Enhancing Middle School Students' English Speaking Skills through CICI AI: A Qualitative Study of Pedagogical Benefits

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Abstract

This research explores the pedagogical benefits of using Cici AI in improving students' English speaking skills at SMPIT Ar Rahman Cikarang, Bekasi. Through a qualitative approach, this research collected data from interviews with six students who had used Cici AI as a learning tool to improve their English speaking skills. The research results show that Cici AI significantly helps students improve grammar, expand vocabulary, and increase confidence in speaking English. Advanced features such as voice notes, phone capabilities, and the ability to record and review conversations provide a practical and effective learning experience. Even though there are several challenges such as limitations in physical interaction, the benefits felt by students are much greater. Recommendations from students, including improvements to voice recognition technology and more personalized feedback, can be used for further development. Overall, this research concludes that Cici AI has great potential as a pedagogical tool in English language learning, providing a more dynamic and effective approach in this digital era.

Keywords: AI technology, Cici AI, pedagogical benefits, qualitative, speaking ability

Introduction

In the rapidly developing digital era, artificial intelligence (AI) technology has introduced various innovations that can be applied in various fields, including education (Muhammad Chairil Imran et al., 2023) . One of these innovations is Cici AI, a virtual assistant designed to help users with daily activities. Cici AI is equipped with artificial intelligence which allows it to understand and answer questions quickly and accurately. This AI intelligence is very useful for education as a long-term investment to make things easier for lecturers, students and Cici AI offers several advanced features, such as natural language understanding, providing recommendations based on user preferences, and performing certain tasks automatically. It also has strong security features to ensure the protection of users' personal data. An interesting application of Cici AI is in English language learning, especially in improving speaking skills.

In the Hollywood film The Sleeping Dictionary, it is depicted that the quick way to learn a foreign language is to stay with a foreign speaker and start a conversation (Sha, 2009) . So the best solution is to use Cici AI as a foreign language learning partner anytime and anywhere. Cici AI can function as an interactive talking partner, leveraging voice and phone notes features to offer a more realistic and practical learning experience. Conversation summaries are also available in the app's chat, allowing users to review and correct errors. This makes Cici AI a valuable tool for students who want to practice and improve their English speaking skills in a safe and supportive environment.

This research focuses on the application of Cici AI in improving students' English speaking skills at SMPIT Ar Rahman Cikarang, Bekasi. Using a qualitative approach, this research aims to explore the pedagogical benefits of using Cici AI in the context of English language education. Through in-depth interviews with six students, this research will examine how Cici AI helps students learn to speak English, the challenges they face, and the overall impact of using this application in the learning process. It is hoped that this research can make a positive contribution to the development of more effective and innovative English language teaching methods. By understanding the experiences and perceptions of students using Cici AI, educators can better integrate the technology into their teaching practices, ultimately improving learning outcomes for students.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative research approach which analyzes a certain field or a

small number of people or regions (Fitria, 2021) and with a phenomenological design. A phenomenological approach was chosen to understand in depth the experiences and perceptions of secondary school students regarding the use of CICI AI in improving their English speaking skills. Data for this research will be collected through in-depth interviews with Ar Rahman Middle School (SMPIT) Cikarang Bekasi students who use CICI AI to improve their English speaking skills. The sample size is 6 students and the duration of use is 1 week.

Research data will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which is one way of analyzing data that aims to find patterns or themes through data collected by researchers (Rozali, 2022) . The steps for data analysis are reading and reviewing interview transcripts repeatedly, identifying themes and patterns that emerge from interview transcripts, developing categories and subcategories to organize themes and patterns, providing meaning and interpretation to the identified themes and patterns. The validity of the data in this research will also be guaranteed through method triangulation and data source triangulation. This research will be carried out in accordance with research ethics, namely; consent, confidentiality, and anonymity.

