

# Students' Perceptions of The Cake App as A Medium to Teach Vocabulary

A Case Study in One of The Elementary Schools in Garut

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## Abstract

In the 21st century, the use of technology in the teaching and learning process is undeniable. In the literature, researches that focus on investigating the effects of technology on learning have been widely carried out. However, most research only provides a quantitative account. The views regarding the topics particularly from the students who are one of the key actors in the teaching and learning process have not been much investigated. This study aims to discover students' perceptions on the use of Cake Application as a medium to teach vocabulary. This study utilized a case study design and involved 5 students in one of the Elementary Schools in Garut. The participants who had been selected using purposive sampling were asked to join the interview and answer several guiding questions. The students' responses were analyzed qualitatively. The results showed that the students shared the same agreement regarding their views on the Cake Application as the medium in teaching vocabulary. The students agreed that Cake Application can increase their motivation in learning which eventually helps them in improving their vocabulary mastery. The results suggest that Cake Application is potential to be applied in teaching vocabulary.

**Keywords:** *Cake app; perception; vocabulary*

## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary knowledge is often viewed as a critical tool in learning a language. Schmitt (2000), in underscoring the importance of vocabulary acquisition, said that "lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language" p. 55). Then there is also a strong connection between vocabulary knowledge and the ability to communicate effectively. As Nation (2001) described that knowledge of vocabulary enables language use and, conversely, language use leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge.

The form of using technology in teaching vocabulary is the use of smartphones in which a mobile-based learning Application is installed. One of the Applications used is the Cake Application. It is a mobile Application that is intended for those who want to learn English easily and fun through a connected internet network. As Yanthi (2021) pointed out, the Cake Application is the newest, most popular Android mobile Application made by South Korea. As explained, this application is included in MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) where its use is via smartphone devices. The use of this application is believed to be able to improve English language skills, including the vocabulary of its users, because this application provides many interesting features that can be used to improve English skills. According to Sinha (2019), the Cake Application provides a recording feature so that users can listen to it again and there is a vocabulary learning feature that is fun to use. In addition, this application also provides videos to teach some terms in English, idioms, or new vocabulary every day that are useful for use in daily conversation.

Nevertheless, the Cake Application has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that this app is simple, easy to use, flexible to use anytime and anywhere, and free without having to pay a fee. While, the disadvantages are that the Cake Application can only be used via a smartphone

and to access this application, an internet connection is required because it cannot be used offline. However, this is only a theory that the features provided will improve students' abilities. Theories like this cannot be confirmed, especially when viewed from the student's perspective. Therefore, a study is needed to discuss this objectively from the student's side. Their views are needed to prove the truth of these assumptions. Based on the information that has been presented, the researcher saw that there is something needed to find out about the implementation of this app in learning English. Therefore, this present study intends to investigate about the students' perceptions of the use of Cake Application as a media to teach vocabulary in one of the Elementary School in Garut.

Regarding the use of the Cake app as a medium in the process of learning English, previously there have also been many studies on this matter. For example, the use of Cake Application in teaching speaking to senior high school students by Yanthi (2020). The result is that the Application creates fun learning, improves students' motivation and their speaking skills, also affects students' self-confidence. Previous studies have indicated the effectiveness of using Cake Application in improving students' vocabulary comprehension. One study by Schisler, et. al. (2010) showed that after oral retelling, students' literal and inferential comprehension. Their comprehension accuracy on the material given to them increases significantly upon receiving used Cake Application. Besides, Nurinsani (2021) conducted research related to the implementation of this application. This study focuses on whether the use of Cake Application in learning English at the high school level is effective. The result shows a positive impact on the development of students' abilities in learning English. On the previous study that has been conducted above, the previous researchers researched about the Cake Application, however the focus on students' perceptions has not been done.

Based on the potential benefit of the Cake Application and also based on the gap found in the literature, this study will investigate students' perceptions of the Cake Application as a medium to teach vocabulary. Besides, this study is expected to be able to increase the interest skill, and vocabulary mastery of the English through the Cake Application.

## **METHODS**

As this study intend to investigate student perception, this study was conducted under qualitative principles in which according to Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun (2012), it has greater emphasis on holistic description- on describing in detail all of what goes on in a particular activity, situation, attitudes or behaviors of people. Specifically, this study applied case study design since it is used to uncover information on a single issue (Gray, 2004). Case study are issues that must be studied, which will reveal a deep understanding of a case or bound system, involving an understanding of an individual's events, activities, processes, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2022). Case study research is a form of qualitative research based on understanding and human behavior based on human opinion (Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T., 2004).

This research was conducted in one of the Elementary School in Garut. The participants of the study were 5 students who have experiences teaching and learning process using Cake App. They are two males and three females. They were selected purposively based on specific criteria (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

To collect the data, interview was chosen as the instrument of the study. It was conducted to answer the research question related to the use of Cake Application as a medium to teach vocabulary from students' perspectives. The interview format was semi-structured. This type of interview was used due to its flexibility that, according to Berg (2001), the interviewers are permitted (in fact expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and predetermined questions. Besides, 6 interview questions which was self-constructed and developed based on relevant theoretical frameworks was asked to each respondent in order to explore their perceptions of the use of Cake Application as a medium to teach vocabulary.

