

ACADEMIC SPEAKING:



GAMIFICATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE APPROACH



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PREFACE

Academic speaking is an essential competence that university students, particularly those in English language education programs, are expected to master. This competence involves the ability to communicate scholarly ideas clearly, logically, and systematically in accordance with academic conventions. In higher education settings, students are frequently required to participate in academic presentations, discussions, seminars, and other scholarly forums. Therefore, academic speaking extends beyond linguistic fluency; it also involves critical thinking, argument organization, and the ability to communicate ideas professionally within academic contexts.

This book is developed as a teaching resource to support the course *Speaking for Academic Purposes* in higher education. It is designed not only to introduce the theoretical foundations of academic speaking but also to provide structured learning activities that enable students to practice and apply these concepts in authentic academic communication situations. Through guided tasks, reflective practice, and progressive speaking activities, students are expected to develop confidence and competence in expressing academic ideas orally.

Despite the importance of academic speaking, many speaking textbooks currently available still focus primarily on general speaking skills and employ conventional approaches such as dialogues, role plays, and simple presentations. While these methods

remain useful, they often do not fully address the specific demands of academic communication in higher education. Moreover, many existing textbooks have not sufficiently incorporated digital learning tools that align with the needs and learning characteristics of students in the digital era.

The rapid advancement of educational technology has encouraged a shift from traditional text-based instruction toward more interactive and experiential learning environments. In this context, artificial intelligence (AI) has begun to play an increasingly important role in language learning. AI technologies can provide automated feedback, interactive speaking simulations, and opportunities for individualized practice. Research has shown that the integration of AI with digital learning environments can enhance students' engagement and support the development of speaking proficiency.

Alongside technological innovation, gamification has emerged as an effective pedagogical approach for increasing learner motivation and participation. By incorporating game elements such as points, levels, challenges, and progressive feedback, gamification can transform learning activities into engaging and meaningful experiences. In speaking instruction, gamification encourages students to practice more frequently, monitor their progress, and develop confidence in expressing their ideas.

This book integrates gamification and artificial intelligence into a unified framework for academic speaking instruction. Gamification functions as a motivational structure in which learning

activities are organized into progressive levels and speaking missions. Artificial intelligence, meanwhile, serves as a learning partner that supports students' independent practice through interactive speaking simulations and feedback opportunities. The integration of these two approaches aims to create a more engaging, adaptive, and practice-oriented learning experience for students.

By combining theoretical insights, structured speaking tasks, gamified learning activities, and AI-supported practice, this book seeks to bridge the gap between traditional speaking instruction and the evolving demands of digital-era education. It is hoped that this book will provide a practical and innovative reference for both lecturers and students in developing academic speaking competence in higher education contexts.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Welcome to *Academic Speaking: Gamification and Artificial Intelligence Approach*. This book is designed to help students develop academic speaking skills through a combination of theoretical understanding, practical activities, gamified learning experiences, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-assisted practices. The materials in this book are organized progressively, beginning with basic concepts of academic speaking and continuing toward more advanced communication skills and authentic speaking projects.

To gain maximum benefit from this book, students are encouraged to begin each chapter by reading the learning objectives to understand the competencies and skills expected after completing the lesson. Students should then study the explanations and examples carefully because these materials provide the foundational knowledge necessary for speaking development. Throughout the chapters, learners will encounter various examples, communication models, and academic expressions that can be used as references for speaking practice.

Students are also encouraged to participate actively in all speaking activities provided in this book, including discussions, presentations, simulations, role-plays, and project-based tasks. Since speaking is a productive skill, continuous practice and active participation are essential for improving fluency and confidence. In addition, this book integrates gamification elements such as

speaking missions, challenges, points, and achievement badges to create a more engaging and motivating learning experience.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is also incorporated into this book to support speaking practice and independent learning. Students may use AI tools to practice pronunciation, receive speaking feedback, improve vocabulary use, and monitor their communication progress. AI should be used as a learning assistant that helps students identify strengths and areas requiring improvement.

