

Masato Kikuchi and Rumiko Shinzato
Georgia Institute of Technology

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH
IN BUSINESS JAPANESE: CONNECTING THE
CLASSROOM TO THE OUTSIDE BUSINESS WORLD
AND VOLUNTEER GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Japanese language programs throughout the United States have experienced a decline in enrollment. For instance, Gessel notes that the enrollment in Japanese at Brigham Young University increased by 148% between 1978 and 1991; however, it decreased by 20% between 1991 and 1995. Gessel claims that this decrease can be “traced to what the Japanese themselves call the bursting of their economic bubble and to an overall souring of the impression that Japan will retain its leadership in many technology fields” (7).

Conflicting with this general tendency, however, is the increasing interest in business Japanese language education. *USA Today* (3 Apr. 1997) reports that the executives of the 1000 largest companies in the US rate Japanese as the second most important second language to learn (16%) following Spanish (63%). Consistent with this report is the Japan Foundation’s 1995 survey, quoted in Azuma, in which students of Japanese rank business at the top of the list of their interests.

As terms such as “globalization” or “internationalization” are becoming key words in technological colleges, the demand for business Japanese, or technical and scientific Japanese is rapidly increasing. Georgia Institute of Technology started teaching business Japanese as part of a six-week long, intensive summer program three years ago, by integrating classroom instruction with outside resources such as invited guest speakers in business and related fields and visits to local Japanese corporations and governmental offices. The course objectives were to improve students’ communicative skills in business interactions, and to increase their awareness and understanding of Japanese society, corpo-

Global Business Languages (1998)

rate culture, and business protocol. The business Japanese course targets intermediate-level students of Japanese. Here, an “intermediate” student is defined as a student who has completed a one-year, university-level, general-purpose Japanese program (120 hours of classroom instruction) or its equivalent and have knowledge of about 120 basic kanji.

We will first discuss how this course is organized and executed and explain why we need each of the components in this course. We will then present the results of our students’ progress over the six weeks. Finally, we will express our belief in the value and success of this innovative program.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

The business Japanese course consists of the following three major components:

- A. a communicative skill-building component (16 hrs/wk or 70%). This includes business conversation and composition classes.
- B. a cultural and societal knowledge-building component (4 hrs/wk or 17%). This includes corporate culture as well as language and society classes.
- C. a networking with business communities and volunteer groups component (3 hrs/wk or 13%). This includes plant/office visits, guest speakers, and cultural demonstrations by volunteers.

In communicative skill-building classes (Component A), students practice business conversation in a traditional classroom as well as CALI-based settings,¹ learn business protocol and write business-related documents. In corporate culture classes and language and society classes (Component B), students learn about Japanese business structures and management styles, as well as Japanese societal structure and characteristics. In an effort to build networking with business communities and local volunteer groups (Component C), students visit local Japanese firms and factories, hear guest speakers’ presentations and also participate in cultural demonstrations by volunteers.

These three components were selected because we see them as interdependent; eliminating one of the components would diminish the

¹CALI stands for Computer-Assisted Language Instruction.

quality of learning. Component A introduces students to language facts; Component B provides theoretical explanations and sociocultural background information for Component A. Together, these components enhance the students' foundation of knowledge in practical aspects (language skills) and in theoretical aspects (sociological or anthropological theories). Component C allows students to have opportunities to evaluate or examine the knowledge they have acquired in Components A and B.

We argue that confining students to only classroom experiences (Component A and B) is limiting because they are deprived of the opportunities to weigh their knowledge against facts. Without Component C, students may overgeneralize the knowledge and create distorted pictures of corporate culture in Japan. Likewise, the removal of Component B is not helpful to the students because it deprives them of the reasons why Japanese language is structured the way it is.

Conventional language classrooms focus primarily on Component A and tend to be highly skill-oriented; however, we strongly believe that an integrated approach like ours is a more beneficial alternative. In the following, each component will be examined in detail.

Component A: Business Conversation and Composition Classes

The main goal of these classes is to train students to function in various business settings in Japan. This includes being able to communicate effectively in business transactions as well as in informal after-work gatherings, to understand and practice business protocol, to read business documents, and to compose simple business letters.

To accomplish these goals, a variety of techniques and tools are used. These include a systematically oriented textbook, grammar explanation classes, conversational practices in small groups, classroom activities to write business documents, and a computer program called QUILL (Kikuchi), which shows business-oriented interactive videos.

Using the framework of our business conversation class, we will focus on two unique tools used in our program.

