

Enhancing Japanese Communication Skills through an Industry-Based Roleplay Module Using Communicative Language Teaching Approach

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Abstract - This study investigates the effectiveness of an industry-based role-play module developed using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach for enhancing Japanese communication skills among tourism vocational students. The research employed a Research and Development (R&D) design integrated with classroom action research. Involving 20 students of the Tour and Travel Business Program at Politeknik Pariwisata Bali who had completed two semesters of basic Japanese Language. Data were collected through speaking performance assessments, observation checklists, peer evaluations, and reflective journals. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure improvement across two learning cycles, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The results indicate a substantial improvement in students' communicative competence, particularly in fluency, pragmatic accuracy (*keigo* usage), and professional etiquette, with overall performance increasing from 65% in Cycle I to 88% in Cycle II. The findings suggest that integrating authentic tourism industry contexts into roleplay-based learning within the CLT framework effectively strengthens students' professional Japanese communication competence.

Keywords: communicative language teaching, experiential learning theory, Japanese teaching module, task-based language teaching, vocational education

1. Introduction

Learning foreign languages in tourism polytechnics is essential, as this competency is required for graduates to enter the global workforce effectively. Bali, one of Indonesia's leading tourist destinations, attracts many international visitors, making foreign-language proficiency a critical skill for tourism professionals who interact extensively with foreign guests. In this context, the ability to communicate in foreign languages is not only a linguistic requirement but also a key component of service quality and professional competence (Basturkmen, 2022; Hyland, 2022). However, foreign language instruction in vocational and polytechnic settings often fails to reflect authentic industry contexts, as it tends to focus more on language structure rather than practical communication. Consequently, there is a need for pedagogical innovation that integrates real-world communication scenarios and equips students with the ability to use language effectively in professional settings (Ellis, 2021; Littlewood, 2022).

In this study, the focus is on Japanese language learning within the Tour and Travel Business study program, in which Japanese courses are allocated up to 4 credits. Students receive instruction over two semesters, with 16 face-to-face meetings per semester. Given this limited instructional time, the expected learning outcome is student's ability to communicate effectively in Japanese within their professional field. Therefore, innovative and efficient learning approaches are required to achieve these outcomes. This research aims to improve students' communication skills by developing and implementing an industry-based roleplay module grounded in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach and informed by the results of a needs analysis. The needs analysis revealed that students require the ability to perform key communicative functions commonly used in the tourism industry, such as welcoming guests, introducing services, handling reservations, giving directions, and responding to customer requests, all with appropriate levels of politeness, including the use of *keigo* expressions.

These identified needs highlight the importance of not only linguistic accuracy but also pragmatic and intercultural competence in professional communication. Therefore, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaningful interaction and the use of language in authentic contexts, is considered an appropriate approach to facilitate the development of these competencies (Littlewood, 2022). By integrating the findings of the needs analysis into role-play-based learning activities, this study ensures that language instruction aligns with real-world workplace communication demands.

Needs Analysis (NA) is a systematic, iterative process for identifying learners' communicative needs within specific institutional and professional contexts. Contemporary needs analysis frameworks emphasize aligning instructional content and tasks with real-world communicative demands rather than relying solely on general learner preferences or subjective data (Basturkmen, 2022; Long, 2015). In vocational education, needs analysis plays a critical role in bridging academic instruction and workplace expectations. Target needs refer to the communicative tasks learners must perform in their future professional roles, including linguistic competence, pragmatic appropriateness, and intercultural awareness (Hyland, 2022). Therefore, the NA in this study was conducted to identify the communicative functions required in tourism service interactions, particularly those involving Japanese-speaking guests. The findings of the needs analysis informed the design of instructional materials structured into industry-based modules.

