

The Effect of Genre-Based Approach and Canva on Descriptive Writing Skills

Mila Aruna¹ Angelia Cipta Riska Nabella² Noor Malihah³

English Language Education Master's Program, Postgraduate, Universitas Islam Negeri
Salatiga, Salatiga City, Central Java Province, Indonesia^{1,2,3}

Email: arunamila60@gmail.com¹ angeliaciptariskanabella@gmail.com²
noor.malihah@uinsalatiga.ac.id³

Abstract

Writing remains one of the most challenging language skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This study aims to explore the impact of combining the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) with Canva-based educational media on students' descriptive writing skills at various levels of learning motivation. Using a quantitative method with a 2×2 factorial quasi-experimental framework, this study included 30 eighth-grade students from SMPIT Al Falah Simo during the 2025/2026 academic year. The experimental treatment group (n=11) was taught using GBA integrated with Canva, while the control group (n=19) underwent traditional teaching methods. Data were collected through pre- and post-study writing assessments, along with a 17-item learning motivation survey, and analysed using Two-Way ANOVA. The results showed that the teaching strategy did not significantly affect independent writing skills (Sig. = 0.371 > 0.05). On the other hand, learning motivation had a significant impact on writing outcomes (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05). Importantly, a significant interaction effect was identified between learning strategies and learning motivation levels (Sig. = 0.045 < 0.05). This indicates that GBA combined with Canva significantly improves descriptive writing skills, especially when addressed to highly motivated students.

Keywords: Canva, Descriptive Writing, Genre-Based Approach, Learning Motivation



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a crucial productive skill in learning English because it allows students to express ideas, experiences, and information in writing. Unlike listening and reading, which are receptive skills, writing requires learners to actively generate ideas, organize information, choose appropriate words, and apply grammatical rules. Therefore, writing is often considered one of the most difficult skills for students learning English as a foreign language. Students are expected not only to master the language but also to be able to convey their ideas clearly and structuredly. Therefore, improving students' writing skills remains a key focus in teaching English. In the Indonesian junior high school curriculum, descriptive text is one of the basic text types that students must master. Descriptive writing helps students describe people, places, animals, or objects in an organized and neat manner. By writing descriptively, students learn how to organize information systematically and use language appropriately to create understandable and meaningful descriptions. However, many students still struggle to write descriptive texts. They often struggle to generate ideas, provide supporting details, organize paragraphs in a structured manner, and use correct grammar and vocabulary. These challenges often result in unclear, disorganized writing that fails to convey a message effectively.

The challenges students face when engaging in writing activities are influenced by various factors. One significant element is the teaching methods used in the classroom. Conventional writing instruction often focuses on the teacher and prioritizes grammar drills over guiding students through the writing process. This approach can reduce students' opportunities to actively construct knowledge and improve writing skills through relevant experiences. As a result, students may view writing as a complex and uninteresting activity, resulting in low

participation and limited progress in writing skills. Beyond teaching aspects, technological advances have opened new avenues for enhancing the language learning process. The application of digital technology in classroom teaching activities is becoming increasingly crucial in modern education. Digital-based learning tools can provide interactive, engaging, and student-focused learning experiences, which support language development. A technology-enabled learning environment allows students to explore various sources of knowledge, collaborate with their peers, and express ideas creatively. Therefore, the appropriate application of technology in teaching writing can help address various challenges faced by EFL learners.

Another factor influencing students' writing performance is their enthusiasm for learning. This enthusiasm plays a crucial role in determining students' effort, consistency, and activeness during the learning process. Students with a strong enthusiasm for learning are generally more engaged in class activities, exert more energy to complete work, and demonstrate higher levels of resilience when faced with challenges. Conversely, students with low motivation tend to be minimally engaged and often view writing as a difficult and tedious task. Therefore, enthusiasm for learning is considered a crucial factor that can influence the success of teaching methods for writing activities in the classroom. One widely recognized teaching method for improving writing skills is the Genre-Based Approach. According to Hyland (2004), this method helps students understand how texts are organized according to their communicative purpose, general structure, and language elements. This approach offers clear instructions and structured support that guide students from understanding sample texts to creating their own written work. The Genre-Based Approach typically follows four steps: Building Domain Knowledge, Modeling Texts, Building Texts Together, and Building Texts Independently. By following these steps, students gradually develop the knowledge and skills necessary for effective writing.

The theoretical basis of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) is closely related to the Social Constructivist Theory proposed by Vygotsky. Vygotsky asserted that learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration with more knowledgeable individuals. With scaffolding and directed instruction, students can complete difficult tasks without having to do it alone. In the context of teaching writing, the GBA stages provide structured support, allowing students to gradually improve their writing skills. Therefore, the Genre-Based Approach is considered ideal for helping students hone their descriptive writing skills. The integration of Canva-based learning media further supports the implementation of GBA in teaching writing. Canva is a digital design platform that allows users to produce visual content by combining text, images, and graphics. Its easy-to-use features make it highly accessible to students and ideal for classroom implementation. Canva provides students with the opportunity to organize ideas visually before documenting them in written form. This visual aid can help students formulate ideas, organize information, and develop descriptive text more efficiently.