1. Business Conversation Class

Business conversation classes are divided into two separate sessions: grammar and drill sessions. Grammar sessions are designed to increase grammatical knowledge (competence) and drill sessions are designed to

enhance oral communication skills (performance). Each one-hour grammar session is followed by three drill sessions (3 hours), all of which comprises one cycle (Grammar, Drill-1, Drill-2, and Drill-3). There are three such cycles per week. English is allowed only during grammar sessions and the Japanese-language-only policy is enforced during drill sessions. The drill instructors are told to provide as much natural context as possible when practicing new language uses learned in the grammar sessions rather than to rely on repetition and other mechanical drills.

Textbook

The primary objective of the textbook, *Yoroshiku: A Systematic Approach to Business Japanese* (Kikuchi, Ohasi, and Shinzato) is to help intermediate-level students develop knowledge and skill in handling business-oriented conversations in Japanese by using systematically sequenced materials gradually shifting from simpler grammatical structures to more advanced ones. The systematic approach enables teachers to incorporate previously learned patterns into conversational exercises. The systematic organization also helps students to employ previously learned patterns and vocabulary within the new patterns introduced in the present lesson.

The organization of this textbook is different from the more common thematically organized textbooks.² These textbooks do not necessarily follow a systematic grammatical sequence and relatively few grammar explanations are presented. Thematic organization makes sense with active businesspeople who do not have ample time for systematic study. However, as the learner base expands to college students, a greater number of learners are seeking more systematic instruction of business Japanese. This textbook is trying to meet this growing need.

The conversations in the textbook incorporate a natural sequence of events in which a hypothetical college graduate is interviewed and hired by a Japanese company where he experiences various incidents. Since the majority of the readers are college students who have a desire to work in Japanese companies, they readily identify with the main character in the text and follow with enthusiasm the natural sequence of events listed below:

²For instance, see Takamizawa's *Office Japanese* and Nissan's *Business Japanese*, and Horiuchi and Ashitaka's *Nihongo Hyoogen to Bijinesu Manaa: Nihon de Bijinesu*.

1. Job interview
2. Business introductions
3. Receiving/Making phone calls & taking messages
4. Work reports
5. At the bank
6. After work
7. Appointments
8. Describing a company
9. Describing a product
10. Negotiating prices
11. Following up on the deal

Each lesson consists of a “priming” section intended to enhance the comprehension of new materials, model conversations, a glossary, and grammar descriptions. In addition, there are culture notes that give students additional insights into business culture in Japan. The textbook also contains many references to sociological factors that affect the language styles. At the end of each lesson there is a grammar exercise section followed by listening comprehension questions. A sample page from the textbook is found in Appendix 1 of this article.

QUILL

All of the conversations in the textbook are available in the CALI format called QUILL.³ This computer program utilizes interactive video segments based on model conversations in the textbook. Any conversational turn can be replayed by a single click of the mouse. Each segment is accompanied by a hypertext (i.e., learners can click on any word or sentence on the screen and the word definition or sentence translation appears immediately). This allows students to listen to, as well as to see, the conversation. It also enables them to learn the pronunciation and the definition of new words and phrases presented in each lesson. The video also provides rich information on nonverbal communication. For instance, students can watch the gestures that accompany an exchange of business cards and study the timing and postures used in bowing to one another. In order to reinforce the materials to be learned, two exercises

³QUILL (QUality Interactive Language Learning) was developed by the Department of Modern Languages, Georgia Institute of Technology.

are prepared for each video segment. These are dictation exercises and multiple-choice vocabulary questions. See Appendix 2 for more details.

More conventional is our business composition class. However, we feel it is invaluable because it provides students with the opportunity to produce concrete business documents that accompany conversations learned in the business conversation class.

2. Business Composition Class

Business composition classes use the materials that closely parallel the textbook lessons and the corporate culture classes. For instance, an example of a job interview at a Japanese company is presented and discussed in conjunction with discussion on a résumé. This is followed up in the composition class with students actually producing their own résumés in Japanese. Résumé composition is followed up in the conversation class, where students take turns acting out the parts of interviewer or interviewee. Students are instructed to create the following business documents in the composition class:

Documents	Textbook Lessons
1. Résumés	Job Interview Lesson 1
2. Business cards	Business introductions Lesson 2
3. Telephone messages	Phone calls Lesson 3
4. Business letters (Thank-you letters)	Plant visits, Corporate culture class (No Lesson)
5. Internal reports (comprehension only)	Work reports Lesson 4
6. Job request letters	Describing a company/product Lesson 8/9
7. Job estimate letters	Negotiating prices Lesson 10
8. Group decision form (i.e., “Ringisho”)	Following up on the deal Lesson 11
9. Contract form	Following up on the deal Lesson 11

Business letters (thank-you notes) written after the students have completed office/plant visits are actually sent to the individuals to whom they are due. During or after the course, students often receive letters of reply from the office/plant they have visited. In subsequent evaluations, students often express amazement that their correspondence and contact have had a personal impact on the individuals they have visited. Sample forms used in the business composition classes are shown in Appendix 3.

