

Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills: The Impact of AI-Based Instructional Tasks in the Genre-Based Approach

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the integration of AI-based Instructional Tasks (AI-IT) into the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) to improve vocational students' speaking skills. Conducted over two action research cycles with 35 hospitality management students in the 2023/2024 academic year, the study used interviews, observations, and document analysis, following Miles and Huberman's framework. Member checks and triangulation ensured trustworthiness. Findings revealed that AI-IT significantly enhanced students' vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence, particularly in transactional language relevant to their field. The approach also increased classroom engagement and active participation. This study contributes to the evolving field of language teaching by demonstrating the potential of AI to support the development of speaking skills in vocational education, ultimately preparing students for real-world communication challenges in their careers

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Developing students' speaking abilities in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings remains one of the most challenging tasks for teachers, particularly in vocational education. For students pursuing vocational majors like hospitality, mastering spoken English is critical. In the hospitality industry, effective communication with international clients is essential, and speaking skills are the most required competence. However, in practice, speaking is often the most difficult skill to develop, as highlighted by surveys that indicate vocational students struggle with oral communication in English (Safira & Azzahra, 2022). The need to equip students with practical, real-world language skills makes it imperative to explore effective teaching strategies that can improve their speaking ability.

To address this issue, teachers are increasingly looking toward modern instructional methods that can actively engage students and improve their speaking abilities. The use of AI-based technologies has emerged as a potential solution. AI tools such as voice-based chatbots, automated speech recognition systems, and interactive learning platforms have been proven to enhance speaking skills by providing real-time feedback and creating more engaging learning environments (Han, 2020; Kim et al., 2021; Makhoulouf, 2021). AI can simulate realistic speaking scenarios, which can improve pronunciation, vocabulary, and communication strategies in ways that traditional methods may not.

At the same time, the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) remains a core instructional framework mandated by the Indonesian government. GBA focuses on teaching language through the understanding and production of specific text genres. It is an effective approach for developing communicative skills by guiding students through stages that involve modeling, joint construction, and independent application of language use in context (Mukminatien, 2016). However, despite its potential, GBA is underutilized in Indonesian classrooms, largely due to challenges such as inadequate teacher training and insufficient resources (Nabilah, 2023; Suharyadi & Basthomi, 2020).

In the context of vocational education, where practical language skills are paramount, combining the benefits of AI tools with the structured framework of GBA offers a promising solution for improving students' speaking skills. This research focuses on how AI-based Instructional Tasks (AI-IT) can be integrated into GBA to enhance the speaking learning process, particularly for students in the hospitality sector. By leveraging AI technology, students can engage more deeply with the language, practice speaking in realistic scenarios, and receive immediate feedback to improve their performance.

Classroom Issues and Challenges

The research was conducted in a vocational school in Yogyakarta, focusing on 35 students majoring in hospitality. During initial observations and interviews with the English teacher, it became clear that students struggled with speaking English. Several challenges were identified:

First, students struggled with limited vocabulary and confidence. The teacher noted that most students lacked the necessary vocabulary for effective communication, especially in professional contexts like hospitality.

Second, the learning activities were monotonous. The teaching methods were largely teacher-centered, offering minimal opportunities for student participation and active speaking practice. This approach failed to engage students effectively.

Next, there was limited use of technology. Despite the availability of digital tools, their use was restricted to basic presentations without interactive elements to enhance speaking practice or student engagement.

Finally, there was minimal use of the GBA. Although GBA was part of the curriculum, it was not fully implemented. The teacher mainly focused on lectures and a few speaking activities, which did not align with the student-centered and interactive stages of GBA.

These challenges hindered students from developing the speaking skills needed for future careers in the hospitality industry. The lack of engaging, student-centered activities and the underutilization of digital tools contributed to a classroom environment that did not foster active language use.

Classroom Action Plan

AI-based Instructional Tasks (AI-IT) present an innovative solution to the challenges observed in the classroom. By integrating AI into the learning process, students can engage in interactive, task-based activities that encourage speaking practice in realistic scenarios. For example, AI chatbots can simulate conversations with hotel guests, allowing students to practice transactional language in a safe, controlled environment. Additionally, AI-driven speech recognition tools can provide real-time feedback on pronunciation and fluency, helping students refine their speaking skills through repeated practice.

