



EFL College Students' Perception on Physical and Psychological Aspects toward the Use of Cake Application as Autonomous Learning Activitiy

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Abstract

The perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) college students regarding the Cake Application vary depending on their proficiency levels, with both low and high-ability students having distinct viewpoints. The Cake Application, known for its accessible features, serves as a convenient tool for English learning, particularly for those seeking autonomous learning opportunities. This study aims to explore how students perceive the Cake Application as a means to enhance motivation in learning English. Using a descriptive quantitative approach, the research was conducted among students enrolled in the Advanced Listening class at Universitas Negeri Padang, Faculty of Language and Arts. The sample comprised 29 students from the K5 Advanced Listening class within the English Language Education Program. Employing a total sampling technique, data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of 8 closed statements rated on a 4-point Likert scale. The findings indicated positive perceptions across various aspects, encompassing both physical and psychological dimensions, with an overall mean score of 3.15. Based on these encouraging results, it is recommended for other classes to consider adopting the Cake Application as an autonomous learning tool to enrich English learning experiences.

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INTRODUCTION

English proficiency holds immense significance in today's global landscape, serving as a universal language facilitating cross-border communication. As such, it is integral for individuals worldwide, including learners in Indonesia. While English has been incorporated into educational curricula in Indonesia to enhance language competencies, mastering it poses challenges due to the complexities of acquiring a new language alongside the native tongue. Proficiency in English encompasses essential

skills like speaking, reading, writing, and listening, all crucial for effective communication.

EFL students' perception of learning media is crucial for engagement, motivation, effective strategies, and personalized instruction. Positive perceptions lead to more motivated students, while negative perceptions hinder technology adoption. Understanding students' cultural nuances helps create inclusive learning environments. Feedback loops help educators make informed decisions to enhance learning materials and methods. Technology integration is also influenced by students' perception, and understanding cultural nuances helps create inclusive environments. Continuous improvement is achieved by regularly gathering feedback and making adjustments based on students' input, fostering a dynamic learning environment that adapts to students' changing needs and expectations. EFL students' perception of learning media significantly impacts engagement, motivation, strategies, instructional tailoring, technology integration, cultural relevance, and continuous improvement in language education.

The study on EFL students' perceptions of English learning media is required to improve learning outcomes, increase engagement, customize learning resources, successfully integrate technology, identify obstacles, support ongoing development, and advance cultural sensitivity in language instruction. For example, Zahra & Marlina (2024) looked into students' attitudes toward using cinematic animations from the "Little Fox" YouTube channel for autonomous learning activities. The study focused on an Advanced Listening course at Universitas Negeri Padang's Faculty of Language and Arts. The results showed that students enjoyed watching animated films and gave them positive consideration for how they affected their comprehension, their sense of sight and sound, and how enjoyable it was to learn English. Furthermore, the use of animated films increased students' confidence, curiosity, and engagement with learning English; consequently, they have a favorable opinion of the use of animation as a learning medium for listening as an independent learning exercise.

The interest of learners in learning is also impacted by the use of information technology. There are several important advantages to information technology integration in the classroom for the educational process. Students now have access to up-to-date knowledge and current events that may be relevant to their coursework thanks to information technology. Additionally, students can employ information technology to transmit knowledge, which in turn promotes student desire for learning and prevents learning from seeming monotonous. Furthermore, media technology or mobile learning is more accessible and encourages students to be more interested in learning, according to research by Yin et al. (2015, p. 281).

Online learning, while beneficial, can suffer from ineffective teaching methods, such as solely sharing materials on platforms like WhatsApp and assigning tasks without proper explanation, as noted by Handayano (2020) and Mertawati (2021). To address this challenge, educators are urged to adopt more effective strategies, such as the Autonomous Learning Model advocated by Suadarna (2012) and Mardiyah (2018). This model empowers students to take control of their learning process by setting goals, acquiring information, and selecting learning methods independently. Iryani et al. (2020) emphasize that this approach fosters a deeper understanding of subjects, with teachers serving as guides (Anangga & Ardiyani, 2021), thus promoting meaningful engagement and improved learning outcomes in online education.

