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THE USE OF DIGITAL AND NON-DIGITAL GAMIFIED SPEAKING CARDS IN AN EFL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is one of the essential skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. However, many junior high school students still face difficulties in expressing their opinions due to limited vocabulary, low confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limited opportunities to participate in speaking activities. To address these challenges, this study explored the use of manual and digital gamified speaking cards in an EFL classroom. This study aimed to investigate (1) the implementation of manual and digital gamified speaking cards in teaching speaking and (2) students' responses to their use during speaking activities. A qualitative case study was conducted with 38 eighth-grade students at a junior high school in Cianjur Regency, Indonesia. Data were collected through classroom observations, open-ended questionnaires, and document analysis and were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with data triangulation employed to enhance trustworthiness. The findings revealed that the integration of UNO-style speaking cards and QuizWhizzer created an interactive and engaging learning environment that encouraged students to participate actively in speaking activities. The activities enhanced students' confidence, classroom interaction, and willingness to express their opinions while reducing speaking anxiety. Students also perceived the gamified activities positively, describing them as enjoyable, motivating, and supportive of their speaking development. The study concludes that combining digital and non-digital gamified speaking cards represents an effective Game-Based Learning strategy for promoting students' speaking skills and creating a more student-centered EFL classroom.

Keywords: *Digital gamified speaking cards, non-digital gamified speaking cards, Game-Based Learning, speaking skills, EFL classroom.*



INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most essential skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it enables learners to communicate ideas, opinions, and feelings effectively in real-life situations. Unlike other language skills, speaking requires learners to simultaneously apply pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension during communication. Therefore, speaking competence is considered an important indicator of students' communicative ability. However, mastering speaking remains challenging for many EFL learners because they must produce language spontaneously while maintaining meaningful interaction. Consequently, developing students' speaking ability has become one of the primary goals of English language teaching (Rao, 2019; Brown, 2004).

Despite its importance, many junior high school students still encounter various obstacles in speaking English. They often experience limited vocabulary, low confidence, fear of making mistakes, incorrect pronunciation, and anxiety when speaking in front of their classmates. These difficulties reduce students' willingness to participate in classroom interaction and prevent them from expressing their opinions confidently. As a result, speaking activities frequently become teacher-centered, with only a small number of students actively participating, while the majority remain passive learners (Malik & Rahmawati, 2025).

To overcome these challenges, teachers need to implement learning strategies that encourage active participation and meaningful communication. One approach that has received increasing attention is Game-Based Learning (GBL). Game-Based Learning integrates game elements into classroom instruction to create enjoyable, interactive, and student-centered learning experiences. Rather than viewing games merely as entertainment, GBL utilizes challenges, competition, collaboration, feedback, and rewards to increase students' motivation and engagement while achieving specific learning objectives. Previous studies have reported that Game-Based Learning enhances students' motivation, classroom participation, confidence, and language performance, particularly in English language learning (Ochoa-Cueva et al., 2023; Kucher, 2021).

Various educational games have been integrated into speaking classrooms. Digital platforms such as QuizWhizzer provide interactive quizzes and competitive activities that encourage students to participate actively while receiving immediate feedback (Ochoa-Cueva et al., 2023). Meanwhile, non-digital games such as UNO cards create opportunities for face-to-face interaction, collaborative learning, and spontaneous communication. Both types of games support the development of speaking skills by providing authentic opportunities for learners to express opinions, respond to others, and practice English in a relaxed learning environment. Through these activities, students are encouraged to become more confident, motivated, and actively involved in classroom interaction.

Digital and non-digital game media provide different learning experiences that complement each other. Digital platforms offer immediate feedback, multimedia interaction, and competitive learning environments, whereas non-



digital games encourage direct communication, peer collaboration, and spontaneous oral interaction. Integrating these two forms of gamified learning may therefore create a more balanced speaking environment that accommodates different learning preferences while maintaining students' engagement throughout the learning process.

