The utilization of the Canva application for enhancing speaking skills among non-English major students at The People's Police College II

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Abstract

Canva, a web-based learning management system, has lately been used to enhance the acquisition of language skills by students and aid instructors in conducting digital classroom activities. Furthermore, recent research conducted in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has emphasized the effectiveness of using the Canva application to enhance the oral proficiency of police school students. To achieve this objective, sixty-four English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students were chosen from two classes at the People's Police College II. The selection was made based on their comparable features and proficiency levels, resulting in the formation of control and experimental groups. Before the treatment, both groups had a pre-assessment to evaluate their oral proficiency and filled out a questionnaire to gather demographic details. Throughout the instructional sessions, the control group engaged in speaking practice using a conventional teaching methodology. However, the experimental group received instruction via the use of speaking tasks created using the Canva application. After the treatment, both groups took a post-test and the experimental group alone completed a questionnaire on student attitudes after finishing the course. The scores were analyzed statistically using SPSS, with a paired sample t-test to compare the pre-test and post-test performance. The findings indicated a significant enhancement in the speaking proficiency of students in the experimental group as compared to the control group, so affirming the beneficial impact of Canva in boosting students' speaking aptitude. In addition, students have illustrated great enthusiasm for the speaking exercises designed via Canva conducted in the classroom.

Keywords: Canva application; Speaking skills; EFL learners; Teaching speaking skills.

1. Introduction

Speaking skills, unlike reading and writing, are spontaneously formed when students learn their native language. Consequently, the acquisition of speaking skills in a second language may present challenges, which is particularly evident among English language learners who are acquiring English as their second or third language. EFL students frequently confront difficulties in acquiring English-speaking skills. Vocabulary, pronunciation, confidence, and logical expression are some of the issues that they struggle with (Kongsontana, 2014; Maskhao, 2002; Siritanarath, 2007). Although speaking English fluently is a necessary skill for students, many English majors and non-majors at universities and colleges in Vietnam struggle with it. The characteristics of the students, their level of public speaking confidence, their level of

motivation, the amount of time they devote to learning English, and the level of support they receive are just a few of the variables that affect how quickly they progress in learning a new language.

Learners frequently evaluate their performance in language acquisition by how well they can utilize their spoken English. Because of the high need for spoken English, numerous researchers have proposed many strategies and procedures for improving oral proficiency. For many years, FL/SL teachers believed that making learners repeat phrases was the most effective approach to enhancing their speaking skills. As a result, students spent countless hours mimicking their lecturers, remembering conversations, and mastering language patterns. At the turn of the century, studies demonstrated that no language could be acquired only through repetition. Instead, it is acquired and learned via interaction, just as it is with newborns. Class activities that assist students in enhancing their verbal expression abilities, according to Ur (1996: 120), appear to be a crucial component of language education. Ineffective teaching and learning techniques and practices may create new issues. The activities undertaken in class left students bored and, for the most part, weary. As a result, their enthusiasm for lecture activities steadily decreased. Numerous elements that are either related to the students themselves or the media they come into contact with during the language acquisition process may have an impact on their ability to communicate in English fluently (Mandasari & Oktaviani, 2018). Effective classroom management and speaking instruction must support students' abilities to communicate successfully in the speaking class. Speaking is the deliberate use of language to transmit ideas or information so that others may understand you (Arini & Wahyudin, 2022). Then, related courses are designed to assist learners in communicating successfully, which requires more than both accuracy and fluency. Furthermore, because English is a foreign language in Vietnam, students may encounter difficulties in speaking it. Each educator has unique approaches to learning while instructing their students. The instructor passionately desires the academic achievement of students.

2. Literature review

2.1. Previous Studies

The Canva application has the ability to enhance student motivation in the domain of writing, as shown by Hadi et al. (2021). This medium also facilitates EFL students in articulating their thoughts and ideas to effectively engage in communication with others (Christiana & Anwar, 2021). Canva provides students with an immediate opportunity to participate in the creative process, enabling them to reinforce their understanding by remembering previously learned information. Visual media refers to several forms of media used in language instruction, such as computer diagrams, whiteboard images, photography, book graphics, and cartoons (Smaldino et al., 2015).

