The Effect Of Cake Application On Students' Vocabulary Mastery At Eighth Grade Of Smp Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar

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Abstrak

  Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh Aplikasi Cake terhadap penguasaan kata kerja tindakan pada teks narasi oleh siswa kelas VIII di SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar. Terinspirasi oleh kinerja kosakata siswa yang rendah, terutama dalam memahami fitur linguistik teks naratif sesuai dengan Kurikulum Merdeka (Permendikbud No. 5 Tahun 2022), penelitian ini menggunakan desain quasi-eksperimental. Dua kelas ditugaskan sebagai kelompok kontrol dan eksperimen. Kelas eksperimen menerima pengajaran melalui Aplikasi Cake, sementara kelas kontrol menggunakan media konvensional. Hasil pre-test dan post-test menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan pada kelompok eksperimen (dari 55,9 menjadi 77,74). Hasil uji t independen (t = 3,854, p < 0,001) mengonfirmasi efektivitas perlakuan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Aplikasi Cake secara signifikan meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa, terutama pada kata kerja aksi yang relevan dengan teks naratif.

Kata Kunci: Aplikasi Kue, Penguasaan Kosakata, dan Kata Kerja Tindakan.

Abstract

  This study investigates the effect of the Cake Application on eighth-grade students' mastery of action verbs in recount texts at SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar. Motivated by students' low vocabulary performance, especially in understanding the linguistic features of recount texts as required by the Merdeka Curriculum (Permendikbud No. 5 of 2022), this research employs a quasi-experimental design. Two classes were assigned as control and experimental groups. The experimental class received instruction through the Cake Application, while the control class used conventional media. Pre-test and post-test scores show a significant improvement in the experimental class (from 55.9 to 77.74). Independent t-test results (t = 3.854, p < 0.001) confirm the effectiveness of the treatment. These findings suggest that Cake Application significantly enhances students' vocabulary mastery, particularly in action verbs relevant to recount texts.

Keywords: Cake Application, Vocabulary Mastery, and Action Verbs.

Introduction

English, as an international language, holds a crucial role in the field of education. In Indonesia, it is taught at all educational levels as a compulsory subject (Dzulkifli Isadaud et al., 2022) Isadaud et al., 2022). A key component of mastering English is vocabulary acquisition, which serves as the foundation for all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing ((Rosyada-AS & Apoko, 2023) Without sufficient vocabulary, learners struggle to understand texts, express ideas, and engage in meaningful communication ((Leong et al., 2017); ((Rahmah et al., 2023). In this context, vocabulary mastery is not only about memorizing words but also about being able to use them accurately and appropriately (Pitriana & Hadi, 2021). This makes vocabulary instruction a critical focus in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Indonesia, especially under the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum that emphasizes communicative competence and learner-centered approaches.

One specific and essential category within vocabulary is the *action verb*, which plays a central role in sentence construction and meaning-making. Verbs serve as predicates and are crucial in conveying the actions or mental states of subjects ((Munir, 2016); (Husain & Pd, 2024). In recount texts, which are used to retell past experiences or events, action verbs are particularly important as they describe the sequence of activities in a clear and structured manner (Saepuloh & Salsabila, 2020); (Azizah et al., 2022). These verbs can be classified into material processes (e.g., run, build, write) and mental processes (e.g., think, feel, see), as categorized by Halliday. Mastery of action verbs helps students write more fluently, tell stories more effectively, and use English grammar more accurately ((Prasatyo et al., 2021). Thus, focusing on action verbs is not only a matter of vocabulary development but also supports students' narrative and grammatical skills.

In response to students' difficulties in vocabulary—particularly with action verbs in recount texts—technology-enhanced learning tools offer innovative solutions. One such tool is the Cake Application, a mobile-based platform that integrates short videos, interactive subtitles, pronunciation drills, and personalized learning powered by AI. These features create an engaging, contextualized environment that can boost vocabulary acquisition ((Ramadhani et al., 2023); (Nurhaliza & Fakhurriana, 2023). Observations and interviews conducted at SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar revealed that 74% of students failed to meet the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) in English, with vocabulary weakness being a primary issue. This study, therefore, aims to address this problem by implementing the Cake Application in EFL instruction.