The application of Canva in education is supported by Mayer's (2021) Cognitive Multimedia Learning Theory. This theory explains that students process information through verbal and visual channels simultaneously. Learning becomes more meaningful when information is conveyed through both channels because students are able to form deeper mental representations of knowledge. Therefore, integrating Canva into writing instruction can reduce cognitive load, improve comprehension, and aid in the development of writing skills. Furthermore, visually engaging learning activities can increase student engagement and participation during the learning process. Several previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the Genre-Based Approach in improving students' writing skills. Changpueng (2012) stated that genre-oriented instruction helps students understand text structures and

gradually improves their writing. Similarly, Zhai and Razali (2023) found that the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) increased students' awareness of generic structures and language features, which in turn improved their writing. Alshahrani and colleagues (2021) also noted that students became more proactive and confident in writing activities when they received structured guidance through genre-based instruction.

Research also highlights the potential use of Canva in the English language learning process. Sugiani (2022) observed that students responded positively to Canva because it provided an interactive and visually engaging learning experience. Lim and Swanto (2022) noted that Canva was able to increase students' motivation, engagement, and interest in writing activities. Recent research conducted by Asrul and Sibarani (2025), Aviani and Taufiq (2025), and Haryanti and colleagues (2025) further confirms that Canva can help stimulate creativity, engagement, and improve students' writing skills in EFL contexts. Although previous studies have shown favorable results for the Genre-Based Approach and the use of Canva-based learning media, most studies have analyzed these variables separately. Research combining the Genre-Based Approach and Canva within a single instructional framework specifically designed for teaching descriptive writing is still very limited. Furthermore, learning motivation is often considered only a supporting factor, rather than an independent variable that can influence teaching effectiveness. Therefore, the relationship between teaching methods and student learning motivation remains very under-researched.

Another limitation of existing research is the limited number of studies examining the educational context of Islamic junior high schools in Indonesia. Educational levels have unique characteristics that can impact the implementation and success of innovations in teaching. Therefore, analyzing the combined use of the Genre-Based Approach and learning media using Canva in the context of Islamic schools can provide valuable insights into English language teaching practices. Based on the previously identified differences, this study introduces an innovation by combining the Genre-Based Approach with learning media produced in Canva while evaluating learning motivation as the second independent variable through a 2×2 factorial experimental design. Unlike previous studies that only emphasize the instructional approach or technology separately, this study analyzes both variables in one framework and investigates the impact of the interaction between the two on students' descriptive writing abilities. Therefore, the objectives of this study are: (1) to explore the impact of the Genre-Based Approach combined with Canva-based learning media on students' descriptive writing skills; (2) to measure the differences in writing outcomes between students with high and low learning motivation; and (3) to determine whether there is an interaction effect between teaching techniques and learning motivation on students' descriptive writing skills at SMPIT Al Falah Simo.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative method with a 2×2 factorial quasi-experimental design. The study took place at SMPIT Al Falah Simo throughout the 2025/2026 academic year. This design was chosen because the researcher could not randomly divide students into separate groups due to the existing class structure. Therefore, the entire class was used as the experimental and control groups. A factorial approach was used to evaluate the impact of teaching methods and learning motivation on students' writing ability and the interaction between the two variables. The population in this study included all eighth-grade students at SMPIT Al Falah Simo, with a total of 30 students. The sampling technique used was random block sampling because the students were already divided into complete classes. One class was designated as the experimental group and was taught through a Genre-Based Approach

equipped with Canva-based learning media, while the other class served as the control group and was taught using traditional teaching methods. The experimental group consisted of 11 students, while the control group consisted of 19 students. This study included three variables. The Genre-Based Approach combined with Canva's learning media did not influence the outcome, while the students' writing ability did influence the outcome. Learning motivation served as the second independent variable, divided into two categories: high and low motivation levels, determined based on students' questionnaire scores.

Data were obtained through writing evaluations and questionnaires on learning motivation. The writing evaluation consisted of a pre-test and a post-test given to both groups before and after the treatment. Students were asked to compose descriptive texts, and their writing was assessed using analytical assessment criteria adopted from Jacobs et al. (1981), covering five elements: content, structure, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Learning motivation was evaluated by relying on a questionnaire consisting of 17 questions, which was designed based on Dörnyei's (2001) learning motivation theory. This questionnaire covers four aspects, namely intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, effort and resilience, and participation in learning. To measure student reactions, a five-level Likert scale was used, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Students with scores equal to or higher than the average are considered to have high learning motivation, while those with scores below the average are classified as having low learning motivation. The collected data was analyzed quantitatively using SPSS. Before testing the hypotheses, normality and homogeneity tests were conducted to ensure the data met the criteria required for parametric analysis. Then, a Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to evaluate the impact of the teaching method, the effect of learning motivation, and the interaction between the two variables on students' writing ability.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to explore how effective the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) combined with learning media from Canva is on students' abilities in descriptive writing, taking into account their learning motivation. The data collected comes from pre-test and post-test scores as well as surveys that measure learning motivation.