Overall, the business conversation and composition classes are rated by students as good to excellent in providing “great exposure to a wide range of vocabulary words” and in giving them the “groundwork for practical situations in Japanese business.” We also asked students to self-evaluate their progress in relation to Component A. On average, on a scale of 1 (= None) to 5 (= Tremendously), students rated their progress at 3.5 (1996) and at 3.7 (1997).

Component B: Corporate Culture/Language and Society Classes

1. Corporate culture class

Initially, various concepts and business protocol used in Japanese decision making processes are discussed in English after viewing several Nippon Steel Corporation videos on Japanese corporate culture. In order to utilize such formal knowledge of the Japanese corporate culture in a more realistic situation, students engage in a simulation game like the one described below titled “Get on the Internet.” This simulation game incorporates the following business problem-solution scenario and involves transactions among three hypothetical companies.

Group A: Traditional Japanese Company (about 6 people)

Roles: President, Sales Division Manager, Finance Division Manager, Manufacturing Division Manager, Worker #1, #2, #3, etc.

You are working for a very traditional Japanese company named _____ which sells _____. Your company has never dealt with advanced technology before. Lately, orders to your company are dwindling. You have heard that your competitors are snapping up your customers. In fact, they are getting purchase orders from all over the world! What’s going on? — It is time for your company

to get on the internet to survive the increasing competition. You must advertise your company and your products through the internet. Since no one in your company has any expertise in this field, it is a good idea to hire some outside contractors. However, first, you must convince the president and the executives of other divisions using consensus building. After all, this is a very traditional organization. Your tasks are to:

1. Produce a group decision form (Ringisho) and circulate it. Explain the benefits and propose the content of the company home page. Find answers to any questions and resolve any differences of opinions within the company. (Your home page must introduce your company, your products, and so on. Include any information that might convince the customers how good your products are.)
2. Contact two WWW site designing companies: _____ and _____. Make appointments to visit each company, write a work request letter, describe the work, and request a price estimate before you sign the final contract. (All written materials must be in Japanese.)
3. Let the two contractors compete and submit their own home page designs. (It is the job contractors' responsibility to translate the home page into English.)
4. After you have seen the demonstration of both designs, make the final decision on which home page to choose as your company's official home page using consensus building processes again. Argue why one is better than the other.

Group B & C: WWW Site Designing Companies (3 people each)

Roles: Web site developers, graphics designers, etc.

You are working for a small company _____ specializing in WWW advertisement. You will be contacted by a Japanese company _____. Your task is to translate the initial materials into English, create a demo version of the web site, and give them a job estimate. (You are competing with another similar company for this job.)

After the instructor divides the class into three companies, students are moved to three separate rooms. They are then asked to come up with the names of their own company, logos and business cards, and the descriptions of the products Company A sells. While Company A is deciding on the specifications for the home page design in Japanese using consensus building processes, the other two companies design their own home page using the computer in the room. About two hours per week are spent for the simulation game, during which students are asked to make as many contacts between the other companies as necessary. All intercompany communication has to be done in Japanese. Students produce group-decision forms, a job request letter, and letters estimating the price of the job. (Students study these documents in the business composition class.) The highlight of this simulation game is the demonstration of a pair of actual WWW home pages that can be browsed by a web browser software. Actual web pages the students created during the simulation game are shown in Appendix 4.

2. Language and Society Class

Language and society classes are designed to introduce students to the intrinsic relationship observed between Japanese societal structures and certain linguistic phenomena. In the field of sociolinguistics, it is firmly accepted that language studies that do not pay attention to the society where the language is spoken are futile. Applying this philosophy to pedagogy, this course has been specifically devised to answer such questions as: “Why is Japanese this way?” or “Why do you have to speak this way?” It is believed that giving answers to such questions would, in turn, facilitate students’ understanding of linguistic structures specific to Japanese. Furthermore, it gives students a fresh perspective helping them to appreciate these structures. In addition, it is believed that such understanding and appreciation of linguistic structures eventually improve students’ mastery of the structures in oral performance.