Table 1.
The Students' score of Vocabulary on Final Semester Test at SMP N 12 Pematangsiantar

Students' score	Total	KKM	Percentage	Description
80-100	3	70	10%	Passed the
70-79	5	70	16%	KKM
41-69	14	70	45%	Not passed
<40	9	70	29%	KKM
Total	31		100%	

(Source: Teacher of eighth grade students of SMP N 12 Pematangsiantar)

As shown in the table above, only 26% of students passed the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM), while 74% did not. This data clearly indicates that many students still face significant challenges in mastering vocabulary. Based on the researcher's observations at SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar, several problems contribute to this issue. First, students have a limited vocabulary, particularly regarding action verbs. This limitation stems from their infrequent exposure to and use of basic English vocabulary, largely due to cultural differences where English is rarely heard in daily life. (Ariani, 2023), supports this, noting that students often struggle to acquire vocabulary due to insufficient language exposure. Second, students experience difficulties identifying the linguistic

features of recount texts, especially distinguishing between material process verbs (physical actions) and mental process verbs (cognitive actions). Third, the teaching approach remains predominantly teacher-centered, which limits student engagement and active learning. Fourth, the lack of interactive and technology-based learning media reduces students' motivation and learning effectiveness (Widyaningrum & Maili, 2023). Erna (2021) highlighted that the use of traditional book-based instruction, involving dictation and note-taking, often results in boredom and low enthusiasm among students. While printed books are valuable, incorporating interactive media supported by AI applications such as Duolingo, Memrise, Cake, and Beelinguapp can enhance learning experiences.

In the era of globalization, technology-based learning media have become essential tools for improving student competencies and skills (Widyaningrum & Maili, 2023). These media, especially mobile applications, offer flexible, anytime-anywhere access to learning resources. Among popular English learning apps is the Cake Application, which features short, engaging videos with subtitles designed to improve conversational skills (Aqilah, 2024). Cake provides learners at various proficiency levels with rich, contextual vocabulary and grammatical explanations, supported by AI-powered personalized learning features (Gaol et al., 2024). This combination of engaging content and adaptive technology makes Cake a suitable tool for enhancing vocabulary mastery (Nurbaiti Ali, 2023).

Previous studies have explored the use of Cake Application to improve vocabulary mastery, but most have focused on general vocabulary without specifying particular word categories. This research addresses that gap by concentrating specifically on students' mastery of action verbs within recount texts—an essential skill for understanding and producing this text type. Furthermore, SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar has not been studied in relation to Cake Application use, so this research offers new insights into its effectiveness in this unique learning environment. Unlike earlier research, this study leverages artificial intelligence technology to examine a more adaptive vocabulary learning method, providing novel contributions to EFL learning literature. Inspired by these considerations, this research is entitled: ***"The Effect of Cake Application on Students' Vocabulary Mastery at Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar."***

Method

The research employs the quantitative method quasi-experimental with pretest-posttest control group. According to (Creswell, 2014), stated that quantitative research is a technique for assessing the correlations between variables in order to test objective theories. Instruments can be used to measure the variables, which can enable statistical analysis of the total data. The experimental technique will be used in this research to assess how Cake Application affects students' vocabulary mastery. Class VIII-4 will be the experimental class and class VIII-5 will be the control class. The sample will be chosen using the random sampling technique. Cake Application is going to be used to treat the experimental class (VIII-4). In contrast, the control group (VIII-5) will employ a conventional media in which students use textbooks to learn vocabulary. This method will provide the information needed to evaluate how Cake Application affects students' vocabulary mastery.