Although numerous studies have investigated the effectiveness of Game-Based Learning in improving speaking skills, most have focused on either digital games or traditional classroom games separately. Limited attention has been given to integrating both manual and digital gamified speaking cards within the same instructional process, particularly for teaching expressing opinions at the junior high school level. Combining these two types of gamified media may provide complementary learning experiences by balancing direct peer interaction with technology-supported activities. Therefore, further investigation is needed to explore how this combination is implemented in the classroom and how students perceive its use during speaking activities.

Based on this gap, this study explored the implementation of manual and digital gamified speaking cards in teaching speaking to eighth-grade students at a junior high school in Cianjur Regency, Indonesia. Specifically, this study aimed to investigate (1) how manual and digital gamified speaking cards were implemented in teaching speaking and (2) how students responded to their use during speaking activities. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of interactive Game-Based Learning practices and provide practical insights for English teachers seeking effective strategies to promote students' speaking skills in EFL classrooms.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Speaking is one of the productive language skills that enables learners to communicate ideas, opinions, and feelings through oral interaction. It requires learners to integrate several language components, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, to convey messages effectively. According to Brown (2004), successful speaking involves not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in different communicative situations. Similarly, Rao (2019) emphasizes that speaking is an essential skill in English language learning because it allows students to participate actively in classroom interaction and real-life communication. Therefore, speaking instruction should provide meaningful opportunities for students to practice expressing ideas rather than focusing only on grammatical accuracy.

Effective speaking performance involves several language components, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These components work together to help learners communicate ideas accurately and meaningfully. Therefore, speaking instruction should provide opportunities for learners to develop all of these aspects simultaneously.

One approach that has been widely used to promote speaking practice is Game-Based Learning (GBL). Game-Based Learning refers to the integration of



game elements into educational activities to achieve specific learning objectives while increasing students' engagement and motivation. According to Kucher (2021), effective Game-Based Learning is characterized by several principles, including interactivity, immediate feedback, learner autonomy, collaboration, and active participation. These principles encourage students to learn through meaningful experiences in which they solve problems, communicate with peers, and receive continuous feedback during the learning process. In English language teaching, Game-Based Learning has been found to create enjoyable learning environments that reduce students' anxiety and encourage greater participation in classroom activities.

In speaking instruction, both manual and digital games can support students' language development through different forms of interaction. Manual games, such as speaking cards, encourage face-to-face communication, collaborative discussion, and spontaneous oral responses among learners. Meanwhile, digital game platforms provide interactive tasks, competition, visual stimulation, and immediate feedback that can increase students' motivation and engagement. Ochoa-Cueva et al. (2023) reported that Game-Based Learning significantly enhances learners' participation, confidence, and willingness to communicate in English by creating interactive and enjoyable classroom experiences. These findings suggest that combining traditional and digital game media may provide complementary learning opportunities that support students' speaking development.

In this study, manual and digital gamified speaking cards function as instructional media designed to facilitate students' speaking practice. The manual gamified speaking cards were adapted from the UNO card game, where each card required students to perform speaking tasks such as expressing opinions, agreeing or disagreeing with statements, and providing supporting reasons. The digital gamified speaking cards were implemented through QuizWhizzer, an interactive online platform that integrates game mechanics, competition, and instant feedback into classroom learning. Although both media aim to improve speaking performance, each provides different learning experiences. Manual cards promote direct social interaction and collaborative communication, whereas digital platforms increase engagement through technology-supported activities and immediate responses.

Based on these theoretical perspectives, this study assumes that integrating manual and digital gamified speaking cards creates a supportive learning environment that encourages students to participate actively in speaking activities. The combination of face-to-face interaction and digital engagement is expected to increase students' confidence, motivation, classroom interaction, and speaking performance. Therefore, this theoretical framework serves as the foundation for examining how manual and digital gamified speaking cards are implemented in teaching speaking and how students respond to their use in an EFL classroom.

METHOD



This study employed a qualitative research design using a case study approach to explore the implementation of manual and digital gamified speaking cards in teaching speaking and to investigate students' responses to their use in an EFL classroom. A case study was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to obtain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon within its real-life context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study was conducted at a junior high school in Cianjur Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The participants were 38 eighth-grade students, consisting of 19 male and 19 female students, who had learned English as a compulsory subject for approximately two years. All students participated in the learning activities, while ten students representing different levels of speaking proficiency were purposively selected for document analysis of their speaking performance.

