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Needs Analysis of Audio-Based Learning Media for Telephone Conversations in Business Japanese

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the needs for audio-based learning media in mastering telephone conversation skills in business Japanese. Effective communication, especially in a professional setting, requires a deep understanding of Keigo (honorific language) and standardized expressions (*kimari monku*), which are often challenging for learners. The research method used was a survey through questionnaires distributed to students studying the Japanese language. The results showed that the majority of respondents experienced difficulties in using keigo and standardized expressions (*kimari monku*) correctly during telephone conversations, indicating a strong need for interactive and contextual learning methods. The findings also highlight the potential benefits of audio-based media in enhancing listening comprehension and communication skills in business settings. This study serves as a foundation for developing effective audio-based learning tools to support learners in improving their Japanese business communication skills, particularly in telephone interactions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving era of globalization, the cooperation between Indonesia and Japan has become increasingly close, particularly in the field of employment (Tavares *et al.*, 2022; Murdiono & Wuryandani, 2021). Japan is one of the primary destinations for Indonesian workers, with a significant increase in the number of workers each year (Lan, 2022; Ngadi *et al.*, 2023). According to the latest data from 2024, there are approximately 121,507 Indonesian migrant workers in Japan, nearly tripling compared to the previous year, from CNN Indonesia, 2024. However, despite the growing job opportunities, the main challenge faced by Indonesian workers in Japan is their communication skills in business Japanese, especially in using keigo (honorific language), which is complex (Andriyani *et al.*, 2024; Haryanti, 2020; Asis & Carandang, 2020).

Keigo and Kimari Monku (standardized expressions) are crucial aspects of professional communication in Japan as they reflect the level of formality and hierarchy in the workplace. State that many Indonesian workers struggle to understand and use keigo correctly, often leading to miscommunication in business interactions (Wahidati & Djafri, 2021; Mahira *et al.*, 2024; Haristiani *et al.*, 2023). Errors in using keigo can cause misunderstandings, reduce work efficiency, and even affect professional relationships between foreign workers and their Japanese colleagues (Grosser, 2023; Shimoda, 2013; Menard-Warwick & Leung, 2017).

In an academic context, students studying business Japanese face similar challenges. Keigo comprehension among students is still at an intermediate level, indicating a lack of deep understanding and minimal practice in real situations (Dibello Takeuchi, 2021). One of the most challenging forms of communication is business telephone conversations, which require the precise use of keigo and kimari monku without relying on facial expressions or body gestures to clarify the message.

To address this issue, a more interactive and contextual learning method is needed to help students better understand and apply keigo (Sari & Kaluge, 2021; Reswari & Kalimanzila, 2021). One potential solution is the use of audio-based learning media. According to research, audio media in learning has been proven to enhance engagement and effectiveness, especially in listening skills (Widyaningrum, 2015). Additionally, the researchers suggest that using audio files can improve listening comprehension and help learners adapt to the language more naturally (Mohamadkhan *et al.*, 2013).

In this needs analysis, the research focuses on mapping students' difficulties in understanding and using keigo in business telephone conversations. Through questionnaires, this study aims to identify the main challenges students face and explore the potential of audio-based learning media in enhancing their business communication skills. The findings of this analysis are expected to serve as a foundation for developing more effective learning media, particularly in improving students' competence in professional communication in Japanese.

Therefore, this study aims to identify students' needs in audio-based business Japanese learning, which can later be used as a reference in developing learning media that better suit users' needs. It is hoped that this learning media will help students understand and master keigo more effectively in telephone conversations, enabling them to communicate more confidently and competently in professional settings in Japan.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Audio-based learning media has long been recognized as an effective method for enhancing language proficiency. According to several studies, audio materials enable learners

to concentrate on pronunciation and intonation without the distractions of visual cues (Hernandez, 2019). In the broader context of language education, audio-based media are seen as particularly beneficial for providing authentic and diverse auditory input (Mohamadkhani *et al.*, 2013), which enriches the learning experience.

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of audio media in language learning. Audio-based instruction can increase student engagement and attention, particularly in listening activities (Widyaningrum, 2015). The importance of audio in business language education, helping learners develop better intonation and speech rate, both of which are often challenging in professional communication (Rizki, 2020).