By comparing the two classes' pretest and posttest results, the researcher will be able to examine how the Cake Application affects students' vocabulary mastery in comparison to the conventional teaching media. The researcher employs standardized questions from the Bank Book, which is created by an established organization and in compliance with academic norms, to guarantee the validity and reliability of the instrument. The test that will be given is a test that includes various types of questions related to vocabulary in the context of recount text, especially on action verbs. The questions that will be given are related to the criteria of students who have a good vocabulary mastery, which can be seen from the form, meaning, and the use of vocabulary in a good structure and context (Nation, 2001) cited in (Rahmah et al., 2023b). According to (Nasution, 2021), there are eight form questions in assessing vocabulary mastery, namely labeling, definition, translation, matching, yes/no question, multiple choice, cloze test, and embedded test. The form of questions that will be used by the researcher consists of multiple choice, matching, and cloze tests.

To assess the influence of the Cake Application on eighth grade students' vocabulary mastery at SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar, the researcher will employ the t-test method. One statistical method for comparing the mean of two classes in this case, the experimental class using Cake Application and the control class using traditional media is the t-test. In this research, before conducting the t-test, a normality test was first conducted to ensure that the data was normally distributed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov. If the data met the assumption of normality, then the Independent Sample t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and control classes in vocabulary mastery.

Results

**Table 1. The Score of Pre-test and Post-test on the Experimental Class**

No.	Students' Initial Name	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
1.	A.P.P.D.	85	90
2.	A.R.P.	65	95
3.	A.N.S.	65	80
4.	A.P.	60	85
5.	A.S.	50	70
6.	A.A.	65	90
7.	B.Y.S.	55	85
8.	C.R.T.	70	85
9.	C.A.S.	65	80
10.	D.P.M.	15	50
11.	F.N.B.	65	85
12.	G.F.S.	45	70
13.	G.A.S.	85	90
14.	H.A.R.S.	40	70
15.	H.E.N.	70	85
16.	K.O.S.	50	80
17.	K.P.S.	30	70
18.	M.S.	40	70
19.	M.S.	40	70
20.	N.O.	45	70
21.	N.H.	65	85
22.	N.A.	60	85
23.	N.R.	55	75
24.	R.M.S.	55	75
25.	R.T.H.	40	70
26.	R.S.	85	95
27.	R.S.	60	70
28.	R.S.	40	65
29.	R.C.	55	70
30.	S.M.	75	80
31.	T.B.S.	40	70
	TOTAL SCORE	1735	2410

No.	Students' Initial Name	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
	MEAN SCORE	55,9	77,74

According to the pre-test and post-test findings from 31 students in SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar's experimental class (VIII-4) who were treated with the Cake Application, there was a notable improvement in their understanding of vocabulary. In the pre-test, two students, A.P.P.D. and G.A.S., received the highest score of 85 out of all the students. The students were able to understand the forms of action verbs, namely material and mental verbs, students were able to understand the meaning of words, and students were also able to form sentences with good and correct action verbs.On the other hand, one student, D.P.M., received the lowest pre-test score of 15.   This demonstrated a gap in the students' prior vocabulary mastery before they were receiving the treatment. The findings of the post-test significantly improved right after the Cake Application treatment. A.R.P. and R.S. were the two students who achieved the highest score of 95 on the post-test. The lowest score in the post-test was 50, which was still obtained by one student, namely D.P.M. Although this student still obtained the lowest score, the increase from pre-test to post-test was very significant, namely from 15 to 50.

During the pre-test, only 13 (41.94%) of the 31 students met or exceeded the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) of 70. In contrast, up to 18 students (58.06%) have failed to obtain this value.   However, after treatment with the Cake Application, the post-test results improved significantly. There were 29 students (93.55%) met or exceeded the KKM score, while just 2 students (6.45%) did not. Students' mean scores increased overall, rising from 55.9 on the pre-test to 77.74 on the post-test. This demonstrated that eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar vocabulary mastery is significantly affected by the use of the Cake Application, particularly in experimental classes.

