integrated English language education from elementary school to university. This strategic integration underscores the country's commitment to preparing its citizens to communicate and engage effectively on the global stage. In the era of globalization, where information transcends borders and advances in knowledge spread throughout the world, English proficiency has become a necessity for Indonesian people to effectively navigate various international situations. Meanwhile, like Professionals in Colombia now need to be proficient in a foreign language to meet the demands of the globalized world and secure better job opportunities or engage in academic and economic exchanges. In response, the Ministry of National Education has initiated the "Colombia Very Well" National English Program (2015-2025) under the Bilingualism Law (Law 1651 of 2013).

Listening plays an important role in language acquisition and everyday communication, serving as a foundation for developing a variety of language skills. Listening serves as a foundation for dialogue, writing, and reading, facilitating mastery of vocabulary and pronunciation (Egamnazarova & Mukhamedova, 2021; Uzer, 2018). In addition, listening helps in understanding pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar simultaneously, thereby increasing understanding of the speaker's message (Salem, 2017). Effective language communication depends on developing listening skills to understand expressions, words and sentences that are relevant to one's background (Teanga Aguilar, 2022). Ultimately, listening involves collecting sounds through the ear and processing them into words or sentences, forming language understanding (Herminingsih, 2021).
Listening comprehension stands out as a fundamental pillar in language acquisition, serving as the foundation on which other language skills are built. However, mastering listening skills poses challenges for many learners, including problems with pace control, vocabulary limitations, and cultural nuances, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (C. W. Chen, 2019; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019). Recognizing the importance of listening, educators are looking for innovative approaches to improve students' listening skills and engagement in the learning process, such as the use of multimedia which includes text, images, and videos in various formats is considered important in capturing students' interest and passion for the material presented. Hiroyuki, (2021) found that incorporating media into a blended training environment resulted in increased satisfaction among many students.

Technology harbors immense potential to revolutionize current teaching methodologies, not only through the utilization of hardware and software but also by facilitating human interaction with devices and other tools (Isman, 2012). When students engage with technology in their learning, they can enhance their higher-order cognitive skills. Technology provides students with educational resources and a conducive learning environment (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Various applications enable learners to harness technology throughout their educational journey. With technological advancements, an increasing array of resources becomes available for utilizing these facilities in teaching and learning. According to several research studies, digital tools play a beneficial role in language learning and instruction (Ebrahimi, 2016). These findings are not solely based on surveys and questionnaires but also draw support from students' and teachers' opinions, as well as observations. The integration of Information Communication & Technology (ICT) into educational tasks has been shown to elevate students' success levels. Various mobile apps are available to assist students in accessing listening materials, honing their listening skills and measuring their understanding of spoken content.

In this context, the CAKE application emerges as a promising tool for improving English listening skills among students. The CAKE application offers a variety of features, including short video conversations accompanied by Indonesian subtitles, allowing students to improve their listening skills by giving them the opportunity to repeat passages spoken by native speakers. The application offers a variety of Western films, cartoons and TV programs, making the learning process interactive and interesting. Additionally, the app uses an adaptive learning system that adapts activities and feedback to each learner's proficiency level and preferences, thereby increasing motivation and engagement in the language learning journey.
The CAKE application, designed for Android and iOS users, serves as a platform for English language learning. The CAKE application, currently holding an impressive score of 4.6 on the Google Play Store, serves as an English language learning platform that utilizes audio, video, and network services to aid learners in mastering the language. This app uniquely allows learners to practice English in either their native language or English itself, a feature that sets it apart from other popular applications that limit language learning to the learner's native language (Nushi & Eqbali, 2017).

Operating the app does not require any registration, and upon downloading and installation from the Google Play Store, users are greeted with an introductory video presenting a language learning point. The app employs an immersive approach, likened to someone learning to swim by diving into a pool without prior knowledge. The app's homepage prominently features a section for today's conversation, segmented into listening and speaking modes, positioned at the bottom of the interface. The researchers opted for the CAKE application as their chosen medium due to its complexity and versatile capabilities, making it a tool accessible anytime and anywhere. This flexibility allowed children to enhance their listening skills beyond the confines of the classroom, offering them the opportunity to learn at their preferred time and location (Hapipah & Dewi, 2021). Playlist Corporation, a South Korean company, is credited with creating the CAKE application, as highlighted by Nawangsih (2019). The app was utilized to refine reading, listening, and speaking abilities, employing current information and a vocabulary acquisition method through quick movies to prevent student boredom during studying.