The structured phases of GBA – building knowledge of the field, modelling, joint construction, and independent construction – can be enhanced by AI tools. In the modelling phase, for instance, AI can demonstrate correct language use in various genres. In the joint construction phase, students can collaborate with AI-based tools to construct dialogues or presentations. Finally, in the independent construction phase, students can apply what they've learned by engaging in AI-simulated tasks that mirror real-world speaking situations.

The integration of AI-IT into GBA offers a promising approach to improving the speaking learning process for vocational students, particularly those in the hospitality sector. By leveraging AI tools, students can gain practical speaking experience, increase their vocabulary and confidence, and engage more actively in the learning process. This research aims to explore how these technologies can transform traditional teaching methods and better prepare students for the communication demands of their future careers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Importance of Effective Speaking Instruction

Effective teaching of speaking is central to enabling students to communicate proficiently in English. Nunan (2003) emphasizes that teaching speaking involves instructing students to produce English speech sounds and patterns, use appropriate rhythm and intonation, and convey ideas coherently. Additionally, Nasri et al. (2019) and Putri and Rahmani (2019) highlight the importance of developing fluency, accuracy, and confidence in spoken English. Despite these objectives, many English teachers struggle to effectively enhance speaking skills. Various methods, including task-based language teaching (Albino, 2017; Xuyen & Trang, 2021) and creative learning media (Haroon, 2021; Hasanah, 2019), have been proposed to address these challenges.

Recent studies suggest that integrating AI-based instructional tasks (AI-IT) into language teaching can significantly improve speaking proficiency (Han, 2020; Makhoul, 2021). AI technologies, such as interactive chatbots and adaptive learning platforms, offer personalized feedback and practice opportunities that are crucial for developing fluency and accuracy in spoken English (Shao et al., 2022). These tools simulate real-life interactions and provide immediate feedback, which helps overcome common difficulties in teaching speaking (Grubaugh & Levitt, 2023; Pertiwi & Kusumaningrum, 2021).

AI-Based Instructional Tasks and Speaking Skills

AI-based instructional tasks have been shown to positively impact students' speaking skills in several ways. According to Han (2020) and Kim et al. (2021), AI chatbots enhance students' emotional engagement and speaking abilities by providing interactive practice and personalized feedback. Zou et al. (2023) also found that AI chatbots significantly boost speaking proficiency through social interactions on digital platforms. Additionally, AI-based tools offer benefits beyond traditional methods, such as improving pronunciation and reading fluency (Rodriguez Bonces, 2020; Shao et al., 2022).

AI-based Text-to-Speech (TTS) technology, which has evolved through neural networks and machine learning, offers high-quality, lifelike speech outputs (Kaur & Singh, 2022; Kim et al., 2021). This technology allows students to hear and practice natural-sounding speech, enhancing their pronunciation and fluency. The advancements in TTS technology, such as those provided by Murf, which offers customizable and expressive voice options, further support language learners by offering realistic speech examples (Studio, 2023).

Integrating AI-Based Instructional Tasks into the Genre-Based Approach

The genre-based approach (GBA) to language teaching focuses on understanding and using language within specific genres or contexts (Mukminatien, 2016). This approach, which includes steps like Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF) and Modelling of the Text (MOT), provides a structured framework for language acquisition (Astuti et al., 2022; Kartikaningsih & Gunawan, 2019). Integrating AI-based instructional tasks into this framework can enhance the speaking learning process by offering targeted, genre-specific practice.

For instance, AI chatbots can simulate various conversational genres, providing students with practical speaking experiences in different contexts. This integration helps students apply their language skills in meaningful ways, as they engage with AI in simulated real-life scenarios (Hyland, 2018). Moreover, AI tools can adapt to students' proficiency levels, offering tailored feedback and practice opportunities that align with the GBA framework's goals.

