

Role-Play Practice Using Chat GPT - Enhancing Oral Interview Skills for Japanese Company Visits -

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1. Background and Objectives

Background

In LAJ3204: Business Japanese 2, students are required to prepare for interviewing company executives of Japanese global companies operating in Singapore, as part of the course curriculum. However, most students struggled due to limited knowledge of the specific companies, business contexts, and the linguistic skills necessary for conducting professional-level interviews in Japanese.

Objectives

To address these challenges, we introduced the use of Chat GPT with audio functions as a Role-play partner, allowing students to simulate interview scenarios with AI assistance so that Chat GPT can provide students with a more dynamic and interactive platform to learn interview techniques, expand their business vocabulary, and gain insights into formal Japanese communication.

2. Workflow for Gen AI Role-Play Practice for teachers

In consultation with AICET, the initial prompts were developed. The prompts were tested twice with volunteer students.

Provide students with a structured context-setting prompt to guide their use of Gen AI effectively

Implement AI-supported role-play activities. students are required to conduct 20–30 mins voice-based interview simulations

Provide targeted feedback, focusing on both their Gen AI role-play performance and the quality of their interview scripts

Collect and analyze students' reflection logs, identifying key strengths, challenges, and practical strategies for improvement.

Prompt to cut and paste into AI

I am a student at a university in Singapore. I am visiting (XXX) (company name) in Singapore to interview the Manager of the (XXX) department about (XXX) (topic). Please role-play with me in Japanese as the interviewee. OO- ~~san~~ sama.

Important Instruction – Spoken Conversation Practice

This is a spoken conversation practice. The student will be speaking aloud in Japanese. The student's Japanese ability is up to JLPT N1 vocabulary only. Do not use too many difficult words at one time.

- After each of your responses, you must pause and wait for the student to reply verbally before continuing.
- Do not continue speaking until the student has responded.
- If the student struggles or hesitates, politely offer clarification or encouragement.
- Be strict about the student's pronunciation and use of vocabulary, ask for clarification whenever necessary.
- Please only respond in proper business Japanese, no matter what language the student uses.

Bot Persona (Voice Interaction Style)

Speech Pattern

He speaks in polished, slightly stylish keigo—professional yet expressive, with the relaxed confidence of someone in the industry. His language is contemporary and clear.

Tone

Charming, confident, and insightful. While he's business-minded, he comes across as thoughtful and approachable, like a mentor who values creativity.

Engagement

He invites the student into the conversation by asking about your preferences, trends in Japan or Singapore, and opinions on cultural style differences. He welcomes personal taste and reflection.

Cultural Respect

The bot integrates respectful Japanese expressions such as:

- 「ご関心をお寄せいただき、ありがとうございます。」 (Thank you for your interest.)
- 「もしよろしければ... あなたの考えについて教えていただけますか?」 (If I may... could you share your?)
- 「ご意見を伺えるとても参考になります。」 (Your opinion would be very helpful.)

Use of Natural Japanese Speech Fillers

- ええと... (etto...) – When introducing a new thought
- あの... (ano...) – To soften or transition into a point
- その... (sono...) – While explaining reasoning
- まあ... (ma...) – For personal or nuanced commentary

Real-Life Insights

The bot shares insights into:

- Differences between Japanese and Singaporean consumers
- Challenges in balancing business with creativity
- Behind-the-scenes of working

Scenario / Role-Play

The user plays a student conducting an interview with OO-san to learn about:

- The interviewee's career path and what he does in his industry
- The interviewee's views on global vs. Japanese trends
- The role of cultural sensitivity in the industry
- Advice for entering the business
- Personal inspirations and future forecasts

Conversation Flow and Ending Condition

The bot should start with engaging the students with small talk before commencing the interview proper (example:

Learning Progression

W4

Challenges

“difficult vocabulary or expressions appeared, which took me extra time to understand.”
“I need to practice incorporating polite expressions more naturally, especially Keigo verbs.”
“The AI spoke very quickly, which made it difficult for me to catch everything.”
“I also struggled with how to properly end the conversation.”
“AI transcription not able to recognise some words, leads to wrong answers.”

W5

“The speed of talking was too fast and I couldn't catch some of the vocab used.”
“The vocabulary that was used was very technical.”
“AI was ‘too nice’ and answered more than I expected.”
“It tends to answer more than what is asked.”
“The same time, I noticed that ChatGPT's answers still sounded overly polished and textbook-like.”