The results of the needs analysis indicate that students are required to perform specific communicative tasks in real tourism service contexts, such as greeting guests, providing information, and handling service-related interactions using appropriate linguistic and cultural expressions. These findings suggest that language learning should be oriented toward task performance rather than isolated knowledge of language structures. Therefore, an instructional approach that emphasizes the use of language through meaningful and goal-oriented activities is needed. In this regard, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is considered an appropriate pedagogical framework, as it enables learners to develop communicative competence by completing authentic tasks that closely resemble real-world workplace situations.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasizes meaningful tasks that reflect authentic, real-world activities as the core unit of instruction (Ellis, 2021). A task is defined as an activity in which learners use language to achieve a specific communicative outcome, with a focus on meaning rather than form. This approach is particularly suitable for vocational education because it mirrors workplace communication practices. The TBLT framework generally consists of three main stages: Pre-Task, Task Cycle, and Language Focus (Gutiérrez, 2024; Long, 2015). The Pre-Task stage introduces the topic and activates relevant background knowledge. The Task Cycle includes task performance, planning, and reporting activities, encouraging learners to engage in meaningful interaction. The Language Focus stage

allows learners to analyse linguistic features and practice forms that emerged during the task. In this study, role-play activities served as communicative tasks that represented fundamental workplace scenarios in the tourism industry, particularly within the Tour and Travel Business study program.

While Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) provides the structural framework for organizing learning activities through meaningful tasks, it is equally important to ensure that language use within these tasks remains communicative, authentic, and interaction-oriented. In this context, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) serves as the underlying pedagogical principle that guides how language is used during task performance. CLT emphasizes not only task completion but also the quality of interaction, including the appropriateness of expressions, fluency, and the ability to respond effectively in real communication situations. Therefore, integrating CLT principles within TBLT-based roleplay activities ensures that students develop not only task completion skills but also comprehensive communicative competence.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasises meaningful interaction, authentic communication, and the development of communicative competence rather than isolated grammatical mastery. Recent research confirms that contextualised communicative tasks significantly enhance speaking performance and learner engagement (Salam & Luksfinanto, 2024). Communicative competence involves grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. In Japanese tourism communication, this includes the appropriate use of *Keigo* (honorific expressions), polite forms, and culturally appropriate service etiquette. In Japanese professional communication, particularly in tourism and hospitality contexts, *keigo* (honorific language) plays a crucial role in demonstrating politeness, respect, and professionalism. *Keigo* generally consists of two primary forms: *sonkeigo* (respectful language) and *kenjougo* (humble language), both of which are widely used in service interactions to maintain harmonious social relationships and professional etiquette (Cook & Burdelski, 2016).

Sonkeigo is used to show respect to the listener or the person being spoken about, typically the guest or customer. In tourism communication, tour guides use *sonkeigo* to acknowledge guests' higher social status and foster a courteous service atmosphere. Expressions such as *goran kudasai* (please look) and *irasshaimase* (welcome) are commonly used when addressing tourists. In contrast, *kenjougo* is used by the speaker to lower themselves or their in-group, showing humility toward the guest. This form is particularly important in hospitality and tourism services because it reflects modesty, professionalism, and respect toward customers. Expressions such as *moushimasu* (humble form of "to say/name oneself") and *goannai itashimasu* (I will guide you) are frequently used in tourism guiding interactions to maintain polite and service-oriented communication with Japanese guests (Andriyani et al., 2020). In tourism-guiding contexts, the appropriate use of both *sonkeigo* and *kenjougo* is important for maintaining intercultural politeness and professional communication standards. Therefore, the roleplay activities in this study were designed to familiarize students with these forms of *keigo* in authentic tourism service interactions. By integrating CLT principles with task-based roleplay simulations, this study aims to promote not only fluency and accuracy but also pragmatic and professional competence aligned with tourism workplace standards.

The findings of the needs analysis provided the foundation for identifying authentic communicative tasks required in tourism service contexts. These identified tasks were then operationalised into experiential learning activities grounded in Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (Kolb & Kolb, 2020; Li & Liu, 2023), ensuring that students engaged in concrete workplace simulations rather than abstract language drills. Within this experiential framework, TBLT served as the instructional structure through which role-play activities were organised into pre-task, task-cycle, and language-focus stages, facilitating meaningful interaction and structured reflection.

Simultaneously, CLT principles ensured that language use during roleplay remained authentic, purposeful, and interaction-oriented, emphasizing pragmatic appropriateness and professional etiquette. Therefore, the development of the industry-based roleplay module integrates needs-driven curriculum design, experiential learning principles, and communicative tasks to enhance students' professional competence in Japanese communication.