In recent times, language courses have incorporated technological media as a means to facilitate greater speaking practice beyond the classroom setting (Christianson, Hoskins, & Watanabe, 2009). Connectivity with students is considered an advantage of technological media. Canva is one technological platform that has the potential to be integrated into language courses. Teachers use the Canva application for a variety of purposes related to designing

educational materials and enhancing classroom activities. Canva is a multifaceted graphic design software that enables users to generate visually appealing and polished graphics.

Al-khoeri (2021) asserts that Canva is an internet-based graphic design platform that enables students to easily generate a diverse range of distinctive English Language Teaching (ELT) resources. Canva is a web-based program that offers a range of innovative features for the creation of diverse and engaging educational videos.

Furthermore, as stated by Smaldino (2015), the use of Canva and other visual aids in educational settings may serve several purposes, including the facilitation of comprehension of complex abstract ideas, fostering inspiration among students, directing their attention towards specific content, reinforcing information via repetition, enhancing memorization of previously acquired knowledge, and ultimately enhancing the overall engagement in the learning process. Canva is a dynamic graphic design tool that can be effectively used to create visually engaging videos aimed at capturing the attention of students and enhancing the overall appeal of educational content.

According to Navarre (2018), Canva has the ability to create more intricate designs for many forms of print media, such as flyers, posters, invitation cards, and brochures. Canva facilitates the exhibition of a diverse range of subjects by enabling users to create posters, presentations, flyers, infographics, book covers, newsletters, programs, reports, media kits, and other forms of visual content, either alone or in collaboration with others (Waring, 2021).

As stated by Martin (2016), Canva offers educators and learners a straightforward and innovative approach to graphic creation. The drag-and-drop feature facilitates the creation of presentations, posters, single-page papers, and social media postings. Based on the perspectives shared by the aforementioned experts, it can be deduced that Canva is a web-based application that offers a range of resources, such as fonts, animation, photos, videos, shapes, and text, which are freely accessible for educational purposes. These resources are intended to facilitate the teaching and learning process for both instructors and students within a classroom setting.

Arunachalam and Munisamy (2022) assert that Canvas provides a very adaptable platform. Both teachers and students have the ability to customize the system to align with their own teaching and learning practices. The primary focus is directed towards the facilitation of communication between the teacher and the learner, hence fostering a collaborative environment throughout the educational journey.

The Canva Learning Management System (LMS) facilitates several functionalities for students, including the provision of notifications, the submission of assignments, and the active use of designated educational materials. The process of connecting Canva accounts with social network profiles. The Canva platform provides teachers with the ability to provide feedback, include multimedia content such as films, blogs, and web pages, as well as other educational resources, and monitor the academic development of their students. Canva provides strong integrated audio and video recording capabilities. The aforementioned function has several applications, including assignments, examinations, and educational resources.

Canva facilitates a wide range of creative freedoms and encourages experimentation. Educators may be inclined to hold the belief that their learners possess a high level of creative proficiency and exhibit a sense of comfort in their academic pursuits (Atherton, 2018).

The use of Canva has the potential to enhance the learning experiences of learners as well as teachers. According to Smaldino et al. (2015), the utilization of visual aids, such as Canva, in educational settings can serve multiple purposes. These include facilitating the formation of tangible understandings of abstract concepts, fostering student motivation, guiding their focus, reinforcing information, enhancing retention of prior knowledge, and promoting overall learning outcomes. Canva is widely regarded as a tool that has the capability to convert abstract concepts into actual sitemaps with no effort.

2.2. Theoretical background

2.2.1. Students' motivation and attitude towards English speaking skill

Motivation is a crucial factor in successful language acquisition, influencing students' engagement and motivation. It can be intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental, or integrative, and affects learning outcomes. The complexity of speaking skills, including linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies, necessitates understanding students' motivation. Teachers should recognize students' problems and create a conducive learning environment. Strong motivation leads to effective engagement, critical thinking, adaptability, self-esteem, and risk-taking. Motivation is the primary driving force in learning English, and its impact on the learning process is well-documented.