There are many different apps available these days that are intended to improve English learning for both teachers and students. By using these apps, educators can broaden their teaching repertoire and find new, creative ways to teach (Adrianti, I., E., & Marlina, L. 2022, p. 264). With just one keyword, they may locate English learning materials with ease. Barakati, (2013, p. 3). In addition to being a tool for communication, gadgets can serve social and professional purposes. Mobile phone use has ingrained itself into the educational process, both in industrialised and developing nations. The learning applications Cake, Magoosh, Hello English, and Duolingo may all be utilised on mobile devices.

The Cake Application, launched on March 22, 2018, by Cake Company Limited, has quickly emerged as a leading Android app, particularly in the realm of English language learning. Originating from South Korea, this free app is readily available for download on both the PlayStore for Android users and the AppStore for iOS users. Renowned for its effectiveness, the Cake app employs videos to illustrate commonly used conversational words. According to Gusti (2022, p. 215), the app boasts various accessible features, making it a practical tool for English learners, accessible anytime and anywhere. The app's videos are deliberately designed to be simple and comprehensible, while also offering practical vocabulary for everyday communication. Notably, the app's interactive nature allows users to record and assess their pronunciation, fostering ongoing improvement. Moreover, the Cake Application has been integrated into the curriculum of Universitas Negeri Padang's Advanced Listening and Basic Listening classes, under the instruction of Leni Marlina, S.S., M.A. This integration underscores Cake's recognition as a valuable educational resource, particularly for enhancing English language learning through its innovative use of videos and interactive features.

Several studies have investigated the efficacy of Cake Application in improving students' language skills, particularly in speaking and listening (Agussalim et al., 2022; Gusti et al., 2022; Putri, 2023). However, while these studies focus on learning

outcomes, there remains a gap in understanding students' perceptions regarding the application's utility in enhancing English learning motivation.

In order to understand data from our senses based on our experiences, perception is a biological process that happens spontaneously in the human brain. It entails condensing information and presenting it in a style that is consistent with our individual perception. The brain's acceptance of messages or information is linked to perception, which originates in the sensory organs. It is influenced by personal experiences and has to do with how people interact with their surroundings through their senses.

Perception is a complex process involving three stages: selection, organization, and interpretation. Selection involves transforming environmental stimuli into meaningful experiences, which can lead to misunderstandings in cross-cultural interactions. Organization involves categorizing objects or people, assigning attributes, and giving meaning to the selected information. Interpretation gives meaning to the selected and organized information. The two dimensions of perception are physical and psychological. Physical perception involves sensory organs like eyes, ears, and nose, which pick up stimuli and transmit them to the brain for organization and meaning. Psychological perception involves individuals interpreting stimuli and adding personal perspectives, influenced by values, attitudes, and motives.

The skill and willingness of a learner to direct their own learning process is referred to as autonomous learning. It shares many similarities with ideas such as autonomy, linguistic awareness, self-direction, and andragogy. The three primary stages of learner autonomy are assessment, observation, and initiation. Understanding individual learning preferences, establishing learning objectives, making study schedules, and providing learning opportunities are all part of the start phase. Choosing appropriate techniques, modifying learning approaches, interacting with others, and keeping an eye on student development and retention are all part of the monitoring phase. The assessment phase upholds the methods used for evaluating learning outcomes, such as assignment reviews and grades. With the use of tools like websites and apps, autonomous learning gives students flexibility and control over the whole learning process.

The Cake app is a well-liked Android mobile app for English language study, created by Cake Company Limited. It offers useful vocabulary for daily communication and uses movies to highlight words that are commonly used in talks. Because the app is interactive, users may record and listen to their own voices, which promotes self-evaluation and ongoing progress. The Cake app facilitates a pleasant and enjoyable learning experience while meeting the demands of different types of language learners. For iOS and Android users, it may be downloaded via the App Store and Google Play Store. Using their Google or Facebook accounts, users must first log

in to the app. Free episodes are accessible when using the app in guest mode. The Cake app contains 50 units from expressions for everyday greetings to talking about relationships.