Addressing Challenges and Expanding Access

While AI-based instructional tasks offer significant benefits, there are challenges to consider, particularly regarding technology access. Many AI tools require advanced gadgets and reliable internet connections, which may not be accessible to all students, especially those from low-income backgrounds. Research suggests exploring web-based AI applications that do not require installation on personal devices could help address this issue (Devi, 2021; Hamuddin et al., 2020). Such solutions ensure broader access to AI-based learning tools and support students from diverse economic backgrounds.

In conclusion, incorporating AI-based instructional tasks into the genre-based approach provides a promising strategy for improving students' speaking skills. By leveraging interactive technologies and personalized feedback, educators can enhance students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence in speaking English. This integration aligns with the goals of the genre-based approach, offering practical and context-specific language practice that meets students' needs. Addressing access challenges through web-based AI tools can further expand the benefits of this approach, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to develop their speaking abilities effectively.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs Classroom Action Research (CAR) to explore the integration of AI-based Instructional Tasks (AI-IT) within the Genre-Based Approach (GBA). CAR, as described by Kemmis and Taggart (1988), involves iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting to address educational issues and improve practice. This method is ideal for examining the specific effects of AI-IT on students' speaking skills. The study utilized CAR's cyclical approach to continuously refine and enhance the instructional strategies based on ongoing observations and reflections (Mariani et al., 2020; Salim et al., 2015).

The study involved eleventh-grade students from the hospitality department at Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) X, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A total of 35 students (25 females and 10 males) participated.

Data was collected through multiple methods. First, lesson plans outline the integration of AI-based tasks into the GBA, ensuring alignment with learning objectives. Second, observation sheets capture teacher and student activities during the implementation phase. Third, field notes document classroom dynamics and interactions with AI tools. Lastly, interviews with the English teacher provide insights into instructional challenges and the effectiveness of AI-IT in enhancing speaking skills.

Data was analyzed qualitatively through descriptive analysis. This includes data reduction to simplify and focus on relevant information, data display to organize findings and identify patterns, and conclusion drawing to address the research question based on analyzed data.

To ensure data credibility, the study used triangulation and member checking. Triangulation involved comparing data from interviews, observations, and field notes to verify consistency. Member checking involved discussing findings with the English teacher to confirm the accuracy of the data interpretation.

This methodology aims to rigorously assess how AI-based tasks can enhance the speaking learning process within the Genre-Based Approach, providing actionable insights for improving English language instruction.

RESEARCH RESULT

The results from the study provide insights into how incorporating AI-based Instructional Tasks (AI-IT) into the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) impacts students' speaking learning processes. The focus is on evaluating the effectiveness of AI tools in enhancing students' speaking skills through the genre-based instructional framework.

Identification of the Field Problems

Initial observations and interviews with the English teacher at SMK N 1 Depok, Sleman, revealed several challenges in the English-speaking curriculum for class XI Hospitality. Conventional teaching methods, primarily lectures with occasional use of visual aids, were found to be ineffective in engaging students and improving their speaking skills. The traditional approach led to low student motivation and limited opportunities for oral practice. The students' vocabulary deficits and lack of digital literacy further compounded the issue, as the teacher relied on outdated tools and methods, neglecting innovative digital solutions such as AI.

Implementation of AI-Based Instructional Tasks

To address these issues, AI-based instructional tasks were integrated into the GBA framework, focusing on enhancing speaking skills through various phases of genre-based learning.

Meeting 1

In the first meeting, AI tools including Deep English AI Chatbot, Murf AI Text-To-Speech (TTS), and Speech Notes AI Speech-To-Text (STT) were introduced. The students engaged with these tools through role-playing and pronunciation exercises.

During the session with the Deep English AI Chatbot, students enthusiastically engaged in written dialogues simulating hotel check-ins. When the chatbot said, "Hello and welcome to our hotel! How can I help you with your reservation today?" students responded with varied answers like:

"I check in for three nights."

"We want to stay here for one night."

Despite initial connectivity issues, the use of AI tools significantly increased student engagement and enthusiasm. The integration of AI allowed students to practice English in a more interactive and supportive environment,

though it highlighted varying levels of student comprehension which suggested the need for targeted group work in future sessions.

