

Improving Students' Pronunciation Skill Using Cake Application

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Abstract: English language competency is crucial for success in the classroom and in the workplace in today's worldwide society. This study examines how sixth-grade students at SD N 1 Baktiseraga can improve their English pronunciation skills by using the CAKE application, a mobile-assisted language learning tool. Utilizing Classroom Action Research (CAR) over two cycles, this research involved 25 students and aimed to improve pronunciation through interactive and interesting technological methods. Initial observations indicated low levels of engagement and pronunciation challenges among students. This intervention involves a learning plan that incorporates the CAKE application, with a focus on everyday conversations and practical speaking exercises. Data collection includes pre-test and post-test to measure progress as well as observation data to assess student participation and engagement. The results showed significant improvements in students' pronunciation skills and increased class participation. Uniformity of pronunciation abilities among students also increased, indicating reduced variation in skills. This research shows the effectiveness of integrating mobile technology into language education, highlighting the role of the CAKE app in improving student pronunciation and engagement. These findings suggest that such technological tools can significantly improve language learning outcomes and should be considered for wider educational use.

Keyword: CAKE Application, English pronunciation improvement, Classroom Action Research (CAR)

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, English language skills are essential for communicating globally. English has become an international language used in almost all aspects of life, from education and economics to the social environment. In Indonesia, English is still a foreign language, which limits its use to specific situations and groups, such as scientific meetings, formal education, and semi-formal and non-formal educational institutions. Even so, various policies have determined English as a mandatory subject taught from high school to university. Based on the Minister of Education and Culture Decree No.060/U/1993 dated 25 February 1993, English can also be included as a local content subject at the elementary school level starting from grade 4 (Zulkifli, 2014).

One of the competencies that students must master is the ability to pronounce English words correctly. English pronunciation is a fundamental skill in developing speaking, listening, and conversational abilities in English (Anggaraini, 2022). Achieving perfect pronunciation is a challenge for non-native language learners (Begum & Hoque, 2016). Speaking English fluently may be challenging, and many students still need help. These difficulties vary from student to student, but pronunciation is often the most common challenge. Students often have difficulty pronouncing English vocabulary correctly when reading or speaking, which results in significant problems because pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of language proficiency (Gilakjani, 2016). The goal of learning pronunciation is for students to be able to pronounce words like native speakers in a simplified way and to articulate words accurately so that others better understand them.

In Indonesia, traditional English teaching methods usually involve memorization and repeated practice. Although this method can improve vocabulary and grammar skills, it could be less effective and could be used to improve pronunciation skills. Traditional techniques like these often require more interactive and immersive experiences, which are essential for students to practice and internalize the sounds of a new language. The lack of native English-speaking teachers also limits students' ability to pronounce accurately and use everyday speech patterns, which is essential for mastering spoken English (Gilakjani, 2016).

Previous research results show that students often feel bored, do not want to be involved in speaking learning activities, and have low motivation to learn English traditionally. Based on initial observations at SDN 1 Baktiseraga, researchers found several obstacles in learning English, especially speaking and pronunciation skills. One of the main obstacles is the lack of student interest caused by conventional and monotonous learning methods and teaching materials that are less interesting and relevant. In addition, students need help with pronunciation, which affects their self-confidence due to a lack of practice and guidance from teachers. An unsupportive learning environment is also a significant factor, where students feel awkward and afraid of being ridiculed when speaking English. A lack of adequate resources, such as interactive learning media and access to technology, also limits teachers' ability to implement innovative methods. Many students lose focus during lessons due to teaching methods that are not varied and tend to be boring. These obstacles indicate the need to revise the English language learning approach at SDN 1 Baktiseraga with more creative and inclusive strategies to increase student participation and motivation and improve their technical skills in speaking English.

Based on the challenges above, technology has become a valuable resource in improving English language teaching in Indonesia. Integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a response to challenges in rapidly developing education. This decision encourages the integration of ICT in every aspect of learning to improve the quality of education, especially in English language teaching (Santosa et al., 2022). Technology provides significant additional tools to improve students' speaking competence, with communication applications and video conferencing recognized as essential means to improve speaking fluency and accuracy (Sosas, 2021). Research shows that using technology in teaching speaking improves students' fluency, coherence, lexical, grammatical, and pronunciation (Sherine et al., 2020). ICT has been proven to help teachers and students increase learning effectiveness. Although pronunciation challenges remain for many English language learners, integrating technology into educational practices can significantly support addressing these issues and improving language proficiency.