Data were collected through classroom observations, open-ended questionnaires, and document analysis. Classroom observations were conducted during three instructional meetings to examine the implementation of manual and digital gamified speaking cards and to document students' participation, classroom interaction, and engagement during speaking activities. Field notes were used to record significant events throughout the learning process. At the end of the implementation, open-ended questionnaires were distributed to gather students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of the gamified speaking cards. In addition, document analysis was conducted using lesson plans, learning materials, students' speaking assessment sheets, and students' speaking task results to support and verify the findings obtained from the observations and questionnaires.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data reduction, relevant information from observations, questionnaires, and documents was selected and categorized according to the research objectives. The reduced data were then organized into descriptive summaries and tables to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring themes across the three data sources. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was employed by comparing information obtained from classroom observations, students' questionnaire responses, and document analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Manual and Digital Gamified Speaking Cards in the EFL Classroom

The implementation of manual and digital gamified speaking cards was carried out over three classroom meetings involving 38 eighth-grade students. The instructional activities focused on the topic of expressing opinions and integrated two types of gamified media: UNO-style speaking cards as the manual medium and QuizWhizzer as the digital platform. The learning process was designed based on



the principles of Game-Based Learning (GBL), emphasizing active participation, collaboration, interaction, and immediate feedback.

During the first meeting, the teacher introduced expressions for asking and giving opinions before explaining the rules of the manual speaking card activities. Students worked collaboratively in small groups using UNO-style speaking cards, where each card required them to express opinions, agree or disagree with statements, and provide reasons for their answers. Initially, several students hesitated to speak because they were unfamiliar with the activities and lacked confidence. However, as the lesson progressed, students gradually became more willing to participate in group discussions and oral interactions.

In the second meeting, the learning activities were continued through QuizWhizzer as the digital gamified platform. Students answered interactive speaking tasks individually and in groups while competing to earn points and progress through the game. The competitive yet enjoyable atmosphere increased students' enthusiasm and encouraged them to participate more actively. The immediate feedback provided by QuizWhizzer also helped students recognize their mistakes and improve their responses during the activities. The third meeting focused on strengthening students' speaking performance by combining both manual and digital gamified speaking cards. Students demonstrated greater confidence in expressing opinions, responded more spontaneously to their classmates' ideas, and actively participated in classroom discussions. Compared with the first meeting, fewer students remained passive, and classroom interaction became more balanced as more learners contributed their ideas during speaking activities.

Classroom observations further demonstrated a gradual improvement in students' participation throughout the three meetings. At the beginning of the implementation, only a small number of students voluntarily expressed their opinions, while others tended to wait for the teacher's guidance or encouragement. As students became familiar with both the UNO-style speaking cards and QuizWhizzer activities, they participated more actively in group discussions, responded more spontaneously to their classmates' ideas, and provided clearer reasons to support their opinions. These changes suggest that the integration of manual and digital gamified speaking cards created a supportive learning environment that encouraged students to engage more confidently in speaking activities.

These findings indicate that integrating manual and digital gamified speaking cards created an engaging learning environment that encouraged students to communicate more confidently. The implementation reflected several core principles of Game-Based Learning, including interactivity, immediate feedback, collaboration, and active learner participation (Kucher, 2021). These findings are consistent with those of Ochoa-Cueva et al. (2023), who reported that Game-Based Learning promotes learner engagement and increases students' motivation to participate in English learning activities. Evidence from the document analysis also supported these findings. Students' speaking assessment records showed gradual



improvement in several aspects of speaking performance, particularly vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Most students were able to organize their ideas more effectively and produce more complete responses during the final speaking activities than at the beginning of the implementation. Although several students still experienced difficulties with grammar and pronunciation, these challenges did not prevent them from communicating their ideas meaningfully during classroom interaction.