Figure 1. Improvement in Experimental and Control Class

	Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental Class	55.9	77.74
Control Class	50	68.22
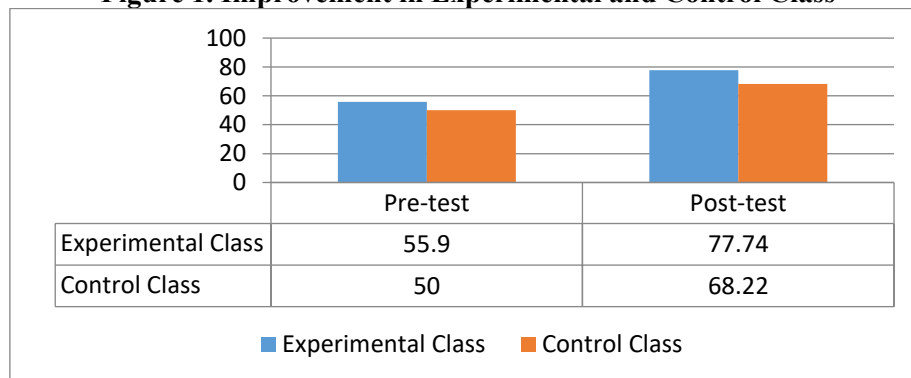
After analyzing the average scores from the pre-test and post-test in both the experimental and control classes, it was evident that students showed improvement in their vocabulary mastery. The experimental class, which used the Cake Application, had a mean score of 55.9 on the pre-test and increased significantly to 77.74 on the post-test, showing an improvement of 21.84 points. Meanwhile, the control class, which was taught using conventional learning methods, had a pre-test mean score of 50 and a post-test mean score of 68.22, indicating a smaller improvement of 18.22 points. These findings suggest that the Cake Application was more effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery compared to traditional teaching methods, emphasizing the benefits of integrating technology-based learning tools in the classroom.

1. The Normality Test

Table 2. The Normality Test

Tests of Normality					
Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.

PretesExperimental	.100	31	.200*	.963	31	.353
PostestExperimental	.079	31	.200*	.990	31	.992
PretesControl	.094	31	.200*	.972	31	.586
PostestControl	.115	31	.200*	.977	31	.730

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The following significance value (Sig.) is obtained by applying the Shapiro-Wilk test results to the experimental and control class pretest and posttest data: experimental class pretest of 0.353, experimental class posttest of 0.992, control class pretest of 0.586, and control class posttest of 0.730. Given that all four significant values are higher than the significance level of 0.05, it is clear that all of the pretest and posttest data in both classes are regularly distributed.   Consequently, the data satisfy a basic prerequisite for parametric statistical analysis, namely the t-test, which identifies noteworthy variations in the learning outcomes of the two groups' students.

2. The Homogeneity Test

Table 3. The Homogeneity Test

Test of Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Hasil Vocabulary Mastery	Based on Mean	1.147	1	60	.288
	Based on Median	1.226	1	60	.273
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.226	1	58.739	.273
	Based on trimmed mean	1.231	1	60	.272

Levene's Test shows a significant value (Sig.) of 0.288 based on mean, 0.273 based on median, 0.273 based on median with adjusted df, and 0.272 based on trimmed mean, according to the output produced. It is possible to determine that the variances of the two groups the experimental class and the control class are homogeneous because each of these significance values is higher than 0.05. As a result, the data from both groups satisfy the homogeneity assumption, allowing for additional analysis using the independent t-test using the proper methodology for data with homogeneous variance.