Results and Discussion

1. Improving English Speaking Skills Through the Use of Cici AI

Interviews with six students of SMPIT Ar Rahman Cikarang, Bekasi revealed that the Cici AI application contributed significantly to improving their English speaking skills. All participants reported that they felt more confident in speaking English after using this application. Cici AI provides extensive and varied practice opportunities, allowing students to improve their pronunciation and expand their vocabulary effectively. Real-time feedback from the app helps them identify and correct mistakes instantly, thereby improving the overall quality of their speaking. Maritza Erlita Putri from class 7 Al Jabbar stated that Cici AI was very helpful in correcting grammar and expanding vocabulary.

2. Student Perceptions of Cici AI

Student responses to the Cici AI application are very positive. They feel this application not only helps in learning English but also makes the learning process more interesting and interactive. Cici AI's adaptive feature, which adjusts the difficulty level according to the student's ability, is highly appreciated as it allows students to learn at their own pace. Afmila Dini Alfirsya from class 8 Al Khawarizmi likes Cici AI's quick response and how the app provides useful tips for practicing English speaking skills. Meanwhile, Zaquin Asya Lunetta from class 8 appreciated the Cici AI voice feature which makes understanding easier and makes learning more fun.

3. Challenges and Obstacles

Even though it has significant benefits, there are still several challenges faced by students in using Cici AI. Some students reported initial difficulties in adapting to this new technology, especially those who were not used to using learning applications. Maritza Erlita Putri said that the limitations of physical interaction and Cici AI's ability to understand complex contexts are still challenges. Siska Ayu Yasmin from class 7 also complained about Cici AI's lengthy responses which were difficult to understand without a translator. Apart from that, limited access to technology and infrastructure in schools is an obstacle to optimal use of applications. Some students experienced technical problems such as unstable internet connections, which hampered the effectiveness of using Cici AI.

4. Pedagogical Implications

The use of Cici AI has important pedagogical implications. This application can be an effective complementary tool in English language teaching, providing more personalized support to students. Because Cici AI supports the learning principles of the 4 essences of education, namely (1) the essence of humans (2) the essence of children (3) the essence of education (4) the essence of the educational process (Rahman, 2018) . Teachers can utilize data from the app to monitor student progress and adjust teaching strategies according to individual student needs. The use of technology such as Cici AI can also increase students' motivation to learn English because it provides a more interesting and interactive learning method. Carissa Raihanah Putri from class 9 admitted that Cici AI helped expand formal and informal English knowledge and vocabulary, as well as correct grammar.

5. Recommendations

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be given to make the implementation of Cici AI more effective at SMPIT Ar Rahman Cikarang, Bekasi. First, training for teachers and students on the use of these applications is necessary to overcome initial difficulties. Teachers need to be actively

involved in this process to ensure that they can provide adequate support to students. Second, schools must ensure adequate access to necessary technology, including stable internet connections and adequate devices. Finally, the integration of Cici AI into the curriculum must be done gradually and strategically to maximize its benefits. A gradual approach will help students and teachers adapt to this new technology without feeling overwhelmed.

Conclusion

This research reveals that using Cici AI as a virtual assistant in learning English provides significant benefits for students at SMPIT Ar Rahman Cikarang, Bekasi. Cici AI effectively improves students' English speaking skills through interactive and immersive interactions. Its advanced features, such as voice note and telephone capabilities, as well as the ability to record and review conversations, provide a practical and effective learning experience.

Interviews with six students showed that Cici AI not only helped them improve their grammar and expand their vocabulary but also increased their confidence in speaking English. Students feel motivated to continue learning and practicing because of the direct and constructive feedback provided by Cici AI. Additionally, students appreciate the flexibility and accessibility offered by Cici AI, allowing them to learn anytime and anywhere.

However, this research also identified several challenges, such as limitations in physical interactions and some difficulties in understanding very complex contexts. Despite these challenges, the benefits students experience far outweigh the difficulties they face. Recommendations provided by students, such as improving voice recognition technology and more personalized feedback, can be valuable input for further development of Cici AI. Overall, this research concludes that Cici AI has great potential as a pedagogical tool in improving students' English speaking skills. The integration of AI technology in language learning can offer a more dynamic and effective approach, meeting the needs of students in this digital era. Educators and educational technology developers can utilize these findings to optimize the use of Cici AI and similar technologies in the teaching and learning process.

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