

Using Artificial Intelligence in Task-Based Language Teaching to Foster Students' Language Skills

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Abstract

The proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has led to its widespread integration in educational contexts. Its application has expanded across a variety of functions, including essay writing, presentations, and interactive learning tools. Many studies have examined the use of AI in language learning, though few have explored the integration of AI within the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach in enhancing students' communication skills. This study aims to investigate the impact of AI on EFL learners by integrating AI technology within the TBLT framework. An experimental study will be used as the research methodology with pre-test and post-test in the control and experimental groups to measure the impact. Additionally, focus group discussion (FGD) and questionnaires will be employed to collect data, examining both the impact and students' perspectives. Researchers will examine (1) the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing students' speaking skills and (2) learners' perspectives on the method regarding their communication skills. The findings suggest that the integration of AI-based TBLT is effective in improving EFL learners' speaking and communication skills. This research offers insights into AI-assisted language learning and provides practical implications for integrating digital tools in communicative teaching strategies.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, TBLT, Language Skill, EFL.

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INTRODUCTION

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an increasingly sophisticated breakthrough, easily accessible for various purposes such as writing essays, preparing presentations, or completing other tasks. There are a lot of research have focused on the general use of AI in the EFL classroom, though only limited studies discuss the integration of AI within the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach in enhancing students' communication skills. For instance, AI chatbots are increasingly utilized in language education to simulate conversations, providing learners with real-time feedback and allowing for the practice of speaking skills in a low-risk setting (Kim et al., 2021). This method aligns with TBLT's focus on authentic interaction as it encourages students to engage in dialogue that mimics real-world communication (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019).

This research will specifically elaborate the integration of an AI-based TBLT approach, with a focus not only on improving speaking skills but also on understanding students' perceptions of the effectiveness of this method within real-world learning contexts.

In this digital era, proficiency in communication skills in foreign languages has become crucial amid intense global competition. Previous studies have shown the effectiveness of digital learning such Wattpad or Klipaa.id apps in the EFL Classroom (Khan et al., n.d.; Samosir et al., 2024). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct deeper research into how AI can be leveraged to benefit users, particularly in enhancing literacy, communication, and critical thinking skills within real-life contexts.

Opportunities for practicing English communication or engaging in social interaction remain limited for foreign language learners. Hence, it is essential to allow the students to enhance their oral skills through simple conversations and expressing their opinions or ideas verbally, incorporating real-world scenarios into the classroom. For instance, students can learn how to negotiate, persuade an audience or conversation partner, or demonstrate presentation skills. These communication skills are known as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS).

Furthermore, BICS refers to conversational skills or interaction in the society, such as in informal situations (Baker & Writght, 2017). As mentioned, the environment may not support targeted students in practicing their oral interaction skills. In the workplace context, EFL learners are typically adults who are already employed, thus needing practical activities that offer them opportunities to develop their communication skills through classroom engagements. The Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) method includes activities such as group and peer evaluations, games, discussions, videos, descriptions, project planning, and sharing ideas/information, which are designed to develop students' BICS. However, implementing TBLT faces challenges, including limited class time and difficulties in providing adequate feedback and personalization.

Technological advancements, particularly in AI, offer significant potential to support TBLT. This sophisticated breakthrough can be accessed for various purposes such as writing essays, preparing presentation or completing other tasks. AI-generated content also can have significant quality limitation which is always not recommended in writing an essay since they are not original and valid. Also, to avoid misused of AI, Indonesian government released a book guidance related to the attitude towards AI in the classroom. Clearly, AI can create more interactive and adaptive learning experiences, allowing students to practice communication in various simulated contexts and receive immediate feedback.

Despite this potential, the use of AI in TBLT is still relatively new and requires further research to understand how it can be effectively applied to enhance students' communication skills. This research aims to explore the integration of AI within TBLT and its impact on improving students' speaking skills, as well as to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with its implementation in learning environments.