Motivation is crucial for effective learning reinforcement, goal clarity, and persistence. It influences both the process and outcomes of learning. Teachers should enhance students' motivation to study English and integrate strategies for fostering motivation into their instructional practices. Motivation is also essential for successful second language acquisition. Brown (2007) identified two forms of motivational orientation: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation involves studying a language for professional goals, while integrative motivation aims to assimilate into the target language community and engage in social interactions.

Gardner (1985) categorized motivational factors influencing language learners into integrative and instrumental motivation. Intrinsic motivation, driven by internal factors, aims to achieve competence and self-determination, while extrinsic motivation expects external rewards. The impact of these motivations on language learning varies, with intrinsic motivation being more effective. Proficiency in spoken English is crucial for effective communication skills, as it involves coherent, precise, and socially appropriate communication. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations contribute to students' achievement in language acquisition.

Effective communication involves expressing thoughts in sentences, explaining ideas, using comprehensible sentences, and using appropriate intonation and gestures. Speaking is a complex task involving several language subsystems, including linguistic competence, discourse competence, and sociolinguistic competence. The appropriateness of communication depends on context, subject matter, relationships, cultural taboos, politeness norms, politically correct terminology, and expression of attitudes. Strategic competence involves recognizing and correcting communication breakdowns before, during, or after interactions. These subsystems can pose challenges for language learners when attempting to speak a second or foreign language.

In social interactions, speakers may encounter unfamiliar vocabulary and need to rephrase or inquire about the corresponding term. External influences like background noise can disrupt communication, so it's crucial for speakers to have the necessary skills and strategies to ensure effective communication. Techniques include requesting repeats, seeking clarification, speaking at a slower pace, using gestures, and engaging in turn-taking. Burnkart (1998) emphasizes the importance of speaking in facilitating clarity, precision, and appropriateness. Learners must understand mechanics, functions, and social and cultural standards. The concept of speaking is complex and requires specific talents and knowledge.

A speaker's proficiency in both linguistic and non-linguistic information is crucial for effective communication. Brown (2004) emphasizes the importance of micro-skills, such as lexicon generation, morphology, syntax, semantics, phonetics, and phonology, and macro skills, such as pragmatic and sociolinguistic competencies. Freeman (2003) highlights the importance of both micro and macro elements in communicative competence, which helps learners effectively use the target language. Students must understand the various forms of language and choose the most suitable form based on the social environment and conversational roles.

This article explores the relationship between English learning motivation and speaking skills in students. It highlights the importance of understanding this relationship for both students and teachers. Limited opportunities for practice outside of class also impact EFL learners' performance. Teachers should use media creatively to encourage students to practice outside of class, increasing exposure. The article also highlights the role of the Internet in supporting the academic curriculum and enhancing students' English-speaking abilities.

2.2.2. Web-based activities for language acquisition

Multimedia and web-based activities benefit the language learning process, they highlight their potential to enhance comprehension, engagement, and retention. The Canva application is a valuable tool for creating visually appealing educational materials, such as PPT presentations, mind maps, videos, interactive worksheets, and flashcards. Web activities are essential in enhancing language learning, as they utilize web resources, tools, materials, or applications. They can be categorized into task-based activities that incorporate authentic web resources for information gathering, problem-solving, and communication purposes, and teacher-made web activities that employ custom-designed language exercises modified by classroom instructors. Multimedia, defined as the use of technological advances in computers to present and combine various forms of media, such as text, pictures, audio, and video, along with interactive features and tools, is essential for educators to incorporate in their pedagogical approach to facilitate students' comprehension of English as a foreign language. This study investigates the utilization of Canva-based language learning activities in the classroom at PPCII, specifically in a non-English language context.