The research entitled "Improving English Listening Skills: Case Study of the CAKE Application in Student Learning" explores the effectiveness of using the CAKE application as a means of improving students' listening skills. By investigating students' learning experiences and outcomes, this research aims to explain the effectiveness of integrating digital learning tools, such as the CAKE app, into language education. Through this research focus, it seeks to address the urgent need for innovative approaches in language learning, particularly in improving listening comprehension, which is an important aspect of language proficiency." Therefore, this study specifically addresses the research question as follow; How effective is the CAKE app in improving English listening skills among students?
RESEARCH METHOD

Design
In this research, qualitative case study methodology was used to investigate a phenomenon in its natural context. Researchers use multiple sources of data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of a problem, avoiding a single perspective and considering many complexities. The data collection process followed a structured approach. The information collected and analyzed was clear. The researcher collected data through various sources, including written interviews through google forms, observations, and document analysis, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the case.

Participants
In this research, 10 students were involved. These students sat in class XII in one of the private high schools in North Sumatra. The selection of participants was deliberately taken from class XII because researchers thought that the class was in the top level and if it had a better English understanding capacity than the classes below to be tested for their listening skills.

Procedure of Data Analysis
Participants are required to download the CAKE application on their smartphones and try to answer the quizzes available in it. After everything is done, it is then analyzed until it becomes data. Then Participants were asked to fill out an interview through a google form to ask their opinion about the use of the CAKE application. The results can state the effectiveness of using the CAKE application in improving English listening skills in student learning according to the results of the data obtained from the participants’ answers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Development of English Listening Skills Through Video Program Playback and Quiz
Data to answer the development of students English listening skills through CAKE application will be seen and proven through several tests that have been conducted by researchers to the participants. (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Test 1 (Score)</th>
<th>Test 2 (Score)</th>
<th>Test 3 (Score)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.1</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>P.8</td>
<td>70</td>
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Table 1. English Listening Test
From the table above, it can be seen that there is a good and significant improvement from students in using the video feature of the CAKE application by listening English video program and its quiz to measure students' English listening skills and help improve them. From the total in each test, there is an increase in the total score of the participants so it can be concluded that the CAKE application is very useful, effective, and helpful in improving students' English listening skills in their learning. The statement can be corroborated by the theory of Mardiya Kamiolah's research (2013) focusing on the use of contextual videos to increase students' capacity in listening. Also as has been proven in Marian Tyson's (1989) writing in her thesis on "the effect of media on intermediate ESL students' listening comprehension scores." In an instant recovery protocol that heard more text than students who viewed the same content, ESL learners who listened to audio tapes would score higher. Support for the fourth hypothesis showed that more than those who watched the movie, students who listened to the audio tapes were better able to recognize the key points of the text.

Utilization of CAKE Application in Students' English Listening Skills

Basically, students' listening skills still need to be improved. This is because English is an international language that is very important to master. Listening skills are fundamental to learning English. Unfortunately, English as a foreign language is quite difficult for students to master. To improve their listening skills, there are actually many current strategies that can be used. In this research, the CAKE application has been created that is implemented with learning features that can be used in it to improve students' English listening skills.

Data to answer the research question was collected through the closed-ended part of the questionnaire; respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire to give their views on the utilization of the CAKE application in enhancing students' English listening skills. All students as participants completed the section on views on the utilization of the CAKE app. The findings showed that the CAKE application is one of the online learning applications from smartphones that they found very useful to improve and assist them in improving their English listening skills, with high replies agreeing or disagreeing with each statement. (Table 2).

Students generally use CAKE applications to hone their speaking skills or listening to them. In fact, researchers found some of them already used this cake application and applied it. They found that this was very useful for them in improving their speaking and listening to their better English. Students feel that this helps them improve grammar skills, increase self-confidence in understanding English, increasing mastery of vocabulary, etc. through the features that have been provided in the CAKE application such as short videos that can be applied in the classroom and outside the classroom. This clarifies what Rosdiana (2018) say about the usage...
of audio visuals as media to enhance the listening capacity of learning. Learning media refers to learning 'means and means of communication or knowledge.