The integration of Needs Analysis, Task-Based Language Teaching, and Communicative Language Teaching forms the conceptual foundation of this study. Needs Analysis identifies workplace communication demands; TBLT provides the instructional framework through authentic tasks; and CLT ensures that communication remains meaningful, interactive, and contextually appropriate. This integrated framework supports the development of an industry-based role-play module that simulates real tourism service interactions and enhances students' professional Japanese communication skills.

Roleplay allows students to learn through hands-on experience through work simulations. Roleplay, developed through an analysis of language needs in the travel industry, will provide students with experience communicating in line with their field.

2. Method

This research was conducted as Classroom Action Research (CAR), which involves iterative cycles of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection to improve instructional practice (Mills, 2022; Stringer, 2023). CAR was selected for its collaborative and reflective nature, enabling researchers and participants (students, lecturers, and travel industry guides) to systematically evaluate and refine the industry-based roleplay module (Ferrance, 2021; Herr & Anderson, 2021). Research was conducted in two cycles. The study subjects are 20 students of the Bali Tourism Polytechnic Tour and Travel Business Study Program in two semesters. They learned basic Japanese for two consecutive semesters. Other subjects include Japanese lecturers and travel industry guides. The research procedure includes planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. Figure 1 shows the Conceptual Framework Diagram in this study.

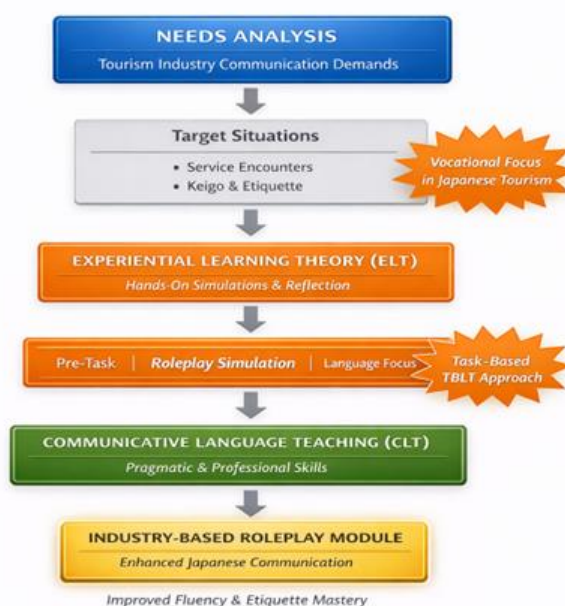


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework for this study. The model begins with a needs analysis to identify authentic communication needs in the tourism industry. These needs inform the design of experiential learning activities grounded in ELT. Instructional implementation follows the TBLT framework, while CLT principles ensure meaningful, contextually appropriate communication. Integrating these components yields an industry-based role-play module designed to improve students' professional communication skills in Japanese.

Communicative Language Teaching is effective in developing students' communicative competence through authentic learning interactions (Salam & Luksfinanto, 2024). In this study, the learning process within the CLT and TBLT-based module was implemented through a sequence of integrated activities. The lecturer first introduced the context by presenting professional video examples and highlighting relevant vocabulary and expressions related to workplace situations. This was followed by an explanation of the task objectives and real-life communication scenarios to ensure students understood the purpose of the activity.

Students then engaged in guided practice using scripts and vocabulary support, while also being introduced to cultural aspects, including appropriate intonation, body language, and communication etiquette. Subsequently, students performed roleplay tasks in pairs or groups without relying on written texts, thereby simulating authentic workplace interactions. The process concluded with reflection and

feedback, where lecturers provided input on language use, communication strategies, and cultural appropriateness, and students documented their learning experiences. To assess the aspects to be evaluated, a rubric for evaluating students' speaking ability and an instrument for observing roleplay activities were prepared.

Data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to evaluate the effectiveness of roleplay modules in improving students' Japanese communication skills. Planning for the preparation of roleplay modules was completed in the previous semester following an analysis of student needs. Observations are conducted in the field, focusing on the interaction between the tour guide and guests. Based on the observations, a module was prepared as a conversation on the interaction between tour guides and guests in various situations.

