

Task-based material design in Japanese tour guide courses: fostering adaptability and sustainable learning

Qiannan Liu^{1,2}, Bee Eng Wong¹, Richard Peter Bailey¹

¹Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts, UCSI University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

²Department of Foreign Languages, Xinhua College of Ningxia University, Yinchuan, China

Article Info

Article history:

Received Nov 14, 2024

Revised May 21, 2025

Accepted Jun 2, 2025

Keywords:

Education innovation

Inclusive education

Language acquisition

Lifelong learning

Quality education (SDG 4)

Task-based learning

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of international tourism has significantly increased the number of Chinese visitors to Japan and vice versa, leading to a heightened demand for tour guides fluent in Japanese. However, the lack of specialized Japanese tour guide courses in Chinese undergraduate tourism programs has resulted in a shortage of qualified professionals. Therefore, developing teaching materials that support the learning of Japanese among Chinese students aiming to become fluent tour guides is essential to fill this gap. This study aims to develop and evaluate task-based teaching materials designed to enhance trainees' oral communication skills and professional adaptability for the Japanese tour guide purpose (JTGP) in real-world guiding scenarios. The task-based material design approach proposed in this research focuses on improving students' Japanese oral tour guide abilities while fostering adaptability and sustainability in their learning. The study was conducted with tourism students from Ningxia University Xinhua College, utilizing tests, semi-structured interviews, and observational data. Action research was employed to optimize the Japanese task-based materials, ensuring that they effectively promote language development while also targeting the cultivation of adaptability and sustainability of learning. The results indicate a strong student interest in the task-based courses, particularly the interactive elements, which have significantly enhanced their adaptability to the tour guide role and capacity for sustainable development thinking.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Qiannan Liu

Department of Foreign Languages, Xinhua College of Ningxia University

668 Helan West Road, Xixia District, Yinchuan City, Ningxia, China

Email: qiannanliu521@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's tourism industry, mastery of Japanese oral communication is a crucial research area, especially in tour guiding. Despite their knowledge of tourism, many students struggle with basic tour guiding tasks in Japanese. Tour guide Japanese oral communication involves fluently explaining, answering inquiries, and managing tour activities [1]. Besides linguistic proficiency, effectively handling emergencies and navigating cross-cultural communication are vital for outstanding tour guides. However, many students face challenges in Japanese oral communication, often overlooked despite their expertise in tourism [2].

Language proficiency is attained through communication, emphasizing task-based language teaching (TBLT) as an enhanced version of communicative language teaching (CLT), where tasks constitute a fundamental aspect [3]. Scholars have extensively explored the application of task-based teaching methods, particularly in oral communication [4]. It provides a conducive learning environment for learners to enhance their proficiency in a second language (L2) through diverse tasks. Within materials development, task-based

teaching principles have been adapted to learners' needs by way of a needs-based approach to content selection. Target tasks, pedagogic tasks, and enabling skills are identified as pivotal elements of task-based teaching [4], with research suggesting that conducting a series of activities in this approach facilitates learning as a progression towards task completion [5]. Task-based methods are also seen as a conduit for communication between different language developmental stages, aiding in L2 acquisition [6].

Early research reveals that tourism-focused Japanese teaching materials, lacking a needs analysis framework, fail to engage learners or accurately reflect the spoken language used in the tourism industry [7]. These materials traditionally emphasize general language skills over the specific needs of tourism contexts [1]. To address this, the study designs task-based teaching materials to improve oral proficiency for tourism majors. Although task-based materials have gained popularity in teaching spoken Japanese [8], [9], applying them in tourism education presents unique challenges. TBLT fosters autonomy in teachers and students, emphasizing fluency, context, and task completion while reducing learning barriers and encouraging active participation [10], [11]. However, previous studies have not examined the application of task-based teaching methods in tourism Japanese course design based on the needs and characteristics of Chinese students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The nature of Japanese for tour guide purposes

The Tourism Japanese course, offered as an elective within the tourism major, aims to develop students' language proficiency and cultural awareness necessary for tourism operations in Japan. Foreign language mastery is often seen as critical in tourism, particularly for roles such as tour guides [1]. Being one of the most widely spoken languages globally, Japanese is important for attracting Japanese tourists, explaining tourist attractions, and coordinating travel itineraries. Through this course, students enhance their ability to communicate with Japanese tourists and gain insights into Japanese culture and customs, which can contribute to improved service quality and customer satisfaction. The course's primary objective is to equip students with foreign language skills relevant to tourism operations, thereby improving their competitiveness and employment prospects in the industry [12].

2.2. Task-based material design

Task-based material design involves creating educational resources and activities around specific tasks or real-life situations [13]. These tasks, designed to engage learners in meaningful language use, promote communication, and facilitate language acquisition, are the cornerstone for integrating diverse learning components [14]. These components encompass input, content, language focus, and tasks [15]. Input refers to any stimulus, such as video or relevant communication data, while the language focus aims to encourage learners to utilize the language actively [16]. The overarching objective is to monitor learners' progress in language proficiency [6]. The design and development of task-based materials for Japanese tour guides typically follow a systematic and sequential process to ensure that the materials meet the practical needs of the target audience and align with educational goals.

