



## Digital Resonance: Enhancing Pronunciation through Tech-Infused Teaching Strategy

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### ABSTRACT

The intention of this research is to discover the implementation of *Cake* in teaching of pronunciation and to uncover the students' perception toward the use of *Cake* in teaching of pronunciation. This research applied qualitative descriptive method. The study was conducted at a private vocational school in Cianjur West Java Indonesia in the academic year 2021. The participants consisted of second grade of banking major at the ages between 15-17. Two of them were male and ten were female. This research collected the data through observation and a forced-choice questionnaire format where the participants were asked to choose one of the available selections (Yes or No). As the data were collected, the writer analyzed them. There were six steps in analyzing the observation as well as the questionnaire: (1) preparing the data to be analyzed, (2) reading or viewing all data, (3) coding the data, (4) generalizing the code, (5) creating tables based on the data code, and (6) interpret the data code. Over the observation the writers found a new formula on implementing *Cake* in helping students' pronunciation accuracy. This formula then is called MRCP with drilling as the teaching strategy. The results of questionnaire show that *Cake* was new for the student. It has many features that support students in learning pronunciation. The students were also happy learning using *Cake* and they felt more confident to speak English after learning using *Cake*.

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## INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation serves as the bedrock of effective oral communication, transcending mere language proficiency. It acts as the gateway through which ideas, thoughts, and emotions are conveyed. Precise pronunciation not only ensures clarity but also cultivates confidence and credibility in speech. It plays a pivotal role in facilitating comprehension, enabling individuals to connect seamlessly within multicultural and multilingual settings. Beyond linguistic accuracy, correct pronunciation influences social interactions, professional opportunities, and overall confidence in expressing oneself. In essence, mastering pronunciation significantly enriches one's ability to communicate fluently and authentically, thereby fostering meaningful connections in both personal and professional spheres. Pronunciation is an essential element in good communication because the wrong pronunciation will lead to misunderstanding and produce ambiguity in communication (Bakar et al., 2015). For English learners, pronunciation is one crucial aspects that must be owned by the students in order to be able to speak in English better (Yusriati & Hasibuan, 2019); (Arjomad & Yazdanimoghadam, 2015).

In learning of language, pronunciation is one component of supporting English language abilities. As it is stated by Purwanto (2019), pronunciation is a critical component in developing spoken abilities in a second language. A good speaking requires a good pronunciation. A good pronunciation is a standard pronunciation that is not effected by mother tongue pronunciation which includes clarity of vowels and consonants and accuracy of pronunciation (Hasan et al., 2015). From those statements, it is quite clear that although the students do not need to be competence in sounding English sound as English, yet this way can lead misunderstanding between the speaker and listener and will create a shift in meaning in conducting communication (Pratiwi & Indrayani, 2021). For that reason, producing a clear and good pronunciation is important for the learner in order the communication run well. As the result, it can be said that pronunciation is a crucial oral communication skill (Huwari & Mehawesh, 2015).

In reality, pronunciation presents a significant challenge for many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, often leading to numerous difficulties. The intricate nature of English phonetics, including its irregularities and diverse regional accents, can pose obstacles to learners. Mispronunciations may impact comprehension and communication, causing confusion or misunderstandings in both academic and social settings (Berdin, 2016). Therefore, many students tend to find difficult in pronunciation in which the students difficult to differ English and Indonesian sound Meo & Dharma (2019). Studies revealed the problems on pronunciation. First, Sihombing (2013); Cavus (2016) reported that mostly students cannot speak fluently because they lack of how to pronounce the words correctly. Second, Komariah (2018), Yusriati & Hasibuan (2019) found that students have problems in pronouncing the sound (s) as [ʃ] as in "sheep", [ʒ] "measure", [θ] "think" in which those sounds do not exist in Indonesian. They also found it difficult pronouncing "enough" [f], "our" [əɹ], "may" [ei], and "mow" [əʊ]. Meanwhile, Maiza (2020) found that the students felt hard to produce English consonants of /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. Third, Silalahi