2.2.3. Canva application

Canva is an online graphic design platform that offers users access to over a million images, drawings, and fonts. Its drag-and-drop interface makes it easy to create visual content. Canva offers benefits such as a wide range of visually appealing designs, facilitating creativity in creating learning materials and reducing time spent on practical learning media. It is also less

demanding in terms of time and effort, and users can use a mobile device for creation. Canva is particularly useful in educational settings, where it can be used to create posters, blogs, and infographics. However, the platform has drawbacks, such as a weak network connection, limited features like formats, stickers, outlines, and fonts, and a mobile app that lacks features from the desktop version. Despite these drawbacks, Canva remains a valuable tool for creating visually appealing and engaging learning materials.

2.2.4. Benefits of Learning Media on the Canva Application

Canva is a web-based platform that offers a wide range of appealing layouts for learning design. It is widely used for creating social media content, logos, and posters, transforming pre-existing features into opportunities for educators to use learning media. Canva is particularly beneficial for global education, particularly in teaching and learning through the creation of language learning activities such as mind maps, posters, flashcards, and worksheets.

The purpose of using Canva to generate language learning activities is to facilitate comprehension by engaging students. The application's interface is optimized with numerous features to enhance the engagement of readers and their comprehension of the presented material. Canva functions as a digital learning platform, providing usability and accessibility to all users.

Using Canva as a tool for technologically driven learning processes fosters innovation, creativity, and value enhancement. By presenting instructional materials in a creative and engaging manner, the Canva application can boost students' motivation to learn by cultivating creative and collaborative aptitudes. Canva's adaptability allows educators and learners to engage in various imaginative activities within the field of education. The use of visual elements in educational materials not only enhances their visual attractiveness but also assumes a substantial function in fostering digital literacy and nurturing students' creativity. However, the Canva application has several disadvantages, including the need for internet connectivity, occasional faults during editing, and not providing entirely free functionality.

2.2.5. Criteria for Assessing Students' Speaking Skills in English

Assessment is a crucial step in the learning process of acquiring speaking skills, as it helps develop and maintain these skills for practical use in real-life situations. To ensure accurate assessment, instructors must possess a comprehensive awareness of the complex nature of oral competency, including spoken grammar and vocabulary. Spoken language is less complex than written language in terms of vocabulary and syntax, and communication is predicated on interaction.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors must provide diverse opportunities for students to express themselves, particularly via interaction, to establish a strong foundation for evaluation. The CEFR recommends analytic assessment procedures, which involve evaluating different aspects or categories, rather than integrated assessment. To provide accurate assessments, teachers should provide precise descriptions of the assessment categories, such as pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, discourse aspects, and successful completion of the task's aim.

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) provides guidance for language education policy, planning, and evaluation in the European Union. However, the topic of

assessment continues to be a subject of debate due to variations in grading throughout the nation. Assessing classroom discussions and student involvement can encourage learners to actively participate in meaningful interactions.

The learners need a variety of abilities to successfully communicate, including fluency, correctness, appropriacy, and sincerity. Assessing proficiency in speaking skills academically presents challenges, but teachers should have an understanding of the objective behind assessing language proficiency to methodically evaluate learners' abilities. Assessment tasks must be of sufficient length, aligned with classroom activities, and provide contextualized exercises that enhance language learners' training to effectively achieve communicative goals in real-life situations.

3. Methodology

The study employed an explanatory sequential design, with quantitative data from pre- and post-speaking tests followed by qualitative data from questionnaires. The study involved 64 freshmen at People's Police College II. Research instruments included speaking tests and questionnaires on student profiles and attitudes towards using 5 Canva products (videos, worksheets, PPT presentations, flashcards, and mind maps) in speaking activities. The researcher analyzed the data using Excel and SPSS software, employing descriptive statistics, Paired-samples T-test and Independent-samples T-test, and Likert scales.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results of the utilization of the Canva application in enhancing students' speaking skill

The pre-test results showed no significant difference in speaking abilities between the two groups. This suggests the groups were equivalent in competence at baseline and qualified to participate in the experiment. Furthermore, the control group showed no significant change from the pre-test to the post-test, with approximately similar mean scores. In contrast, the experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in the mean score of 1.3488 points from the pre-test to the post-test. This improvement implies that the intervention received by the experimental group between tests was effective in enhancing their speaking performance.