For instance, we read in class *Japanese Society* written by the celebrated sociologist, Chie Nakane. In her book, she introduces two terms to describe social structures: *attributes* and *frame*. The word *attributes* means “being a member of a definite descent group or caste,” while the word *frame* means “a locality, an institution, or a particular relationship which binds a set of individuals into one group” (Nakane 2). Nakane claims that Japan is a frame-based society, while India is an attribute-

based society. According to her, a frame-based society tends to develop an internal organization based on a *hierarchical order* and *group-consciousness* (i.e., people in *my* company vs. people in *other* company).

The key concepts, *hierarchy* and *group-consciousness*, which are used to analyze Japanese social structures, can readily be adopted to explain complicated honorific systems of the Japanese language. The *hierarchy* is used to explain *teinei-go* [polite language]. All three of the examples below convey the message that the meeting is today.

- | | | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------|-----------------|--------------|
| (1) Kaigi | wa | kyoo | da | ne. |
| meeting | Topic | today | Copula (distal) | confirmation |
| (2) Kaigi | wa | kyoo | desu | ne. |
| meeting | Topic | today | Copula (distal) | confirmation |
| (3) Kaigi | wa | kyoo | de gozaimasu | ne. |
| meeting | Topic | today | Copula (polite) | confirmation |

The direct-style copula *da* may be used among male colleagues who are more or less of equal rank and on close and friendly terms. However, it should never be used when speaking to someone higher in rank than the speaker him/herself. In such cases, the distal-style copula *desu* is appropriate. The polite copula may be selected when the speaker feels that extraordinary deference is due to the addressee, such as speaking to the president of his/her company.

Similarly, the other concept, *group-consciousness*, is useful in explaining the other two types of honorifics, namely *sonkei-go* [deferential language] and *kenjoo-go* [humbling language]. In inquiring about the presence of the president of another company, the speaker would use *sonkei-go* [deferential language] as below:

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| (4) Shachoo-san | | wa | irasshaimasu | ka? |
| president-Honorific suffix | Topic | be (respect) | Question | |
| | | | | ‘Is the president in?’ |

In an answer to the above question, the secretary would use *kenjoo-go* [humbling language] as below even though the president assumes a considerably higher rank than the secretary. Note also that the secretary omits the honorific suffix, *san* as well.

- (5) Shachoo wa orimasen ga . . .
 president Topic be (humble)-not but
 ‘The president is not here, but . . .’

This is because the secretary sees her president to be an insider as opposed to the caller from another company, an outsider. That is, when the subject (in this case, the president) belongs to the same in-group as the addressee, the speaker would use *sonkei-go* [deferential language] as in example (4). In contrast, when the subject forms an in-group with the speaker, the speaker would use *kenjoo-go* [humbling language] as in example (5).

Seeing these three honorifics in this perspective serves as an eye-opener for students. Suddenly, the mechanical and dull practice of honorifics becomes a meaningful and enlightening communication exercise in the real world. This experience seems to be useful for many students.

Component C: Plant/Office Visits, Guest Speakers, and Culture Classes

Plant visits, guest speakers, and culture classes are incorporated into the course in order to give students first-hand experience in the Japanese business world and society. We have visited governmental offices such as JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization), the Consulate General of Japan, and local Japanese corporations such as Yokogawa Corporation of America (measuring equipments), NACOM (car parts), and Hitachi (audio-visual). At JETRO and the Consulate General of Japan, students learned the functions of these offices in more concrete terms and received up-to-date information on business, culture, and technology. Plant visits normally include presentations of the overall history and philosophy of the companies followed by a tour of the plants. For instance, at NACOM, the students learned the company motto, “Say what we do; Do what we say; and Prove what we said we did.” At Yokogawa, students were introduced to such terms as ISO 9000, QS 900, Toyota’s *kanban* system, and the six Ss (Seiketsu [sanitary]; Seiri [sort]; Seiton [organize]; Seisoo [clean-up]; Shitsuke [discipline]; and Sensu [sense]). Students were encouraged to ask questions about everything from quality control measures to personnel matters. These activities are found to have the desired effects of allowing students to examine in real life what they have previously learned about Japanese-style management or quality control measures in industrial engineering or management classes.