There were some steps taken in accomplishing this present study. First, the researcher determines which class will be used as a research resource. Then select several informants based on predetermined criteria. The next step was to give 6 questions to the selected informants.

The semi-structured interview consisted of 6 questions was conducted to 5 Elementary School students on June, 6 2022. The interviewees were first asked to describe about Cake Application itself and its features. Then, they were asked to explain about how this application was used when the teaching and learning vocabulary conducted. The informants also asked about the benefits and barriers when they use the Cake App. Each interview was recorded with the interviewees' prior consent and transcribed to get clear explanation.

The data were analyzed descriptively to be specific the data analyzed follow theory of Sugiyono (2008), there are three activities to analyze data in descriptive qualitative research. Those activities are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Based on those statements, the researcher divides the activity in analyzing data into three activities, they are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results were then compared with the relevant theories for justification.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This present study was designed to investigate students' perceptions of the Cake App as a medium to teach vocabulary in one of the elementary schools in Garut. Therefore, the inquiry was conducted based on the question, "What are students' perceptions of the Cake App as a medium to teach vocabulary in one of the Elementary schools in Garut?"

### **Findings**

In this section, the findings from the interview will be presented. The interview results mainly provided the answers to the research questions about the students' perceptions of the Cake App as a medium to teach vocabulary.

Under the purpose of the study, which is to find students' perceptions of the use of Cake Application as a medium to teach vocabulary, the first thing that is the core of the discussion is its effectiveness. All informants in the interview process revealed that this application is effective to use as a medium in vocabulary learning. The following responses illustrated these findings. (R is the abbreviation for respondent)

*#R2: I think it is effective because I can know more vocabulary than before.*

The answer from the resource person who was a user of the Cake Application to learn vocabulary represents the effectiveness felt by all students. Of course, the views of those who think this application is effective are motivated by several reasons. Some of the things they feel or get when using the Cake Application in vocabulary learning activities can be a strong reason why they believe Cake App is effective. The things referred to here can come from the implementation of this application that is relatively easy to use, especially with the assistance of their teacher. The implementation of this application, when used for vocabulary learning based on the view of the source person, is as follows:

*#R1: So, in every English lesson, we were told to bring our cellphones, and we were told to install this Cake Application. After it was installed, he gave an example of how to use it, namely directing us to click on the basic vocabulary section, then he practiced how to use it, such as the function of the speaker feature button for practitioners, then there were also sentences consisting of the vocabulary we learned.*

From the above expression conveyed by one of the informants, it can be seen that the Cake Application is very easy to use, especially as a medium for learning vocabulary, coupled with guidance from a teacher. Therefore, the ease of using this application is one of the reasons for its effectiveness when used as a medium to learn vocabulary. Essentially, this ease of use of this

application is not only the opinion of researchers but the views of the sources who also said that this application is easy to use.

*#R2: ... it is very easy to use; I am motivated to continue learning English with this application...*

Moreover, this application, a tough competitor of the Duolingo Application, provides many very interesting features. When learning vocabulary alone, this application not only provides new vocabulary every day but is coupled with a daily quiz feature and a record feature that is a place to recall previously learned vocabularies. Although the speakers only focused on learning vocabulary, they also knew other features that made this application very convenient and interesting.

*#R3: There are lots of learning videos from YouTube that we can imitate, and there is a feature to record them too, then there is a feature for learning vocabulary, and there is also a daily quiz to test our English skills, as far as I know, there are online classes too, but I have never tried using this*

Like the expression from the third informant above, almost all participants in this study knew the various features presented by the Cake Application, especially the vocabulary feature. Then the additional features contained in the learning vocabulary feature are one of the important factors for this application's effectiveness in learning vocabulary. Unlike most other English learning Applications that only provide random vocabularies to learn, the Cake Application provides vocabulary options of various levels that can later be adjusted according to the capacity of the user. The second speaker's view represents other participants' opinions on this subject.

*#R2: The feature that is used most often is the vocabulary learning feature because it is easier, and there are levels from the basic to the most difficult. So, to learn English, I use that feature because it is the easiest while we memorize the vocabulary.*

Furthermore, the features provided by the Cake Application are interesting, providing benefits and positive impacts felt by the participants when used to learn vocabulary. One of the advantages they feel from using this application as a medium to learn vocabulary is that it can increase their motivation so that they become more excited even in learning activities.

