

**Having an Aha! Moment with AhaSlides: Increasing Student Involvement in ESL
Classes**

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Abstract:

This study examined the effectiveness of AhaSlides, an interactive presentation tool, in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom setting. The research focused on four key aspects: student motivation, ease of use, active learning, and overall satisfaction. A sample of 54 undergraduate ESL students participated in the study. Data was collected using a 5-point Likert scale survey designed to measure students' perceptions and experiences with AhaSlides during their ESL lessons. The survey assessed factors such as increased involvement, willingness to participate, user-friendliness of the platform, perceived enhancement of learning outcomes, and overall satisfaction with the tool. The results revealed an overall positive perception among the participants, with a mean score of 4.50 out of 5. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on technology-enhanced language learning and provides insights into the potential benefits of interactive presentation tools in ESL instruction. (142 words)

Keywords: *Ahaslides, digital pedagogy, ESL classroom, students' participation*

Introduction

Successful language learning in the context of teaching English as a second language (ESL) requires promoting active student participation (Motlhaka, & Wadesango, 2014; Zulfa & Zahidah, 2023-30). Learning outcomes from conventional teaching methods are often subpar because of their inability to keep students' interest and engagement. In order to solve these problems, more dynamic and engaging learning environments may now be created thanks to the advent of digital tools. Masifana (2022) notes that AhaSlides is one of these resources that has the potential to be an effective tool for raising student involvement and participation.

Teachers may create dynamic, interesting learning environments with the use of interactive presentation software like AhaSlides. Ahaslides may transform dry textbook study into an interactive discussion by including interactive components like word clouds, live polls, quizzes, and real-time Q&A sessions (Phelps & Moro, 2022). This study is based on the constructivist learning theory, which maintains that students actively produce knowledge

rather than just absorbing it. By using AhaSlides, educators can create a learner-centered environment that encourages participation, critical thinking, and cooperative learning. This technique is consistent with contemporary educational theories that encourage integrating technology into the classroom to enhance student learning.

Problem Statement

Effective English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction is crucial given the growing need for ESL proficiency in globalised economies. Encouraging active student participation, which is essential for language acquisition and retention, is a recurring problem in ESL classes. Due to low motivation, fear of making mistakes, or unengaging instructional approaches, traditional teaching methods frequently fall short of adequately engaging students, creating passive learning settings (Yaccob et al., 2022; Jie, Zakaria & Hassan, 2023).

Effective involvement is also very important for language acquisition since it gives students a chance to practise and get better at speaking English. Unfortunately, a lot of English as a Second Language (ESL) schools struggle to encourage students to participate actively because of cultural differences, shyness, or a lack of confidence (Musabal & Abdalgane, 2023). For students to be completely engaged and motivated to actively participate in class activities, traditional teaching methods and materials might not be enough.

An interactive presentation tool called AhaSlides has demonstrated the ability to raise student participation and engagement in a variety of learning environments. Its usefulness in ESL classes, however, has not been thoroughly investigated. This study is to investigate how AhaSlides are used in ESL classes to increase student participation. This study employs a quantitative methodology to examine the potential benefits of AhaSlides for students in terms of active learning, motivation, usability, and student satisfaction. It is anticipated that the results will add significantly to the conversation about technology integration in education and offer insightful advice to teachers looking for creative ways to improve ESL instruction.

Literature Review

Technology integration in education has completely changed the way that traditional teaching methods are applied, especially when it comes to teaching English as a second language (ESL). Digital technologies have been shown in numerous studies to have the ability to improve learning outcomes, motivation, and student engagement. With a particular emphasis on the use of AhaSlides to increase student participation, especially in ESL classrooms, this research review explores the function of interactive technology in ESL instruction.

It is commonly known that interactive technology may produce learning settings that are more effective and interesting. Interactive multimedia technologies are an essential part of language acquisition courses because of their capacity to deliver dynamic, varied material that accommodates various learning methods. Multimedia projectors, interactive whiteboards, and web-based tools like WeChat and iBook Author are some of these resources (Smirnova et al., 2020; Liu & Moeller, 2019). These web-based tools give teachers and students the chance to interact with language, material, and culture while also improving language skills. Furthermore, the use of interactive and multimedia-enhanced technologies in language learning environments, both inside and outside of institutional settings, can strengthen students' autonomy, self-efficacy, and motivation to participate in the learning process (Setyorini, & Masulah, 2015). Through deliberate use of these resources and their alignment with learning strategies informed by research, educators can design a more engaging and productive language learning environment for students with varying backgrounds and learning styles.

The effectiveness of ESL instruction depends heavily on student engagement (Panhwar & Bell, 2023). Higher competence levels, active participation, and information retention are all associated with engaged pupils. Interactive technologies have the potential to improve each of the three behavioural, emotional, and cognitive components of student involvement, according to Liu et al. (2023). Teachers can promote student engagement and eventually enhance learning results by carefully weighing the match between the individual, task, environment, and technology. AhaSlides is an interactive presentation tool with features like word clouds, live polls, quizzes, and Q&A sessions that help promote audience participation in real time. Studies conducted on analogous instruments indicate that interactive elements of this kind can greatly enhance student engagement. For instance, Arjomandi et al. (2023) discovered that incorporating interactive polling technologies into the classroom boosts student engagement, feedback, and attention spans. Similar to this, Zhang (2023) showed how real-time interactive technologies might improve classroom dynamics and encourage active learning by raising student participation and offering insightful feedback to teachers and students alike.