Each week, we invite one guest speaker to our class to provide some insight into worlds students have yet to experience. We have invited guest speakers with a variety of backgrounds—businessmen, a newspaper editor, a professional translator, government officials, publishers, academicians, and former students of our program. For example, two businesspersons (from A.D.A.M. Software, Inc. & T-Tech, Inc.) talked about their experience making inroads into the Japanese market with their company's products. A professional translator, who conducted numerous US-Japan trade negotiations, discussed the historical background and cultural traits that affect Japanese negotiation styles. A newspaper editor from Nikkei Business Publications, Inc. gave his account of why there is no successful venture business in Japan like that of Bill Gates. A government official from MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) introduced students to the JIS (Japanese Industrial System) standards. A professor from International Affairs explained how the bidding system works in the Japanese construction industry, and why the Japanese construction market is so stubbornly closed to foreign companies. The president of a monthly magazine, *Mangajin*, related his motivations for creating his company, introduced his publication and described the comic book market in Japan. A language instructor from Georgia Public Television introduced his Japanese-language instruction TV program called *Irasshai*, aimed at high school students. Subsequently, the speaker expressed his interest in hiring one of our students as a studio student-actor. A graduate of our program, who was hired by the company he visited during the course in 1996, also visited our class, introduced his company (Y.K.K. Corporation of America), and presented his experience working for a Japanese corporation located in the US. In addition, we invited native Japanese speakers who were enrolled in the E.S.L. Institute at Georgia Tech to have an informal language exchange arrangement. This was intended to increase the opportunities for the Business Japanese students to use Japanese in real-life situations.

In cultural demonstration classes, students are exposed to various hands-on experiences in calligraphy, origami-making, sushi-making, tea ceremony, bon dance, karaoke, *karuta* [cards], etc. Most of these cultural events are carried out with extensive help from local volunteer clubs. The highlight of the cultural events is Japanese Jeopardy, which takes place at the end of the course. The format of this activity follows the TV program *Jeopardy*, with the recorded sound effects, and an Alex Trebeck look-

alike. The difference is that questions are all related to Japan, on topics most of which have been touched upon in various classes throughout the course.

The overall rating of Component C (Plant/Office visits, guest speakers, and culture classes) was high (4.5-5 on a scale of 1 (= Poor) to 5 (= Excellent) in both 1996 and 1997. Some students commented that they especially liked the association with native speakers of Japanese (e.g., the Japanese ESL students).

EVALUATION

In order to measure students' progress as well as the effectiveness of the course (Component A: business conversation and composition classes), we administered three kinds of tests both at the entrance and the exit of the course. These three tests are: SPOT (Simple Performance-Oriented Test) developed by Professor Noriko Kobayashi and her group at Tsukuba University; VOCI (Video/Oral Communication Instrument); and an in-house written test.

SPOT

SPOT is a test that is designed to measure students' general proficiency levels. It requires students to listen to a tape and fill in the blank with one hiragana letter as shown below. (The actual test is written in kana and kanji with a hiragana reading on top of the kanji.)

- (1) Soko ___ nani wo shite iru n desu ka?
- (2) Kimura sensei ni ae___ba ii no desu ga . . .

One hundred and twenty five sentences of this format are read at normal speed with a two-second pause between the two sentences. Most of the items chosen to be tested are part of the function words, or inflectional endings, and are therefore, stressed very weakly. Kobayashi, Ford-Niva, and Yamamoto hypothesize that in order to actually hear the sound of the tested item, students must possess all of the following linguistic abilities: (a) perceive sounds phonemically; (b) read the sentence along with the tape; (c) comprehend the meaning of the sentence; and (d) predict how the sentence develops. In their series of studies, Kobayashi and others have demonstrated the validity and reliability of SPOT to measure students' language abilities.

In our sample, the following mean scores were obtained (Table 1). In both Part A and B of the tests, paired t-tests revealed that students made a significant improvement (Part A: $t = 6.601$, $df = 10$, $p < 0.001$; Part B: $t = 5.062$, $df = 10$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 1: SPOT Results

	Pretest (N = 13)	Posttest (N=11)
Part A (Max = 65)	Mean = 20.8	Mean = 31.0
Part B (Max = 60)	Mean = 29.9	Mean = 42.3

VOCI

The VOCI, developed at the National Language Resource Center at San Diego State University, is a general proficiency test that is often used as a placement test. It elicits ratable samples of utterances using a video-tape in order to measure students' oral proficiency. In the video, native speakers of Japanese ask students questions in various contexts. They are simple information questions at the beginning and gradually progress in structural and situational complexity to conclude with more task-oriented questions. Students are expected to answer these questions to the best of their ability, and their responses are tape-recorded. At the completion of the tests, we evaluated their performance based on the ACTFL's OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) scale.⁴ Compared with OPI interviews, which aim to obtain ratable language samples through natural interviews, the 'interview' with VOCI is deprived of such naturalness. However, because the same questions are asked at the entrance and the exit of the course, and also to all the interviewees at the same time, it enables direct comparisons of pretests and posttests of one individual as well as among individuals.