Table 1. Mean Scores of Pre-tests and Post-Test

Class	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Improvement
Control Group	69.57	77.36	7.79
Experimental Group	70.81	82.27	11.46

Table 1 shows that both groups improved after going through the learning process. The control group's score increased from 69.57 to 77.36, while the experimental group's score increased from 70.81 to 82.27. The experimental group achieved a higher score increase of 11.46 compared to the control group's score of 7.79.

Table 2. Distribution of Learning Motivation and Post-Test Mean Scores

Group	Motivation Level	Number of Students	Mean Score
Experimental (GBA + Canva)	High	10	81.9
Experimental (GBA + Canva)	Low	1	77.0
Control (Conventional)	High	8	80.6
Control (Conventional)	Low	11	74.1

This study shows that students with high motivation to learn tend to achieve better writing scores than those with low motivation. The highest average score was achieved by

highly motivated students in the experimental group, at 81.9, while the lowest average score was found in low motivated students in the control group, at 74.1.

Table 3. Two-Way ANOVA Results

Source of Variation	Sig.	Description
Teaching Method	0.371	Not Significant
Learning Motivation	0.000	Significant
Teaching Method × Learning Motivation	0.045	Significant

Based on Table 3, the significance level of the teaching method is 0.371, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the teaching method does not significantly influence students' writing ability. Meanwhile, learning motivation significantly influences students' writing ability, with a significance value of 0.000. Furthermore, there is a significant influence between the teaching method and learning enthusiasm, with a significance level of 0.045.

Discussion

The research found that students who were taught using a genre-based approach combined with learning media using Canva achieved better writing results compared to students who were taught using previously used methods. The experimental group rose 11.46 points, while the control group rose 7.79 points. Although there are differences, two-way ANOVA analysis shows that the differences are not statistically large enough ($p = 0.371$). Although the results were not statistically significant, the Genre-Based Approach provided a structured set of steps: Building Domain Knowledge, Text Modeling, Collaborative Text Construction, and Independent Text Construction. These steps helped students understand the structure and characteristics of descriptive texts. Furthermore, the Canva-based learning media helped students organize ideas visually and strengthened classroom participation. These findings align with previous research suggesting that genre-based teaching methods and the use of technology in learning can help improve students' writing skills. This study also shows that learning motivation has a significant influence on students' writing ability ($p = 0.000$). Students with a strong learning motivation usually get better writing grades than those with low learning motivation. Students with a high learning motivation are usually more actively involved in class activities, try harder on writing assignments, and remain persistent even when experiencing difficulties when writing. The results of this study are in accordance with the theory of Ryan and Deci (2020), which states that motivated students are usually more active in learning activities and achieve better academic results. Furthermore, there was a significant correlation between teaching methods and students' motivation to learn ($p = 0.045$). These findings suggest that teaching methods using a genre-based approach and incorporating Canva-based learning media can work well or poorly, depending on students' motivation to learn. Students with high motivation to learn can benefit more from teaching and learning activities and achieve better writing grades than those with low motivation. The results suggest that success in teaching writing depends not only on the teaching method used but also on students' motivation levels. Therefore, teachers need to combine appropriate teaching methods with efforts to increase students' motivation to learn to produce better writing quality.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the extent to which a genre-based approach combined with Canva-based learning media improved students' writing skills, based on their motivation to learn. The study showed that this teaching method did not significantly impact students' writing skills, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.371, which is greater than 0.05. Although the



experimental group showed greater improvement than the control group, the difference was not statistically significant. Learning motivation has a significant influence on students' writing outcomes, and the results are highly significant with a value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Students who are well motivated to learn can usually write better than students who are less motivated to learn. In addition, a significant interaction effect was found between teaching methods and learning motivation ($p = 0.045 < 0.05$), indicating that the success of learning methods depends on the level of student motivation. Therefore, enthusiasm for learning has an important role in helping students improve their writing skills. Teachers are encouraged to combine new teaching methods and digital learning tools to increase students' enthusiasm for learning and help them achieve better results in learning to write.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gerot, L., & Wignell, P. (1994). *Making sense of functional grammar*. Gerd Stabler.
- Hyland, K. (2004). *Genre and second language writing*. University of Michigan Press.
- Jacobs, H. L., Zinkgraf, S. A., Wormuth, D. R., Hartfiel, V. F., & Hughey, J. B. (1981). *Testing ESL composition: A practical approach*. Newbury House Publishers.
- Lim, F. V., & Swanto, S. (2022). The effectiveness of Canva in improving students' writing performance in ESL classrooms. *International Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 4(3), 45–58.
- Mayer, R. E. (2021). *Multimedia learning* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Press.
- Sugiani, K. A. (2022). The implementation of Genre-Based Approach in improving students' writing achievement. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 7(2), 150–162.
- Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly*, 27(3), 425–478.
- Yunus, M. M., Salehi, H., & Chenzi, C. (2012). Integrating social networking tools into ESL writing classroom. *English Language Teaching*, 5(8), 42–48.
- Zhai, Y., & Razali, A. B. (2023). Genre-based writing instruction and students' writing development: A systematic review. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 10(1), 1–18.