

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background of the study, research question, objective of the study, scope and limitation of the study, significant of the study, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Speaking skill is one of the four most important skills to learn because the purpose of learning English is to be able to communicate with native speakers or other people who use the language in this increasingly developing era. This skill involves students directly to actively participate in communicating in formal situations such as education and non-formal in everyday life. Speaking is not only limited to formal education, but also plays an important role in social life (Saldaria et al., 2019). According to (Ferdian Sari & Wangi, 2020) speaking ability refers to the genuine exchange of information between two, three, or more individuals who are all simultaneously speakers and listeners. As it promotes real language practice and fluency, such participation is essential for EFL students. But EFL students, especially those in Indonesia, have unique difficulties when it comes to developing their speaking skills.

These difficulties arise because students have limited opportunities to practice with native speakers and in real life they get little exposure to English. The most common root causes of problems are pronunciation, fluency, limited vocabulary, and lack of confidence. The most common problem students

experience is a lack of vocabulary, and the main factor that prevents them from speaking is the fear of making mistakes (Nety et al., 2020); (Maji et al., 2022). It is very difficult for Indonesian students to improve their speaking skills in English. Speaking requires quick thinking, spontaneous reactions, and real-time communication, in contrast to reading and writing, which can be done independently. Therefore, students need to find frequent and purposeful opportunities to practice speaking to develop their confidence and fluency.

Similar problems were also found at SMAN 1 Pare when English learning took place. Based on the observation conducted by the researcher, there were several problems found that made it difficult for students to speak English. These problems include errors in pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and difficulty in pronouncing words fluently and correctly when speaking English. Students have enough enthusiasm in English class but they lack confidence when coming in front of the class and speaking English. This lack of confidence often results in hesitation, which increases the risk of fear of making mistakes and reduces their overall performance. This combination of challenges highlights the need for a more supportive and interactive approach to help SMAN 1 Pare students improve their speaking skills and become more confident in actively using English.

There are many strategies that can help students improve speaking skills that are commonly used by teachers in teaching speaking including: dialog, imitative, story-telling, picture series, role play, and many more. Teachers are required to be able to create interesting and interactive speaking practices in order to motivate students to practice foreign languages. In this

developing era, many schools, especially high schools, are allowed to use technology as a tool to support their learning. In English language learning, there are many digital platforms that provide fun, communicative, and interactive learning platforms. These platforms can be based on websites or applications that are designed to make it easier for students to access learning.

Cake application is a language learning platform that provides various English learning features. Using *Cake* application, an innovative digital tool created especially to benefit language learners, is one extremely effective way to improve language proficiency. Al Muammamah & Zuhriyah (2024) state that speaking ability was greatly improved by the *Cake* application, which made it a useful resource for teachers and students looking to enhance their proficiency in the English language. Students may actively practice speaking in a stress-free and enjoyable way with *Cake's* interactive and engaging platform. With the use of speech recognition technologies, dialogue simulations, and short video clips, the app gives users opportunity to practice speaking in actual situation. According to (Ayu et al., 2022) the *Cake* application has several features, including the ability to view short films and practice speaking conversation. Users may freely experiment with language in this helpful, pressure-free environment created by the app without worrying about making errors or receiving negative feedback. This is important to promoting fluency and confidence since it lets students talk freely and advance at their own speed. The *Cake* application transforms language learning from an exercise into a fun, interactive experience by making language practice more approachable and interesting.