Finally, students are encouraged to complete all worksheets, reflection activities, and final speaking projects provided throughout the book. By actively engaging with the materials and activities, students are expected to gradually develop greater confidence, stronger communication abilities, and more effective academic speaking skills for both academic and professional contexts.

Overview of Academic Speaking: Gamification and Artificial Intelligence Approach

Academic speaking is an essential skill in higher education because students are expected to communicate ideas effectively in academic and professional environments. Communication activities such as classroom discussions, presentations, seminars, conferences, and research defenses require learners to express ideas clearly, confidently, and professionally.

However, many students encounter challenges in academic speaking, including:

1. speaking anxiety,
2. lack of confidence,
3. pronunciation difficulties,
4. limited vocabulary,
5. communication barriers,
6. limited speaking practice opportunities.

Traditional speaking instruction frequently emphasizes theoretical knowledge and repetitive exercises without providing sufficient opportunities for authentic communication experiences. Consequently, students may understand speaking concepts but still experience difficulties applying them in real-life situations.

To address these challenges, this book adopts two innovative approaches:

1. Gamification Approach

Gamification refers to the use of game elements within educational environments to increase learner motivation and engagement.

The gamification approach in this book incorporates:

- a. missions,
- b. challenges,
- c. points,
- d. rewards,
- e. badges,
- f. progress systems,
- g. collaborative competitions.

The purpose of gamification is not to transform learning into games but to increase motivation and create meaningful learning experiences.

Through gamification, students are encouraged to:

- a. participate actively,
- b. practice regularly,
- c. collaborate effectively,
- d. develop confidence,
- e. enjoy learning processes.

2. Artificial Intelligence Approach

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed educational practices by creating opportunities for personalized and adaptive learning.

Within this book, AI functions as a learning assistant that supports:

- a. pronunciation improvement,
- b. speaking practice,

- c. communication simulations,
- d. feedback generation,
- e. performance analysis,
- f. independent learning.

AI allows students to:

- a. receive immediate feedback,
- b. practice anytime,
- c. monitor progress continuously,
- d. identify weaknesses and strengths.

This book consists of ten chapters organized progressively:

Chapter 1: Introduction to Academic Speaking

Chapter 2: Pronunciation and Intonation

Chapter 3: Building Academic Vocabulary

Chapter 4: Interactive Academic Speaking Practices

Chapter 5: Academic Presentation Skills

Chapter 6: Seminar and Conference Simulation

Chapter 7: Advanced Academic Speaking: Critical Speaking and Argumentation

Chapter 8: Digital Academic Speaking

Chapter 9: Public Speaking Confidence and Anxiety Management

Chapter 10: Project-Based Speaking: Final Academic Speaking Project

Each chapter integrates:

- a. theoretical understanding,
- b. practical speaking activities,
- c. AI-supported learning,

- d. gamification elements,
- e. worksheets,
- f. reflection activities,
- g. authentic communication practice.

By the end of this book, students are expected not only to improve speaking proficiency but also to become confident, critical, collaborative, and technologically competent academic communicators capable of participating effectively in modern academic environments.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication competence has become one of the most essential skills in twenty-first-century education and professional life. In higher education, students are expected not only to master academic knowledge but also to communicate ideas effectively, critically, and professionally. Among the four language skills, speaking is often considered the most challenging skill for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners because it requires the simultaneous use of grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and confidence. In academic environments, speaking ability becomes even more complex because students are required to communicate using formal language, evidence-based arguments, and critical thinking. Consequently, academic speaking has become an important component of university learning and professional preparation. Academic speaking refers to spoken communication used in formal educational and scholarly contexts. It involves the ability to express ideas systematically, logically, critically, and professionally in situations such as classroom discussions, presentations, seminars, conferences, debates, and thesis defenses. Unlike casual daily conversation, academic speaking emphasizes formal language use, organized ideas, analytical thinking, and evidence-based communication. According to Yang and Kuo (2021), academic speaking is a multidimensional communication competence that integrates linguistic knowledge, cognitive skills, interactional competence, and academic reasoning. This means that students are not only expected to speak fluently but also to communicate meaningfully, critically, and academically.