The gradual improvement observed across the three meetings also indicates that repeated exposure to gamified speaking activities contributed to students' speaking development. During the initial activities, students tended to rely on short responses and often paused before expressing their opinions. As the implementation progressed, however, many students became more spontaneous in responding to discussion topics and demonstrated greater willingness to elaborate on their ideas. The repetitive practice provided through both manual and digital speaking cards enabled students to become more familiar with opinion expressions and reduced their hesitation during oral communication. This finding suggests that continuous opportunities to practice speaking in enjoyable learning situations can gradually improve students' confidence and classroom participation. Rather than focusing solely on linguistic accuracy, the activities encouraged students to prioritize communication, which is one of the main objectives of communicative language teaching in EFL contexts (Brown, 2004). Consequently, the gamified learning environment supported not only students' language development but also their willingness to communicate in English.

Although the implementation was generally successful, several challenges were observed during the learning process. At the beginning of the activities, some students were hesitant to speak because they lacked confidence and were afraid of making grammatical and pronunciation mistakes. A few students also needed additional guidance to understand the rules of both the UNO-style speaking cards and the QuizWhizzer activities. During the digital session, several students required assistance in accessing the platform and adapting to the game mechanics. However, these challenges gradually decreased as students became more familiar with the activities and received support from their teacher and classmates. By the final meeting, most students were able to participate independently and interact more confidently during speaking activities. These findings suggest that adequate preparation, clear instructions, and continuous teacher support are important factors for the successful implementation of gamified learning in EFL classrooms.

Students' Responses toward the Use of Manual and Digital Gamified Speaking Cards

The findings from classroom observations, open-ended questionnaires, and document analysis revealed that students responded positively to the implementation of manual and digital gamified speaking cards. Overall, the gamified activities created an enjoyable learning atmosphere that encouraged students to participate actively in speaking tasks. Most students reported that



learning through games was more interesting than conventional classroom activities because it reduced boredom and increased their motivation to communicate in English. The questionnaire findings provided further evidence of these positive perceptions. Many students explained that learning English through games enabled them to "learn while playing," making speaking activities more enjoyable and less stressful than conventional classroom instruction. Several participants also reported that the familiar gameplay of UNO cards and the competitive features of QuizWhizzer maintained their interest throughout the lessons. In addition, students highlighted that working collaboratively with their classmates made them feel more comfortable when expressing their opinions because they could exchange ideas and support one another during the activities.

Students' responses further illustrated these positive perceptions. For example, one student stated that learning through the games was interesting because they could "learn while playing," which made the lesson more enjoyable (S2). Another student explained that the activities were exciting because they could freely express their own opinions during the games (S3). Similarly, several students described the learning activities as enjoyable and engaging because they introduced a new learning experience that differed from their usual English lessons (S7; S9). These responses indicate that the gamified activities successfully created a positive learning atmosphere that encouraged students to participate actively in speaking tasks.

One of the most significant responses was the improvement in students' confidence. During the initial classroom activities, several students were reluctant to express their opinions because they were afraid of making grammatical or pronunciation mistakes. However, as they became familiar with the game mechanics and collaborated with their peers, they gradually showed greater confidence in sharing their ideas. Classroom observations also indicated that students became more willing to ask and answer questions, respond to their classmates' opinions, and participate in group discussions.

The questionnaire responses also showed that the gamified activities helped many students become more confident when speaking in front of their classmates. One participant explained that the activities increased confidence because they already understood what they wanted to say before speaking (S1). Another student reported becoming more confident because they had the opportunity to represent their group during the activity (S2). In addition, some students mentioned that support from their teammates helped them feel more comfortable expressing their opinions (S7). These findings suggest that collaborative game-based activities reduced students' anxiety and encouraged them to communicate more confidently.

The implementation of gamified speaking cards also increased students' motivation and engagement during speaking activities. Both the manual UNO-style speaking cards and the QuizWhizzer platform encouraged active participation through interactive challenges, friendly competition, and immediate feedback. Rather than remaining passive listeners, students became actively involved in expressing opinions, agreeing or disagreeing with others, and providing reasons to



support their arguments. The game elements maintained students' attention throughout the learning process and encouraged them to communicate more frequently in English.