There are several previous studies that are still related to this topic in the use of *Cake* application in English language learning. (Octavianita, Fitri, Rafinazly & Ihsan; 2022) the title is “The Effectiveness of Using *Cake* Application in Improving Students Speaking Skills”. This study establish that the *Cake* application is an effective tool for improving listening skills in English as it gives students a fun environment in which they can improve outside of the classroom. Next study by (Nuraeni & Yanthi, 2020) the title is "The Use of *Cake* Application in Teaching Speaking to Senior High School Students". The results of this found that using the *Cake* application in teaching speaking to senior high school students is effective in improving their speaking skills, fostering active and enjoyable learning, and providing direct feedback to boost their confidence. The third study was carried out by (Putri, Djunaidi & Vernandes; 2023) the title is “The Effects of Using *Cake* Application to Improve Listening Ability of The Tenth Grade Students f State Senior High School 2 of Tungal Jaya”. This study proves that Class X students at SMA Negeri 2 Tungal Jaya who were taught via the *Cake* application showed a significant increase in listening skills. The fourth study by (Fadila, Amminuddin & Ali; 2024) the title is “The Implementation of *Cake* Application to Improve Students’ Speaking Skill”. They found that how the *Cake* application significantly improved English proficiency among grade 10 students through pre- and post-test measurements and demonstrated significant improvements in their confidence, vocabulary, and pronunciation skills in a digital learning environment.

Different methods have been employed based on previous studies, including pre-experimental designs and qualitative research utilizing questionnaires, interviews, and observations. However, most of these studies focused more on presenting the experiences of the students. There is a gap as not many studies have used more reliable techniques, such as quasi-experimental designs, which offer a direct comparison between groups that use the *Cake* application and those that do not. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled “The Influence of *Cake* Application Towards Students' Speaking Skills at SMAN 1 Pare”, using the quasi-experimental method to provide clearer results on the effectiveness of the application.

B. Research Question

How can the use of *Cake* application influence students' speaking skill at SMAN 1 Pare?

C. Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out the use of *Cake* application influence students' speaking skill at SMAN 1 Pare.

D. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The participants of this study only included 2 classes of students from SMAN 1 Pare, one of which will use the *Cake* application as an additional tool to hone their speaking skills. Fluency, pronunciation, and confidence are some of the specific components of speaking skills that are the focus of the study. However, other language skills such as writing, reading, and listening were not

covered in this study. Furthermore, the impact of the *Cake* application was only studied for a short period of time in this study, which may not take into account the long-term improvement in speaking skills.

In addition, the limitations of this study include students' willingness to explore the app consistently and the accessibility of devices on which they may access it. Because not all students may have equal access to technology or show the same amount of interest for utilizing mobile applications in their language study, these limitations may limit the findings' generalizability.

E. Significance of the Study

1. For English teachers

The study's findings can help English teachers in understanding how the *Cake* application impacts students' speaking skills, especially in SMAN 1 Pare. Teachers may use this information to make greater choices about the use of digital technologies in the classroom. By collaborative and interesting activities, both within and outside of the classroom, this study will support teachers in discovering efficient methods to enhance speaking skills.

2. For students

Students will get an understanding of how digital tools such as the *Cake* application may enhance their speaking skills. Additionally, it helps students take more interest in their education by helping them to experiment with various teaching strategies that are effective for them.

3. For other researchers

This study helps other researchers by showing how the *Cake* application affects speaking skills in secondary school students. This study

can be a starting point for future studies on mobile apps in language learning. The findings and methods can guide researchers who want to explore the use of similar apps in different schools or countries, or even see how these apps affect other skills such as reading and writing.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Speaking skill

Speaking skills are the skills of communicating and expressing ideas directly in verbal form fluently which involves the use of appropriate vocabulary and appropriate pronunciation.

2. *Cake* Application

Cake application has a recording capability that users can use, and it is an English learning tool designed to enhance students' English language learning experiences. It is possible to speaking, writing, listening, and reading with this application. Thus, students learning English can benefit from the *Cake* application.

3. EFL Students

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners are people who are studying English in countries where it is not the primary form of communication. Instead of utilizing English as a medium for everyday communication, these learners primarily study it as an academic topic or for development as professionals. They have particular difficulties, including little exposure to the language in real-world situations and little chances for practical use outside of classrooms. Their learning environment is usually classroom-based (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).