The urgency of this research lies in the compelling need to improve English oral skills among EFL learners so that they are better prepared to face global challenges.

By leveraging AI technology in a TBLT approach, it is hoped that language learning can become more effective and efficient, providing innovative solutions to existing challenges in language education.

This study poses two main research questions: (1) to what extent does AI-based TBLT enhance students' speaking skills? (2) what are students' perspectives towards TBLT in enhancing students' communication skill?

The first primary question concerns the impact of AI-based TBLT on students' speaking skills. Meanwhile, the second intends to explore how students perceive the use of AI in fostering communication skills in EFL learning contexts. Indeed, this research also aims to contribute to academic and practical literature in the development of better English teaching methods and to prepare learners with the necessary skills for success in a competitive work environment.

TBLT and Teaching Methods

Ellis and Shintani (2014) argue that the main objective of TBLT is to enhance students' speaking skills by promoting meaningful communication such as through presentation tasks. Activities are thus designed to foster both language development and content learning (communication in everyday contexts). In this framework, instructors provide tasks or instructions that prompt students to learn both content and language. For example, in the first week, instructors might use videos to demonstrate successful and unsuccessful communication. Students would then analyse key communication factors collaboratively, employing vocabulary and keywords introduced beforehand. This is one instance of how TBLT could be applied within a unit framework.

Furthermore, form-focused instruction is considered an effective strategy to ensure that students can apply material in communicative or social interactions (Lyster, 2007). This approach enables students to practice expressing their opinions supported by evidence or critical analysis through task completion. The use of audio-visual media, such as images and sound, can also be incorporated to positively influence students' learning outcomes (Wahyuni & Nissa, 2023).

Ellis and Shintani (2014) also recommend that instructors scaffold students' participation in conversations using gestures and repetition. Guchte et al. (2016) suggest that repetition tasks can improve learners' accuracy, although they found no significant differences in speaking accuracy and fluency. Nonetheless, prior studies indicate that students who practice repetition in class exhibit significant improvements of the metalinguistic knowledge and accuracy in writing (Guchte et al., 2016).

Lyster (2004) proposes three key aspects of interlanguage such as noticing, analysis and practice which are essential for effectively implementing form-focus instruction in immersion contexts. In this unit, the researcher will implement strategies aimed at enhancing students' accuracy in English. First, students will be given written tasks (fill-in-the-blank) to encourage noticing. This will be followed by diagram presentations and explanations on the use of transitional words for presenting ideas. At this stage, instructors will raise grammatical awareness and guide students to correct their prior task errors (grammar explanation). Subsequently, students will engage in group practice tasks, with instructors providing feedback during this phase. While some argue that form-focused instruction may not be as effective in enhancing productive skills, Rashtchi and

Keyvanfar (2012) that the noticing component within form-focused instruction can significantly support the development of grammatical accuracy in social interaction contexts. Classrooms often represent the sole setting where EFL students can engage in authentic communication through activities or role-play.

Additionally, In accordance with the 4Cs framework proposed by Coyle (2007), this unit brings together content, language, cognitive development, and cultural awareness. Coyle describes this framework through the dimensions of language for learning, language from learning, and language through learning.

Language for learning refers to grammatical structures used to understand the content, while language from learning encompass the specific language or types of questions that arise from engaging with new content. Language through learning involves the development of deeper thinking and communication skills, including activities such as discussions, critical thinking, and looking up new vocabularies in dictionary and noting their definitions. The details of the 4Cs are elaborated in the unit chart and described in the learning objectives and language sections. Cultural awareness will be introduced in select weeks, enabling students to connect with topics and discuss them with peers.

Oral Feedback Mechanisms

Ellis et al. (2006) describe two types of corrective feedback: explicit and implicit. Explicit feedback involves direct comments, information, or questions, while implicit correction may involve repetition, prompting students to rephrase their sentences correctly. In this unit, teachers will employ both types of corrective feedback during tasks and discussions.