Moreover, digital platforms like SoundCloud and podcasts offer accessible ways to distribute audio content (Asmi, 2019). As highlighted by several studies (Fadilah *et al.*, 2017), podcasts provide flexibility in terms of time and location, thereby enhancing both the frequency and quality of study.

In the realm of business Japanese, scholars have pointed out the necessity for strong communication skills, especially for graduates aiming to work in Japanese companies (Dwiwardani & Wahidati, 2019). A key challenge in this context is the lack of specialized audio materials that focus on keigo (formal or honorific language) and kimari monku (standardized expressions) used in business settings. As noted by several researchers, students often make errors in keigo, reflecting the high degree of formality required in business interactions. Telephone conversations, in particular, pose unique difficulties, as speakers cannot rely on nonverbal cues such as facial expressions or gestures (Wahidati & Djafri, 2021). This can be especially problematic for learners unaccustomed to the nuanced hierarchy and sentence structures associated with keigo and kimari monku.

Although numerous studies have highlighted the importance of audio media in language learning, there is still a noticeable gap in the development of audio-based materials specifically tailored to business Japanese telephone conversations. Previous research has largely focused on general listening skills or face-to-face keigo usage, overlooking the practical needs of telephone interactions that demand quick responses and precise use of honorific language and fixed expressions. Additionally, earlier studies have not thoroughly addressed the iterative design of audio media tailored to the needs of business Japanese learners.

In response to these gaps, the present study aims to design an audio-based learning medium specifically geared toward business Japanese telephone conversations, including the appropriate application of both keigo and kimari monku, while considering the needs of students preparing to enter the workforce. This approach seeks to bridge the divide between theoretical research and practical implementation, ensuring that learners have access to high-quality, context-specific audio resources that support effective communication in professional Japanese settings.

3. METHOD

This study aims to analyze the need for audio-based learning media in improving telephone conversation skills in business Japanese. The focus of this research includes the availability of learning resources, their suitability to student needs, as well as students' interest, motivation, and perception of using audio media in learning business Japanese.

The approach used in this study is quantitative, allowing for the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns and trends in students' perceptions of audio-based learning media.

The population in this study consists of fourth-year Japanese Literature students at Universitas Komputer Indonesia who are studying Japanese at the university level and

preparing to enter the workforce. The sample is determined using random sampling techniques to ensure objective representation. A total of 70% of the population is selected as the sample, which is considered sufficient to provide an overall depiction of students' needs and perceptions.

Data is collected through closed-ended questionnaires distributed online via Google Forms. This method is chosen for its efficiency, broader reach, and the flexibility it offers students to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. The questionnaire used in this study consists of two main variables:

- (i) Variable 1: The need for audio-based learning media, covering aspects of availability, accessibility, and its suitability to student needs.
- (ii) Variable 2: Interest, motivation, and perception of audio learning media, including aspects of interest in using audio media, learning motivation with audio media, and students' views on the effectiveness of audio media in learning business Japanese.

The questionnaire indicators include questions about students' experience in using audio learning media, difficulties in learning Japanese telephone conversations, and their level of proficiency in keigo used in business communication. Additionally, the questionnaire assesses students' level of interest and motivation in using audio media as a learning method and the advantages they perceive from using this media.

Data obtained from the questionnaire will be analyzed quantitatively to identify patterns and trends in students' needs and perceptions of audio-based learning media. The analysis techniques include descriptive statistics, aiming to present data in percentages and frequency distributions to provide a clear picture of students' needs for audio-based learning media in business Japanese.

The findings of this study are expected to serve as a foundation for developing more effective audio-based learning media that align with students' needs, particularly in the context of telephone conversations in business Japanese.

4. DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings on the need for audio-based learning media for business Japanese telephone conversations. These findings are based on two main variables: the need for audio-based learning media and students' interest, motivation, and perception of audio learning media.

In this questionnaire, each variable consists of two selected indicators relevant to our study. Each indicator is represented by multiple questions, resulting in a structured set of responses. The sequence begins with the need for audio-based learning media, which includes the following indicators: Availability and Accessibility, and Suitability to Student Needs. The second variable, Interest, Motivation, and Perception of Audio Learning Media, consists of the following indicators: Interest in Using Audio Media, Learning Motivation with Audio Media, and Perceived Effectiveness of Audio Media in Business Japanese Learning.