Data collection is carried out in two stages. The first stage introduces language-learning needs through a communicative language teaching approach. Data from the results of field observations on the interaction of tour guides and tourists. This data serves as a guide for developing Japanese language learning modules for the travel industry. Then the data is applied to the role-play module. Modules arranged according to learning needs are applied in the classroom; their use is observed, and the process is documented. The application of the learning module model is carried out in two cycles. The first cycle was conducted to observe student's progress in role-playing. The second cycle involves applying modules that have been improved based on observations from the first cycle.

To identify the aspects to be assessed, a rubric was prepared to evaluate student's speaking ability, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Speaking Ability Assessment Rubric (Japanese Communication)

No	Aspects Assessed	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Sufficient (2)	Less (1)
1	Smooth	Very smooth, with no lag	Smooth with little lag	Frequent stalls	Intermittent
2	Pronunciation Clarity	Very accurate and precise pronunciation	Pronunciation is relatively straightforward, with a few mistakes	Some annoying errors	Unclear, lots of errors
3	Language Structure	Sentence structure according to the work context	Minor errors do not interfere with meaning	Recurring errors	The structure is wrong until it is not understood
4	Relevance of the Response	Responsive, professional response	Generally appropriate	Some responses are inappropriate	Confused/d isconnected responses
5	Use of Special Expressions	Using Japanese verb expressions (<i>keigo</i>) appropriately	Using a portion of <i>keigo</i>	Rarely use	Not using at all

The scoring for the speaking ability assessment rubric is as follows; Total score maximum 20; Score ≥ 16 = very competent; Score 11-15 = competent; Score ≤ 10 = need guidance. During the implementation of the roleplay module, observations were conducted using six indicators, as shown in the following table.

Table 2. Roleplay Activity Observation Instruments

No	Observation indicator	Yes	No	Note
1	Students actively and enthusiastically participate in role-play activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

2	Students use vocabulary and expressions appropriate to the work context.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Students can interact without relying on written text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Students demonstrate an understanding of Japanese cultural communication etiquette (keigo, manners)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Students can complete conversations with a logical flow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	The activity takes place on time, and students participate in at least one simulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Data analysis was carried out using a scoring system on learner’s communication skills. There are five aspects of assessment, namely 1) fluency, 2) clarity of pronunciation, 3) language structure, 4) relevance of responses, and 5) use of special expressions. Observations were also made of role-play activities using six indicators, as shown in Table 2. Data were analysed using a mixed descriptive and reflective approach appropriate for Classroom Action Research (CAR). Quantitative data were obtained from student’s communication performance scores across two cycles and analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate percentage improvements and trends in the distribution of performance. Descriptive statistical analysis is commonly employed in classroom-based intervention research to determine instructional effectiveness and observable learning gains (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Mills, 2022).

Qualitative data from classroom observations, peer evaluations, and reflective notes were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in student’s pragmatic development and participation behavior. Thematic analysis enables researchers to interpret recurring themes in classroom interactions and learner responses systematically (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The cyclical nature of data analysis followed the reflective model of Classroom Action Research, where findings from Cycle I informed instructional adjustments implemented in Cycle II. This iterative evaluative process strengthens instructional validity and supports pedagogical refinement (Stringer, 2023). Triangulation was employed by comparing quantitative performance data with qualitative observational findings to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the results. Combining multiple data sources is recommended in action research to ensure methodological rigor and balanced interpretation (Herr & Anderson, 2021).

3. Results and Discussion

The roleplay module was designed around a structured narrative that represents real tourism service interactions, from picking up guests at the airport to accompanying them until departure. The module consists of 10 roleplay scenarios, with vocabulary (*kotoba*) and grammar (*bunpou*) aligned with the learning materials in each lesson. The module was implemented in Cycle I, subsequently revised based on evaluation results, and re-implemented in Cycle II.