We have found that all of the students have made some progress. For instance, one student who belonged to the lowest proficiency level in his class made the following progress:

⁴For the detailed description of OPI, please refer to *The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview Tester Training Manual* (1988).

VOCI	Pretest	Posttest
Comprehension	Did not comprehend Part II & III questions	Comprehended Part I & II; partially comprehended Part III
Text type & structural complexity	Spoke in discrete sentences; often used incomplete sentences; used mostly copula sentences	Spoke in discrete sentences; used mostly complete sentences; made some successful attempts to conjoin sentences; structural varieties included comparison and permission forms
Accuracy & delivery	Made sentences difficult to understand; had frequent hesitations	Made sentences easier to understand though made ungrammatical sentences and wrong word choices

Another student who belonged to the medial level of proficiency made the following progress:

VOCI	Pretest	Posttest
Comprehension	Did not comprehend half of Part II & III questions	Comprehended Part I & II questions; comprehended most of Part III questions
Text type & structural complexity	Used mostly discrete, complete sentences though made some attempts to connect sentences with gerunds	Produced abundance of conjoined sentences and a variety of structures (e.g., gerund, <i>shi</i> , since, but, etc.); showed good control of a variety of structures including a comparative, conditional, benefactive, etc.; used modal expressions
Accuracy & delivery	Made sentences that were easily understood; had frequent hesitations	Made smooth execution of strings of sentences with a high level of accuracy

Finally, another student who belonged to the highest achieving group made the following progress.

VOCI	Pretest	Posttest
Compre- hension	Did not fully comprehend Part III questions	Comprehended all the ques- tions
Text type & struc- tural com- plexity	Used paragraph discourse	Used paragraph discourse; was able to state opinions by raising coherent and suppor- tive evidence in a convincing manner; used some cultural references and idioms
Accuracy & delivery	Showed great accuracy; showed good control of the major structures and a vari- ety of vocabulary	Spoke with near native flu- ency and accuracy

In-house Written Achievement Test

The in-house written test was developed as an achievement test to measure students' mastery of grammatical structure, mostly business vocabulary as well as their reading comprehension skills. The format of the test employs multiple-choice, fill in the blanks, and matching types of questions. In our test samples, the following mean scores were obtained (Table 2). The results confirmed that students learned well the materials presented during Component A of the course.

Table 2: In-house Written Achievement Test Results

	Pretest (N = 13)	Posttest (N=13)
Part A (Max = 40)	Mean = 13.2	Mean = 32.9

CONCLUSION

We have discussed a unique business Japanese course offered annually at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Specifically, we have described our own creative approach that successfully interconnects three components (i.e., language skill, sociocultural knowledge, and networking) and integrates local business communities and volunteer groups with the classroom. We have also introduced teaching materials that we have

developed. The systematic organization and comprehensiveness of the textbook as well as innovative CALI materials enhanced the students' learning processes, as measured by two general proficiency tests (SPOT and VOICI) and one achievement test (in-house written test). We also have shown that corporate culture classes and language and society classes increased students' interest in, as well as knowledge about, Japanese business, management and society. In the end, all this material enhanced the conversation classes.

We hope that this article has made a contribution to the rapidly growing, highly demanding, yet not fully cultivated area of business Japanese instruction.⁵

REFERENCES

- The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. *The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview*. New York: The Office Ink, 1989.
- Azuma, S. "Facing Diversification in the Purpose of Study: Business Japanese." *ADFL Bulletin* 28.2 (1997): 17–20.
- Butler, K. D. *Japanese for International Businessmen*. Tokyo: ALC, 1987.
- Gessel, Van C. (1997). "Teaching 'the Devil's Own Tongue': The Challenges of Offering Japanese in a College Environment." *ADFL Bulletin* 28.2 (1997): 6–10.
- Hall, C., and M. E. Mullins. "U.S.A. Snapshots: Second Language of Business." *USA Today* 3 Apr. 1997.
- Horiuchi, M. and C. Ashitaka. *Nihon de Bijinesu*. Tokyo: Senmon Kyooiku Shuppan, 1989.
- Kobayashi, N., J. Ford-Niwa, and H. Yamamoto. "Nihongo nooryoku no atarashii sokuteihoo." *Sekai no Nihongo Kyooiku* 6 (1996): 201–18.
- Kikuchi, M. *Hajimashite: A Systematic Approach to Business Japanese*. Field Test Version. 1997.