Meeting 2

The second meeting focused on the genre-based phases of Building Knowledge of the Field (BKoF), Modeling of the Text (MoT), and Joint Construction of the Text (JCoT). AI tools were employed to enhance pronunciation and vocabulary through interactive activities, including Murf AI, which converted text to speech for phrases like:

"Thank you for bringing this to our attention," and "Let me call the engineering department to fix this issue."

Students practiced by repeating these phrases and mimicking the AI's pronunciation. They displayed improved proficiency in handling guest complaints and effectively used AI for refining their speaking skills. The high engagement level during the 'Scavenger Hunt' activity indicated the effectiveness of AI tools in making learning more engaging and dynamic.

Meeting 3

In the final meeting of the first cycle, the Independent Construction of the Text (ICoT) phase employed the Jigsaw technique, with students working in expert groups to handle guest complaints.

The researcher observed enthusiastic participation as students presented their expert group discussions. For instance, one student listed expressions for guest complaints like *"The Wi-Fi is not working in my room"* and *"The TV remote control is not functioning well."* Another student shared apology phrases such as *"I apologize for the inconvenience caused"* and *"We regret any inconvenience this has caused you and are ready to provide compensation."* A third student outlined solutions, including offering a room change for room issues and ensuring problem resolution for service issues.

The use of AI tools for pronunciation and dialogue practice was beneficial, showing improvements in students' speaking confidence and fluency. Despite reduced attendance due to a concurrent event, the session demonstrated that AI tools effectively supported students in refining their speaking abilities.

In the Independent Construction of the Text (ICoT) phase, students wrote and recited basic expressions for handling guest complaints from memory. Phrases shared included:

"I apologize for this inconvenience."

"Please forgive us for the unpleasant things you feel."

During the collaborative reflection session, students provided anonymous feedback on the lesson. Comments included:

"The group discussions were impressive, but the lesson time was too short."

"More time should be allocated for material study, and activities should be more engaging."

Meeting 4

During Meeting 4, AI-based instructional tasks were integrated across the BKoF, MoT, and JCoT phases. The researcher asked each group to create at least two simple sentences related to handling guest check-ins using collected vocabulary. Students then used Murf AI Text-To-Speech (TTS) to practice pronunciation, guided by the researcher's prompts: *"Listen to how AI pronounces*

the sentence. Now practice saying it correctly and loudly. Repeat after me..." They practiced sentences such as:

"Our bellboy will help you bring your luggage."

"Your room number is 217. Here is your key card."

"You can ask our concierge for local tourist destinations."

After pronunciation practice, the researcher invited several students to use Speech Notes AI Speech-To-Text (STT) to dictate their sentences and check pronunciation accuracy. Students actively engaged with AI tools, showing improved speaking fluency and confidence. Despite some classroom noise, the use of AI for pronunciation and conversation practice provided immediate feedback, positively impacting students' language skills and participation.

Meeting 5

The final meeting focused on the Independent Construction of the Text (ICoT) phase, where students practiced and presented sentences related to guest interactions. The researcher invited the most prepared students to recite their sentences aloud from memory and write them on the blackboard. Several eager students participated, sharing sentences such as:

"Is there any additional service you'd like to request?"

"Can I borrow your identity card and passport?"

"Do you have any special requests?"

AI tools were crucial in providing feedback and supporting this independent practice, leading to noticeable improvements in pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. The reward system of digital star stickers further boosted student motivation and participation.

The incorporation of AI-based Instructional Tasks into the Genre-Based Approach proved effective in enhancing students' speaking skills. AI tools facilitated interactive and supportive learning environments, improving students' fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. The structured use of AI in various genre-based phases significantly contributed to a more engaging and dynamic learning experience, ultimately fostering better speaking abilities in students. Addressing challenges such as connectivity and varying comprehension levels will further optimize the integration of AI in future cycles.

DISCUSSION

This study at Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) X, Yogyakarta, focused on integrating AI-based instructional tasks (AI-IT) within the genre-based approach (GBA) framework to enhance students' speaking learning process. The research, conducted over two cycles, highlighted how AI tools improved students' speaking abilities in the context of the GBA framework.