The first phase, often referred to as the stage of identification, involves identifying the specific learning needs of the tour guides, such as language skills, cultural knowledge, and customer service requirements. During this stage, developers gather detailed information about the target audience, including their proficiency in the language, the typical tour scenarios they encounter, and the key communicative tasks they must perform. This stage establishes the foundation by outlining clear learning outcomes and objectives to guide the material development process. The second phase, the stage of development, focuses on creating the task-based materials. In this phase, task-based learning principles are applied to design relevant and engaging materials for learners. This includes creating realistic and practical tasks that tour guides are likely to encounter, such as providing information about tourist sites, answering questions from tourists, or managing group logistics. The emphasis is on promoting communicative competence through authentic, meaningful tasks that encourage learners to use the language in real-world contexts. The tasks are designed to progressively build language skills and cultural competence, ensuring the guides can perform their roles confidently and effectively. Finally, the stage of evaluation and revision involves assessing the suitability and effectiveness of the developed materials. This stage typically includes pilot testing with actual learners, gathering feedback from both the learners and instructors, and conducting a thorough analysis of the materials' impact on learning outcomes. Based on this evaluation, revisions are made to improve the materials, ensuring they are both pedagogically sound and practically useful. This iterative process ensures that the final product is theoretically grounded and tailored to meet Japanese tour guides' specific demands in their professional context.

Task-based instruction is an interactive language teaching approach to enhance learners' linguistic skills through task engagement. This approach emphasizes the practical application of language in real-life contexts, transcending traditional grammar-focused methodologies [4]. Consequently, task-based instruction

advocates for developing learners' ability to effectively express themselves in various scenarios, such as those encountered in actual tour guide work. Effective language communication is fostered through meaningful interactions. The tasks provided within this framework prioritize language and communication skills [6]. Through task-based instruction, learners can efficiently acquire and apply the language skills essential for success as a tour guide.

2.3. Previous studies

In recent years, TBLT has gained widespread recognition as an effective approach to enhancing communicative competence in foreign language learners, particularly in settings where real-world application of language skills is essential. Task-based language instruction significantly enhances English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' willingness to communicate (WTC), a key factor in improving overall communicative competence [17]. When learners are engaged in authentic, meaningful tasks that simulate real-world communication, they are more motivated to participate and interact in the target language. This aligns with the principles of TBLT, which focuses on using tasks as the core unit of instruction to promote practical language use rather than rote memorization or isolated skill practice. Research also highlights the critical role of interaction in TBLT, suggesting strategies that maximize its effectiveness [18]. Supportive strategies include incorporating collaborative tasks that require learners to negotiate meaning, solve problems, and use language in socially meaningful contexts. These findings suggest that creating opportunities for learners to engage in structured but spontaneous interaction is essential to developing fluency and confidence in the target language. By fostering an environment where learners must communicate to complete tasks, TBLT naturally supports the development of communicative competence. Similarly, studies on EFL and English as a second language (ESL) students have consistently confirmed the importance of improving oral Japanese ability among Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) learners [19]. These studies suggest that focusing on speaking skills through task-based approaches is critical, especially for learners aiming to use Japanese in practical, real-life scenarios such as guiding tourists. The connection between task completion and language acquisition is particularly relevant for learners who need to develop functional speaking ability quickly.

Focusing on Thai EFL learners, Tachom [20] explored their challenges during interview-based tasks, advocating a shift toward sociocultural learning approaches. This research suggests that by embedding language learning within a sociocultural context, learners can better understand the nuances of communication in different cultural settings, which is especially beneficial for those learning Japanese tour guide purpose (JTGP). A sociocultural approach complements TBLT by encouraging learners to focus on language structures and how language functions in specific cultural contexts. These findings can be complemented by research incorporating thematic role-play in TBLT, significantly enhancing communicative skills among JFL learners [21]. The authors reported that role-play tasks simulate real-life situations, such as interacting with tourists or navigating cultural exchanges, which are central to JTGP courses, and that overcoming the challenges learner's encounter during role-play is closely linked to developing more effective communication abilities. Role-playing allows learners to experiment with language use in a safe, controlled environment while receiving feedback on their performance, which leads to greater fluency and confidence in using Japanese.

Collectively, these studies underscore the value of task-based approaches in enhancing the communication skills of JFL learners. The recent focus on customizing materials specifically for JTGP courses reflects the growing need to adapt TBLT methodologies to specific professional contexts, where learners must develop both linguistic competence and cultural awareness to meet the demands of their roles effectively. The research highlights that task-based instruction, emphasizing interaction, real-world relevance, and sociocultural understanding, is particularly suited for preparing learners for the communicative challenges they will face as tour guides.

3. METHOD

3.1. Objective and research questions

This study aimed to develop and evaluate task-based teaching materials that enhanced oral communication skills and fostered sustainability of learning and adaptability for students studying JTGP. By addressing the specific needs and challenges of tourism students, it sought to bridge gaps in existing materials, ultimately strengthening their ability to communicate effectively and adaptively in real-world tourism contexts. A mixed-methods approach was adopted in response to this study context, allowing for a comprehensive and validated exploration of the research questions by combining qualitative and quantitative insights for robust findings. Unlike previous studies, this research provided an innovative focus on task-based

tourism scenarios, designed to improve students' adaptability and sustainable learning practices in guiding settings. The research addressed the following questions:

- What were the oral communication needs of tourism students learning Japanese, particularly in relation to adaptability and sustainability of learning?
- How did task-based material design influence the enhancement of oral communication skills and the development of adaptability and sustainability of learning?

3.2. Research design

Figure 1 illustrates the research design for task-based Japanese material development for tour guides. The experimental design for developing Japanese language materials specifically for tour guide purposes was methodically structured into three interconnected stages, ensuring that the materials were effective and practical. The process began with the identification stage, where a detailed needs analysis assessed the required competencies through evaluations of target and present situations, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with students and teachers. This initial phase was crucial in establishing precise competency standards tailored to the needs of tour guides, ensuring that the materials addressed the actual demands of learners aiming to achieve proficiency in tour guiding contexts.

The next phase, the development stage, was guided by an action research framework that emphasized syllabus design and the selection of relevant topics, directly influenced by the outcomes of the identification phase. This stage ensured that the syllabus and topics aligned with real-world demands, allowing for the strategic design of materials that mirrored authentic tour guide scenarios and enabled students to apply their learning in practical situations. The action research framework incorporated a systematic, iterative process with cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. It facilitates the continuous evaluation and enhancement of the task-based materials, ensuring they evolve in response to practical insights and ongoing feedback.