They also revealed that metalinguistic explanations, as a form of explicit feedback, is more effective in fostering students' understanding compared to the implicit feedback. In this unit, students will receive both explicit and implicit feedback, including grammar explanations, corrections, and peer evaluations for each topic. However, Harmer (2015) advises against excessive correction of students' errors. Instead, educators should encourage learners to actively practice the productive skills (writing or speaking). Overcorrection may negatively affect students' motivation to learn.

Teachers will also provide written feedback following summative assessments or midweek presentation tasks. Sheen (2007) suggests that written corrective feedback can improve learners' accuracy in both the short and long term. While teacher feedback might not directly enhance students' communication skills, it can facilitate accurate speaking over time. Through these strategies and plans, students are expected to improve their speaking and writing skills while understanding business communication content.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is progressing swiftly, driven by user demands for faster, more accurate task completion. Numerous AI tools now facilitate work and support foreign language learning, including platforms like ChatGPT and ELSA Speak, which can interact with users in real time. These technologies function similarly to messaging apps such as WhatsApp or chatbots, responding to inquiries and commands as directed.

Prior research indicates that AI-based communication can serve not only as a learning tool but also as a means for users to engage in independent, continuous learning (Yan et al., 2024). Additionally, employing this method can enhance students' metacognitive skills as well as their interpersonal abilities.

From a psychological standpoint, EFL learners may feel more confident and comfortable when interacting with AI (Zhang et al., 2024). Mardiah (2022) also found that students these days are literate enough to use the technology which can help them to be independent learners. AI-speaking assistants have also been shown to increase students' willingness to communicate. The fear of making mistakes during language practice in class becomes less significant, allowing learners to improve their language skills without inhibition. In the initial stages, EFL students can use AI to develop their literacy skills, engage in spontaneous question-and-answer sessions, and practice communication. This experience can then be transferred to the classroom in more structured settings with different topics. Ginting et al. (2023) report that students have positive perceptions of using AI as a tool for academic writing. Therefore, AI contributes positively to students' development, both psychologically and academically.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study examines the effectiveness of AI using Task Based Language teaching (TBLT) approach in enhancing English communication skills among EFL learners and to explore their perspectives on this method. Thus, mixed methods research design is employed by conducting an experimental study, group discussion, and distributing questionnaires to students (Liang et al., 2021).

Through an experimental design, recognized by Bryman (2016) for its strength in internal validity, this study aims to compare the performance of students in the experimental and control groups to examine the effect of a specific intervention. In this context, the intervention refers to the use of AI-based Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) integrated into the learning process. As noted by Cresswell (2009), experimental research seeks to determine whether a clearly defined intervention produces measurable changes in outcomes. This includes clearly structured components such as participant, instructional materials, procedural steps, and assessment measures.

The participants are 33 EFL learners from English department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara with in between pre-intermediate and intermediate level.

Research instruments consist of communication skills tests, including both oral and written assessments, to evaluate English communication proficiency before and after the intervention; focus group discussions (FGD) and questionnaires to explore learners' perspectives on AI-based TBLT. The questionnaires are categorized into three thematic areas, such as students' perception of TBLT, challenges and overall impressions. 10 Likert-scale questions (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Agree) are used to measure students' perspective and 6 open-ended questions are given assisting the students to elaborate their challenge and overall impressions.

The data collection procedures will be started from the preparation stage, which involves designing TBLT-based learning materials integrated with AI. Then, the

pre-test will be conducted to gauge student's communication abilities. Following, the experiment group will be instructed to use AI and enhance their communication skills during 5-week period. Then, the post-test will be used to assessed the improvements, in total this research takes 7 weeks to collect the data. Finally, FGDs and questionnaires will be distributed to understand the learner's perspectives.