One of the major characteristics of academic speaking is the use of formal and professional language. Academic speakers avoid slang, informal abbreviations, and overly casual expressions because academic communication requires professionalism and credibility. For example, instead of saying “I think this is good,” students are encouraged to say “In my perspective, this approach provides significant educational benefits.” Al-Sobhi and Preece (2022) explain that formal language use strengthens academic identity and improves communication effectiveness in educational settings. In addition to formality, academic speaking also requires clarity and organization. Speakers must organize ideas systematically through introductions, explanations, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Li and Hafner (2021) argue that logically structured oral

communication enhances audience comprehension and speaker confidence during academic interaction.

Another important component of academic speaking is critical thinking. University students are expected to analyze issues, evaluate information, compare perspectives, defend opinions, and provide logical arguments supported by evidence. Academic communication is therefore not limited to speaking fluently but also involves intellectual engagement and analytical reasoning. Sato and Loewen (2022) emphasize that evidence-based oral communication improves the quality of interaction and develops higher-order thinking skills among language learners. Furthermore, academic speaking requires mastery of academic vocabulary and discourse markers such as “furthermore,” “consequently,” “in contrast,” and “according to.” Coxhead (2021) states that academic vocabulary significantly contributes to speaking precision, communication fluency, and learners’ ability to express complex ideas in educational contexts.

Academic speaking matters because it directly influences students’ academic achievement, communication competence, and professional development. In higher education, students frequently participate in presentations, discussions, research seminars, and collaborative projects that require effective oral communication. Students with strong academic speaking skills are generally more active in classroom participation and more successful in academic performance. Zhang and Ardasheva (2022) found that collaborative speaking activities improve student engagement, participation, and oral communication competence in EFL classrooms. Additionally, academic speaking promotes critical thinking because learners must evaluate ideas, formulate arguments, and communicate perspectives logically. These skills are essential not only for academic success but also for future workplace communication such as meetings, interviews, conferences, and public speaking activities.

Academic speaking also plays a significant role in building students’ confidence. Many EFL learners experience speaking anxiety due to fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, or low self-confidence. Continuous speaking practice in supportive academic environments helps learners reduce anxiety and improve fluency. Rahimi and Fathi (2021) found that interactive and gamified speaking instruction significantly enhances speaking confidence, learner motivation, and classroom participation. In the era of globalization, academic speaking additionally supports international communication and global academic participation. English is widely used in international conferences, research

collaboration, academic publications, and digital communication platforms. Therefore, students with strong academic speaking competence are better prepared to participate in global educational and professional communities.

In recent years, technology integration has transformed language learning significantly. One of the most influential innovations in language education is gamification. Gamification refers to the use of game elements in non-game educational contexts to increase learner engagement, participation, and motivation. Instead of turning learning entirely into games, gamification integrates game mechanics such as points, badges, levels, rewards, leaderboards, missions, and challenges into learning activities. Dichev and Dicheva (2021) explain that gamification creates meaningful and motivating learning experiences by increasing students' intrinsic motivation and active participation. In speaking classrooms, gamification is particularly beneficial because speaking activities are often associated with anxiety, fear of failure, and low confidence. Through enjoyable and interactive learning environments, gamification helps learners feel more relaxed and motivated to participate in speaking tasks. Gamification in language learning can be implemented through various speaking activities such as speaking missions, pronunciation battles, discussion arenas, role-play competitions, seminar tournaments, and collaborative speaking challenges. For example, students may receive experience points (XP) for completing oral presentations, participating in discussions, or answering questions critically. They may also earn digital badges such as "Best Presenter," "Critical Thinker," or "Discussion Champion" based on their speaking performance. Rahimi and Fathi (2021) report that gamified speaking instruction significantly improves speaking fluency, classroom interaction, and communication confidence among EFL learners. Furthermore, Zhang and Ardasheva (2022) found that gamified collaborative speaking tasks increase learner engagement and reduce classroom boredom. Therefore, gamification is considered an effective approach for creating interactive, student-centered, and motivating speaking instruction.