(2016) found that, the native speakers of Indonesia found difficult in pronouncing 'sh' (phonetically transcribed /ʃ/). Fourth, Adeline (2020) found that the students lack of produce some consonant letters in English that should be pronounced silently. For example, /b/ sound in the words *Debt, Plumber, Bomb*; /c/ sound in the words *Muscle, Science, Conscious*; /k/ sound in the words *Knock, Know, Knew*; /n/ sound in the words *damn, column, hymn*; /s/ sound in the words *aisle, island, patios*; and /w/ sound in the words *answer, two, whole*.

Those problems were caused by two aspects; internal aspect and external aspects. The internal aspects came from the students and the external one came from teacher (Syafitri et al., 2018). From the students' point of view, the problems in pronunciation were caused by two factors; The first is problems that caused by the students' competence and the second was caused by students' psychological factor. The incompetence students' pronunciation were caused by three factors; 1) the difference of sounds system between vowels and consonants (Maiza, 2020), (Meo & Dharma, 2019), (Silalahi, 2016), 2) there is no silent letter in Indonesia (Adeline, 2020), and 3) the students tend to use mother tongue to produce unfamiliar English sound (Silalahi, 2016). Meanwhile, the sources of the problem from the students' psychology are 1) student less motivation to pronounce English sound correctly such as such as checking pronunciation or phonetic transcription in dictionary (Adeline, 2020), (Naser & Hamzah, 2018), 2) students have less confidence in pronouncing words (Syafitri et al., 2018), and 3) lack of using videos, listening to authentic contexts, or having English pen friends (AL-Ghazo et al., 2018).

From the teacher point of view, the problems of pronunciation were cause by some factors; 1) the teacher less paid attention on pronunciation instruction (Arashnia & Shahrokhi, 2016), 2) lack of material guidance (Gilakjani, 2016), 3) the teacher ignored in teaching pronunciation (Bakar et al., 2015), 4) the teachers are lack of applying teaching strategy, 5) the teacher only focusing on the exercises in the textbooks, 6) the teacher used monotonous strategy in teaching pronunciation (Prahani et al., 2020), and 7) the teachers were lack of pronunciation training, 8) The teacher lack of using technique in teaching pronunciation (Maiza, 2020), 9) the teachers are lack in implementing instructional media (Shooshtari, 2013), and 10) the teachers are lack of applying variety of teaching strategy in teaching pronunciation (Arjomad & Yazdanimoghadam, 2015).

Presently, there is a myriad of technologies available to aid in improving pronunciation. Audio recording tools, pronunciation apps, interactive online platforms, and speech recognition software are just a few examples of the technological advancements designed specifically to assist individuals in honing their pronunciation skills. These resources offer personalized feedback, exercises, and even live interactions, allowing learners to practice and refine their pronunciation at their own pace and convenience. English teachers are able to integrate the technology into their teaching practices (Mali, 2016).

The integration of technology in the teaching and learning practices is not only important for classroom learning and teaching process but it also helps learners to be autonomous learners.

It is because technology and internet have provided learners with several online and offline resources for language learning (Thabit et al., 2020). Technology is one of the instructional aids that is currently widely applied (Halimah et al., 2019). It can be used to teach adults as well as children (Kusumawardhani, 2020). In general, the integration of technology in the teaching and learning processes has to be improved (Budiarta & Santosa, 2020). It has been demonstrated that multimedia technology has a good impact on student actions and initiatives, as well as the teaching effect in English class. We have also gathered a lot of research about how successful technology is as a media at teaching pronunciation (Alwehaibi, 2015); (Suryani, Syahrizal, & El Fauziah, 2019); (Haryanto, 2015); (Nguyen, 2020).