Rapid advances in digital technology offer promising solutions to language learning challenges. Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) takes advantage of the ubiquity and accessibility of mobile devices to offer interactive and engaging experiences that are highly effective for language acquisition. The MALL application has multimedia capabilities, instant feedback, and flexibility to learn anytime and anywhere, enhancing language learning (Hussain, 2017). The CAKE application provides an innovative approach to language learning. This application, developed by Playlist Corporation in 2018 and based in South Korea, has achieved considerable global popularity with high ratings and almost 10 million downloads (Fitria et al., 2021). The CAKE app is designed specifically for English language learning, offering features that facilitate improving language skills, such as simulated conversations with native speakers and recording features that increase student engagement. By integrating video clips and the native

voices of native speakers, the CAKE application creates an immersive learning experience, which effectively improves students' English skills (Yanthi, 2020).

The learning process in class is not only limited to traditional classrooms but can also utilize online education platforms that can be accessed outside the classroom. As a result, students can easily access learning materials through engaging media because most are active Internet users. This research focuses on applying the CAKE Application to support students' pronunciation abilities and aims to determine the impact of using the CAKE Application in improving students' pronunciation abilities. CAKE application in English language teaching is expected to significantly improve students' pronunciation skills and increase engagement in learning.

METHOD

This research was conducted to improve the pronunciation skills of sixth-grade students at SDN 1 Baktiseraga. This research used 25 class 6A students as research subjects on using CAKE Application technology-based learning media in the odd semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, to be precise in December 2023. This research used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach by Kemmis and McTaggart (2014), which included four phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This research was carried out in two cycles. This research was carried out in two cycles, where each cycle aims to resolve the problems identified in the previous cycle to achieve the results to be achieved. Researchers created tailored learning plans and teaching methods to utilize CAKE effectively at the planning stage. Next, the action phase involves implementing this plan in the teaching and learning process. Observations are carried out to assess student responses and progress in using the application. The reflection phase then evaluates the clarity and effectiveness of the learning experience.

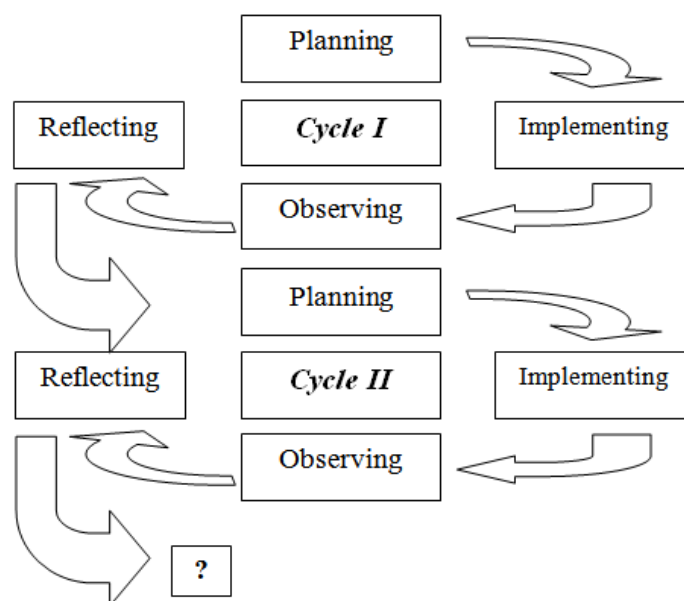


Figure 1. Classroom Action Research (CAR design)

Data collection was achieved through both tests and observational methods. The testing involved pre-tests and post-tests administered in each cycle to measure improved English language pronunciation. Observational data was gathered gradually to monitor and record student responses throughout the study. Additionally, the research utilized non-test techniques, including interviews with selected students, to gauge their perceptions and reactions to the learning tool. Triangulation analysis was employed to verify the accuracy and consistency of the collected data by comparing different sources of information. The success criteria for this research were set