Table 2. Results of the Survey Questionnaires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>After using the CAKE app, I feel more confident in understanding spoken English.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The CAKE application helps me to focus and improve my listening skills.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I feel more motivated to learn English listening after using the CAKE application.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The CAKE app has a variety of materials that are helpful in improving my listening skills.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I felt a significant improvement in my listening ability after using the CAKE app.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The CAKE application is an English learning application that is easy to use and effective for me to improve my English skills, especially listening skills.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Regular use of the CAKE app helps me to develop my listening skills consistently.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I found using the CAKE app effective in helping me understand accents and variations in the English language.</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I would recommend the CAKE app to my friends as an aid in improving English listening skills.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A = Agree, D = Disagree

Most of the results of the analysis are comparable; From the first, second, fourth, sixth, and ninth statements of the statements, students choose and express fully with the statements provided. For fifth and seventh statements, percentage the highest is the "agree" option which is 90% while for the "no choice Agree "both by 10%. The eighth statement has The percentage is "agree" of 80% and "disagree" by 20% with a statement that the use of cake applications is effective in helping students understand accents and variations in English.
For all statements in general, respondents show positive responses to the use of the CAKE application in improving the ability to listen to students' English, because the results of the survey above are greater than those who choose to agree than disagree with the statements in the questionnaire survey. These results support the statements of several researchers which say that the CAKE application has been proven to improve the ability to listen to students' English. Accordingly, Nur (2022) claimed that after using the CAKE application to improve student listening skills, students' listening skill was very significant and the grades obtained by students were very good so that they were able to give students more confidence in improving listening. This was especially true when using the CAKE application, when students were more at ease and felt interested in the material presented. Furthermore, According to Momeni, (2022), the main goal of this app is to help language learners improve their educational experience by watching real films that concentrate on language that is used in particular contexts. Which means, Cake application is the one of applications that students can use to improve their English ability, especially listening skill.

The Perceived Benefits of CAKE Application for Students

Theme 1: Student Experience on Improving Listening Skills through the Use of CAKE Application

English learning applications generally offer various features that can help students improve their listening skills. Some features commonly found in these kinds of apps include: Audio Materials, Applications usually provide a variety of audio materials in the form of dialogues, interviews, or real conversations between native English speakers. Students can listen and gain an understanding of the intonation, vocabulary and sentence structures used. Then Listening Practice, Apps often have a variety of listening exercises, including listening tests and activities designed to help students improve their ability to understand various accents, rates, and speaking styles. Interactive Tools Some applications provide interactive tools that allow students to record and compare their voices with those of native speakers, or provide features to highlight text while audio is playing. Progress Tracking Apps often have features that allow students to track their progress in improving their listening skills, whether through tests or other activities. By using these kinds of apps regularly, students can improve their overall understanding of the English language, including their listening skills. And the participants have implemented and felt its use. Language learners rely heavily on technology to support their learning of a new language. Among various technological advances, mobile applications have become very useful in attracting students’ attention (Nushi & Momeni, 2021). Cake, one of the leading apps for improving speaking and listening skills, is potentially popular among language learners around the world. This application is focused on watching authentic videos that discuss specific linguistic material in specific situations. Cake is an audio-visual learning platform that significantly helps in mastering vocabulary, expressions and improves long-term memory retention. Various studies show that audio-visual aids are effective in education because they support student-centered learning, encourage student involvement in the learning process, and ultimately increase student learning success (McLean et al., 2016; Yeh, 2020).
2022). From the results of the subjects interviewed, there were several differences in answers. The answer most frequently mentioned by subjects based on their experience was that the CAKE application was interesting, good, and really helped them in improving their listening skills. And this statement is supported by the following student confession:

“My experience has been good, and the CAKE app has really helped my listening skills by playing a video records”

“Really good, especially if there are important words in the video, it will be replayed several times in the important words”

“Using the CAKE app is very exciting, making me more interested in improving my listening skills by providing good visuals and easy-to-understand accents”

“very interesting, good and easy to understand because listening from video recordings”

“Very good and the app helped me a lot. And after learning about the CAKE app, I became more focused on listening due to its interesting and helpful features”

From the above statement, it can be concluded that the interesting video snippet feature in the CAKE application is very good and helps students’ listening skills.

**Theme 2: The Impact of Using the CAKE Application on Listening Skills**

Nuraeni, (2014) discusses the impact of teaching media and student learning encouragement, lack of student interest and desire to learn can be due to inappropriate media and approaches that are not appropriate for students or students. So, with the CAKE application which can be used as an easy and effective English learning media because it can be used anytime and has interesting features in it so that it can attract the attention of learners to be more enthusiastic in using it to improve their English skills. From the results of the interview, it was discovered that each subject had felt an improvement in their English language skills, both in terms of vocabulary, listening, and so on. Here are some subject statements from the interview:

“Alhamdulillah there is an improvement”

“Yes, I feel an improvement in my English skills especially in my vocabulary and listening skills”

“Quite an improvement in understanding and listening to English”

“Yes, I feel more interested in honing my skills through this app and the results have improved from before”

“There is an increase”

From the statement above, it can be concluded that the CAKE application has proven to be helpful in improving students’ English listening skills.