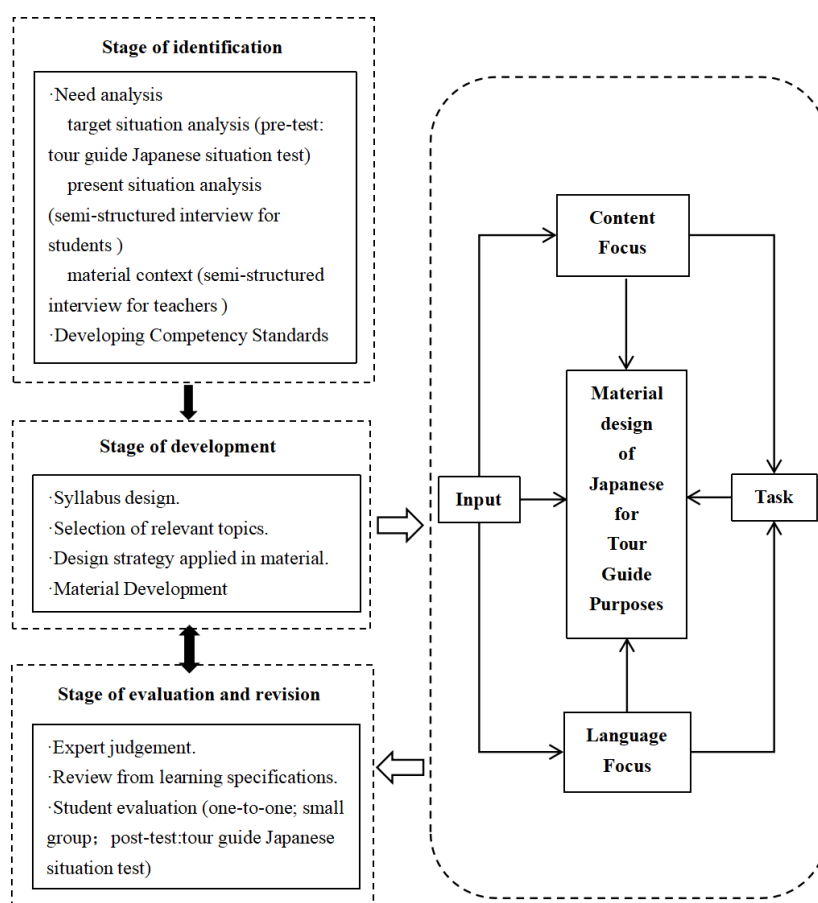


Figure 1. Research design for task-based Japanese material development for tour guides

The process culminated in the evaluation and revision stage, where the developed materials underwent expert reviews, compliance checks, and rigorous testing with students through a tour guide Japanese situation test. This phase, grounded in action research principles, established a structured feedback loop that enabled the ongoing refinement of the materials, ensuring they remained aligned with learning objectives and the practical applications of tour guiding. Diverse perspectives from educators and industry experts, gathered through action research methods, contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of educational needs, ensuring the content remained highly relevant and effective for real-world applications.

Insights from the evaluation and revision stage were then reintegrated into the development stage, creating a dynamic feedback mechanism that continuously optimized the materials based on feedback, refining content and instructional strategies to meet the specific requirements of tour guide training. This iterative process ensured that the materials remained adaptive and responsive to the evolving demands of the tourism industry. This structured approach underscored the importance of integrating input, content focus, language focus, and task in the material design, ensuring a comprehensive and practical development process that addressed the unique challenges and requirements of Japanese language learning at Xinhua College of Ningxia University for tour guide purposes. The ongoing interplay between evaluation and material refinement enhanced the practicality and effectiveness of the educational content, making it highly tailored and responsive to industry needs, ultimately preparing students to communicate effectively and adaptively as professional Japanese tour guides.

3.3. Participants and research setting

Teachers as co-researchers. We enlisted five experts with over ten years of experience in tourism-related Japanese education, all holding lecturer positions or higher. These experts were integral in two key research stages. In the stage of identification, they conducted interviews to set initial competency standards and learning needs. In the stage of evaluation and revision, they performed expert judgments on student situational pre-tests and post-tests (tour guide Japanese situation test), ensuring the materials' effectiveness and relevance.

Students as active contributors, 30 students majoring in tourism with Japanese as their language from Xinhua College at Ningxia University, China, actively participated in this study. In the stage of identification, 30 students completed the tour guide Japanese situation test as the pre-test to establish baseline competencies. Additionally, five students were interviewed to explore current teaching and learning conditions. In the stage of evaluation and revision, after each of two action research cycles, five students were selected for an interview, and another five students participated in group evaluations to provide feedback on the instructional materials. Following the second cycle, all students repeated the situation test as a post-test. This structured feedback mechanism ensured continuous refinement and effectiveness of the educational content tailored to students' needs.

3.4. Instruments and data collection techniques

This study employed various instruments to ensure the material development's effectiveness and practicality. During the identification stage, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students were conducted to establish preliminary competency standards and learning needs. In the evaluation and revision stage, feedback was refined through one-on-one and group interviews with students to target specific improvements, while subject experts conducted individual interviews to evaluate the developmental potential of the materials. The tour guide Japanese situation tests served as both pre-test and post-test to establish baseline competencies and measure educational progress, encompassing practical scenarios relevant to tour guiding, such as site introductions, tourism-related dialogues, and emergency situation handling, thereby providing a comprehensive assessment of students' practical language skills. Additionally, expert evaluation checklists were conducted by five specialists in tourism-related Japanese language education, who assessed the effectiveness and practicality of the materials by analyzing student situational tests. Their evaluations identified strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring that the materials met the stringent demands of tour guide training.