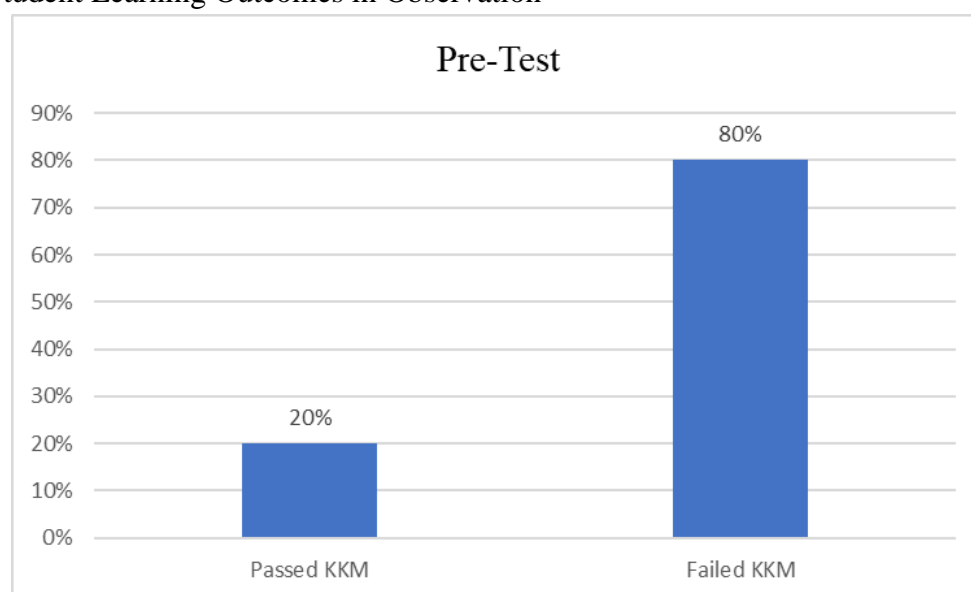
based on students' ability to meet cognitive and affective goals. Specifically, a student was considered successful if they achieved a minimum completeness criterion of 60% in cognitive skills, per the school's standards. The overall success of this research was determined by the percentage of students who achieved between 60% and 100% of the set criteria and their ability to use English with confidence and courage after implementing the CAKE application in their pronunciation courses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The researcher administered a pre-test to the sixth-grade students of SDN 1 Baktiseraga. This pre-test aimed to determine the student's initial abilities in English pronunciation before proceeding to the classroom action research phase. The pre-test consisted of a simple conversation between two people performed by seatmates. This pre-test was conducted on November 29, 2023. The pre-test was designed to measure the student's ability to correctly pronounce English words and sentences. It consisted of a simple conversation script containing everyday expressions, such as greetings, self-introductions, and simple questions. Students were asked to practice this conversation with their partners and perform it in front of the class. The researcher and the English teacher acted as evaluators, noting pronunciation errors and providing scores based on the accuracy of pronunciation, intonation, and speech fluency.

Table 1. Student Learning Outcomes in Observation



This pre-test evaluates students' initial abilities before implementing Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the CAKE Application. Pre-test data is the basis for researchers to design learning plans appropriate to the CAKE learning media. Based on the pre-test results, the learning plan will be adjusted to improve students' pronunciation skills, considering individual needs and class conditions.

Based on the pre-test results, the researcher identified several issues causing students to struggle with English language skills, particularly pronunciation. Initial observations also indicated that many students felt bored during classroom learning due to teaching methods that failed to capture their attention, leading to low motivation to learn English. This research was

conducted to address these problems through two cycles implemented during English class hours at school.

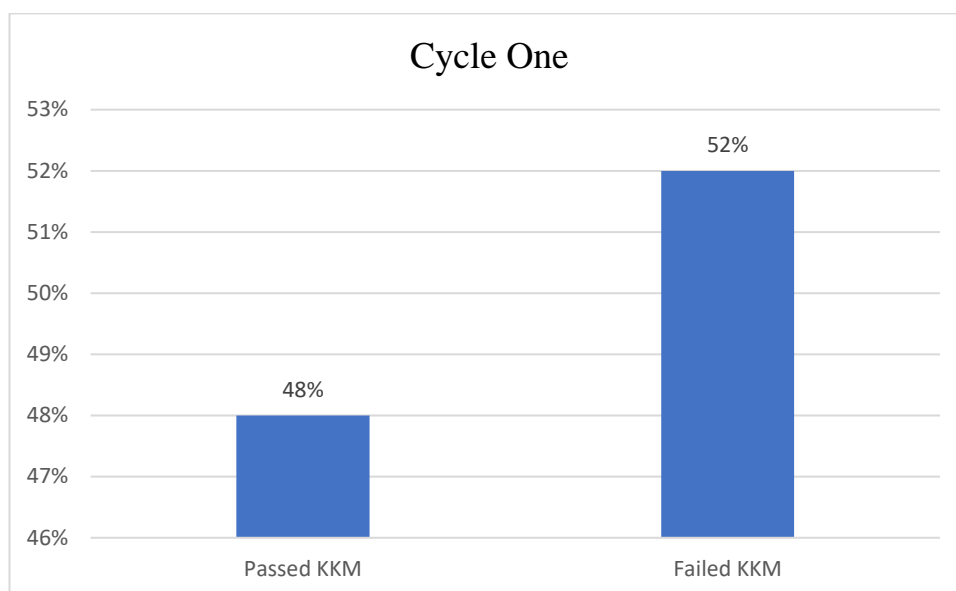
The researcher used the CAKE application as a learning medium to improve students' pronunciation skills. CAKE application was chosen because it can be downloaded from the Play Store and App Store for free. This application offers interactive features to make English learning more engaging and effective. These features include interactive videos that help students understand the real-world context of language use, pronunciation exercises with immediate feedback, and educational games that enhance students' motivation and involvement in learning.