Nakane, Chie. *Japanese Society*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1970.

Nara, H., and M. Kikuchi. *Interactive Japanese: Understanding Written Japanese*. Tokyo: Nippon Television Cultural Society and Fujitsu, 1990.

Nichibeï Kaiwa Gakuin. *Nihongo de Business Kaiwa Shokyu Hen*. Tokyo: Bonjinsha, 1987.

Japan: Its Land and People. Video series. Nippon Steel Corporation, 1989.

Takamizawa, H. *Office Japanese*. Tokyo: ALC, 1991.

Takamizawa, H. *Business Japanese Plus*. Lincolnwood: Passport Books, 1991.

Wetzel, Patricia J. (1997). "Japanese Articulation: Not Just Lip Service." *ADFL Bulletin* 28.2 (1997): 11–15.

APPENDIX 1: ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXTBOOK

Each lesson consists of the following sections: *Priming*, three or four sets of segments containing *Conversation*, *Glossary*, *Notes*, and *New Structures*, followed by *Exercises* and *Listening Comprehension* questions. Whenever relevant, culture notes are attached in a box. *Priming* provides the background information to facilitate the understanding of the model conversations that follow. Each conversation has an English translation. The *Glossary* section shows the definition of words. The *Notes* section provides a brief review of grammar and sociological information on the conversation. The *New Structures* section provides grammar explanations. The *Exercises* section provides various types of activities utilizing the new grammatical structures and vocabulary learned in each lesson. The last section in each lesson is *Listening Comprehension*. This includes questions based on a taped conversation. A sample page from the textbook follows:

Lesson 1:  [Job Interview]*Priming*

Imagine that you are about to graduate from your university and are looking for a job in Japan. You have surveyed various companies in your field of specialty, received job application forms, and set up an appointment for a job interview. Now imagine that you have arrived in Japan and that you are about to enter the interview room. This is the moment when all of your hard work in studying Japanese will really pay off.

- How do you greet your interviewer?
- Can you state your name, school, major, and your specialty in a succinct manner?
- How do you answer if you are asked why you have chosen the company?



Conversation 1: a

The interviewer, Mr. Tanaka, is a member of an electronic firm manufacturing cellular telephones. His formal speech style indicates that he is playing a role of an impartial, slightly detached interviewer to maintain a social distance from Mr. Han, a college graduate. Both parties use polite languages (Mr. Han honorifically refers to the company as 御社^{おんしゃ} while Mr. Tanaka humbly refers to his own company うちの会社^{うちのかいしゃ}). This reflects the fact that they do not belong to the same in-group.

1. 田: どうぞ。 T: Please [come in].
2. ハ: 失礼します。 H: Excuse me.
3. ハ: はじめまして。ジョージア工科大学のハンと申します。よろしく願いたします。 H: How do you do? I'm called Han of Georgia Institute of Technology. Nice to meet you.
4. 田: ハンさん、専攻は電気工学ですか。 T: Mr. Han, is your major electrical engineering?
5. ハ: はい。 H: Yes.
6. 田: 電気工学のどの分野が専門ですか。 T: Which field of electrical engineering is your specialty?
7. ハ: コンピュータ回路が専門です。 H: Computer circuits are [my] specialty.
8. 田: ハンさんはどうしてうちの会社をご志望なんですか。 T: Why have you chosen our company?
9. ハ: はい。御社は創立82年という歴史のある会社で、携帯用電話もすばらしく、御社は大学の専攻がいかせると思ったんです。 H: Yes. Your company has a history of 82 years since its establishment, your portable telephones are excellent, and I thought I can make the most of what I have learned in my major [to succeed] at your company.

APPENDIX 2: COMPUTER PROGRAMS

QUILL (QUality Interactive Language Learning)

The *QUILL* modules were primarily designed to work as self-study units for pre-viewing and reviewing business conversations through interactive video technology. The program works on Macintosh-compatible computers.

Students have a choice of viewing the entire conversation at once or one conversational turn at a time. On each screen, students can do dictation exercises and vocabulary drills.