Before analyzing these key variables, it is essential to understand the students' career aspirations, as they directly influence their learning priorities and perceived importance of mastering business Japanese communication skills. One of the general questions in the questionnaire asked:

Based on **Table 1**, all respondents (100%) answered "Yes" to the question "Do you plan to work or pursue a career after graduation?" These findings indicate that every participant has a clear intention to enter the workforce after completing their studies.

This reinforces the urgency of developing learning media that can help students prepare for professional environments, particularly in business Japanese communication skills. Given

the strong demand for entering the workforce, practical learning approaches such as mastering telephone conversations in business Japanese become increasingly relevant and essential.

The first indicator in this study focuses on the availability and accessibility of audio-based learning media for business Japanese telephone conversations. This aspect is crucial in determining whether students have adequate resources to develop their communication skills effectively.

Based on the questionnaire responses, students were asked whether they had previously learned business Japanese using audio-based media and whether they had access to specific learning materials for Japanese telephone conversations. The findings indicate that 73,3% of respondents have never used audio-based media for business Japanese learning, highlighting a gap in accessible learning resources.

Additionally, 20% of respondents stated that it was "very difficult," while 70% found it "difficult" to find audio-based learning materials for business Japanese telephone conversations. These results suggest that while audio-based learning media play a vital role in improving listening comprehension and fluency, their availability remains limited. The lack of easily accessible and structured materials may hinder students from acquiring essential business communication skills, particularly in mastering *keigo* and polite expressions required in professional settings.

Given these findings, there is a clear need to develop more structured and accessible audio-based learning materials tailored to business Japanese. Ensuring that students have convenient access to these resources, whether through online platforms, university-provided materials, or mobile applications, can significantly enhance their learning experience and practical application of business Japanese communication skills.

The second indicator focuses on how well audio-based learning media align with students' needs in learning Japanese business telephone conversations. This section explores students' perceptions of the importance of audio learning media, the most challenging aspects of telephone conversations in Japanese, and their proficiency in using *keigo* in this context.

According to the survey results, 26.7% of respondents considered audio-based learning media "very important," while 70% rated it as "important." These findings suggest that the vast majority of students recognize the significance of having structured audio materials for mastering business Japanese telephone conversations.

When asked about the most difficult aspects of learning Japanese business telephone conversations, 46.7% of respondents identified *keigo* as the most challenging. Additionally, 20% pointed to sentence patterns and set phrases (*kimari monku*), 26.7% found vocabulary to be the main obstacle, while 6.7% struggled with intonation and speaking speed. These results highlight the complexity of formal business communication in Japanese, particularly the correct use of honorific language (*keigo*).

Regarding their mastery of *keigo* commonly used in business telephone conversations, 60% of students reported that their proficiency was "not good," while 16.7% stated it was "very poor." Only 23.3% considered their *keigo* skills to be "good." This finding aligns with the study, which revealed that students generally struggle with *keigo*, as their understanding remains at an intermediate level with limited practical application. The results further reinforce the need for targeted learning resources, particularly audio-based materials, to improve students' comprehension and usage of *keigo* in real-world business settings.

Table 1. Answer questions from all respondents.

Question	Answer	Percentage (%)
Do you plan to work or pursue a career after graduation?	Yes	100
	No	0
How difficult is it for you to find audio-based learning materials for telephone conversations in the context of business Japanese?	Very Difficult	20
	Difficult	70
	Easy	10
	Very Easy	-
How important do you think audio-based learning media is for learning telephone conversations in business Japanese?	Very Important	26.7
	Important	70
	Not Important	33.3
	Very Important	-
What do you think is the most difficult aspect of learning telephone conversations in business Japanese?	<i>Keigo</i>	46.7
	<i>Kimari Monku</i>	20
	Intonation	6.7
	Vocabulary	26.7
How well do you understand keigo, commonly used in telephone conversations in the context of? business Japanese	Very Good	-
	Good	23.3
	Not Good	60
	Very Poor	16.7
I am interested in using audio-based learning media to improve my telephone conversation skills in business Japanese.	Strongly Agree	40
	Agree	53.3
	Disagree	6.7
	Strongly Disagree	-
Do you think audio-based learning can help boost confidence when speaking on the phone in Japanese?	Strongly Agree	36.7
	Agree	56.7
	Disagree	6.7
	Strongly Disagree	-

Table 2 shows results from the indicator that examines students' interest in utilizing audio-based learning media to improve their proficiency in business Japanese telephone conversations. When asked about their interest in using audio learning media, 53.3% of respondents agreed that they were interested, while 40% strongly agreed. These results indicate that the majority of students recognize the potential benefits of audio-based learning and are willing to incorporate it into their study routines.