The larger corpus of research on interactive presentation tools offers a solid foundation for AhaSlides' potential benefits, despite the paucity of studies on the use of this digital tool in ESL classes. AhaSlides and other interactive technologies are in line with the ideas of constructivist learning theory, which promotes student engagement and active creation of knowledge (Vagele-Kricina, 2021). AhaSlides promotes active participation and engagement

among ESL students by enabling real-time interaction and helping to establish a more learner-centered environment.

To conclude, research shows how interactive technology may greatly improve student participation and interest in ESL classes. With its wide range of interactive capabilities, AhaSlides presents a viable option for developing engaging and interactive learning environments. While AhaSlides-specific empirical research is still lacking, the body of knowledge about related tools already available offers a solid basis for investigating AhaSlides' efficacy in ESL instruction. In order to offer insights that can improve and guide ESL teaching practices, this emphasises the need for additional research on the real-world application and effects of AhaSlides.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey method to investigate the impact of AhaSlides on escalating student participation in ESL classrooms.

Sample and Data Collection

This study used a survey gathered from 54 students from one public university in Malaysia. The participants are randomly selected for this study to discover the participants' perceptions in using Ahaslides in the ESL classroom.

Analyzing of Data

The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS 22.0. The questionnaire used consisted of 21 questions and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.94 which was highly significant at the 0.01 level. Appropriate statistical methods, like descriptive statistics, were used to analyse the quantitative data from the survey questions. In our data analysis, we focused extensively on mean scores as a pivotal metric to understand the central tendency of our dataset. This is how we interpret the mean score:

Mean Level Interpretation Table

Score min	Interpretation
1.00 to 1.89	Very Low
1.90 to 2.69	Low

2.70 to 3.49	Average
3.50 to 4.29	High
4.30 to 5.00	Very High

Source: Bahagian Perancangan, Penyelidikan dan Dasar Pendidikan, BPPDP (2006)

Findings / Results

Table 1 shows the demographic profiles of the respondents involved in the survey. A total of 54 students participated in this study.

Table 1. Demographic details of the respondents

<i>No.</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i> (<i>N = 54</i>)	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>24.1</i>
		<i>Female</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>75.9</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>MUET Band</i>	<i>Band 5</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.9</i>
		<i>Band 4</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>11.1</i>
		<i>Band 3</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>53.7</i>
		<i>Band 2</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>33.3</i>

Table 2 displays the mean score for overall aspects, motivation, ease of use, active learning, and satisfaction.

Aspect of learning	Mean Score	Level*
Overall	4.50	Very High

Motivation	4.57	Very High
Ease of use	4.50	Very High
Active learning	4.44	Very High
Satisfaction	4.50	Very High

*Source: BPPDP (2006)

Table 2 presents the mean scores for the overall evaluation and four specific aspects of using AhaSlides in the ESL classroom. Among the four specific aspect, the highest mean is motivation (m=4.57), followed by ease of use and satisfaction (m=4.50). The lowest mean score is active learning aspect (m=4.44) and overall mean score is 4.50 considered a very high level.

Discussion

The results of this study highlight the noteworthy influence that AhaSlides can exert on elevating student engagement in ESL courses. Numerous significant findings from the study shed light on how interactive tools like AhaSlides can improve student engagement and change the way that learning takes place. By requiring constant engagement with the subject, AhaSlides facilitates active learning. Deeper cognitive processing, which is essential for language learning and retention, is fostered by this active engagement. Students' understanding is reinforced when they can promptly recognise and rectify their misconceptions thanks to the instant feedback that quizzes and polls offer. Arjomandi et al. (2023) asserted that gamified and interactive components can improve learning outcomes and motivation in language teaching, and our results support their claims.

The findings of this study suggest that AhaSlides is perceived as a user-friendly and intuitive tool by ESL students. Most participants said that even for people with little experience with technology, AhaSlides' interactive features—such as its real-time polls, quizzes, and collaborative activities—were simple to use and navigate. Because of the tool's simplicity of use, students were able to participate actively in ESL sessions and were confidence in their ability to utilise it without being intimidated by its complexity (Zhang, 2023).

According to the results, using AhaSlides considerably raises student happiness and motivation. When using AhaSlides' interactive capabilities, students reported feeling more engaged and encouraged to participate in class activities. This is in line with the research on interactive technology, which highlights the importance of dynamic content and real-time

feedback in sustaining students' attention and involvement (Zhang, 2023). Students who might be reluctant to participate in traditional classroom settings were encouraged to do so by offering them the option to contribute anonymously in polls and quizzes, which increased total class involvement.

Recommendations and Conclusion

An overview of the advantages and difficulties of implementing AhaSlides in ESL courses is given by this study. Future studies should examine the long-term effects of consistent AhaSlides use on academic performance and linguistic proficiency. Furthermore, comparative research comparing various interactive tools may offer more profound insights into the precise characteristics that improve learning outcomes and student engagement the most. To help generalise the results and provide best practices for technology integration in ESL instruction, it would be beneficial to look at the effects of AhaSlides across a variety of educational environments and student demographics. In conclusion, there is clear evidence that using AhaSlides in ESL classes may significantly increase student involvement and participation. Even though there are still issues to be resolved, interactive tools like AhaSlides have a generally favourable effect on student motivation and classroom dynamics, which shows that they can be extremely useful in modernising and improving language instruction. Teachers may establish more engaging, inclusive, and productive learning environments for their students by utilising these technologies.

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