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A Critical Review of Cake: A Mobile English Language Learning Application

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Abstract
The burgeoning prominence of information technology has positioned mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) as an integral milestone of English as a foreign language (EFL) learning. With its mark deeply left on multiple manifestations of language learning, the MALL has substantially revolutionized the way second languages are taught and learned. In this illumination, the widespread integration of highly prominent portable devices such as smartphones and tablets has introduced to the market multitude of mobile applications for L2 learners, broadening the ground of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) to integrate MALL as an innovative direction of L2 learning. The Cake software is one such application that is a promising venue that teaches learners the English language through realistic, interesting, and engaging English videos. The app is primarily intended to assist language learners in enhancing their learning experience through watching videos that focus on situation-specific linguistic material. The focal point of this article revolves around is to offer an overview of the Cake application by illuminating its key functionalities and discussing its upsides and downsides. The article suggests Cake as a platform for English language learners to improve their speaking and listening capabilities. Furthermore, the application may aid English language teachers in introducing the app to the learners as a supplementary resource.

Keywords: Application; Cake Application; English Language; Mobile-assisted Language Learning (MALL); Technology

1. Introduction

Within the last few years, the burgeoning prominence of information technology has positioned mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) as an integral milestone of English as a foreign language (EFL) learning (Burston, 2015; Chen et al., 2020; Şad et al., 2020; Tragant et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2022). With its mark deeply left on multiple manifestations of language

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learning, the MALL transitioned the PC era into an age of mobilization, in which classroom instruction shifted from an 'I Teach' teacher-centered methodology to a 'We Learn' one (Alghamdi, 2022). Similarly, Prensky (2001) claimed that students are consistent users of mobile devices and are branded as technology-savvy or digital natives. The mobile learning approach is a relatively new development in the digital environment, and it has the potential to significantly revolutionize the educational system (Chang & Hwang, 2019). Mobile learning enables educators to optimize and encourage learning and performance both inside and outside of the classroom (Martin & Ertzberger, 2013). Furthermore, the educational technology that mobile devices offer can provide L2 learners with a wide range of natural and instructional resources (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011), enables independent, self-paced learning (Pim, 2013), empowers learners to establish intercultural competence through communication with native and non-native speakers (Whyte, 2011), and serves to make them more motivated (Baleghizadeh, 2015), to mention a few. Incorporating materials from the outside world into the classroom (Stanley, 2013), providing students with multidimensional feedback (Elola & Oskoz, 2016), and assisting students with distinctive learning demands are further benefits of technological innovations of mobile devices for language instructors (Roblyer & Doering, 2013). It would not be an overstatement to assert that mobile device technology currently supports every language learning and teaching component.

With the same token, one of technology's significant contributions seems to be the interface of various language learning applications, which enables students to learn the language efficiently and through unique modalities of instruction. The widespread integration of highly prominent portable devices such as smartphones and tablets has introduced to the market multitude of mobile applications for L2 learners, broadening the ground of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) to integrate MALL as an innovative direction of L2 learning (Puebla et al., 2021; Tragant et al., 2021). The Cake is one such application that is a promising venue that teaches learners the language through authentic English videos. It is noteworthy that the videos which constitute the audio and visual aids can strengthen EFL students' listening and speaking abilities (Nanda & Lubis, 2022). To that end, this review article will elaborate on Cake's language learning application and will discuss the app's many characteristics, as well as its upsides and downsides.

2. Description

The Cake application, which presently holds a rank score of 4.6 in the Google Play Store, is an English language learning application that assists learners in learning the language via audio, video, and network services. The app will empower learners to practice the language in their native language or English, which is highly important because many popular apps do not allow learners to learn English from English (e.g., Duolingo) (Nushi & Eqbali, 2017). There is no registration required to operate the app, and when learners download the app from Google Play Store and install it on their phone, they may observe a video with a language learning point, similar to someone who does not know how to swim and dives into the pool to learn swimming. The app's initial visual representation features a category for today's conversation, which is broken down into two modes, listening and speaking, and is positioned at the bottom of the app's homepage. Certain new and important words in the subtitle of the videos have been

underlined so that learners may click on them to get information on the word in the dictionary (https://www.dictionary.com/) and the thesaurus (https://www.thesaurus.com/). The learners may pause the videos by clicking on the screen, and the software also allows them to view the entire video on Youtube by selecting the option "Watch the full video on Youtube." It could be recommended that for learners who are utilizing this app for the first time, a listening mode is a preferable option since it allows learners to become comfortable with the app's platform and encounter the contents that will be played in the app. Afterward, learners can go to the speaking mode, which can include representations of how things are spoken, the accents of those speaking, and assisting learners in strengthening their accents. The app showcases videos that teach users how to utilize various expressions in everyday life (e.g., expressions about whether, expressions about cooking, expressions about meeting people). These expressions in the videos introduce learners to the words in their context and through authentic materials that benefit learners in simultaneously learning the word and its usage. When the videos are played, a subtitle is displayed below them, and learners can switch to speaking mode and repeat the expression until it is properly learned. There is another function, labeled challenge, which is denoted by stars and allows learners to participate in quizzes that are primarily in sentence-completion formats. These quizzes tend to improve the learners' cognitive abilities since they are acquiring new content and instantly testing themselves on it. In addition, the app evaluates students' speaking mode competence. (e.g., A, B, C.) so that when learners record their voices, the app provides a grade depending on the learner's accent and pronunciation. Further, the app offers themes and channels that enable learners to follow their favorite types of videos, and after watching videos in a certain category, the app will systematically suggest videos that are relevant to the learners' interests. This functionality of the application is identical to those of YouTube, which offers an abundance of contextualized and situation-specific English-learning channels. In this respect, the app outlines the various channels to which learners may subscribe and follow their interests in particular content. Additionally, there is indeed a review feature that allows learners to examine previously watched videos for more understanding and meaningful learning.