The semi-structured interview questions for teachers and students included inquiries about learning needs, challenges in mastering Japanese for tour guiding, preferred learning strategies, and expectations for task-based materials. These interviews provided insights into the competency standards and the real-world application requirements of Japanese tour guide training. As the pre-test and post-test, the tour guide Japanese situation test assessed four types of questions: explanation of tourism-specific terminology, communication in practical scenarios, site introductions, and opinions on environmental and cultural topics. These categories comprehensively evaluated students' ability to use Japanese effectively in authentic tour guiding contexts. The expert evaluation checklist encompassed assessments of material effectiveness, relevance to tour guiding scenarios, alignment with professional standards, language appropriateness, and potential for enhancing students' adaptability and sustainability of learning. These evaluations ensured that

the materials met the rigorous demands of professional tour guide training. The data collection instruments used ensured precise and actionable feedback at each stage of the research, facilitating the continuous refinement of the educational content.

3.5. Data analysis

The needs analysis required an overview of the target situation, current status, and thematic background [5]. It involved material development, including selecting specific topics related to the required skills and choosing specific strategies for implementation. The collected data were analyzed through an interpretative process, reflecting individual perspectives and forming interpretations of the data [22]. Descriptive analysis was conducted on the data collected from the pre-test to obtain the results of students' needs analysis for JTGP (i.e., research question one). All comments or qualitative information collected from course-participating students and their assessing teachers were coded to identify response categories. Data analysis was done through data reduction, display, visualization, and conclusion verification [23], [24].

Formative assessment in developing task-based JTGP materials involved a methodical four-step process designed to refine educational content and evaluate its efficacy. The process began with one-on-one interviews with learners to identify and address the most significant teaching errors. Group evaluations followed this to test the effectiveness of the changes implemented. Next, one-on-one interviews with subject experts were conducted to evaluate the developmental potential of the materials. The final step was a tour guide Japanese situational test, which measured the quality of the task-based material design and its effectiveness in enhancing JTGP skills.

This formative assessment cycle was executed in two phases within an action research framework. The initial cycle generated a preliminary report and optimized the JTGP materials, while the second cycle tested the revised materials. The evaluations focused on various aspects, including clarity of instruction, material accuracy, accessibility, and the appropriateness of the tests and overall teaching arrangements. Specifically, the one-on-one assessments examined the clarity of instruction, the impact on learners, and the feasibility of the teaching methods. Group assessments aimed to capture students' perspectives on the effectiveness of the teaching, focusing on their interest, understanding, and relevance of the content. In the final stage, the tour guide Japanese situational tests assessed practicality, quality, effectiveness, and efficiency. Five assessors conducted pre-tests and post-tests to address specific research questions. The outcomes of these tests determined the effectiveness of the content of the course. Furthermore, as part of the formative assessment, learners underwent a post-test: the tour guide Japanese situation test. Within a 30-minute period, learners engaged with a randomly selected tour guide scenario, where they were required to describe the scenario and address any issues or emergencies that arose, such as managing a welcome ceremony at the airport. This comprehensive evaluation strategy ensured that the educational materials were continuously adjusted and refined to meet the evolving needs of learners.

While the formative assessment process primarily focused on gathering data from learners, having experts, including subject experts external to the project, was equally essential to evaluate the teaching. Therefore, this study also involved three Japanese language teachers as experts in teaching JTGP and two subject experts in tourism for content and material design. They reviewed both the process and the products. Their contributions encompassed providing information on needs analysis, evaluating the newly designed materials, and offering suggestions and recommendations as prerequisites. A triangulation technique was also employed to validate the results [22]. The study combined qualitative data (teacher and student interviews) with quantitative data (pre-test and post-test scores along with expert evaluation checklist results), allowing for a multi-faceted and multi-angled exploration of the research questions and objectives. This integration ensured a comprehensive analysis, enabling the study to address the research problems and goals from diverse perspectives, thus enhancing the reliability and depth of the findings.

4. RESULTS

4.1. The outcomes of the students' needs analysis of JTGP

The researchers began by collecting information on what learners wanted, needed, and desired through a thorough analysis of demands. This provided a framework for creating Japanese materials aimed at training tour guides. The developmental stages included: i) improving students' spoken Japanese skills as tour guides; ii) designing tools to assess learning outcomes; iii) formulating teaching strategies; and iv) developing material designs. The researchers carried out pre-testing in tour guide scenarios and conducted semi-structured interviews with students to obtain the results of the demand analysis.

4.1.1. Target situation analysis result

The analysis of the target context, based on teacher semi-structured interview data, revealed four key themes. Firstly, the need for intercultural communication skills emerged as essential for effectively

addressing issues arising from cultural differences. Secondly, learners should possess specialized knowledge of tourist attractions in both China and Japan to provide accurate explanations during guided tours. Thirdly, they must develop the ability to handle unexpected situations and be equipped with basic problem-solving skills to manage emergencies—a fundamental competency for Japanese tour guides. Lastly, understanding Japanese culture is crucial for ensuring enjoyable tourist experiences and preventing cultural conflicts.

These themes clearly define the academic learning objectives of enhancing JTGP. They form the foundation of the course, providing a theoretical basis for instructional design. Additionally, improving cultural literacy, mastering emergency response in tourism, and fostering sustainability of learning are integral to achieving these objectives.

4.1.2. Present situation analysis result

The researchers emphasized that data analysis from the students' semi-structured interviews revealed significant shortcomings in learners' practical application of skills in the context of JTGP. Thematic analysis results indicate that many learners lacked immersive experiences in authentic tour guide environments, hindering their ability to effectively utilize Japanese language skills in real-world scenarios. Secondly, there were evident deficiencies in learners' cultural understanding and contextual knowledge, impeding their ability to provide culturally sensitive and engaging experiences for tourists.