3. The Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. The Hypothesis Testing

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means
		F	Sig.	t
Hasil Vocabulary Mastery	Equal variances assumed	1.147	.288	3.854
	Equal variances not assumed			3.854

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
			Significance	
		df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Hasil Vocabulary Mastery	Equal variances assumed	60	<,001	<,001

Equal variances not assumed	59.681	<,001	<,001

Figure 2. The Hypothesis Testing
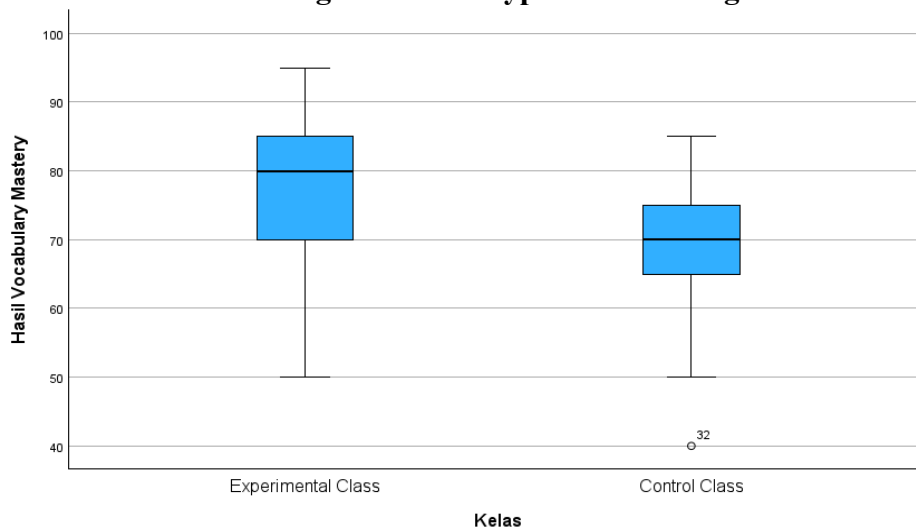
The t-test result, as displayed in the SPSS output table, was t = 3.854 with degrees of freedom (df) = 60 and a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of less than 0.001. The students' vocabulary mastery scores in the experimental and control groups differ significantly, as indicated by the significance value being less than 0.05. Accordingly, the test's results showed that using the Cake Application significantly enhances the vocabulary mastery of eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar. Comparing the application to traditional learning media, Cake Application was shown to be successful in increasing students' mastery of English vocabulary.

Research Findings

The objective of this research is to determine how the Cake Application affects eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar's vocabulary ability, particularly with regard to their command of action verbs in recount texts. Two groups the experimental class, which used Cake Application as media in the learning process, and the control class, which utilized conventional media were given pre-test and post-tests to ascertain the influence of Cake Application. The research findings are listed below, as follows:

1. Experimental Class
   The pre-test and post-test results for 31 students in the experimental class are displayed in Table 4.1. The overall pre-test score was 1735 with an average of 55.9, and the overall post-test score improved to 2410 with an average of 77.74 due to these findings. This demonstrates a 21.84-point rise in score, suggesting that the Cake program has a beneficial effect on students' vocabulary mastery.

2. Control Class
   The pre-test and post-test results for 31 students in the control class are displayed in Table 4.2. While the post-test score improved to 2115 with an average of 68.22, the pre-test score was 1550 with an average of 50. Although the gain is less than the experimental class, the 18.2 -point score increase also indicates an increase in vocabulary competence. When comparing the two groups, it is evident that the experimental class significantly outperformed the control class in terms of both score and average score.

3. Normality Test
   To make sure the data was regularly distributed, the normality test was performed. All significant values were greater than 0.05 in the pre-test and post-test for both classes, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test results (Experimental class: pre-test 0.353, post-test 0.992; Control: pre-test 0.586, post-test 0.730), indicating that the data were normally distributed.

4. Homogeneity Test
   The data variance between the experimental and control classes is homogeneous, according to the significant value of 0.288 (> 0.05) obtained from the variance homogeneity test using Levene's Test.

Consequently, the data is appropriate for additional analysis using the Independent Sample t-test.
5. Independent t-test
    The estimated t-value for the Independent Samples t-test is 3.854, and the two-sided significance value (p-value) is less than 0.001. The experimental and control classes' post-test scores differ statistically significantly, as indicated by the rejection of H0 and acceptance of Ha due to $p < 0.05$. This demonstrates that eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar benefit greatly from using the Cake Application in terms of their vocabulary mastery.