Therefore, this study aims to explore EFL college students' perceptions of using Cake Application as an autonomous learning activity. By delving into students' perspectives, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of Cake Application as a motivational tool in English language education.

METHOD

The study adopts a descriptive quantitative research design, Creswell (2013: p. 56) explained that quantitative research in education involves the researcher determining the subject of study, formulating precise and limited inquiries, gathering numerical data from participants, utilizing statistical analysis of these figures, and conducting an unbiased and objective investigation. As outlined by Brumfit and Mitchell (1990, p.11), aiming to provide a detailed representation of current practices, learning methods, teaching strategies, and classroom dynamics within a specific context, timeframe, and location. It involves two variables: the independent variable and the dependent variable. Descriptive quantitative research primarily employs statistical analysis to examine data, focusing on collecting numerical data and drawing general conclusions across various demographic categories or explaining specific phenomena.

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang, situated on Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka, Padang, West Sumatera. The research population comprised students from the English department at UNP enrolled in the Advanced Listening class. To gather data, a questionnaire, an organized research tool consisting of a series of questions, was utilized to gather information, opinions, or data from respondents either individually or in groups. The choice of a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection is informed by its ability to comprehensively capture students' perceptions of classroom activities related to teaching speaking. Questionnaires, as noted by Wilson and Mclean (1994) cited in Louis Cohen (2007p. 253), offer a structured approach to data collection, allowing for numeric analysis and independent administration. The questionnaire design incorporates rating scales such as the Likert scale starting from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4) to assess respondent answers, balancing benefits against the time required for development, testing, and refinement.

Table 1. The Indicator of Research Instrument

Theory	Details	Number of Statements
Qiong's theory, the two dimensions of perception	Students' perceptions toward the use of the <i>Cake</i> Application	
	1. Physical Aspect	1,2,3,4
	2. Psychological Aspect	5,6,7,8

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

The students' perception of physical and psychological aspects questionnaire consists of 8 statements that require student responses in the form of an agreement scale from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4).

1. The Student's Perception Particularly of the Physical Aspect of Using *Cake Application* as an Autonomous Learning Activity

No	Questionnaire Statements	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
1	I feel that using <i>Cake Application</i> allows me to understand the English material more easily.	4	4	13.8%	3.10
		3	24	82.8%	
		2	1	3.4%	
		1	0	0%	
2	<i>Cake Application</i> helped in enhancing my English learning experience through the use of engaging visuals and audio.	4	12	58.6%	3.41
		3	17	41.4%	
		2	0	0%	
		1	0	0%	
3	<i>Cake Application</i> helps me stimulate my sense of sight (eyes) in understanding English materials.	4	5	17.2%	3.10
		3	22	75.9%	
		2	2	6.9%	
		1	0	0%	
4	<i>Cake Application</i> helps me stimulate my sense of hearing (ears) in understanding English materials.	4	6	20.7%	3.17
		3	22	75.9%	
		2	1	3.4%	
		1	0	0%	
Total mean					3.19

2. The Student's Perception Particularly of the Psychological Aspect Toward the Use of *Cake Application* as an Autonomous Learning Activity

No	Questionnaire Statements	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
5	Using <i>Cake</i> Application makes me more interested in learning English.	4	9	31.0%	3.31
		3	20	69.0%	
		2	0	0%	
		1	0	0%	
6	I feel more confident in using English after using the <i>Cake</i> App.	4	5	6.9%	3.10
		3	22	75.9%	
		2	2	17.2%	
		1	0	0%	
7	I tend to focus more on English learning materials when using <i>Cake</i> App.	4	5	17.2%	3.06
		3	21	72.4%	
		2	3	10.3%	
		1	0	0%	
8	Using <i>Cake</i> Application allows me to link my English learning experience with my personal interests and motivations.	4	7	24.1%	3.00
		3	19	65.5%	
		2	3	10.3%	
		1	0	0%	
Total mean					3.11

Mean Score of each Aspects

No	Themes	Mean Score	Degree of Perception
1	Physical aspect	3,19	Positive
2	Psychological aspect	3,11	Positive
Average		3,15	Positive

The findings pertained to students' perceptions of utilizing the *Cake* Application for autonomous learning activities. Regarding the research question on students' perceptions of the *Cake* Application for autonomous learning activities, responses to the 8 statements indicated positive feedback from students concerning the application's

use, with an average score of 3.15. Most of these statements elicited very positive responses from students.