Cycle 1

First is the planning stage. Before starting the research, the researcher created a lesson plan (RPP) based on the syllabus, learning instruments relevant to the material, and learning media. The researcher also prepared several observation sheets for collaborators and post-test instruments. Second is the action stage. According to Suryadi (2010), action involves implementing what has been planned in a classroom setting, consisting of pre-task, task, and post-task activities. The researcher presented daily conversation texts using PowerPoint. The first meeting was held on December 5, 2023, starting with greeting the students, checking attendance, and introducing the topic of "daily conversation." The researcher used pictures to explain the material and asked the students to follow the pronunciation of short conversations. The researcher also instructed the students to download the CAKE application, provided usage guidelines and allowed them to learn independently using the application, including watching videos and practicing speaking.

The second meeting on December 7, 2023, introduced a new topic: "expressing opinions." The researcher reviewed the students' understanding of the previous lesson, taught the new material, and asked the students to practice in groups using the CAKE application. The learning process continued with a focus on developing pronunciation skills until a pronunciation test was conducted to evaluate the student's progress. Third is the observation stage. After completing all activities, the researcher administered a test to the students to assess their pronunciation skills. This test was conducted after all meetings in the first cycle were completed. This test aimed to determine the student's abilities before proceeding to the next cycle. Additionally, the researcher used short texts as test materials. The results of the first post-test are as follows:

Table 2. Cycle 1 Student Learning Outcomes in Cycle 1



At this reflection stage, researchers and English teachers discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the first cycle. Several critical aspects need to be addressed: although there has been an increase in students' pronunciation abilities, almost the majority of students' achievements are still below the class minimum competency criteria (KKM), there are significant variations in student abilities, low student participation, and there are challenges in using the application CAKE. These findings highlight the need to evaluate and adapt teaching strategies to meet student needs better.

Concrete steps for improvement are necessary to enhance student engagement, optimize the use of the CAKE application, and develop more differentiated teaching strategies. This reflection provides valuable insights into areas that need improvement in the learning process. Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of the first cycle is essential for refining instructional strategies in the subsequent cycle to improve students' overall understanding and performance.

Cycle 2

The second cycle was conducted after the researcher identified the students' abilities and issues from the post-test of the first cycle. The researcher focused on the CAKE application the students studied in the first cycle. However, the lessons were modified to "how to respond to everyday expressions," this cycle consisted of three meetings. The researcher began teaching the sixth-grade students using the CAKE application method. The steps in each meeting were as follows:

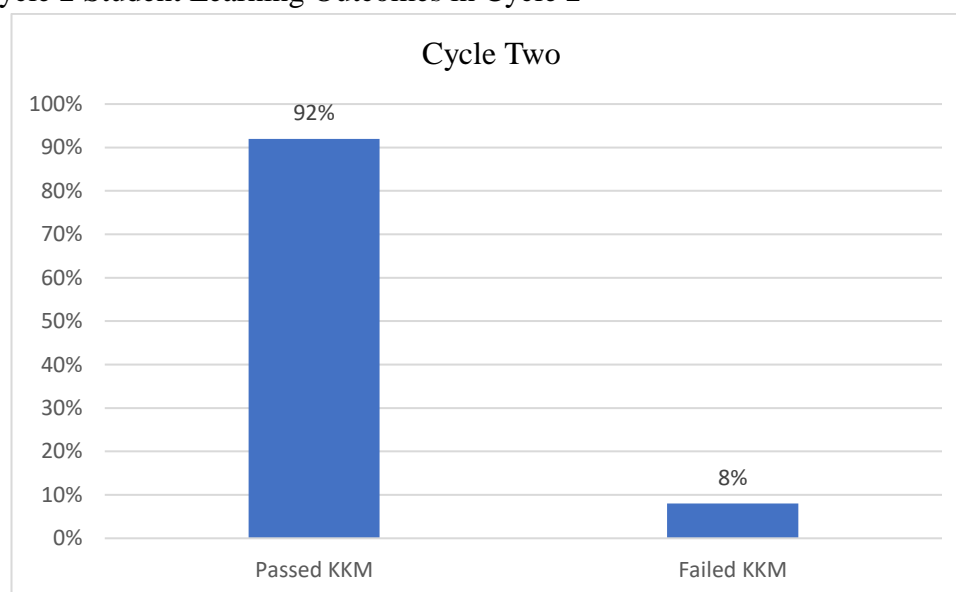
The first meeting of the second cycle was held on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, from 9:00 to 10:00 AM. The researcher began the lesson by greeting the students and checking the attendance list. The researcher informed the students to listen carefully during the teaching and learning. Additionally, the researcher asked the students to remain quiet and not make noise in the classroom during the lesson. After advising the students, the researcher started explaining the lesson, including formulas, phonetics, expressions, and the CAKE application related to the lesson.

The second meeting was held on Thursday, January 11, 2024, from 8:00 to 10:00 AM. The researcher began the second meeting similarly to the first and taught the class a different lesson. The lesson was "various ways to say hello and goodbye," with the same steps as the

previous meeting. After implementing the lesson, the researcher asked one of the students to come forward and read expressions from their CAKE application.

The third meeting was conducted on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, from 8:00 to 9:00 AM. The researcher started the class as in the first and second meetings. Without wasting time, the researcher began teaching the students, following the steps of the previous meetings. The teacher-reviewed the material and expressions learned in the first and second meetings. After applying the material, the researcher asked the students to form groups with their partners to create simple everyday conversations.

Table 3. Cycle 2 Student Learning Outcomes in Cycle 2



Based on the observations from cycle 2, the second cycle yielded better results than the first. The results from this cycle are used to determine whether the research will continue to the next cycle. According to the joint evaluation between the researcher and the English teacher, implementing Classroom Action Research to improve students' pronunciation using the CAKE learning media aligned with the previously discussed plan.

The teacher and researcher concluded that the teaching method using the CAKE-based learning media application can enhance students' pronunciation skills. This is evident from the improved test results of students from the first cycle to the second cycle. This improvement indicates that the learning method with the CAKE application has a significantly positive impact on students' pronunciation skills. Additionally, the uniformity of students' pronunciation skills also

improved. This is shown by the decreasing variation in abilities among students, meaning that students' pronunciation skills became more uniform and stable. This reduction in variation indicates that the applied learning method effectively enhances students' overall pronunciation skills.

Student participation in class also increased from the first cycle to the second cycle. Students became more engaged and active in learning, indicating improved classroom activities. This increase in participation indicates the successful implementation of a new, more effective teaching strategy. Overall, this reflection shows that the CAKE application learning method is efficacious in improving students' pronunciation skills and increasing student participation and engagement in the learning process.

Interviews with grade 6 students at SDN 1 Baktiseraga regarding using the CAKE application also provide in-depth insight into how students use the CAKE application, especially outside the school environment. This interview was conducted outside regular class hours and involved four students selected to represent the students' abilities in the class. Two students with the highest and two with the lowest scores were selected to capture different perspectives. Interview questions focused on students' understanding of the CAKE application, its integration with classroom learning, and its impact on daily life.

The interview results show variations in students' experiences using the CAKE application, especially outside the classroom. Some students need help using this application at home due to limited smartphone access and signal. One student said, "I have difficulty using the CAKE application at home because of signal problems." However, some students acknowledged the benefits of the CAKE app, feeling that it helped them learn the pronunciation of English sentences through the 'speak' feature and expanded their vocabulary. "The CAKE application helped me learn how to pronounce English sentences correctly through the speak feature," said one student. Overall, although there are difficulties in accessing the CAKE application outside the school environment, students recognize the value of this application in supporting English learning outside the classroom. The diversity of student experiences reflects the diversity of acceptance and use of technology in the learning process.