**Theme 3: A Method of Measuring Progress in Listening Skills through the Use of the CAKE Application**

From the interview results, it is known that each subject has felt an improvement in their English language skills, but it is necessary to know how they measure their progress in listening skills since starting to use the CAKE application. Here are some subject statements from the interview:

http://eduvest.greenvest.co.id
“Very good and there has been progress in terms of increasing knowledge of new vocabulary contained in the videos”
“I started to understand English more, 30% because I who know nothing about English can be helped by this CAKE application”
“Keeping in mind its diverse vocabulary”
“Now I can slowly watch movies without using subtitles”
“By starting to understand the pronunciation of the outside movie language clearly”

From the above statement, it can be concluded that students’ English language skills have improved slowly since using the CAKE application, both from the addition of vocabulary, their listening skills through movies, and so on. As Mei Hardiah (2019) touches upon using audiovisual media to improve student listening skills.

**Theme 4: Challenges and Difficulties Experienced in Using the CAKE Application**

From the results of the interviewed subjects, there were some differences in answers. Some stated that they did not feel any difficulties when using the CAKE application, some also felt difficulties or challenges, such as confusion in choosing a video program that is large and less familiar in the CAKE application, as well as audio conversations or accents that are not clear enough to be heard by novice students. And this statement is supported by the following student confessions:

“There is, a little”
“Yes, when choosing the video program because many of them are unfamiliar”
“Not too much”
“Sometimes there are difficulties because the delivery in the video is not clear to hear”
“No difficulties”

From the statement above, it can be concluded that there are still some difficulties experienced by beginners in using this CAKE application in learning.

**Theme 5: Suggestions to Increase the Effectiveness of Using CAKE Application in English Listening Learning**

From the results of the subjects interviewed, students expressed their suggestions or input in improving the quality of this CAKE application so that it is more enjoyed by its users. And this statement is supported by the following student recognition:

“I recommend this CAKE application can be used to help learn to listen to English videos”
“Sometimes there is some audio that is not clear enough so it is difficult to understand, so maybe the audio quality should be improved”
“More slowed down in the delivery of English so that it is clearly heard and understood”
“My suggestion is that the application is free or not paid so that access to learning English is not constrained for those who are less able to subscribe”

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“Add more ways or other features so that many are interested in learning foreign languages and interesting to learn”

From the above statement, it can be concluded that students agree to recommend this CAKE application to be used in learning English, like Nhat, (2021) said, the media helped improve the students’ listening skills and affected their autonomy positively. But it's just that students have added input or suggestions that can be used as a reference in improving the quality of the CAKE application.

CONCLUSION

This present study showed that all the participants agreed that using CAKE application could improve their English listening skills. In conclusion, recognizing the importance of mastering English beyond academic purposes, educators are continually seeking innovative approaches to enhance students' language skills. Listening comprehension, in particular, plays a fundamental role in language acquisition and everyday communication, serving as a foundation for developing various language skills. However, mastering listening skills poses challenges for many learners, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. In this context, the CAKE application emerges as a promising tool for improving English listening skills among students. Through its various features, including short video conversations accompanied by subtitles and an adaptive learning system, CAKE offers an engaging platform for students to enhance their listening skills. The application's versatility and accessibility allow students to practice English anytime and anywhere, beyond the confines of the classroom.

Research findings demonstrate the effectiveness of the CAKE application in improving students’ listening skills. Participants reported significant improvements in their English language proficiency, including vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension. Moreover, the application received positive feedback from students, who found it engaging and helpful in their language learning journey. Despite its benefits, some students encountered challenges when using the CAKE application, such as difficulties in selecting videos and understanding unclear audio. Nevertheless, students provided valuable suggestions for enhancing the application, such as improving audio quality and adding more features to enhance learning experiences. Overall, the CAKE application represents a valuable resource for language learners, offering innovative solutions to improve English listening skills. By addressing students’ needs and incorporating their feedback, the application has the potential to further enhance its effectiveness in supporting language learning and contribute to students’ overall language proficiency.

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