NAHRA-EDU
Journal of Teacher Education and Professional Development

Vol. 2, No. 1, 2025
ISSN (Print) xxx-xxxx | ISSN (Online) xxx-xxxx
pp. 1-10

CANVA IN THE CLASSROOM: A MODERN APPROACH TO ENGLISH PRESENTATION EDUCATION

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Article Info

Article history:

Received July 13, 2025
Revised September 30, 2025
Accepted October 15, 2025

Keywords:

Canva;
English language learning;
Student Engagement;
Presentation Skills;
Digital Learning

ABSTRACT (10 PT)

The integration of digital technology into English language teaching has become increasingly important in creating engaging and student-centered learning environments. Among various digital tools, Canva has gained attention as a platform that enables students to create visually appealing presentations and learning materials. This study explores the use of Canva in the English language classroom at UIN Walisongo Semarang, focusing on its influence on students' engagement and motivation, the benefits and challenges experienced by students, and its role in supporting presentation skills. This research employed a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with three undergraduate students who had experience using Canva in English presentation activities. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that Canva positively influenced students' engagement and motivation by making learning activities more creative, enjoyable, and visually attractive. Students also reported several benefits, including improved collaboration, creativity, and confidence in completing English assignments. However, challenges such as internet connectivity issues and difficulties in accessing certain features were identified. Furthermore, Canva was found to support the development of presentation skills by helping students organize information effectively, communicate ideas more clearly, and present with greater confidence. Overall, the study suggests that Canva can serve as an effective digital tool for enhancing English language learning, particularly in presentation-based activities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital transformation, the integration of technology in education has become increasingly essential, particularly in the field of English language teaching (ELT). The rapid development of digital tools has opened new opportunities for educators to create more engaging, interactive, and student-centered learning experiences. According to Syahdan et al. (2023), the use of digital media in English classrooms can significantly enhance students' motivation and participation, which are key factors in successful language acquisition.

However, despite the growing availability of digital tools, many English language classrooms in Indonesia still rely on conventional teaching methods such as textbook-based instruction and teacher-centered approaches. This condition often leads to low student engagement, passive participation, and limited opportunities for students to develop their communicative and presentational competence. Students in the 21st century, who are accustomed to digital environments, require learning experiences that are not only informative but also visually stimulating and interactive.

One digital tool that has gained considerable attention in recent years is Canva, a web-based graphic design platform that allows users to create visually appealing presentations, posters, infographics, and multimedia content. Canva offers an intuitive interface that is accessible even for users with minimal design experience, making it a practical tool for integration in educational settings. Effendi et al. (2024) highlighted that Canva for Education contributes to enhancing students' creativity and presentation skills, suggesting its potential as an effective instructional medium in language learning contexts.

Despite its growing popularity, research on the specific application of Canva in English language teaching, particularly in developing students' presentation skills and boosting their learning engagement, remains limited. Most existing studies focus on Canva as a general design tool or examine its use in higher education contexts without emphasizing its role in language learning processes. This gap calls for a more in-depth investigation into how Canva can be purposefully employed as a pedagogical tool in the English language classroom.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the use of Canva in the English language classroom at UIN Walisongo Semarang, with a focus on its impact on students' presentation skills, creativity, and engagement in learning English. By examining students' experiences and perceptions, this research seeks to provide practical insights for English language educators who wish to integrate digital tools meaningfully into their teaching practice.

1.1 Burning Issue

One of the most pressing concerns in English language classrooms today is the growing disconnect between how students are taught and how they actually learn best. In many EFL settings, teachers still rely heavily on conventional, teacher-centered instruction, a model in which the teacher talks and the students listen. As researchers have pointed out, this kind of setup tends to turn students into passive recipients of information, leaving little room for them to ask questions, explore ideas, or make sense of things in their own way (Wanli et al., 2023). For students who have grown up in a digital, visually driven world, sitting through one-way lectures can feel disconnected from the way they naturally engage with information.

This issue runs deeper than mere boredom. Studies have found that many English learners are showing declining levels of engagement, motivation, and satisfaction in their classes. Teachers notice that students rarely participate, while students themselves feel that classroom activities do not connect to anything meaningful for them (Mao, 2021; Wang, 2017). When students do not perceive value in what they are learning, it becomes nearly impossible to get them genuinely involved, which in turn directly affects how well they develop their English skills.