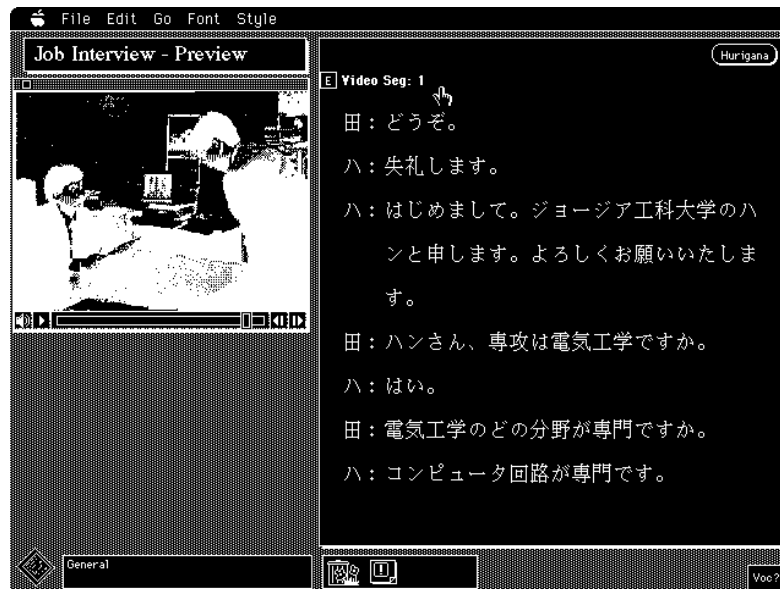


Figure A1: QUILL Screen

By clicking on the "Hurigana" button on the upper right corner, students can display the hiragana reading of each kanji. Each label to the left of the conversation identifies the speaker. By clicking on this label, students can play back the video segment corresponding to that line of conversation. Any words in the text can be clicked on to produce a pop-up window containing the meaning and usage of the word. Students can drag the "E" button located next to the top line "Video Seg: 1" to any line of the conversation and start the dictation exercise. The Japanese symbols (hiragana and katakana) are used during the dictation exercises. The "Voc?" button on the bottom right corner starts multiple-choice vocabulary exercises randomly chosen from definitions contained in this conversation.

The following is a sample letter for a job request used in the composition class. Students made their own business letters during the simulation game based on this sample letter.

平成 年 月 日

東京都 千代田区 本町 2-13

部長/課長 _____ 殿

東京都渋谷区元町 4-14

☎03-3123-4567 FAX: 03-3123-4568

桜製菓株式会社

_____ 部長 _____ 印

インターネットによる宣伝について

拝啓 貴社ますますご発展のこととお喜び申し上げます。

さて、かねてから計画しておりました当社でのインターネットによる宣伝の原案ができましたので、お送りいたします。つきましては下記の条件で経費をお見積り下さるよう、お願いいたします。

敬 具

記

1. インターネット原案 (別紙参照)
2. 原案の英文 翻訳
3. 納入期限 平成 年 月 日

以 上

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE WEB PAGES CREATED BY STUDENTS

The following is one of the web pages created by students during the simulation game. This company, "Cool Connection," is one of the hypothetical internet advertisement companies.

Nihongo English

Is your company choo berry bad?

Do you want to be choo berry good?

All you need to do is call us at



Cool Connections

Cool Connections
902 Peachtree St.
Atlanta, GA 30332
Tel: 800 987-0000
FAX: 800 987-1000

This design was chosen as the official home page for Company A ("Sakura Seika"), a traditional Japanese company which manufactures Japanese candies.

桜製菓
Sakura Candy Company



歴史：1895年より桜製菓が生まれて皆様の手元にも私たちのお菓子が届くようになりました。桜製菓は品質が高くてもっと虫歯もできてしまうほどおいしいと言われています。

History The Sakura Candy Company was established in 1895 for the sole purpose of bringing joy to Japanese children. Traditional candymaking processes allow us to produce high quality candies that are both delicious and unique.

社長のメッセージ：私の家は昔から皇室のために何世代にも渡って高い品質のお菓子を作って参りました。私たちは皇室の方々に喜ばれていただいた桜製菓のお菓子を皆さんにも楽しんでいただきたく思います。皆様方の時の支援とより一層のごひきをお願ひします。
 敬具

Message from the President: No matter what the age, we strive to bring the highest quality candies to your honorable home. We hope that the candies from the Sakura Candy Company bring you joy and happiness. With warmth from our hearts, we wish you all the best in life.



桜製菓

住所：東京都渋谷区元町4-1-4

Sakura Candy Company

Tokyo Japan 4-14

☎03-3123-4567 FAX: 03-3123-4568