Students also perceived the gamified speaking activities as motivating. Several participants explained that they became more active because the activities were enjoyable and different from their usual classroom routines. One student mentioned that the game was exciting because it was their first experience using this type of learning activity (S3), while another reported becoming more active because both the game and classmates created an enthusiastic classroom atmosphere (S8). These responses demonstrate that the combination of manual and digital gamified speaking cards increased students' willingness to participate in speaking activities. Furthermore, document analysis demonstrated improvement in several aspects of students' speaking performance. Students showed better organization of ideas, expanded vocabulary related to expressing opinions, improved fluency, and greater comprehension of the discussion topics. Although some students continued to experience minor difficulties in pronunciation and grammatical accuracy, they demonstrated noticeable progress in communicating their ideas more confidently and effectively than during the initial learning activities.

These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that Game-Based Learning promotes students' motivation, participation, and speaking performance in EFL classrooms. Ochoa-Cueva et al. (2023) found that game-based activities increase learners' engagement and willingness to communicate, while Kucher (2021) emphasized that interactivity, feedback, and exploration are essential principles that support meaningful learning. Similarly, the present study demonstrates that combining manual and digital gamified speaking cards provides complementary learning experiences that encourage students to participate actively and develop greater confidence in speaking English.

The findings indicate that combining manual and digital gamified speaking cards provides complementary learning experiences. While the manual UNO-style cards promoted face-to-face communication and collaborative interaction, QuizWhizzer increased students' engagement through digital competition and immediate feedback. The integration of both media allowed students to practice speaking in different contexts while maintaining their motivation throughout the lessons.

This finding supports the principles of Game-Based Learning proposed by Kucher (2021), who argues that meaningful learning occurs when learners actively interact with game mechanics that encourage participation, collaboration, and continuous feedback. In addition, the enjoyable classroom atmosphere reduced students' fear of making mistakes, enabling them to participate more confidently during speaking activities. Unlike previous studies that investigated either digital or non-digital games separately, this study demonstrates that integrating both types of gamified media can create a richer learning experience. Students benefited not only from the collaborative interaction provided by manual speaking cards but also from the competitive and interactive features of digital platforms. Therefore,



combining digital and non-digital gamified speaking cards may better accommodate different learning preferences while promoting meaningful communication in EFL classrooms.

Another important finding is that each type of gamified media contributed differently to the learning process. The manual UNO-style speaking cards encouraged direct interaction among students because they communicated face-to-face, negotiated ideas, and responded immediately to their classmates' opinions. These activities promoted collaboration and provided more opportunities for extended speaking practice. Meanwhile, QuizWhizzer increased students' enthusiasm through digital competition, visual interaction, and instant feedback, creating a more dynamic classroom atmosphere. The integration of these two media allowed students to experience different forms of engagement without reducing the focus on speaking practice. Students who were initially less confident during face-to-face interaction often became more motivated when participating in the digital activities, while those who enjoyed collaborative discussion benefited from the manual speaking cards. Therefore, the combination of digital and non-digital gamified speaking cards can be considered a complementary instructional strategy that accommodates different learning preferences while maintaining students' motivation and participation throughout the learning process. This finding is also consistent with the principles of Game-Based Learning, which emphasize that different game mechanics can support learner engagement through various forms of interaction and feedback (Kucher, 2021).

To facilitate the interpretation of the findings, Table 1 summarizes the key themes identified from classroom observations, open-ended questionnaires, and document analysis.

Table 1 Summary of Key Findings from Classroom Observation, Open-Ended Questionnaire, and Document Analysis.

Theme	Evidence from classroom observation	Evidence from Open-Ended Questionnaire	Evidence from Document Analysis
Enjoyment	The student participated enthusiastically and appeared to enjoy the game-based speaking activities.	Students described the activities as enjoyable, interesting, and different from conventional English lessons because they could "learn while playing."	Students actively completed all speaking tasks and remained engaged throughout the learning activities.
Confidence	More students voluntarily expressed their opinions and participated in classroom discussions.	Students reported feeling more confident because they understood what to say and received	Students demonstrated greater confidence when presenting their opinions during speaking tasks.