To address the primary research question, a quantitative experimental design will be applied and the learners will be divided into control group and the experimental group. In this approach, the researchers will conduct pre-test, treatment and post-test. The tests will analyse students' speaking skill through 5-minute presentation. In the pre-test, the students are asked to describe their chosen book and why the topic is interesting for them. Then, in the post-test, they should make a presentation report related to the translation project that they have completed. In week 1, both groups will have the pre-test and FGD. The treatments will be conducted in the experimental group during week 2 and 5 with different activities for each meeting.

During the treatment, the TBLT consists of 5-week activities, The instructions will allow them to (1) choose the issue for the translation project, (2) Use AI tools to explore the topic in depth and plan the project, (3) update the progress and sharing their experience with peers, (4) use AI to polish the final work and (5) make a presentation. In contrast, the control group will be given the conventional TBLT method without the help of AI as their assistance or polishing their final work.

In the final meeting, the students in the control and experimental group will be asked to make a 7 min presentation, the speaking skill will be measured with the same criteria in the pre-test. Then, the pre-test and post-test in both groups will be compared to measure the significance. Also, FGD will be conducted in both groups to measure their communication skills in general.

To answer the second research question, the discussion in FGD will be analysed to collect the data about their perspective and attitude towards AI or without AI in completing their project. This data will be added to support the students' perspective in the questionnaires. Lastly, the questionnaires will be designed based on three areas, include their perspective on TBLT, the challenges and overall impression. It consists of 10 questions to measure their impression of the TBLT and 6 open-ended prompts to elaborate the three aspects.

Table 1. Research Questions and Data Collection

Research Questions	Data Sources	Metode Analysis Data
Q1: Does the use of TBLT enhance student' speaking skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking Pre-test • Speaking Post-test 	Score the speaking's features such as fluency and coherence, pronunciation and vocabulary.
Q2: What are students' perspectives towards TBLT in enhancing students' communication skill?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Discussion • Questionnaire 	Collect and classify the data based on categories

Quantitative data analysis is performed using statistical analysis, with t-tests comparing pre-test and post-test results through software such as SPSS. Meanwhile, qualitative data analysis is carried out through thematic analysis questionnaire data and FGDs to identify themes and patterns in learner perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The experimental data revealed that the integration of AI-based TBLT enhanced the communication skills of EFL learners. Participants in the experimental group demonstrated a marked improvement in various aspects of spoken English, such as fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy. This aligns with previous studies indicating the effectiveness of AI in promoting real-time verbal interaction and language practice (Zhang et al., 2024).

The Impact of TBLT Based AI in Enhancing Student' Speaking Skills

From the collected data, we can see the experimental group has the highest overall score compared to the control group.

Table 2. Speaking Pre-test and Post-test in experimental and control group

	Min Score	Max Score	Mean		Std. Deviation
Pre-test Experimental Group	65.00	86.00	73.1071	1.36213	7.20771
Post-test Experimental Group	65.00	91.00	80.2500	2.56569	8.28486
Pre-test Control Group	63.00	74.00	68.8000	1.772200	3.96232
Post-test Control Group	70.00	83.00	75.0000	2.30217	5.14782

The table presents the speaking test scores for both experimental and control groups prior to and following the intervention. The experimental group, which was exposed to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) integrated with AI, showed a notable improvement. Their mean score improved from 73.11 in the pre-test to 80.25 in the post-test (an improvement of 7.14 points). In contrast, the control group's mean score rose from 68.80 to 75.00, resulting in a 6.20-point increase.

Although both groups demonstrated progress, the experimental group achieved a higher score gain, with a difference of 0.94 points more than the control group. This suggests that the TBLT-based AI intervention had a positive impact on enhancing students' speaking skills.

Table 3. Paired Sample t-Test

Group	t-statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Control Group	3.62	0.022	Significant improvement ($p < 0.05$)
Experimental Group	4.16	0.0003	Highly significant improvement ($p < 0.0001$)

The t-test demonstrated a notable improvement in the control group ($t(4) = 3.62$, $p = 0.022$), whereas the experimental group demonstrated a more substantial gain ($t(27) = 4.16$, $p < 0.001$). These results suggest that the integration of AI within the TBLT approach had a stronger impact on students' language development compared to traditional instruction.