Field observations and interviews with professional tour guides informed the development of roleplay tasks. These data identified key communicative situations in tourism services, such as greeting guests, providing information, handling luggage, and politely closing interactions. Based on these findings, roleplay scripts were developed to simulate authentic communication between guides and Japanese-speaking tourists.

Examples of roleplay tasks include airport pick-up interactions, conversations during the journey to the hotel, tour explanations, and farewell interactions when escorting guests back to the airport. These scenarios progressively increase in linguistic complexity, allowing students to develop both basic and advanced communication skills, including the use of polite expressions (*keigo*) and appropriate service etiquette.

The following are examples of roleplay given to students to be done from cycle 1 to cycle 2.

Script 1. Title: "Picking Up at Airport"

G = Guide O = Guest

- G : しつれいですが、にほんのかたですか。
Shitsurei desu ga, Nihon no kata desu ka? (Excuse me, are you Japanese?)
- O : はい、そうです。
Hai, sou desu. (Yes, I am)
- G : たなかさまですか。
Tanaka-sama desu ka? (Are you Ms. Tanaka?)
- O : はい、たなか ゆうこです。
Hai, Tanaka Yuuko desu. (Yes, Tanaka Yuuko)
- G : はじめまして。バリへようこそ。わたしはアンディと申します。
Hajimemashite. Bali e youkoso. Watashi wa Andi to moushimasu.
Welcome to Bali, I am Andi.
カマラツアーのガイドです。どうぞ、よろしくおねがいします。
Kamala tsuaa no gaido desu. Douzo, yoroshiku onegaishimasu.
Kamala tour guide. Nice to meet you.
- O : はじめまして。たなかです。
Hajimemashite. Tanaka desu. (I am Tanaka)
こちらこそ、よろしくおねがいします。
Kochira koso yoroshiku onegaishimasu. (Nice to meet you too)

Script 1 presents the first roleplay given to students. The background of this roleplay is picking up guests at the airport and meeting them for the first time. Students are given this task after completing the first lesson on *jikoshoukai* (introduction). *Sonkeigo* variety is inserted in the word "*nihon no kata*" instead of "*nihon jin*" and *kenjougo* is a form of the word "*to moushimasu*" instead of "*desu*". The expression *Tanaka sama* denotes respect toward a guest or customer. While its communicative function aligns with that of *sonkeigo* by elevating the addressee's status, it is not classified as *sonkeigo* grammatically. Instead, it represents the use of an honorific suffix.

Before roleplaying, the lecturer provides an overview of the topic and highlights key considerations for the task. The cultural background of Japanese guests and the body language that should be of concern are also explained to students. This aims to provide a comprehensive understanding. After the teacher explains the key points, the students watch this role-play video. Each roleplay module is accompanied by a video that aims to provide students with a clearer picture.

Script 2. Title: "On the way to the Hotel"

G = Guide O = Guest

- G : お客様、こちらはバリの地図です。どうぞ ご覧ください。
Okyakusama, Kochira wa Bali no chizu desu. Douzo goran kudasai.
Dear guest, this is the map of Bali. Please have a look
- O : ありがとうございます。
Arigatou gozaimasu.
Thank you
- G : こちらは マリンスポーツのパンフレットです。
Kochira wa Marin supootsu no panfuretto desu.
And this is the brochure of marine sports
- O : どうも。
Doumo.
Thank you
- G : それでは、ホテルにとうちやくしました。
Soredewa, Hoteru ni touchaku shimashita.
Alright, we arrive at the hotel
このスーツケースは おきやくさまの ですか。
Kono suutsu keesu wa okiyaku-sama no desu ka?
Does this suitcase belong to you, sir/madam?

- O: はい、そうです。
Hai, sou desu.
Yes right.
- G: これもおきやくさまのかばんですか。
Kore mo okyaku-sama no kaban desu ka?
This is also your bag?
- O: はい、それもわたしのかばんです。
Hai, sore mo watashi no kaban desu.
Yes, that bag is also mine.
- G: ベルデスクスタッフがにもつをおはこびします。しょうしょうおまちください。
Beru desuku sutaffu ga nimotsu o ohakobi shimasu. Shoushou omachikudasai.
Bellstaf will carry your luggage. Would you wait a moment?