Motivation	Students participated actively in group discussions and gamified speaking activities.	support from their peers. Students stated that the games motivated them to participate because the activities were enjoyable, interactive, and competitive.	Students consistently participated across the three classroom meetings.
	Speaking Development	Students provided longer, clearer, and more spontaneous responses during speaking activities.	Students showed improvement in vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and organization of ideas.

As presented in Table 1, the findings obtained from classroom observations, questionnaires, and document analysis consistently demonstrate that students experienced positive changes throughout the implementation. The convergence of evidence across the three data sources strengthens the credibility of the findings through data triangulation. Students not only perceived the learning activities as enjoyable and motivating but also demonstrated observable improvements in their classroom participation and speaking performance. These consistent findings indicate that combining manual and digital gamified speaking cards contributed positively to both students' learning experiences and their speaking development.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study provide several pedagogical implications for English teachers, particularly those teaching speaking in EFL classrooms. Integrating manual and digital gamified speaking cards can create a more interactive and student-centered learning environment that encourages students to communicate more actively. The combination of face-to-face interaction through manual speaking cards and technology-supported activities through QuizWhizzer allows teachers to accommodate different learning preferences while maintaining students' motivation throughout the lessons.

First, integrating manual and digital gamified speaking cards can create a more student-centered classroom by increasing students' participation and confidence. Second, combining traditional classroom interaction with digital technology enables teachers to accommodate different learning preferences while maintaining students' motivation. Third, this approach may serve as an alternative strategy for teaching speaking, particularly in junior high school EFL classrooms where students often experience anxiety when communicating in English.



Furthermore, to ensure successful implementation, teachers should provide clear instructions and demonstrations before using game-based activities. Continuous guidance and encouragement are also important to help students overcome speaking anxiety. Finally, schools are encouraged to support this integration by providing adequate technological facilities and internet access, which can assist teachers in creating a more engaging English learning environment.

In addition to improving classroom interaction, the implementation of gamified speaking cards may contribute to the development of students' twenty-first-century learning skills. Throughout the activities, students were encouraged to communicate effectively, collaborate with peers, think critically when expressing opinions, and solve problems during game-based tasks. These learning experiences reflect several competencies expected in modern education, where students are required not only to master subject knowledge but also to develop communication and collaboration skills. Furthermore, integrating digital platforms such as QuizWhizzer into classroom instruction also supports the development of students' digital literacy by familiarizing them with educational technology. Therefore, beyond improving speaking performance, the combination of manual and digital gamified speaking cards may also prepare students to become more active, collaborative, and confident learners in contemporary learning environments (Kucher, 2021). The findings also suggest that schools should encourage teachers to integrate both digital and non-digital learning media into speaking instruction. Professional development programs focusing on Game-Based Learning may help teachers design more engaging speaking activities and improve students' communicative competence.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the implementation of manual and digital gamified speaking cards in teaching speaking and explored students' responses to their use in an EFL classroom. The findings revealed that the integration of UNO-style speaking cards and QuizWhizzer successfully created an interactive and student-centered learning environment that encouraged students to participate actively in speaking activities. The gamified learning activities enhanced students' confidence, motivation, classroom interaction, and willingness to express their opinions while reducing their anxiety about speaking English. Furthermore, students responded positively to the implementation of both manual and digital gamified speaking cards, perceiving the learning activities as enjoyable, engaging, and helpful in improving their speaking skills. These findings suggest that combining digital and non-digital gamified media can serve as an effective Game-Based Learning strategy for developing speaking skills in EFL classrooms.

Despite its positive findings, this study was limited to one class in a junior high school and employed a qualitative case study design, meaning the findings cannot be generalized to all EFL contexts. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger sample sizes across different educational levels. Furthermore, employing experimental or mixed-methods research designs could



help measure the long-term impact on students' speaking achievement and identify the specific contributions of digital versus non-digital media to speaking development.

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