The contrast between traditional and more interactive approaches makes this even clearer. Research comparing conventional PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production) methods with more task-based approaches found that students in task-based classes made noticeably more progress, suggesting that the formulaic, step-by-step methods that have dominated language classrooms for years may not be giving students what they need (Harris & Leeming, 2022).

In the Indonesian context specifically, studies have shown that interactive methods, such as using technology, working collaboratively, or engaging with real-world materials, can make a substantial difference in how motivated and engaged students feel and in how well their language skills actually develop (Anggaira et al., 2022; Novita & Paragae, 2023). Yet despite this evidence, many classrooms have been slow to change. Even among students who are open to digital tools, some still tend to hold back or lack confidence when technology is introduced without adequate guidance from their teacher, pointing to the need not only for new tools, but also for thoughtful, well-supported ways of integrating those tools into the classroom.

This is what makes Canva worth exploring. Rather than simply layering technology onto an already passive learning environment, Canva offers a way to genuinely reshape how students engage with English by giving them something to create, collaborate on, and take pride in.

1.2 Research Problem

1. How does the use of Canva influence students' engagement and motivation in learning English?
2. What are the benefits and challenges experienced by students when using Canva in English language learning?
3. How does Canva support students' presentation skills in the English language classroom?

1.3 Research Objective

1. To examine the influence of Canva on students' engagement and motivation in English language learning.
2. To identify the benefits and challenges faced by students in using Canva as a learning medium in English class.
3. To analyze how Canva supports the development of students' presentation skills.

1.4 Literature Review: The Problem with Traditional Approaches in English Classrooms

For decades, English language teaching has leaned heavily on teacher-centered models where the primary dynamic is one of delivery: the teacher presents, and students receive. Research has consistently shown that this kind of teacher-fronted instruction often pushes students toward passivity and disengagement, whereas learning structures that involve more peer interaction and active participation tend to produce better motivation and stronger language development (Khataybeh et al., 2024). This matters because engagement isn't just about keeping students happy; it's directly tied to how well they absorb and use the language they're learning.

The reality in many EFL classrooms is that students are showing declining levels of engagement, motivation, and satisfaction. Teachers frequently report low participation rates, while students express feeling that classroom activities don't carry much real-world meaning for them (Mao, 2021; Wang, 2017). This gap between what classrooms offer and what students actually need has pushed researchers and educators to look for alternative approaches that are more interactive, more visual, and more student-driven.

1.5 Literature Review: Moving Beyond the Conventional — Interactive and Digital Approaches

The shift away from traditional methods hasn't just been a trend; it's been backed up by evidence. Studies comparing conventional PPP instruction with task-based language teaching found that students in task-based classrooms consistently outperformed their peers, suggesting that approaches rooted in authentic, communicative tasks offer a more meaningful pathway to language development than formulaic teaching methods (Harris & Leeming, 2022).

In the Indonesian context, research has found that interactive learning strategies, including technology integration, role-play, and collaborative activities, significantly improve student motivation, engagement, and language proficiency across different educational levels (Anggaira et al., 2022; Novita & Paragae, 2023). These findings point toward a growing recognition that modern learners need more than passive instruction; they need to be active participants in their own learning process.

1.6 Literature Review: Canva as a Tool for English Language Learning

It is within this context that Canva emerges as a promising alternative. Canva is a web-based design platform that allows students to create presentations, posters, infographics, and other visual content, all through an interface that is accessible even for those with no design background. Syahdan et al. (2023) found that when Canva was integrated into English classrooms, it opened up new possibilities for teachers to make lessons more engaging, though it also came with its own set of challenges in terms of aligning the tool with specific language learning goals.

Building on this, Ramli and Serip Mohamad (2025) found that students who used Canva for presentations showed noticeable growth in confidence, creativity, and willingness to participate actively, all qualities that traditional instruction often struggles to cultivate. Similarly, Effendi et al. (2024) highlighted that Canva for Education gave students a tangible way to develop both their design skills and their ability to present ideas clearly and creatively.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach, which was considered the most suitable method for addressing the research questions. Rather than measuring outcomes through numbers or statistics, the aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of students' actual experiences and to explore what it genuinely feels like to use Canva in an English language classroom, from the

students' own point of view. This approach is well grounded in the literature. Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe qualitative research as operating from a constructivist worldview, one that recognizes how individuals construct meaning from their experiences and how those meanings are shaped by social and personal contexts. In other words, there is no single truth about what Canva does for students; rather, there are multiple, layered experiences worth exploring. Qualitative methods are particularly well suited to this kind of inquiry.