Teachers who are just looking for effective tools to utilize in their classrooms may be intimidated by the sheer amount and variety of accessible technologies. However, if we approach this topic from a different perspective, beginning with the pedagogical goals that teachers and students must complete and then considering the most appropriate tools to complete each one, technology might become far less scary (Yoshida, 2018). Therefore, as a teacher we have to be critique in selecting the technology to be applied in teaching practices. Technology should be kneaded with appropriate strategy in teaching practices (Halimah, Lustyantie, & Ibrahim, 2018). By integrating technology with teaching strategy appropriately should the teacher is more creative and the students are more active (Dewi et al., 2021).

In this study, researchers applied *Cake* as an effort to help students of a private vocational school in Cianjur West Java Indonesia to increase students' pronunciation accuracy by answering these two questions; 1) How is the implementation of *Cake* application in order to enhance the student's pronunciation? And 2) How is the student's insight towards to use of *Cake* application in Pronunciation.

## METHODOLOGY

The intention of this research is to answer the two research questions; 1) How is the implementation of *Cake* in teaching of pronunciation and 2) What are the students' perception toward the use of *Cake* in teaching of pronunciation. Therefore, this research applied qualitative descriptive method. The study was conducted at one of private vocational school in Cianjur district West Java Indonesia in the academic year 2021. This researcher was conducted from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 until 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The participants consisted of second grade of banking major at the ages between 15-17. Two of them were male and ten were female.

This research collected the data from observation and questionnaire. To answer the first question, the researchers observed the implementation of *Cake* Application in the classroom. Following the observation, the writers gave questionnaire to the participants. The questionnaire was a forced-choice questionnaire format where the participants were asked to choose one of the available selection (Yes or No) (Callegaro et al., 2015). There were 17 questions given.

As the data were collected, the writer analyzed them. There were six steps in analyzing the observation as well as the questionnaire: (1) preparing the data to be analyzed, (2) reading or viewing all data, (3) coding the data, (4) generalizing the code, (5) creating tables based on the data code, and (6) interpret the data code (The Alberta Teacher's Association, 2000), (Creswell, 2012).

## RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *The Practice of Cake Kneaded with Teaching Strategy in Teaching Pronunciation*

Over the observation, it can be noted that in implementing *Cake* as a teaching media in teaching pronunciation the writers used Drilling strategy through Listen and Repeat activity. The writers also discover a new patter in applying *Cake* in teaching Pronunciation. The patter consisted of four phases; Modelling, Recording, Correcting, Practice. The writers named this pattern as MRCP. The phases of these pattern are descried in the next paragraph.

The first phase of the patter was *modelling*. In this phase the pupils were given a model on how to produce an English sound correctly. It is important for the teacher to show how sounds and words are produced. *Cake* provided some short videos taken from BBC Learning English with different topics (Figure 1). The teacher again, have to select the topics that fit the teaching and learning intention. From these videos students might learn some expression used in daily life. The students were guided to watch 2 minutes' video. Firstly, they have to watch the video completely. Then the might repeat to watch them partly. The students paid attention and wrote on some difficult words to pronounce. Then, they might press the 'Drill' button to get the drilling of those difficult words. Finally, they repeated to produce uttering those difficult words. The use of video has been shown to help learners improve their ability to identify sound and words (Simanullang, 2018); (Sanjadireja, 2020). Authentic videos provide useful material for scaffolding. Scaffolding is an activity in which students watch a short video multiple times, repeating after the speakers in order to practice imitating the sound, pauses, and intonation to get the pronunciation fluency (Yoshida, 2018).



Figure 1

The second stage was *recording*. After the students practiced many times from the given model, the students then recorded their voice (Figure 2). The students uttered the utterance modelled by *Cake*. In this stage students are asked to record their voices as a part of pronunciation practice. The objective of this task is to achieve students' fluency. It was underpinned by Halimah et al. (2019). Moreover, recording their own pronunciation can help students develop the ability to self-correct (Yoshida, 2018).