Another important technological innovation in speaking instruction is Artificial Intelligence (AI). Artificial Intelligence refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that normally require human intelligence, including speech recognition, language processing, automated feedback generation, and adaptive learning. AI has become increasingly influential in language education because it provides learners

with individualized support and immediate feedback. Huang et al. (2022) explain that AI-assisted language learning significantly improves speaking fluency, pronunciation accuracy, learner autonomy, and communication confidence. AI technologies enable students to practice speaking independently beyond classroom limitations, making speaking instruction more flexible and accessible.

AI supports speaking instruction in several important ways. First, AI tools provide pronunciation analysis and corrective feedback. Applications such as ELSA Speak and speech recognition systems can identify pronunciation errors and suggest improvements. Second, AI systems can evaluate fluency, speaking speed, pauses, intonation, and rhythm. Third, AI chatbots function as virtual speaking partners that allow students to practice conversations, interviews, discussions, and presentations interactively. This creates additional speaking opportunities for learners who may lack confidence in face-to-face communication. Fourth, AI systems support personalized learning by adapting activities based on students' proficiency levels and speaking difficulties. Huang et al. (2022) state that AI-based adaptive learning environments enhance learner autonomy and speaking performance because students can practice according to their individual learning needs.

Despite its advantages, AI in speaking instruction also presents several challenges. Overdependence on technology, limited emotional interaction, internet accessibility issues, and data privacy concerns remain important considerations in AI-based education. Therefore, AI should not replace teachers but rather function as a complementary learning tool that supports speaking practice and feedback. Human teachers still play essential roles in emotional support, communication modeling, classroom interaction, and pedagogical guidance.

This textbook integrates academic speaking instruction with gamification and artificial intelligence to create innovative, interactive, and practical learning experiences for university students. The integration of these approaches is intended to transform traditional speaking instruction into student-centered, technology-enhanced learning environments that support active participation, critical thinking, communication confidence, and independent learning. Through discussions, simulations, speaking projects, AI-assisted practice, and gamified classroom activities, students are encouraged to become active and confident academic speakers.

The learning outcomes of this textbook focus on the development of comprehensive academic speaking competence. At the end of the course,

students are expected to communicate ideas formally and professionally in various academic contexts such as discussions, seminars, debates, and presentations. Students are also expected to demonstrate critical thinking by analyzing issues, defending arguments, and responding logically during academic interaction. In addition, students should be able to use academic vocabulary appropriately, participate actively in collaborative speaking activities, and utilize AI tools to improve pronunciation, fluency, and communication performance. Through gamified speaking instruction, students are encouraged to engage actively in speaking missions, discussion challenges, and collaborative projects that enhance confidence and speaking motivation. Ultimately, this textbook aims to prepare students to become competent academic communicators who are capable of participating successfully in educational, professional, and global communication contexts.

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The book *Academic Speaking: Gamification and Artificial Intelligence Approach* explores innovative methods to improve academic speaking skills by integrating gamification strategies and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. It emphasizes how interactive learning experiences and intelligent digital tools can enhance learners' confidence, fluency, and engagement in speaking activities.

Written in clear and accessible language, this book discusses key concepts of academic speaking, principles of gamified learning, and the application of AI-based tools in language practice and assessment. With practical examples, instructional strategies, and implementation guidelines, this book serves as a valuable reference for teachers, students, and anyone interested in modern approaches to improving academic speaking skills in the digital era.