

Short Report: Introduction to Spoken Japanese for SOI Asia Project

Course Instructor: Ms. Yuka Shori Kataoka*
Assistant Course Instructor: Ms. Yuko Osawa†

1. Overview of the course

Introduction to Spoken Japanese (ISJ) course was conducted from Nov 7th to Dec 26th in 2020 (8 weeks) for SOI Asia Project partner universities. A total of classroom hours (real-time face-to-face) was 15 hours. Our proposed system “ORP Gym: Online Oral Repetition Practice Support System” was incorporated into the program during classroom hours to improve the number of opportunities for oral practice and feedback.

2. Course schedule

The course was scheduled every Saturday from 14:00 to 15:50 (GMT+9) as Table 1 shows. Although each lesson was designed based on the expected learning outcomes, the participants’ voluntary oral presentation sessions and cultural sessions were also conducted according to their interest and motivation.

Table 1 Course schedule and learning outcomes

Lesson	Date	Time	Learning outcomes
1	Nov 7th	14:00 - 15:50 (110 min)	Orientation Self-introduction and greetings Personal pronouns
2	Nov 14th	14:00 - 16:30 (150 min)	Demonstrative pronouns Nouns (daily necessities)
3	Nov 21st	14:00 - 15:50 (110 min)	Possessive form Numbers and how to tell the time
4	Nov 28th	14:00 - 15:50 (110 min)	Adjectives
5	Dec 5th	14:00 - 15:50 (110 min)	Present future tense Destination
6	Dec 12th	14:00 - 15:50 (110 min)	Past tense Time expression and days of the week
7	Dec 19th	14:00 - 15:50 (110 min)	Word orders and review all particles
8	Dec 26th	14:00 - 15:50 (110 min)	Review all sentence patterns (Post-test on ORP Gym)

* Keio University Graduate School of Media and Governance

† Keio University Graduate School of Media Design

3. The program and timetable

As Table 2 shows, the session was mainly divided into 2 parts in each lesson: 1) Main session (80 min) in one room and 2) Parallel session in two break-out rooms. The instructional program which includes fundamental knowledge of spoken Japanese language and culture and interactive practice were provided to all the participants during the 1st session. After that, the class was divided into 2 classes (“break-out classrooms”) and Oral Repetition Practice (ORP) exercise program was conducted in parallel.

The instructional program fostered the participants to remember (*input*) keywords and sentence patterns by understanding the fundamental grammar knowledge. The ORP exercise program encouraged them to speak (*output*) the words and sentence patterns practically and correct their erroneous utterances as many times as they could by the support from the different types of feedback (instructor’s manual feedback and automatic prompt feedback on our proposed system, ORP Gym).

Table 2 Program and Timetable in each lesson

Time slot	Session	Program
14:00 - 15:20 (80 min)	Main session in one room	Instructional program
15:20 - 15:30 (10 min)	Parallel session in two break-out rooms	Break and attendance check
15:30 - 15:50 (20 min)		ORP exercise program
15:50 - 16:00 (10 min)		After class Q and A / Announcement

4. Participant detail

The participants from 4 SOI Asia partner universities and Keio university joined the course as a student. The percentage of the participants in each university is shown in Figure 1. A total of 12 students completed the course by meeting the criteria to complete the course (achieved more than 70% in all three criteria: 1) attendance, 2) mini-test, and the online individual speaking test on ORP Gym). Although 18 students registered and submitted the consent form at the beginning of the course, 6 students switched to audit or dropped out in the middle of the course. Due to COVID-19 pandemic issues, all the students joined the course at home or at workplaces using Internet access.

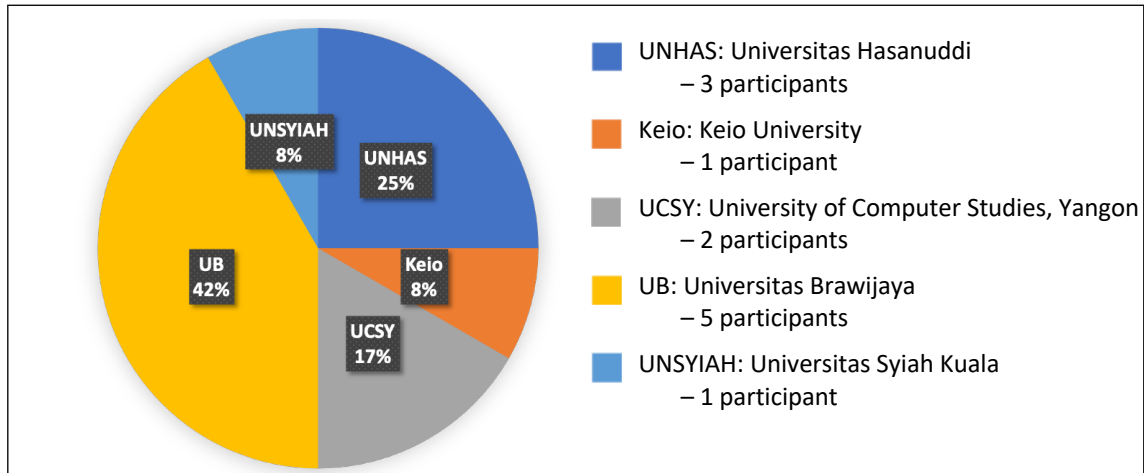


Figure 1 Percentage of the participants in each SOI Asia Project partner university

5. Course completion

The 12 students who completed the course were awarded the certificate of the course with the detailed report card in the speaking test. The e-badge on ORP Gym was also issued on ORP Gym.

6. The student feedback about the course

The questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale was conducted online after the course (from Dec 26th, 2020 to Jan 18th, 2021). There were 5 question items in the questionnaire and the students showed high positive learning satisfaction with the course, as the result shows in Table 3. The mean was above 4.5 and the SD was below 1 in all the items. Especially, they confirmed that ORP session in a breakout room benefitted in improving their speaking.

Table 3 The questionnaire result of the students' satisfaction with the course (N= 12)

No.	Question items	Mean	SD
1	I enjoyed the course.	4.9	0.3
2	The course was easy to understand for me.	4.8	0.5
3	I enjoyed the oral repetition practice session in a breakout room.	4.8	0.5
4	The oral repetition practice session was easy to understand for me.	4.7	0.7
5	The oral repetition practice session helped me to improve my speaking.	5.0	0.0

7. The detailed report regarding the experiment

The experiment to deploy ORP Gym for real-time ORP exercise was also conducted during the course. The detailed report including an analysis of the collected data on the system will be compiled as an academic paper by March 2021.

8. Acknowledgements

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