Thirdly, the absence of constructive feedback mechanisms exacerbated these challenges, as learners struggled to receive timely guidance on language use, tour guide techniques, and cultural nuances. Lastly, limited access to authentic materials, such as audio recordings of tour guide scenarios, hindered the development of language skills in relevant contexts. Additionally, the researchers found that students often were reluctant to actively engage in the learning process, partly due to a fear of making mistakes stemming from past failures. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to address these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of JTGP learning.

4.1.3. Learning situation analysis result

From both teacher and student perspectives, combined with the JTGP curriculum design, it is evident that students have linguistic needs and requirements for cultural adaptability and sustainability to learn awareness in JTGP materials. Specifically, the JTGP content is expected to encompass a variety of tour guide scenarios, such as welcoming tourists, introductory techniques, sightseeing guidance, shopping assistance, dining etiquette, hotel check-in procedures, and handling emergencies. These requirements align with the course objectives, and the results support their relevance to learning goals.

Furthermore, students expressed the necessity of incorporating learning strategies into JTGP training materials, emphasizing the inclusion of practical strategies due to their lack of practical experience in the field. They also expect JTGP materials to be distributed across various tasks and activities, encouraging participation in authentic tasks related to their real-life experiences to enhance their communication skills in JTGP. They believed this approach would prevent boredom and foster active engagement in the JTGP course.

The results indicate that learners' need for Japanese tour guide materials played a crucial role in achieving learning objectives through communication and application. In addition to focusing on language, learners need to be attentive to the learning process, as it influences their personal experiences and fosters the connection between language learning and tour guide expertise. The program's learning objectives outline that students should be able to: i) possess language expression abilities conducive to practical tour guiding work; ii) handle tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds effectively, resolving communication and cultural differences challenges; iii) learn to respect and understand various cultures and adapt flexibly to potential challenges in different tour guide scenarios; and iv) continuously enhance their tour guiding skills through practice and feedback, gradually building confidence and professional competence.

4.2. The quality of the task-based material design to improve JTGP skills

The student needs analysis provided the researchers with a framework for designing JTGP task-based teaching materials. The students' requirements enabled the researchers to determine what the course should focus on, which materials should be included regarding language or skills, and what learning methods should be adopted. Figure 2 depicts the task-based Japanese materials model for tour guide purposes.

In the context of Japanese for specific purposes, the researchers aligned task-based materials with the objectives of JTGP learning. This alignment was due to their goal of achieving communicative and professionally applicable language skills. As the primary focus, a diverse range of tasks was provided for learners to utilize language skills. In this scenario, JTGP allowed learners to acquire language skills through tasks, using communicative language in classroom settings and tour guide scenarios. Language was regarded as a means to achieve the objectives. Students were also expected to regularly participate in the classroom

tasks through the general use of the target language. Task-based materials tended to integrate language skills to ensure accuracy and fluency, indirectly motivating learners through various tasks.

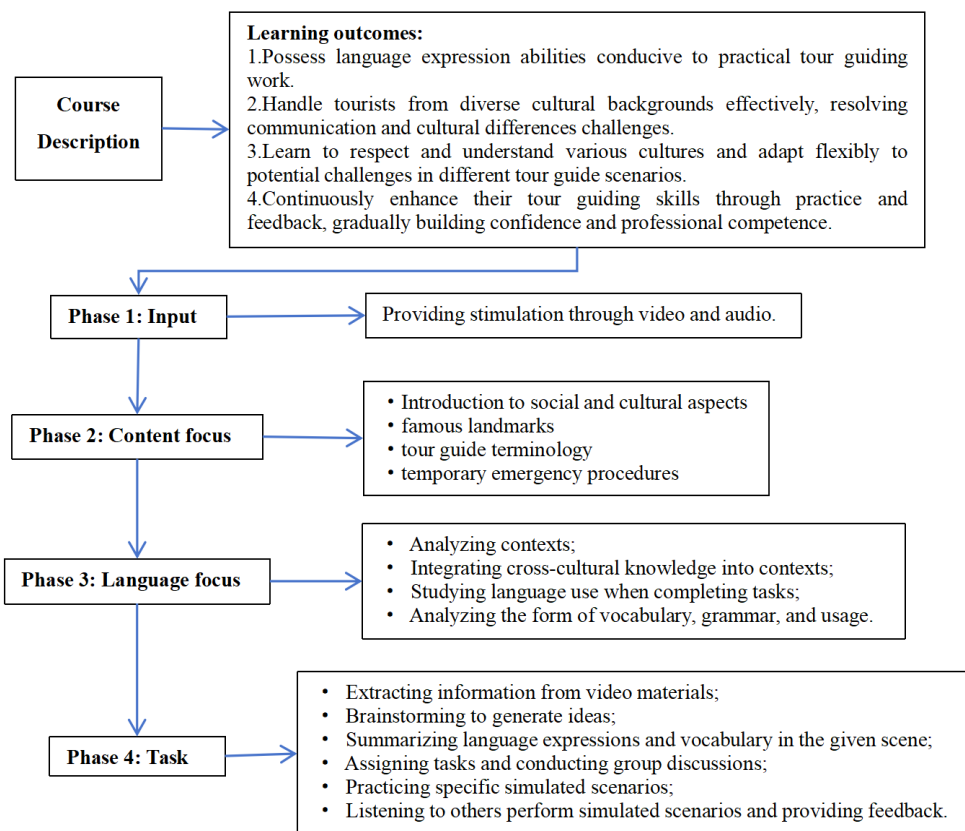


Figure 2. Model of task-based Japanese materials for tour guiding purposes

4.2.1. The development of the task-based JTGP materials model

The development of task-based JTGP materials was conducted through two cycles of action research, beginning with designing initial materials based on a needs analysis report before the first 5-week cycle. After completing the first cycle, the researchers gathered feedback from one-on-one student assessments and group evaluations, which provided valuable insights for refining the task-based JTGP materials. These recommendations were subsequently integrated into the second action research cycle, ensuring the materials were continuously optimized.