Effective Implementation of AI-Based Instructional Tasks

The incorporation of AI-based instructional tasks significantly improved students' speaking learning process. The GBA framework, which emphasizes contextualized language learning (Hyland, 2018), was effectively complemented by AI tools that offered interactive and personalized learning opportunities. AI tools, such as interactive chatbots and speech recognition software, provided immediate feedback and adapted to individual needs, thus enhancing students' pronunciation, fluency, and confidence (Delgado et al., 2020; Grace L. et al., 2023).

Scaffolded Learning and AI Integration

AI tools served as a form of scaffolding, providing structured support similar to Vygotsky (1978) concept of temporary assistance from a more knowledgeable other. Tools like Murf AI and Speech Notes offered immediate feedback and practice opportunities, essential for building fluency and accuracy. This aligns with previous studies indicating that scaffolded e-learning environments enhance language acquisition (Arora et al., 2024; Meri-Yilan, 2019; Pishadast, 2022).

Feedback and Independent Practice

AI tools provided immediate feedback, crucial for autonomous learning (Little, 2007). The use of AI for pronunciation practice and simulated dialogues enabled students to self-correct and practice independently, enhancing their speaking skills. This method aligns with findings that immediate feedback significantly boosts language proficiency (Ajogbeje, 2023; Hadijah et al., 2022; Sallang & Ling, 2019).

In summary, the integration of AI-based instructional tasks within the GBA framework proved to be highly effective in improving students' speaking skills. AI tools facilitated scaffolded learning, provided varied and contextualized practice, delivered immediate feedback, and supported independent practice, all of which contributed to enhanced speaking proficiency and learner engagement.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study aimed to determine how incorporating AI-based instructional tasks (AI-IT) into the genre-based approach (GBA) improves students' speaking learning process. The research, conducted through two cycles of classroom action research, demonstrated significant advancements in various aspects of students' speaking abilities.

The integration of AI-based learning activities notably enhanced students' speaking skills. Improvements were observed in grammatical accuracy, sentence complexity, pronunciation, and vocabulary usage. AI tools provided ample opportunities for practice through pronunciation exercises, text simulations, and collaborative projects such as the Jigsaw technique. These activities helped students engage in diverse and contextualized speaking practices, leading to better speaking proficiency.

The use of advanced AI tools like speech-to-text, text-to-speech, and interactive chatbots not only facilitated language learning but also increased students' technological literacy. This exposure improved vocabulary retention and application in speaking tasks, equipping students with essential digital skills for their future careers.

Student engagement also saw a marked improvement. Initially reluctant students became more involved and confident, driven by interactive elements such as digital star stickers, which boosted motivation and active participation. However, the effectiveness of AI-based instructional tasks is contingent upon addressing challenges such as internet connectivity issues, varying levels of AI

understanding among students, and time constraints. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for maximizing the positive impact of AI on student learning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed for enhancing the use of AI-based instructional tasks within the GBA framework:

First, address technical challenges by focusing on minimizing issues such as network connectivity and ensuring reliable access to AI tools. Investments in robust infrastructure and technical support are essential for smooth implementation.

Second, implement differentiated instruction by tailoring AI-based activities to accommodate diverse student needs and levels of understanding. This will ensure equitable access to learning and support varied learning styles.

Next, improve time management by allocating sufficient time for AI-based activities and adjusting lesson scope to cover essential content effectively. Prioritize impactful assignments to maximize learning outcomes.

Lastly, ongoing assessment is crucial—continuously evaluate the effectiveness of AI-based tasks and the GBA framework. Collect feedback from students and teachers to refine strategies and enhance learning experiences.

FURTHER STUDY

The findings of this study indicate that integrating AI-based instructional tasks into the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) significantly improves students' speaking skills, particularly in vocabulary, pronunciation, confidence, and engagement. To deepen understanding and enhance implementation, future studies should explore several areas: first, addressing technical challenges like network connectivity and AI tool accessibility to ensure smooth integration in various learning environments; second, investigating differentiated instruction to tailor AI-based tasks to students' varied skill levels; and third, examining the long-term impact of AI-enhanced GBA on students' language proficiency. Furthermore, ongoing assessment and feedback from educators and students should be prioritized to refine instructional methods. Collaborative research between academics and AI developers could also provide deeper insights into optimizing these tools for language education.

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