This study aimed to investigate students' perceptions regarding the utilization of the *Cake* Application as autonomous learning activities. This section outlined the research findings and outcomes gathered throughout the research process. The findings indicated that students exhibited positive responses to the *Cake* Application as a learning tool. According to Qiong (2017, p.19), perception comprises two aspects: the physical aspect and the psychological aspect. From the data analysis, the mean for the physical aspect was 3.19, indicating a positive categorization. Similarly, the mean for the psychological aspect was 3.11, also categorized as positive. Therefore, students' perceptions regarding the use of the *Cake* Application were positive.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on EFL college students' perceptions of utilizing the *Cake* Application for autonomous learning activities. The positive feedback obtained from the respondents underscores the potential of mobile applications in enhancing language learning experiences. The discussion will delve into the implications of the study's findings and their significance in the realm of English language education.

The positive perceptions exhibited by students towards the *Cake* Application resonate with the notion that technology integration in language learning can yield favorable outcomes. The application's accessibility and user-friendly features seem to have contributed to its perceived effectiveness as a supplementary learning tool. As suggested by Warschauer (2006), technologies like mobile applications offer opportunities for learners to engage in autonomous learning, thereby fostering self-directed learning skills crucial for language acquisition.

Moreover, the distinction between physical and psychological aspects of students' perceptions provides valuable insights into their overall attitudes towards the *Cake* Application. The favorable mean scores obtained for both dimensions signify the multifaceted benefits perceived by students. From a physical standpoint, the convenience of accessing learning materials anytime and anywhere through the application appears to have resonated positively with students. This aligns with findings from previous research highlighting the importance of convenience and accessibility in promoting learner engagement (Chen et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the positive psychological aspect reflects students' motivation and satisfaction derived from using the *Cake* Application. The sense of autonomy and control afforded by the application likely contributes to students' intrinsic motivation, as suggested by Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985). By allowing learners to set their learning pace and preferences, the *Cake* Application aligns with the principles of autonomy-supportive learning environments, fostering a sense of competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

However, despite the promising results, it is essential to acknowledge the potential limitations of the study. The sample size, confined to a single class at a specific university, may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could employ a larger and more diverse sample to ensure broader representation and validity of

results. Additionally, incorporating qualitative methodologies such as interviews or focus groups could provide deeper insights into students' experiences and perceptions of using the *Cake* Application.

In conclusion, this study underscores the significance of understanding students' perceptions towards technology-mediated language learning tools. The positive feedback received regarding the *Cake* Application emphasizes its potential as a valuable resource for enhancing motivation and autonomy in English language learning contexts. Moving forward, further exploration and integration of such technologies hold promise for enriching language education practices and fostering more effective learning environments.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study revealed that EFL college students exhibit positive perceptions towards the utilization of the *Cake* Application for autonomous language learning activities. With an average score of 3.15, indicative of overall positive feedback, students demonstrated favorable attitudes towards the *Cake* Application as a supplementary learning tool. The mean scores for both the physical aspect (3.19) and the psychological aspect (3.11) further corroborated these positive perceptions. This underscores the application's potential in enhancing language learning experiences among students, providing accessible and engaging opportunities for autonomous learning outside traditional classroom settings.

Moving forward, educators are encouraged to integrate the *Cake* Application into language education practices, leveraging its interactive features to promote active learning and engagement. Providing adequate support and training for both educators and students can facilitate effective utilization of the application, ultimately enhancing language learning outcomes. Additionally, further research is warranted to explore the long-term impact of the *Cake* Application on language proficiency development and to identify optimal learning strategies for its users, ensuring continued innovation and improvement in language education methodologies.

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