Figure 2

The third phase was *correcting*. *Cake* analyzes students' speech after they record their utterances for a few seconds. The students then would be able to see the result and the feedback directly. When the students' pronunciation was correct they would get A score, yet they would get B if their speeches were incorrect (Figure 3). Due to the analyze the students might make self-correction dealing with the mispronunciation the device suggested. Then the students could get some suggestion from their friend or the teacher. In this phase they discussed with their fellow or consulted to the teacher dealing with the error. Through this activity both students and teacher might build the skill of collaboration (Halimah, Ibrahim, & Lustyantje, 2018).

The last phase was *practice*. As soon as the students corrected their mistake in uttering the speech, they rehearsed practicing the utterances modelled in the video and practicing to communicate with their fellow using the dialogue from the video or they might create themselves.

From the result of the observation, it could be described that the students were very excited in participating English class using *Cake* for their pronunciation practice in the classroom. It is supported by Dewi et al. (2021) that when the students' study in fun and joy condition the goal of teaching and learning will be gained effectively. They students worked collaboratively with their friends, delivered their ideas and opinion without feeling of fright. Their self-awareness of pronunciation mistake improved better. By the application assistance they got direct feedback of their speech then they discussed with their friend and teacher to make correction to fix up their performance.



Figure 3

*Students' Perceptions toward the Use of Cake Application*

The data on students' insight toward the use of *Cake Application* is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Students' Insight toward the Use of *Cake Application*

No	Matter of Contention	Students' Respond	
		Y	N
1	Have you ever used Cake in learning English before?	0	12
2	Is <i>Cake</i> easy to be used?	12	0
3	Does <i>Cake</i> provide you the learning materials?	12	0
4	Does <i>Cake</i> provide video, audio, and/or text?	12	0
5	Is <i>Cake</i> can be used in offline?	12	0
6	Does <i>Cake</i> provide you model on how to utter words?	12	0
7	Does <i>Cake</i> provide drilling feature?	12	0
8	Does <i>Cake</i> provide you exercise?	12	0
9	Does <i>Cake</i> give you feedback on your performance?	12	0
10	Does <i>Cake</i> show you the incorrect parts of your speech?	12	0
11	Do you fix the incorrect pronunciation yourself?	2	10
12	Do your friends help you in making correction?	5	7
13	Does your teacher help you to fix your mistake in pronouncing words?	8	4
14	Can you record your voice over the application?	12	0
15	Do you enjoy learning English using <i>Cake</i> ?	12	0
16	Do you feel your English is better now?	8	4
17	Do you practice speaking with your friends using the expressions given on <i>Cake</i> ?	12	0
18	Do you feel more confident in speaking English after using <i>Cake</i> in learning English?	10	2

Table 1 describes the questionnaire items, number of respondents, and students' responds. There are 18 questions items with two options. The numbers of respondents are 12.

The questionnaire was a forced-choice questionnaire format where the participants were asked to choose one of the available selections (Yes or No) (Callegaro et al., 2015).

From the table, some inferences could be taken. In relation to students' response toward their experience in using *Cake*, all of the students respond that they haven't ever used *Cake* in learning English before. It indicates that *Cake* is new for them. Although *Cake* is new for the students, they find *Cake* is easy to use as learning media. It is proved by their respond to the second questionnaire item that asks them whether *Cake* is easy to be used or not. Out of 12 students state *Cake* is easy to be used.

To the question 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 and 14 in relation to the *Cake* features. 12 students respond that *Cake* provides vary teaching materials that can be selected by the students themselves or by the teacher. The materials are in the form of video, audio, and/or text. The actors on the video give the students model on how to utter or pronounce utterances. The students can play many times as much as they need as a drilling activity since *Cake* is free to be access and is available in offline. *Cake* also provides exercises for the students to practice words or utterances by recording their own voice. When the students pronounce words or utterances incorrectly, the app shows the mistake. Finally, this app grades the students' performance.