The high percentage of agreement suggests that students perceive audio learning as an effective tool for enhancing their listening and speaking skills, particularly in mastering business Japanese telephone conversations. This aligns with previous research by several researchers, which highlights that audio-based learning media can significantly improve engagement and comprehension in language acquisition (Widyaningrum, 2015).

This indicator assesses the extent to which audio-based learning media can enhance students' motivation to improve their proficiency in business Japanese telephone conversations.

When asked whether they felt more motivated to learn business Japanese telephone conversations using audio-based media, 56.7% of respondents agreed, while 36.7% strongly agreed. Only 6.7% disagreed. These findings suggest that the majority of students find audio-based media to be an engaging and motivating learning tool.

Additionally, when questioned about whether audio-based learning could help boost their confidence when speaking on the phone in Japanese, 43.3% of respondents strongly agreed, and 46.7% agreed, with only 10% disagreeing. These results indicate that most students

believe audio-based media can contribute significantly to building their confidence in using Japanese in professional settings.

The overall findings reinforce the idea that incorporating audio-based media in language learning can foster motivation and enhance speaking confidence, aligning with the researchers (Mohamadkhan *et al.*, 2013), which highlights the effectiveness of audio learning in improving language acquisition and real-world communication skills.

Table 2. Answer questions about interesting media from all respondents.

Question	Strongly Agree	Percentage (%)		Strongly Disagree
		Agree	Disagree	
I am interested in using audio-based learning media to improve my telephone conversation skills in business Japanese.	40	53.3	6.7	-
I feel more motivated to learn telephone conversations in business Japanese when using audio-based learning media.	36.7	56.7	6.7	-
Do you think audio-based learning can help boost confidence when speaking on the phone in Japanese?	43.3	46.7	10	-

Table 3 explores students' perceptions of the advantages of audio-based learning media in improving their ability to engage in business Japanese telephone conversations. Respondents were allowed to select more than one option, with most choosing an average of two benefits.

The most commonly cited advantage was that audio-based media allow students to study anytime and anywhere without the need to look at a screen, with 73.3% of respondents selecting this option. This flexibility is a crucial factor, as it enables learners to integrate language learning seamlessly into their daily routines.

Additionally, 56.7% of respondents stated that audio-based media help improve pronunciation, intonation, and listening comprehension, reinforcing the importance of auditory input in language acquisition. Meanwhile, 26.7% of students found audio media to be more practical than text- or video-based learning resources, and another 26.7% agreed that it works well as a complementary tool alongside other learning media.

Table 3. Percentage of students' perceptions of the advantages of audio-based learning media.

Answer (Percentage)	What do you think are the advantages of audio-based learning media?
Makes learning easier anytime and anywhere without having to look at a screen.	73.3 %
Helps improve pronunciation, intonation, and listening comprehension.	56.7 %
More practical compared to text- or video-based media.	26.7 %
Suitable as a complementary learning tool alongside other media.	26.7 %
Helps enhance focus in understanding the material without visual distractions.	13.3 %

Finally, 13.3% of respondents indicated that audio-based learning helps them focus on the material without visual distractions, suggesting that some learners benefit from an auditory-only approach when studying.

These findings highlight the various strengths of audio-based learning media, demonstrating that it provides flexibility, enhances listening and pronunciation skills, and serves as a valuable supplement to other learning methods. The results align with previous research (Widyaningrum 2015), which emphasizes the effectiveness of audio media in improving listening comprehension and overall engagement in language learning.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings highlight the urgent need for audio-based learning media to support students in mastering business Japanese telephone conversations. Despite their strong career aspirations, many struggle to find structured learning materials, particularly for keigo, a key challenge in professional communication.

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5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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