The one-on-one student assessments focused on clarity, effectiveness, and feasibility. Regarding clarity, students found the material design's consistency, functionality, and substance to be accurate, relevant, and understandable, effectively supporting their learning objectives. In terms of effectiveness, students highlighted the positive impact of the instructional design on their mastery of key aspects of the Japanese language. As for feasibility, students believed that the task-based material design could be enhanced by incorporating more authentic language materials as supplementary resources in the Japanese tour guide learning process. Based on the results of these one-on-one evaluations, the researchers made necessary modifications and adjustments to the task-based JTGP material model, and the optimized materials were subsequently applied in the second cycle of action research.

Group evaluations assessed aspects such as interest, understanding, and relevance. Students indicated that the guidance provided in the material design was coherent, traceable, and systematic, which positively influenced their motivation. The teaching content was engaging, and the methods used were diverse and easy to understand, making the materials more accessible. In terms of understanding, students found the instructions in the material design easy to follow, especially when presented in video format. The group evaluation phase provided additional recommendations for modifying the task-based JTGP material model. After the first action research cycle ended, corrections were proposed to assess the impact of these modifications through one-on-one assessments and determine whether these changes could be effectively integrated into the intended scope of the task-based JTGP materials. This iterative process of incorporating

feedback and making adjustments ensured that the task-based JTGP materials were refined to meet the learning objectives and the practical demands of Japanese tour guide communication, ultimately enhancing their relevance and applicability for learners.

We implemented the improved JTGP materials in the second cycle based on the adjustments from the data gathered in the first cycle. The improvements included the addition of emergency scenario settings, discussions on cultural similarities and differences, and a focus on the sustainability of learning in the area of awareness. Following the second cycle, the one-on-one student assessments and group evaluations were repeated to gather further insights.

The one-on-one student assessments focused on classroom responsiveness, where students actively engaged with the material. The group evaluations were conducted to assess several aspects, with the first aspect involving the usability and quality of the task-based JTGP material model. Students reported that, based on the referenced design, the materials were useful for acquiring the necessary skills to achieve their learning objectives, particularly in handling emergency situations—a crucial competency for tour guides. This aspect was considered appropriate and well-aligned with the learners' needs.

The second aspect related to effectiveness is group evaluations. Students found that incorporating cultural elements into the materials was highly effective in enhancing their learning experience, as it positively influenced their attitude and enthusiasm toward the course. Regarding efficiency, students found the material design to be time-saving and cost-effective, significantly impacting their mastery of JTGP. Lastly, students discussed the inclusion of sustainability of learning awareness in the materials, which they felt contributed to their future career planning by inculcating in themselves an in-depth understanding of sustainable practices in the tour guiding profession.

During the formative assessment periods before and after implementing the JTGP, the researchers conducted pre-tests and post-tests on students' tour guide Japanese oral proficiency to validate the research findings. As shown in Figure 3, the results illustrate significant improvements in students' JTGP abilities after the implementation of the JTGP materials. The tour guide Japanese situation test assessed four areas: vocabulary expression (average score increased from 75 to 87), location description (average score rose from 60 to 87), emergency handling (average score improved from 60 to 72), and cultural interaction (average score increased from 68 to 79). The increase in learning scores from pre-test to the post-test demonstrates the positive impact of task-based materials on learning tour guide Japanese. The result here validates the data obtained through observation and interviews regarding the influence of task-based materials.

Five experts used a detailed checklist to evaluate the revised JTGP materials from the second cycle. They emphasized the successful integration of authentic tour guide scenarios that mirrored real-world contexts, the appropriateness and accuracy of the instructional content, and the inclusion of theme-related vocabulary and grammar to suit learners' limited Japanese proficiency. The experts also stressed the importance of presenting materials that stimulated cognitive development through real-life practices and confirmed that the assessment tools effectively measured learners' mastery of tour guide oral communication skills. Furthermore, they noted that the materials were closely aligned with academic goals and were effective in preparing students for professional Japanese tour guide roles. This evaluation ensured that the task-based JTGP materials developed over the two cycles of action research were refined to meet learners' specific learning objectives and practical needs, effectively enhancing their communication skills for Japanese tour guiding.