Discussion

The findings of this research show a significant improvement in the vocabulary mastery of eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 12 Pematangsiantar, particularly in understanding and using action verbs in recount texts, after being taught using the Cake Application. The experimental group's mean score increased by 21.84 points (from 55.9 to 77.74), while the control group improved by 18.22 points (from 50 to 68.22). Although both groups showed progress, the experimental group outperformed the control group, indicating the effectiveness of the Cake Application as a digital learning tool.

This improvement can be attributed to several key features of the Cake Application. Its AI-powered personalized learning path adapts to each student's level and pace, allowing for differentiated instruction that traditional classroom settings may lack. Interactive subtitles in short English videos expose learners to authentic language input in real-world contexts, helping students understand not just word meanings but also usage patterns. Repetition of phrases and pronunciation drills further reinforce learning, while immediate feedback and progress tracking enhance learner autonomy and motivation. These features align with principles of *multimodal learning*, which has been shown to support vocabulary acquisition more effectively than text-based methods alone.

Moreover, these results must be interpreted within the context of Indonesia's current educational landscape. The *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn) curriculum encourages innovation and flexibility in teaching methods, particularly those that integrate digital literacy and self-directed learning. The use of Cake Application supports this vision by offering a student-centered, engaging, and technology-integrated approach that suits the learning preferences of today's digital-native students. Given that most students are already familiar with mobile apps and enjoy visual, interactive content, integrating mobile-based learning tools like Cake can bridge the gap between formal education and students' everyday digital habits.

Despite the promising results, this study has several limitations. It was conducted in a single school and focused only on action verbs in recount texts, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The study also did not measure long-term vocabulary retention or the effects on other aspects of language skills such as speaking or writing. Future research may explore how sustained use of the Cake Application influences vocabulary retention over time or compare its effectiveness with other AI-assisted language learning tools such as Duolingo or ELSA Speak.

In addition, qualitative data such as student feedback or classroom observations could provide deeper insights into how learners interact with the app and what specific features they find most helpful. Considering the rapid development of educational technology, further studies could also investigate how to integrate mobile applications more systematically into English language curricula, especially in rural or under-resourced schools. In conclusion, the use of the Cake Application has proven effective in improving vocabulary mastery among Indonesian junior high school students, particularly in mastering action verbs in recount texts. Its interactive, AI-enhanced, and learner-friendly features align well with the demands of the Merdeka Belajar initiative and the learning styles of today's students. Therefore, it is recommended that educators consider adopting mobile-based applications like Cake as complementary tools in English language teaching, while also being mindful of digital equity and access.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the independent samples t-test, the 2-tailed significance value was

0.001, which is less than 0.05. This indicates a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Hₐ) is accepted. It can be concluded that the use of the Cake Application as a teaching medium effectively enhances students' vocabulary mastery. Students who used the Cake Application showed improvement in identifying and differentiating types of action verbs (material and mental verbs), understanding their meanings within recount texts, and constructing grammatically correct sentences using appropriate action verbs. The interactive features of the application—such as AI-powered personalization, engaging short videos with subtitles, pronunciation practice, and real-life language contexts—helped foster a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience.

These findings offer several practical implications. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, integrating mobile-assisted language learning tools like the Cake Application can enrich vocabulary instruction, especially when teaching functional texts aligned with the *Merdeka Curriculum*. This approach supports student autonomy and caters to the learning preferences of digital-native students who are already familiar with mobile platforms. In addition, education policymakers are encouraged to consider incorporating digital applications into classroom practice as complementary learning media. Providing training for teachers and allocating resources for technological integration can help ensure broader access and effectiveness. While the results are promising, future studies are needed to investigate the long-term retention of vocabulary learned through such applications and to compare the effectiveness of various digital tools in different educational contexts. Nonetheless, this study highlights the potential of the Cake Application as a relevant and practical tool for enhancing students' English vocabulary proficiency in today's digitally connected learning environments.

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