2.2 Participants

Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, a technique of selecting participants not randomly but intentionally, based on whether they possess the specific experiences relevant to the research. The participants were three undergraduate students from UIN Walisongo Semarang who had used Canva in their English language classes, particularly for presentation tasks. They were chosen because they could speak from real, firsthand experience, not merely about what Canva looks like, but about what it actually felt like to learn with it.

1. Student 1 regularly uses Canva to design and deliver presentations in English class and has developed a clear personal workflow with the platform.
2. Student 2 has worked on group presentation projects using Canva, giving them a perspective on how the tool shapes collaborative learning.
3. Student 3 uses Canva to make presentations more visually engaging and has noticed a shift in their confidence when speaking in front of others.

2.3 Research Instrument

The main instrument for collecting data in this study was a semi-structured interview guide. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they strike a balance between structure and flexibility; they keep the conversation focused on the research questions while still leaving room for participants to take the discussion in unexpected and meaningful directions. The questions were designed to elicit students' honest reflections on how Canva shaped their experience in English class.

2.4 Data Collection

Data were collected through interviews conducted via WhatsApp. The researcher contacted participants individually and conducted the interviews through WhatsApp text chat or voice notes, depending on each participant's preference.

2.5 Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involved reading through the data carefully, identifying recurring patterns, organizing those patterns into meaningful themes, and then using those themes to construct a coherent picture of students' experiences. The aim was not to reduce what students said into rigid categories, but to preserve the richness and complexity of their accounts while still identifying the connections between them.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study based on in-depth interviews conducted with three undergraduate students at UIN Walisongo Semarang. The data are analyzed and discussed in relation to three research problems: (1) how the use of Canva influences students' engagement and motivation in learning English, (2) what benefits and challenges students experience when using Canva in English language learning, and (3) how Canva supports students' presentation skills in the English language classroom. Each research problem is explored through the individual perspectives of all three participants, supported by direct evidence from their interview responses.

3.1 RP 1: How does the use of Canva influence students' engagement and motivation in learning English?

What makes P1's response particularly telling is the comparison they draw, not just saying that Canva is good, but that it is noticeably better than what they were used to. The ability to weave together text, images, and design in one place gave them a kind of creative agency that traditional methods simply did not offer. Engagement, for P1, came from having something meaningful to build, not just something to fill in.

"It makes learning more interesting because I can combine text, images, and design elements in one presentation. I feel more engaged during lessons compared to using traditional methods." (P1)

P1's motivation is what researchers might call activity-driven; it flows naturally from the enjoyment of the creative process itself. The word "excited" here is significant. It suggests that Canva did not just make assignments more manageable; it made them something to look forward to.

"Using Canva increases my motivation because the learning activities become more creative and enjoyable. I like designing presentations and posters, so I feel excited to complete English assignments and express my ideas in a more attractive way." (P1)

P2 captures two distinct dimensions of engagement in a single sentence: visual appeal and clarity of understanding. This matters because it shows that Canva was not just making their work look better on the surface; it was helping them think through and communicate their material more effectively.

"Canva helped me make my assignments more attractive and easier to understand." (P2)

If P1's motivation was driven by the activity itself, P2 was driven by the platform's accessibility and visual appeal, what we might call interface-driven motivation.

"Canva increases my motivation to learn English because the interface is attractive and easy to use. I become more enthusiastic about completing assignments because I can add images, icons, and creative designs." (P2)

P3 draws the sharpest contrast of all three participants: the difference between putting words on paper and building something visual and multi-layered. What Canva gave them was not just a different tool; it was a fundamentally different kind of learning experience.

“I felt more engaged compared to just writing assignments on paper. The visual aspect made the learning process feel more creative and fun.” (P3)

P3's account of motivation is the most layered and linguistically significant of the three. Their drive to produce professional-looking work created a kind of internal standard, and meeting that standard required getting their English right.