Based on teacher's observation, some of the students use more academic words such as *precisely*, *meanwhile*, *target text*, *the source* and they are more structured in their presentation by starting their presentation with opening, and giving the closing statement. Specifically, the analysis of speaking tasks showed that students

using AI-based tools, such as ChatGPT for dialogue practice and preparing students' task, were more confident and exhibited smoother speech transitions compared to the control group. However, the experimental group showed greater reliance on AI when drafting their presentations.

The post-study questionnaires supported these findings, as students expressed that AI-assisted tasks made practicing English more engaging and removed the apprehension often associated with classroom performance. Feedback from peer evaluations also influence the improvements in clarity and coherence during presentations and group discussions.

Students' Perspectives Towards TBLT Based AI

Students' responses are classified into three areas, they are students' perceptions, challenges and benefits of AI-based TBLT to their communication skills.

Students' Perceptions of AI-based TBLT

The results from the questionnaires and focus group discussions indicated positive perceptions among EFL learners regarding the use of AI-based TBLT. The majority of participants reported feeling more motivated to participate in speaking tasks, attributing this to the non-judgmental and immediate feedback provided by AI tools.

One the other hand, more than 85% of students agree that TBLT based AI can effectively improve their communication skills. Students described AI as a supportive tool that allowed for independent learning, enabling them to practice outside of class hours and reinforce their in-class learning. This mirrors the findings of Ginting, Batubara, and Hasnah (2023), who observed similar attitudes toward AI in writing activities.

It is clear that AI can save time to complete a task as one of the students, FM, also mentioned the benefit of this technology *"AI helps speed up the translation process and with AI, common errors in sentences can be minimized."*

"Based on my experience, when I am completing the tasks using AI, it is highlight effective as it encouraged practical communication and real-world application of the language" (HS)

However, a small percentage (about 15%) of participants expressed concerns about potential overreliance on AI, noting that while it boosted their confidence, it sometimes made them less inclined to attempt spontaneous communication without the tool. This suggests that while AI is a powerful supplemental resource, educators should balance its use with activities that promote human-to-human interaction.

Challenges in Implementing TBLT based AI

Imperfect final product

Although the overall response was positive, the study highlighted some challenges in implementing AI-based TBLT. Most of the challenges is AI does not satisfy their expectation in completing the assignments and feel afraid of the dependency.

"One of the challenges is the imperfect final product of AI, especially when it comes to the context. Over-reliance on AI can diminish our ability to translate the text with our own skill."(AP)

Prompting Difficulties

Even though few of students admit that there is no challenge in using AI while doing the task, the others complain that the prompts to ask questions to AI also become an issue since they have to ask multiple times to get the answer of AI. Furthermore, some of the students questions the answer from AI.

“I am afraid that the answer from AI is wrong” (AP)

“AI does not always give the correct answer, we have to decide if the answer can be accepted or not” (AJ)

“The challenges I face in using AI are the potential of long-term dependency and the risk of errors of information that we need to know” (AN)

Reflection

Feedback from teachers indicated the need for training to effectively integrate AI into their teaching strategies, ensuring that it complements rather than dominates classroom activities. This reflects the broader challenges of adopting new technologies in educational contexts and the importance of providing sufficient support and resources.

*Enhancing Communication Skills**Confidence Building*

The data suggested that AI-assisted TBLT was particularly effective in boosting students’ productive language skills. Tasks that incorporated interactive AI elements led to increased student engagement and more substantial participation in oral activities. The practice of using AI as a rehearsal tool before class discussions appeared to enhance not only linguistic accuracy but also learners’ willingness to contribute ideas, thus enriching the overall classroom dynamic.