In script 2, the expression *こちら* (*kochira*) is a more polite alternative to *これ* (*kore*, “this”) and is frequently used in tourism communication to address guests respectfully. Although not a grammatical form of *sonkeigo*, it functions as a courteous demonstrative expression. Similarly, *ごらんください* (*goran kudasai*) is the *sonkeigo* form of *みてください* (*mite kudasai*, “please look”), derived from the verb *見る* (*miru*). By using *ごらんください*, the speaker elevates the listener’s action and shows respect, making it appropriate for professional service encounters. Together, these expressions contribute to a polite and guest-oriented communication style.

The expression *おはこびします* (*ohakobi shimasu*) is derived from the verb *運ぶ* (*hakobu*), meaning “to carry” or “to transport.” It follows the honorific pattern *お + verb stem + します*, which is commonly used as a form of *kenjougo* (humble language). In this sentence, the bell desk staff refers to their own action of carrying the guest’s luggage. By employing *おはこびします*, the speaker humbles their own action while showing respect to the guest. Therefore, *おはこびします* is classified as *kenjougo*, because it lowers the speaker’s side rather than elevating the guest’s action.

Script 2 is the second roleplay given to students. The background of the second roleplay is the journey from the airport to the hotel for check-in. Starting with the conversation in the car and continuing through the moment guests arrive at the hotel.

Script 3. Title: “Explanation of one-day tour activities”

G = Guide O = Guest

- G: みなさま、おはよう ございます。
Minasama, Ohayou gozaimasu.
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen
本日はウブドツアーに参加いただきまして、ありがとうございます。
Honjitsu wa Ubud tsuaa ni sankai itadakimashite, arigatou gozaimasu.
Thank you for joining us on our Ubud Tour today
私はガイドのアンディと申します。どうぞよろしくお願ひいたします。
Watashi wa gaido no Andi to moushimasu. Douzo yoroshiku onegai itashimasu.
My name is Andi, and I am your guide. Nice to meet you
本日のツアーの説明をします。
Honjitsu no tsuaa no setsumei o shimasu
I will explain about today’s tour
まず、車でウブド市場に行きます。買い物します。
Mazu kuruma de ubud ichiba ni ikimasu. Kaimono shimasu.
First, we are going to the Ubud Market and shopping
そのあと、モンキーフォレストに行きます。モンキーフォレストにさるがたくさんいます。
Sonoato, Monkey forest ni ikimasu. Monkey forest ni saru ga takusan imasu.
After that, we are going to Monkey Forest. In Monkey Forest, there are a lot of monkeys
昼食は 12 時です。インドネシア料理です。
Chuushoku wa 12ji desu. Indonesia ryouri desu.
The lunch will be at 12.00 with Indonesian food
2 時にテガラランライステラスに行きます。
2ji ni Tegallalang Rice Terrace ni ikimasu.
At 2 o'clock we will go to Tegallalang Rice Terrace
4 時にホテルに帰ります。

Aji ni Hoteru ni kaerimasu.
 At 4 o'clock we're going back to the hotel

In script 3, words 申します (*mōshimasu*) and いたします (*itashimasu*) are classified as *kenjougo* because they are used to humble the speaker's own actions or position to show respect toward the listener. By lowering oneself rather than elevating the other person, these expressions demonstrate politeness and deference, which are the defining characteristics of *kenjougo*. Script 3 is given to students in lesson 6 after learning verbs. Students play the role of a guide who explains the journey to be taken. In this script, polite language (*sonkeigo*) is used at the beginning of the conversation. The words “*sanka itadakimashite*” use a variety of *keigo*. Although this word structure is not taught in depth in class but is introduced to learners in the form of speech.