“Because I wanted my designs to look good and communicate clearly, I became more careful about the English words and sentences I used. I felt a sense of pride when my work looked professional, and that pushed me to write better English captions, titles, and descriptions in my projects.” (P3)

3.2 RP 2: What are the benefits and challenges experienced by students when using Canva in English language learning?

All three participants shared the same view about collaboration, pointing to something that goes beyond the individual learning experience: Canva's impact on the social dynamics of the classroom. When students work together on a shared design, they are not just collaborating; they are using English to negotiate, communicate, and create. P3 describes collaboration happening at two distinct levels, during the creation process, where group members discussed content and layout decisions in English, and during the presentation itself.

“Canva improves classroom interaction because students often work together on group projects and exchange ideas while creating presentations. It encourages communication, teamwork, and active participation during English learning activities.” (P1)

“Canva makes interaction and collaboration in class better. When working on group assignments, all members can share ideas and work together in one design.” (P2)

“We communicated more in English while deciding on content and layout. It also sparked more discussion during presentations because our slides were visually attractive and easier to follow.” (P3)

Like P1 and P2, P3 experienced internet connectivity as a real barrier, a reminder that technology-enhanced learning in Indonesian educational contexts is not always supported by the infrastructure it requires to function well.

“I have experienced problems such as a slow internet connection and difficulty finding certain features. When that happened, I asked my classmates or teacher for help, watched tutorial videos, or tried using Canva when the internet connection was more stable.” (P1)

“I once experienced internet connection problems that made Canva run slowly. To deal with it, I used a more stable network or worked on assignments when the internet connection was better.” (P2)

"One of the main challenges I faced was limited internet connection, which sometimes made it difficult to access Canva smoothly." (P3)

3.3 RP 3: How does Canva support students' presentation skills in the English language classroom?

P1 identifies three concrete and distinct impacts on their presentation skills: better organization of information, greater ability to hold the audience's attention, and increased fluency when speaking in English.

"Canva has improved my presentation skills by helping me organize information more effectively and present it with confidence. Attractive slides make it easier for me to explain my ideas, maintain the audience's attention, and speak more fluently in English because the visuals support my explanation." (P1)

P2 frames the relationship between visual structure and spoken confidence in a way that is both practical and perceptive. Well-organized slides function as a cognitive map; during a presentation, they tell the speaker where they are, where they are going, and what comes next.

"Canva helps improve my presentation skills because the material I present becomes more structured and attractive. I also feel more confident when speaking in English because the slides I use help me explain the material more clearly." (P2)

Of the three participants, P3 offers the most psychologically honest account of how Canva affected their presentation experience. For them, the impact was not primarily about technical speaking skills; it was about anxiety reduction. Having slides that were organized and visually polished gave them a sense of security before and during the presentation. That security translated into less nervousness, more fluency, and greater confidence.

"Because my slides were well-organized and visually clear, I felt less nervous standing in front of the class. The structured layout also helped me stay on track during my presentation. I think when your visual aids look good, it naturally encourages you to speak more fluently and confidently in English." (P3)

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored the use of Canva in the English language classroom and examined its influence on students' engagement and motivation, the benefits and challenges of its use, and its contribution to students' presentation skills. Based on the findings, Canva was perceived as a valuable learning tool that made English learning more engaging, interactive, and enjoyable. The visual and creative features available in Canva encouraged students to participate more actively in classroom activities and increased their motivation to complete English assignments.

The study also found that Canva offered several benefits, including improved creativity, collaboration, classroom interaction, and confidence in expressing ideas. Through presentation-based tasks, students were able to communicate and work together more

effectively. Nevertheless, some challenges remained, particularly related to internet connectivity and occasional difficulties in using certain features of the platform.

In terms of presentation skills, Canva helped students organize information more clearly, create attractive visual aids, and present their ideas with greater confidence. The platform reduced presentation anxiety and supported students in delivering English presentations more fluently and effectively.

In conclusion, Canva can be considered a practical and innovative tool for English language teaching, especially in presentation-based learning. Its integration into the classroom has the potential to create more meaningful, student-centered, and technology-enhanced learning experiences. Future studies may involve a larger number of participants and different educational settings to gain a broader understanding of Canva's impact on English language learning.

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