“I will rate 99%, because I think this method helps me to be confident in communicating my ideas” (RS)

“I think maybe when we see our teacher speaking English in the front of class we are motivated to speak English too, we want to can speaking English with a good pronunciation and structured.” (MDL)

Rehearsal and Motivation

AI allows the students to communicate in English and get the direct response in the language that can be understood easily. AM states that the conversation with AI motivate her to interact in the classroom.

“In my opinion, TBLT based AI contributes to improving my communication skills in English by providing opportunities to practice through tasks that simulate real world situation. this motivates me to be more active in speaking, listening, and interacting, that enhancing my fluency and confidence in using English.

Linguistic Development Beyond Speaking

The written feedback, based on teacher evaluations and peer assessments, noted a gradual improvement in grammatical accuracy and the ability to structure responses coherently. This reinforced the value of AI not just as a speaking tool but as a comprehensive language-learning aid that supports multiple facets of language acquisition.

Discussion

This study has shown that the integration of AI in TBLT approach is effective in enhancing students' language skills and support their communication skills. As found in the questionnaires, some students stated that they feel confident because AI provides opportunities to practice and have a conversation related to their tasks in English. This statement also supports quantitative data that present a positive increase in the post-test. This aligns with Ginting, Batubara, and Hasnah (2023), who also reported positive impact of AI in EFL Classroom. The conversation with AI helps the students to understand the assigned topic more deeply and the response can effectively motivate the students to be more confident in using English.

Students' ability to engage with AI tools independently reflects a shift toward more learner-centered pedagogy, where technology serves as a bridge between formal instruction and informal practice. In terms of practical implications, educators should consider integrating AI-based tools into TBLT activities in ways that promote not just fluency but also critical language awareness. However, while the perception is overwhelmingly positive, it is essential to question whether such tools equally benefit all proficiency levels, or if some learners may still require more structured guidance. Future research could explore the guidelines to use AI for specific skills in the language learning.

In completing the tasks, the students are required to complete meaningful tasks as a translator through collaboration, peer groups and individual tasks with AI to finally present their work. Most of the students use the advanced and academic words in translating the projects which can be clearly seen in their final work.

Indeed, this research has limitations in the number of samples and the gap of students between the experimental group and control group. A further challenge observed during the implementation was related to fostering students' self-awareness in balancing the technological support with their speaking skill advancement. Some students tended to rely on AI assistance even during oral presentations, which may contribute to increase their fluency but occasionally led to misunderstanding due to inaccurate content generated by the tool. This highlights the need for more structured guidance on the proper application for technology within educational contexts.

On the other hand, the students should not be allowed to use their cell phone while doing the presentations that will impact the measurement of the post-test speaking skills. AI has given the absolute access to complete the task easily and get the answer quickly. However, the students should be encouraged to discuss how this technology impact their critical thinking and the best approach to utilize the AI to complete their tasks as students and in the future.

AI has increased quickly with tremendous advancement. While writing this journal, China has announced a new technology that is more advanced than Chatgpt which is DeepSeek that is more intelligent and better than the previous Artificial Intelligent. Clearly, with the vary of AI and the launch of the most updated technology over the time, the access and opportunity to learn the language is wider and more interesting since we can easily adapt with our needs and environment. Thus, the teacher and stakeholder should be more aware to utilize the use of AI and giving the instruction and caution to the students to use them wisely.

In conclusion, while AI-enhanced TBLT holds great promise for language learning, it also demands a structured and ethical approach to its implementation.

Future research should explore how to design AI-integrated lesson plans that balance technological support with pedagogical integrity.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study support the integration of AI-based Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as an effective method for enhancing EFL learners' speaking and communication skills. The students' positive reception underscores its potential to foster engagement, boost confidence, and create a more dynamic and autonomous learning environment. Importantly, this approach should not only aim to develop fluency but also nurture learners' critical language awareness and reflective thinking. However, its successful implementation depends on providing clear guidance and maintaining a balanced use of technology. Educators must scaffold students' interaction with AI tools to ensure they are used ethically and meaningfully, thereby supporting—not replacing—the essential processes of language acquisition and communicative competence.

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