Script 4. Title: “Drop off guests at the airport to return to Japan”
 G = Guide O = Guest

- O: アンディさん、いろいろお世話になりました。ありがとうございます。
Andi-san iroiro osewa ni narimashita. Arigatou gozaimashita.
 Mr. Andi, thank you for your service,
- G: こちらこそありがとうございます。バリはどうでしたか？
Kochirakoso arigatou gozaimashita. Bali wa dou deshita ka?
 It is a pleasure, you are welcome. What do you think about Bali
- O: とても楽しかったです。
Totemo tanoshikatta desu.
 I have a great time
 バリはうつくしくてすてきな島ですね。
Bali wa utsukushikute sutekina shima desu ne.
 Bali is a very nice and beautiful island.
- G: はい、バリはおもしろいところがたくさんあります。
Hai, Bali wa omoshiroi tokoro ga takusan arimasu.
 Yes, there are a lot of interesting places in Bali
 ぜひまた来てください。
Zehi mata kite kudasai.
 Please come again to visit
- O: はい、また来ます。アンディさん、お元気で。
Hai, mata kimasu. Andi-san ogenki de.
 Yes, sure, I will come back. Take care, Andi.
- G: 日本まで気をつけて。また会いましょう。さようなら。
Nihon made ki o tsukete. Mata aimashou. Sayounara.
 Take good care until you arrive in Japan, till we meet again. Good bye..

In script 4, the expression お元気で (*ogenki de*), the prefix お (*o-*) is an honorific prefix added to 元気 (*genki*) to make the expression more polite and respectful. The prefix does not change the meaning of the word itself but adds a level of courtesy toward the listener. Script 4 is the last roleplay given to the students. The task is to take the guests to the airport after they finish their vacation in Bali. In this task, the language is more advanced in its structure and vocabulary. Students have completed the last lesson, including learning *doushi* (verbs) and *keiyoushi* (adjectives). Students practice roleplay that has been arranged over 2 semesters. The first semester is defined as cycle 1, and the second semester is cycle 2.

The analysis was carried out in two cycles. The first cycle is conducted during the implementation of the first roleplay module in a single semester. The results of the data analysis show the scores of learners' speaking ability from five aspects that have been determined in cycle one, as follows:

Table 3. Speaking Ability Score Cycle 1

Smooth	Pronunciation clarity	Language structure	Relevance of the response	Use of special expressions
1.7	2.25	2.15	2.15	2

The results of observations on roleplay activities in cycle one can be seen in Table 4:

Table 4. Observation Results of Roleplay Activities Cycle 1 in Percentage

Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Indicator 5	Indicator 6
100	50	0	30	45	90

The results in Cycle I indicate that although students demonstrated basic communicative ability, their performance was still limited, particularly in fluency (1.7) and the use of appropriate expressions (2.0). This suggests that students were still in the early stage of communicative development and relied heavily on memorization rather than spontaneous language use. The observation data further support this finding. While student participation was very high (100%), the ability to perform roleplay without relying on written text was extremely low (0%). This indicates that students lacked confidence and had not yet internalized the language needed for authentic interaction. Similarly, the relatively low scores in communication etiquette (30%) and logical conversation flow (45%) suggest that students had difficulty applying language appropriately in professional contexts.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings highlight the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical communication skills. Although students had learned basic Japanese structures, they were not yet able to apply them effectively in real-world scenarios. This reinforces the importance of integrating task-based and communicative approaches that provide repeated opportunities for meaningful interaction and contextualized language use.

Therefore, the results of Cycle I serve as a baseline, indicating the need for improved instructional strategies, particularly to encourage spontaneous communication, increase exposure to authentic expressions, and strengthen students' pragmatic competence in tourism-related contexts. After the first cycle, the roleplay module was evaluated and adjusted, and speaking skills and roleplay activities were again observed in the second cycle. The results of the data analysis in cycle two are shown as scores and percentages in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Speaking Ability Score Cycle 2

Smooth	Pronunciation clarity	Language structure	Relevance of the response	Use of special expressions
3.45	3.45	3.2	3.3	3.25

The results of the observations on role-play activities in cycle two are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Observation Results of Roleplay Activity Cycle 2 in Percentage

Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Indicator 5	Indicator 6
100	80	75	85	100	100

The data presented in Tables 5 and 6 indicate a significant improvement in student's performance in Cycle II following revisions to the roleplay module and instructional strategies. The average speaking ability scores increased to 3.2–3.45 across all assessed aspects, placing students in the “competent to very competent” category. Similarly, observations of role-play activities showed substantial progress, particularly in interacting without text (75%), using context-appropriate expressions (80%), and understanding communication etiquette (85%). This improvement suggests that students were able to use Japanese more effectively in professional tourism contexts, not only in terms of linguistic accuracy—such as fluency and pronunciation—but also in terms of pragmatic competence, including the appropriate use of *keigo* and service-oriented communication strategies.