Discussion

Integrating technology in education, particularly in English language teaching, has proven beneficial for teachers and students, enabling more effective learning materials (Santosa et al., 2022). Rapid advances in digital technology offer promising solutions to challenges in learning, especially English. Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) takes advantage of the affordability and accessibility of mobile devices to provide interactive and engaging experiences that are highly effective in acquiring language proficiency. The MALL application has multimedia capabilities, instant feedback, and means to learn anytime and anywhere, significantly enhancing language learning (Hussain, 2017). The CAKE application is a technological learning tool that helps teach English. Apart from improving speaking skills, CAKE also increases students' self-confidence and communication skills in everyday life and public situations.

The CAKE application can record the user's voice using the "speak" feature, which can be corrected in real-time to students' pronunciation abilities, which is presented in an enjoyable way (Suryani et al., 2021). This application can also enable students to discover new knowledge while speaking. CAKE is a practical application for learning English, especially pronunciation skills. Some films teach us new English terminology, idioms, and vocabulary that we might use in everyday conversations (Octavianita et al., 2022). Teachers can use many elements of this

application to teach students. This application can be downloaded for free on the Google Play Store, and we can also use it for free. Students can speak English with confidence and even give speeches in public. The cake application in learning to say is a suitable learning medium for students because it helps students learn and improve their speaking skills. Some videos show how to complete some of these tasks. Valid new words, idioms, and English terminology are provided for everyday discussions.

The results showed significant progress in students' pronunciation abilities from the pre-test to the post-test during both cycles. In the first cycle, despite facing challenges such as low student engagement and technical obstacles with the CAKE application, there was a marked improvement in students' pronunciation abilities. Interviews with grade 6 students at SDN 1 Baktiseraga also revealed various experiences using the CAKE application outside the school environment. Interview results showed that some students faced challenges such as limited smartphone access and signal problems, which prevented them from entirely using the CAKE app outside school hours. Nevertheless, many students recognize the benefits of the CAKE app in improving their English skills, helping them improve their pronunciation and broaden their horizons independently.

Based on previous research showing the positive impact of the CAKE application in improving students' English speaking skills, (Chaniago, 2022) found that using the CAKE application significantly improved English speaking skills at SMP Hang Tuah 1 Belawan. This research highlights that the CAKE application provides new hope for teachers and students to overcome limitations in learning English speaking skills. Research by (Anggaraini, 2022) also highlights the increase in learning outcomes and student engagement in learning English through the CAKE application. This research shows an increase in learning outcomes and student engagement through various indicators, which shows the effectiveness of the CAKE application in overcoming challenges in English language learning, especially in pronunciation. The study by (Octavianita et al., 2022) emphasized the importance of using the CAKE application to increase students' motivation and speaking abilities. The results show that using the CAKE application in learning English can increase students' motivation and speaking abilities. Other research shows that implementing the CAKE application can create enjoyable learning, increase students' motivation and speaking skills, and increase their self-confidence (Yanthi, 2020). Another study also found that students felt comfortable and involved in learning to speak using the CAKE application (Fitria et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Implementing the CAKE application in teaching English significantly enhances students' pronunciation skills and fosters greater interest and engagement in learning. The study conducted with sixth-grade students at SD N 1 Baktiseraga demonstrated that the CAKE application is an effective tool for improving pronunciation, as evidenced by the substantial progress observed from the pre-test to the post-test across two cycles.

In the first cycle, despite initial challenges such as low student engagement and difficulties using the application, the overall results indicated that students' pronunciation improved. However, many students' achievements were still below the class minimum competency criteria (KKM), significantly varying their abilities. The reflection on this cycle highlighted the need for better teaching strategies and more effective use of the CAKE application. The second cycle saw the implementation of revised teaching strategies and a more focused approach using the CAKE application. This led to further improvements in students' pronunciation skills, increased student

participation and engagement in the learning process, and a noticeable reduction in the variation of skills among students.

Overall, the study concluded that the CAKE application is a valuable educational tool that significantly enhances pronunciation skills in English learners. The positive outcomes from the research underscore the importance of integrating technology into language learning, providing students with interactive and engaging methods to practice and master their pronunciation. The success of this study suggests that similar applications could be effectively used in other educational settings to improve language proficiency.

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