W6

“I still tend to hesitate before asking a question because I'm not sure how to phrase it in a way that's understandable.”
“It would help if the AI kept follow-up questions shorter so I have more space to practice responding.”
“I still think that the narration is clunky... I ended up copy pasting the text generated by the chatbot into another website for Japanese AI text to speech”

“Wanted to ask about 合意形成, but by the end couldn't remember, only keeping up with the rest of the response.”
“There are occasional delays in response or contextual misunderstandings showed that the AI still struggles with fully grasping nuances. Sometimes responses were too generic...”

Guidance for AI Role Play

Session 1

Session 2

Session 3

Session 4

Company Visit

“ChatGPT really mimicked the scene of an actual online interview... it felt as if I was speaking with a real Japanese company executive.”
“You can see and hear the use of keigo during the interactions, which I think is informative to anticipate what might be said during an actual interview.”

Advantages

“It makes me realise how I do not have the sentence structures ready to follow up its answers.”
“It helped me predict possible directions the conversation could take.”
“The AI gave long, detailed answers that helped me imagine what a real company representative might say.”

“I think I managed to ask better follow-up questions this time.”
“I felt like I was better able to catch what the bot was saying, I was able to understand more points that he brought up...”
“I managed to maintain a respectful tone with Keigo after practicing using the lecture slides.”
“The answers were shorter and more to the point this time, which made it easier to keep the flow of questions.”

“Chatbot gives me some possible answers so I can better understand what will be spoken in the real interview.”
“Interacting with the AI helped develop critical thinking about question framing... facilitated reflection on how to clarify and refine queries for better responses.”
“after further revising my questions, my content now had a smoother flow and I could almost anticipate the direction in which my questions were going.”
“Uploading the company information PDF that Maruno buchou shared with us was really helpful, because the AI's responses closely matched the actual interview...”

Decide on Interview theme and Structure

Write an individual Draft

Compile Group Draft

Receive Feedback

Revise Group Draft

Create a Final Script

Rehearsal

3. Results: Advantages of Use of GenAI

- Realistic & immersive interview simulation (Session1)
- Keigo & professional Japanese exposure (S1)
- Improved speaking clarity & awareness of weaknesses (S2)
- Helped predict possible directions of conversation (S2)
- Enable to make follow up questions (S3)
- Enhance realism (Realistic/Natural) (S3)
- Better flow & smoothness (S4)
- Enhance confidence and control (S4)



4. Result: Challenges of Use of GenAI

- Language difficulty (business Japanese, vocabulary, kanji)(Session1)
- Technical issues (audio, transcription, setup, glitches) (S1)
- Fast AI speech(S1)
- Conversation flow control (ending, transitions, turn-taking)(S1)
- Own unnatural / broken Japanese or keigo issues(S2)
- Responses too long / overly detailed(S2)
- Dealing with fast, long / technical AI responses and retaining context)(S3)
- AI failing to understand nuances, missing questions, giving generic/repetitive answers (S4)



5. Result: Prompt Modification by Students

- “I asked the chatbot to act as a Japanese business professional and requested the use of polite, natural language.”(S1)
- “Encouraged it to make shorter responses to simulate a conversation better.”(S1)
- “Modified the prompt to include the company to make it more personalized.”(S1)
- “I modified the prompt to state that the bot should not answer more than what is asked.”(S2)
- “Added a prompt to remove guiding questions. (S2)
- “Do not proceed unless the student has answered any questions you may have.”(S2)
- “Uploading the company information was really helpful as the AI's responses closely matched the actual interview...” (S4)
- “Modifying the prompts and method of narration helped a lot for practicing listening and trying to catch Japanese at a more technical level (S4)

6. Conclusion and Teaching Implications

- Most students improved** interview skills, expanded business vocabulary, and greater awareness of formal Japanese communication.
- Effective use of ChatGPT depends on **careful prompt design aligned with learning objectives**
- Repeated practice enhanced** students' ability to handle communication breakdowns and respond to unexpected answers.
- Developing learners' ability to adjust prompts** is critical; students who modified prompts showed greater improvement.
- Reflective Session Reports** supported learning, especially through critical evaluation of questions.
- Technical limitations remain**, particularly in clarification strategies and the range of backchanneling (aizuchi).