Additionally, the experimental group scored significantly higher on average than the control group on the post-test. This further indicates the intervention may have positively impacted the experimental group's speaking abilities compared to the control group, which received no intervention.

In summary, the pre-test established equivalency between groups, the control group showed extremely little change, and the experimental group improved significantly from the pre-test to the post-test and in comparison to the control group. This suggests the intervention was effective for the experimental group. In other words, Canva's products had a good impact on the students' speaking skills in the EG.

4.2. Results of the investigation on students' attitudes towards Canva's products in speaking activities in the classroom

The study evaluated students' perceptions of Canva-designed materials utilized for classroom speaking activities. Five types of Canva materials were implemented: videos, worksheets, PowerPoint presentations, flashcards, and mind-maps. Students' feedback

regarding the helpfulness and appeal of each material type was gathered through surveys. The results revealed unanimously positive student responses.

First, the Canva worksheets and videos were rated as relatively helpful for improving speaking skills. Next, students found the PowerPoint presentations to be highly attractive, accessible, exciting, and conducive to active participation. Moreover, the Canva flashcards were also appealing to students and were perceived as beneficial for language acquisition as well as boosting engagement. Finally, the mind-maps were deemed useful by students for comprehending information, sparking interest, and encouraging involvement.

Across all Canva material types, the students' reception was highly favorable. The consistently positive feedback indicates the visual nature of the Canva designs may have contributed to their appeal. Students viewed the materials as advantageous for speaking practice, comprehension, retention, and participation.

In summary, the Canva-designed videos, worksheets, PowerPoint presentations, flashcards, and mind-maps were well-received by students across all surveyed measures. The results suggest visual materials created in Canva can be an effective tool to motivate students and enhance classroom speaking activities. The students perceived the Canva materials as helpful, appealing, and beneficial for language learning and active involvement. Implementing engaging visual aids through platforms like Canva could potentially boost student participation, retention, and speaking skills.

The study reveals that students have a favorable attitude towards developing speaking abilities using Canva products, particularly flashcards and worksheets. The primary focus was on enhancing student involvement in speaking activities. The study found that students in the experimental group had more chances to practice speaking and were more willing to engage in the activities than the control group. The visual elements in the Canva materials, like colorful imagery, charts, and graphic organizers, helped boost their comprehension and retention of key vocabulary and concepts relevant to the speaking activities. The flashcards received the highest positive attitude, followed by worksheets and videos. Videos and worksheets received moderately positive evaluations, while mind-maps received an average rating of 4.36. PPTs received the lowest average rating at 4.25, indicating they were slightly less favorable than the videos, worksheets, flashcards, and mind maps. Overall, students viewed all Canva-designed items positively, with flashcards faring best in terms of the most positive attitude. The Canva materials' visual nature and flexibility appear conducive to student retention, confidence, and participation. The study suggests that ongoing participation is key to improving speaking skills over time, and the Canva materials' perceived support for comprehension, retention, and engagement suggests they may help sustain students' effort and practice.

5. Conclusion

The experimental group showed a significant improvement in their speaking performance with the use of Canva, as evidenced by better scores on the post-test compared to the pre-test. The research also showed a statistically significant difference after treatment between the two groups. Students acknowledged the benefits of Canva in enhancing their speaking skills, primarily by providing visual aids such as photographs, color schemes, images, fonts, and graphics. They believed that Canva enhanced their creativity in speaking English and

facilitated the transmission of ideas and comprehension for communication. Moreover, Canva's application motivated students to engage in learning activities and reduced their anxiety. In conclusion, Canva's resources are considered valuable and functional educational aids for enhancing students' speaking skills, making learning a foreign language an enjoyable endeavor.

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