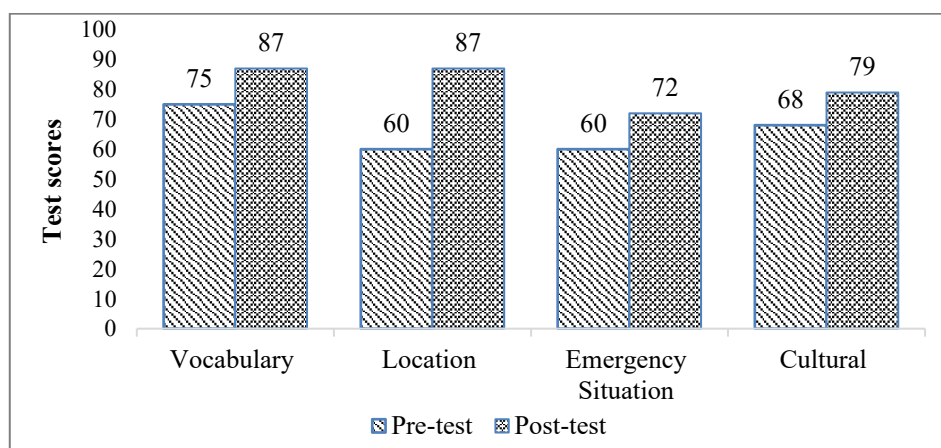


Figure 3. Average scores of tour guide Japanese oral proficiency tests

4.2.2. The final product

Figure 4 presents a sample of the task-based JTGP materials model, designed with clear course objectives and structured across four main parts to ensure effective communication training for tour guides in hospitality environments. The warm-up phase engaged students with discussions and video content that introduced real-life scenarios, while the dialogue materials presented specific interactions that tour guides might encounter, focusing on interactions with guests. The practice section allowed students to role-play these dialogues, reinforcing their learning and enabling the application of language skills in simulated contexts. The summary phase consolidated the material by emphasizing key expressions and techniques for handling emergencies. Additionally, the curriculum featured a supplementary materials section that provided practical communication strategies and dialogue examples, integrating cultural adaptability and sustainability of learning into a comprehensive training framework for tour guides.

Unit 4 Japanese Tour Guide Training Course: Checking into a Hotel and Communicating with Guests

Course Objectives:

1. Understand the dialogue process between the tour guide, hotel front desk, and guests during hotel check-in.
2. Master the basics of conveying important information to guests.
3. Learn how to handle emergencies, such as guests losing their passports.

Part I: Warm-up

Activity Content: Watch a video and answer questions.

Video Content: Shows typical dialogue between a tour guide, hotel front desk, and guests.

Question 1: Where does this dialogue take place?

Question 2: What are the roles of the two people in the dialogue?

Part 2: Dialogue Material:

Dialogue 1: Tour Guide and Hotel Front Desk

Scenario: The tour guide leads a group of tourists to the hotel and check in at the front desk.

Tour Guide: Hello, I'd like to check in for the tour.

Front Desk: Hello, welcome. Could you please tell me the name under which the reservation was made?

Tour Guide: Yes, it's Tanaka from ABC Tour.

Front Desk: Yes, I've confirmed it. Here is your room key. Please note that check-out is at 11 a.m.

Dialogue 2: Tour Guide and Guest

Scenario: The tour guide explains hotel facilities and important information to the guests.

Tour Guide: Everyone, here are your room keys. Breakfast at the hotel is served on the first floor restaurant from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Tourist: Thank you, Mr. Tanaka. Is there anything else we should be aware of?

Tour Guide: Yes, please be quiet during the night, and make sure to leave any valuables with the front desk for safekeeping.

Dialogue 3: Guest Asks Tour Guide About Free Hotel Services

Scenario: A guest asks the tour guide about free services offered by the hotel.

Tourist: Mr. Tanaka, are there any complimentary services available at the hotel?

Tour Guide: Yes, there is free Wi-Fi and a fitness gym available. Please ask for the Wi-Fi password at the front desk.

Dialogue 4: Tour Guide Discovers Guest Lost Their Passport and Calls the Hotel for Assistance

Scenario: The tour guide discovers a guest has lost their passport and contacts the hotel front desk for help.

Tour Guide: Excuse me, it seems that one of our guests has lost their passport. Has it been turned in by any chance?


Front Desk: Let me check. Please wait a moment. (A few minutes later) Front Desk: I'm sorry, but the passport hasn't been found. It might be best to come to the police.

Tour Guide: Understood. Thank you.


Part 3: Practice

Activity Content: Students look at pictures and dramatize the scenarios shown in the images.


Picture 1:




Picture 2:



Picture 3:



Picture 4:



Part 4: Summary

Reiterate key expressions and polite phrases.

Emphasize common steps in handling emergencies.

Provide additional materials and references for students to practice after class.

Supplementary Material

More examples of dialogues in both scenarios.

A compilation of common polite phrases in Japanese.

Practical dialogue techniques for handling guest issues and complaints.

Figure 4. The model of task-based JTGP materials

Based on the data gathered during the development process of the task-based JTGP materials model, the researchers identified how to make modifications according to students' needs. The outcome indicated that the task-based JTGP materials incorporated authentic materials presented across various activities. The materials utilized videos and audio formats to help students experience real tour guide scenarios better. These materials are specifically designed to enhance students' adaptability and sustainability of learning, enabling them to effectively navigate the complex and dynamic challenges of the tourism industry. By fostering these critical skills, the materials not only improve language proficiency but also prepare students for professional success in diverse and evolving contexts.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Finding 1: the critical need for adaptability and sustainability of learning among students

The needs analysis for JTGP students underscores a critical requirement for both adaptability and sustainability of learning in their educational experience. Adaptability is essential for students, as it encompasses the development of intercultural communication skills necessary to address issues arising from cultural differences and the acquisition of specialized knowledge of both Chinese and Japanese attractions to provide effective tour explanations. Additionally, students must cultivate the ability to handle unforeseen circumstances through basic problem-solving skills, which are fundamental for Japanese tour guides. Furthermore, an understanding of Japanese culture is crucial for facilitating tourists' enjoyable experiences and preventing cultural conflicts, further highlighting the need for adaptability.

In contrast, the need for sustainability of learning is reflected in the identified deficit in cultural understanding and contextual knowledge among learners, which limits their ability to provide culturally sensitive and engaging experiences for tourists. This challenge is exacerbated by the absence of constructive feedback mechanisms, which hinders students' progress in receiving timely guidance on language usage, tour guiding techniques, and cultural nuances. Moreover, limited access to authentic materials, such as audio recordings of tour guide scenarios, impedes the development of language skills within relevant contexts. Students also expressed a necessity for the application of practical learning techniques in JTGP training materials, which aligns with the overarching need for both adaptability and sustainability of learning in their educational experience.