Questions items number 11,12, 13 and 17 is about the students' attitude during learning pronunciation using *Cake*. Only 2 students fix on their mistake of pronunciation. 8 students respond that they come to their friends and 5 students come to teacher for a help. 12 students respond that they practice dialogue with friend using utterances modeled by the video.

In responding to the question item number 15,16,18 about the students feeling happiness to use *Cake* in learning pronunciation. 12 students respond that *Cake* create a joyful learning and they are happy in learning pronunciation using *Cake*. However, they are only 8 students feel their English increase better resulted confident in speaking English.

Based upon the result of students' responses toward questionnaire, it is proved that *Cake* helps students in increasing their pronunciation accuracy. It was because this app provides students drilling feature in which students can make repetition in listening the utterance as model. One of strategy that can be used to teach pronunciation is drilling (Sanjadireja, 2020); (Amirullah et al., 2017); (Richards, 2006). *Cake* application can help students fix their pronunciation awareness. The features provided in *Cake* enabling students to record and listen their own pronunciation. Recording and listening to their own pronunciation can help students develop the ability to self-correct. (Yoshida, 2018). *Cake* application also increased students' collaboration skill. They work with their friends and teacher during the teaching and learning process. It is in line with (Kurniati, 2016) that collaboration is one of requirement skills in tis technological era. *Cake* application promote students to be an autonomous learner. Since *Cake* is free, the students can use it every time both inside and outside the classroom.

It is supported by A. S. M. Suryani, Nurinsani, Purnama, Hakim, & Nisa (2021), (Fitria et al., 2021), *Cake* application is a free application developed by *Cake* Corp which is released on 22 March 2018. *Cake* also creates students' positive attitude toward learning English especially in learning pronunciation. They feel happy and enjoy learning pronunciation using *Cake*. It is supported by

Dewi et al. (2021), that the use of technology in teaching and learning can create a joyful learning atmosphere.

Despite of these good responds on *Cake* application, there are a few cautionary notes. A few students still feel unconfident to speak in English for they thought that their pronunciation was still inaccurate. For this reason, they thought that their English was still bad.

## CONCLUSION

In an era where technology seamlessly integrates into every facet of education, the quest for enhancing language learning experiences, especially in honing pronunciation, stands at the forefront. Embracing innovative teaching strategies that blend technological advancements with traditional methodologies has become a cornerstone in fostering accurate pronunciation skills. By harnessing the power of interactive tools, real-time feedback systems, and personalized learning platforms, educators can effectively navigate the complexities of language pronunciation, ensuring a more engaging and effective learning journey for students.

It is true that recently we are standing in the age of technology where almost all of human works can take the advantages of the technology to ease their works. As teachers of language, we can take this positive effect of technology as well. As it has been suggested by Yoshida (2018) that one thing that should be considered by the teachers or lecturers of language in using the technology for their teaching practices is by making sure that the selection of the technology is fit to the teaching and learning goal. First, choose the appropriate technology that fit with teaching desire. Second, Teachers can only help students achieve decent speaking if the *Cake* English app is combined with other teaching approaches and activities, implying that cultivating students' speaking capability does not rely solely on the *Cake* English app. The tools chosen for inclusion in this article meet these criteria overall. Pedagogically task, *Cake* provides a pronunciation model for students in which the students get examples of the pronunciation of individual sounds and words, and also examples of longer stretches of meaningful connected speech. Tech tools can supplement the model that teachers themselves provide. Over the observation, it can be noted that in implementing *Cake* as a teaching media in teaching pronunciation the writers used Drilling through listen, and repeat strategy. The writers also found a new pattern in applying *Cake* in the tutoring Pronunciation. The pattern consisted of four phases; Modelling, Recording, Correcting, Practice. The writers called this formula as MRCP.

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