*#R3: ... Because it is very easy to use, I am motivated to continue learning English with this application, especially in learning vocabulary...*

In line with the opinions of the second participant at the top, the third participant also revealed that the features contained in this application are easy to use. Furthermore, he also revealed that one of the benefits he felt from using the Cake Application to learn vocabulary was that it could increase his motivation to learn English. Of course, if the motivation to learn increases, then the vocabulary they know will also be more and more as a result of this. The increase in vocabulary that they knew as a result of the use of this application was conveyed by one of the informants as follows.

*#R2: I know more vocabulary and try memorizing it daily because I use this app.*

The participants also felt directly proportional between the increase in vocabulary knowledge and the increase in exam results. Some of them revealed that after using this application as a medium to learn vocabulary, it had an impact on improving their English exam results.

*#R4: ... I knew a lot of vocabulary that I didn't know before, and even this vocabulary often appeared during exams.*

The student's view above shows that after learning vocabulary through the Cake Application as a medium, it impacts the learning achievements obtained by participants. Therefore, it is not surprising that participants believe that this application is effective when used as a medium to learn vocabulary.

Apart from the features, convenience, and positive impact of using this application, there are also several obstacles experienced by the students of its users. Among the obstacles felt are limited quotas, internet networks, or even a less conducive classroom atmosphere.

*#R3: For this application, you must have internet. Sometimes if I study at home, the signal is bad*

*#R4: ... The obstacle in the classroom is that it is often noisy, making it difficult to record sound.*

Although some obstacles are encountered when using this application, they can overcome them in various ways depending on the obstacles faced. Overall, the Cake Application provides far more benefits than the perceived obstacles, so all informants said that the Cake Application was considered effective as a vocabulary learning medium.

## **Discussion**

This study has investigated the students' perceptions of using the Cake App as a medium to teach vocabulary; this study found several major findings. First, regarding the effectiveness of the Cake App, the study found that the Cake App is quite effective where Cake App can potentially help students' vocabulary mastery. It is in line with the findings of Chyntia Nurinsani (2021), who said that Cake App positively impacts the development of students' abilities in learning English.

The teaching and learning on the Cake App as a medium to teach vocabulary motivates students to use this application because it is quite easy to use, interesting and fun. These findings support the result of Honeck (2013) that the learners need the motivation to learn, and one of them is using the interesting and attractive media.

In addition, the study found that the Cake App presents features that can be used to increase vocabulary knowledge, such as learning videos from YouTube, daily quizzes, and vocabulary learning features. The finding is in line with Hapipah, Munawaroh, and Dewi (2021), who said that the Cake Application is an alternative Application that is very effective for students to learn because it provides features that can help improve student pronunciation, students' grammar, student' vocabulary and students' fluency in speaking English, especially during the Covid 19 students only study at home.

Furthermore, based on the interview results, the researchers found that the Cake App has many benefits and positive effects. Because of its easy use, students are motivated and more enthusiastic about learning vocabulary. Access to the Cake App requires no payment because this app is free. In addition, students do not feel bored because the features available in the Cake App are interesting as well as the learning is relaxing. The findings confirm the findings of Fitria, Dwimaulidiyanti, and Sapitri (2021) that the students are comfortable and interested in learning using the Cake Application. What is more fortunate, of course, is that their vocabulary ability is improved, which impacts their test scores.

However, this study also found barriers students face when using Cake App. Because this application is used online, students experience network problems and quota problems. This finding supports the result of Fitria, Dwimaulidiyanti, and Sapitri (2021) that the students should have adequate facilities like smartphones and good internet connection.

This study is not without limitations. The first one is this study only has a small number of participants. Afterwards, the focus of the study is only on grammar mastery. The instrument used only interviews and is not accompanied by quantitative data.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study was designed to determine the students' perspective on the Application of Cake in its use in learning vocabulary in an elementary school in Garut. The basis behind this research is the fact that there are so many studies that examine the use of technology that only prioritizes quantitative calculations, but very few discuss the perceptions of students who are one of the main actors in teaching and learning activities. The findings of this study indicate that most of the students show their fairly broad knowledge of the Application of this Cake starting from its features, how to use it, and the impact they feel. The obstacles they face are the limitations of the internet network, the noise that occurs in the classroom, and the internet quota they have. In addition, providing a wifi network as well as providing a quiet classroom atmosphere is an effective strategy in utilizing this application optimally when teaching and learning take place. Therefore, based on these findings, it can be concluded that the use of technology in learning is quite important because it can increase students' motivation and learning outcomes. In addition, the use of this Cake Application is also considered effective enough to be used as a medium for learning vocabulary in addition to the obstacles faced by its users.

In addition, this study presents recommendations for consideration. First, it is very important for teachers and schools to provide complete facilities to support the implementation of technology-based teaching and learning activities. Teachers are also expected to be able to control class conditions to remain conducive and calm, which allows students to take full advantage of the features of this application. Second, this recommendation is addressed to future researchers in the same field. Since this study only focuses on the perspective of students with a small number of participants and the instrument used is only interviews, a more comprehensive study on a different perspective and focus on a more representative sample and instrument would be beneficial.

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