A comparison between Cycle I and Cycle II reveal a notable shift in student's communicative behavior. In Cycle I, students tended to rely heavily on scripted dialogue and showed limited confidence in spontaneous interaction, as reflected in the 0% achievement in text-free communication. In contrast, Cycle II demonstrated increased learner autonomy, with students becoming more capable of engaging in unscripted interactions and responding more appropriately in simulated workplace situations. From a pedagogical perspective, these findings confirm that integrating industry-based role-play within the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) framework effectively enhances student's communicative competence. The use of authentic, task-based scenarios allows students to practice

language in meaningful contexts, thereby improving not only fluency and accuracy but also discourse and strategic competence (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

Furthermore, the substantial improvement in communication etiquette—from 30% in Cycle I to 85% in Cycle II—highlights the importance of incorporating cultural and pragmatic elements into language instruction. This finding aligns with the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), where learning occurs through engagement in realistic communicative tasks that reflect workplace demands. Previous studies have also shown that roleplay and experiential learning activities significantly enhance learners' pragmatic competence and intercultural awareness (Nguyen & Boon, 2022; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021).

In addition, observations showed that students became more confident and actively participated in work communication simulations. This supports Hyland's theory, which suggests that activities grounded in social interaction in an authentic context can strengthen *language performance* and increase learning motivation (Hyland, 2022). The improvement observed between Cycle I and Cycle II indicate not only a quantitative increase in scores but also a qualitative transformation in student's communicative behavior. In Cycle I, students tended to rely heavily on scripted dialogues and demonstrated limited confidence in spontaneous interaction. This is reflected in the low percentage of students able to interact without text (0%) and the limited use of appropriate professional expressions.

The iterative process of practice, feedback, and reflection implemented in this study enabled students to gradually internalize communication strategies and apply them more flexibly. This supports the view that repeated simulation and guided reflection contribute to the development of professional communication behavior and pragmatic appropriateness (Matsumoto & Nakayama, 2024). Overall, the findings demonstrate that industry-based roleplay modules serve as an effective pedagogical innovation in vocational Japanese language learning. By integrating authentic workplace contexts, these modules not only increase student engagement and confidence but also facilitate the holistic development of professional communication skills required in the tourism industry. This study contributes to vocational language education by demonstrating how industry-based roleplay modules can effectively bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-world communication demands in tourism contexts.

4. Conclusion

This study offers empirical evidence that an industry-based roleplay module based on the principles of CLT and TBLT significantly enhances vocational students' Japanese communicative competence. The marked increase in communication etiquette performance (from 30% to 85%) demonstrates that not only measurable skill development but also a transformation in students' pragmatic awareness and professional interactional behavior.

The results emphasize that successful tourism language education should progress beyond structural proficiency to incorporate linguistic precision, pragmatic suitability, and intercultural awareness. Through iterative simulation, reflection, and feedback cycles, students assimilated workplace communication standards, notably the strategic application of *keigo*, consisting of *sonkeigo* and *kenjougo*, and service-oriented civility essential in Japanese tourism settings.

This study's principal contribution is its systematic integration of needs analysis, experiential learning concepts, and classroom action research into a cohesive, industry-responsive language module. By integrating authentic tourism tasks into structured communicative cycles, the study addresses the ongoing disparity between classroom instruction and the requirements of professional communication in vocational higher education.

These findings possess strategic significance for tourism polytechnics and vocational institutions seeking to enhance graduate employability through industry-relevant language instruction. Simulation-based roleplay modules may serve as a scalable pedagogical model for strengthening workplace-ready communicative competence. Future studies should investigate long-term retention effects, workplace transferability, and cross-institutional applicability to further validate and refine this industry-based communicative framework.

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