3. Evaluation

Language learners are immensely turning to technology to empower them to learn new languages. Among the huge number of technological developments, mobile apps have been more beneficial than other technological breakthroughs in attracting the students' attention. (Nushi & Momeni, 2021). Cake, as one prominent application for strengthening speaking and listening skills, has the potential to raise popularity among a large number of language learners worldwide. The app is primarily intended to assist language learners in enhancing their learning experience through the watching of authentic videos that focus on situation-specific linguistic material. This software is an audio-visual learning platform that contributes significantly to the acquisition of vocabulary and expression and assists in long-term memory retention. A large body of research has signposted that audio-visual aids are pedagogically appropriate because they promote student-centered and self-paced learning throughout professions, motivate students to engage in learning, and subsequently maximize students' learning efficacy (McLean et al., 2016; Yeh, 2022). It is an exceptionally insightful application with a user-friendly layout

that tries to make learning another language more enjoyable for students. The utilization of visually appealing and topic and situation-oriented videos not only clarifies complicated material but also significantly motivates distracted learners.

Despite these interesting characteristics, the app possesses a number of obvious shortcomings. Even though the app underlines the words in the video, it does not allow learners to click on full expressions; therefore, it is recommended to underline the expressions and then direct learners to freedictionary.com (https://www.thefreedictionary.com/) instead of dictionary.com (https://www.dictionary.com/) for better idiom definitions. Furthermore, the speed at which videos load and download is unsatisfactory, and videos occasionally cannot be played due to the bugs in the app. Moreover, the app periodically goes out of service and is unable to be utilized. The voice recognition feature of the app also does not perform effectively and is incapable of recognizing and processing the learners' speech. Due to a lack of integration capabilities, the app is unable to connect to other applications. It is currently only available on mobile devices, and there is no website for it which constitutes an important limitation. Many mobile phones' limited screens may be inadequate for language learning. There should be some possibilities for commentary and participation to motivate learners to take an active position in the learning experience, given that the way in which the videos are presented does not offer enough interactive roles for the learners. As pointed out by the app's users in the Play Store, the white model of the app, which will hurt their eyes, and the rate of advertising spamming, which will delay transmitting the app's built-in dictionary to the corresponding website, should be remedied. The lack of meaning for the sentences shown for the pictures, the app's filtration in certain countries, the lack of supplying learners with feedback about their errors, the lack of attention to the users' comments about the app's shortcomings, the lack of sufficient instructions on how to use the different sections of the app, and the poor sound quality of the videos being played were additional complaints maintained by users on the app's homepage. In addition, almost all of the users were outspoken about the fact that this app used to be free, but recently the "Cake Plus" edition was released, which restricted most of the app's intriguing and useful material, and the price of this version was so high that most users could not afford it, so they simply uninstalled the application.

4. Conclusion

In a constantly innovative generation, learners may learn at any time and from any place using only a cell phone. This technological advancement alters the method or manner in which learners are educated (Nuraeni, 2021). There seem to be no requirement about distance, if the learning experience is performed satisfactorily, it might occur through a mobile phone application. One such technology is Cake, which is partially free to use and requires learners to just have a certain amount of Internet connectivity. The Cake is a cutting-edge innovation that incorporates videos, the internet, and speech recognition. It contains a large number of videos that can be found on Youtube. The learners will notice a variety of videos on the Cake app, and what distinguishes them is that each video has been made to be as simple as possible for learners to understand. This app will teach the learners speaking and listening skills of English through a variety of realistic, interesting, and engaging videos and inspire them to pursue learning with its user-friendly interface. This application is not constrained to learners exclusively; language teachers can adopt it as well to introduce it to the learners as a supplementary resource for improving speaking and listening skills. As highlighted by the users

of the app, the writer of this review article thinks that the application can facilitate L2 acquisition if learners use it on a consistent schedule.

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Note: The important information about the application
Title: Cake
Contact Information: mycake.me@gmail.com
Type of Product: Mobile phone application
Hardware Requirements: Smart device (phone or tablet) and access to an Internet connection
Operating System: Android and iOS app
Registration: Not required
Language: English
Publisher: Playlist Corporation
Level: Any
Supplementary Software: The Google voice recognition on the phone

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