5.2. Discussion on students' needs for adaptability and sustainability of learning

The needs analysis for JTGP students underscored a critical requirement for both adaptability and sustainability of learning in their educational experience. This study aligned with Mínguez *et al.* [12], which highlighted the importance of industry-specific knowledge and effective communication skills. Learners needed to acquire both tour guide oral communication skills and relevant industry knowledge to meet their educational objectives, underscoring the crucial role of JTGP textbooks in integrating tourism industry knowledge with Japanese language application to achieve these learning goals [12].

Adaptability was essential for students, as it encompassed the development of intercultural communication skills necessary to address issues arising from cultural differences [17]. This included acquiring specialized knowledge of both Chinese and Japanese attractions to provide effective tour explanations. Furthermore, students were required to cultivate the ability to handle unforeseen circumstances through basic problem-solving skills, which is fundamental for Japanese tour guides. Understanding Japanese culture was also crucial for facilitating tourists' enjoyable experiences and preventing cultural conflicts. These aspects of adaptability aligned with the study by Nudin *et al.* [7], who argued that developing intercultural communication skills and the ability to handle unforeseen circumstances were crucial for effective tour guiding.

In contrast, the need for sustainability of learning was reflected in the identified deficit in cultural understanding and contextual knowledge among learners, which limited their ability to provide culturally sensitive and engaging experiences for tourists. This gap was compounded by the absence of constructive feedback mechanisms and the lack of timely guidance on language usage, tour guiding techniques, and cultural nuances, which hindered students' progress [18]–[20]. Additionally, limited access to authentic materials, such as audio recordings of tour guide scenarios, impeded the development of language skills within relevant contexts. This finding was consistent with Ikeda research [21], which highlighted that the lack of authentic materials in language training restricted students' ability to practice and apply their skills in real-world situations. This highlighted the need for JTGP training materials that focused on language proficiency and integrated practical applications related to sustainability.

Notably, this study extended Ikeda research [21] by incorporating the sustainability of learning as a crucial and innovative component of JTGP training. While Ikeda [21] predominantly focused on language proficiency and professional skills, this study identified a critical gap in preparing students to promote

environmental stewardship and cultural preservation. This addition moved beyond traditional language training to encompass sustainable tourism practices, an aspect not extensively covered in earlier studies.

Additionally, the study addressed limitations in the teaching process, such as the lack of constructive feedback mechanisms and access to authentic materials. By advocating for task-based learning and using authentic materials—such as videos and recordings—this research built on the work of scholars like Ikeda [21], who supported using authentic materials in language training. This study extended this concept by emphasizing the integration of adaptability and sustainability of learning in tour guiding contexts, offering a novel approach to overcoming these limitations. In conclusion, this study reaffirmed the importance of industry knowledge and communication skills while introducing essential innovations in the JTGP curriculum. Integrating adaptability and sustainability of learning provided a comprehensive framework for preparing students to meet contemporary challenges in the tourism industry, reflecting the evolving demands of the profession and offering a robust foundation for future curriculum development in JTGP education.

5.3. Finding 2: improvement of adaptability and sustainability of learning through task-based materials in JTGP training

This study found that integrating tour guide scenarios into task-based JTGP materials is crucial for enhancing students' adaptability and sustainability of learning and improving their oral communication skills and cross-cultural communication abilities. To specifically address adaptability, the materials were designed to include a wide variety of scenarios that reflect diverse tour guide situations, requiring students to adjust their language use based on the context. This was achieved by incorporating video-based scenarios representing different cultural interactions, unexpected changes in tour itineraries, and diverse tourist needs. These scenarios encouraged students to develop flexible language strategies and problem-solving skills, fostering their ability to adapt to new and challenging situations.

In terms of sustainability of learning, the materials emphasized long-term engagement by including reflective tasks that prompted students to consider the broader implications of their communication choices. This included activities encouraging students to consider how their language use could impact sustainable tourism practices, such as promoting cultural awareness and responsible travel behavior among tourists. By integrating these elements, the task-based materials aimed to create a learning environment where students not only acquire immediate language skills but also develop a mindset that supports continuous learning and professional growth in the context of tour guiding.

Moreover, formative assessments indicated a need for more personalized language organization and cultural exchange delivered in an engaging manner. Therefore, the content of JTGP materials is needed to support learners, especially those with limited Japanese proficiency, in accurately using context-relevant sentence structures. The role of teachers in this context has evolved into facilitators, helping students creatively practice oral expressions, providing spaces for articulating language specific to particular situations, and guiding group assessments of students' work.

5.4. Expansion of adaptability and sustainability of learning through task-based materials in JTGP

The improvements in task-based materials for JTGP marked a significant evolution from previous studies by incorporating real-life scenarios designed to activate students' adaptability and sustainability of learning. This study built upon earlier research demonstrating the efficacy of authentic scenarios to enhance language acquisition and facilitate cross-cultural communication. Prior studies consistently showed that realistic contexts significantly contributed to learners' ability to apply language skills in practical situations, thus facilitating smoother cultural exchanges and more effective communication in professional settings [25], [26]. Liu and Hu [27] emphasized that task-based learning improved language acquisition rates by integrating complex, real-life tasks that reflected actual professional environments. Similarly, the importance of realistic materials in assessing cognitive abilities and aligning language training with practical needs has been emphasized [28], [29]. This approach ensures that learners are better prepared for real-world communication tasks. This study, however, extended these findings by integrating themes centered around sustainability, environmental protection, the relationship between humanity and nature, and the impact of artificial intelligence. Unlike previous research, which primarily focused on language proficiency and cross-cultural communication, this study introduced a broader scope of task design [30].

The deliberate inclusion of diverse scenarios in the task-based materials—ranging from sustainability of learning issues to technological advancements—reflected a novel approach to task-based learning. This broader perspective enhanced language proficiency and fostered critical thinking skills essential for adapting to and addressing global challenges. This study diverged from earlier work by integrating themes that stimulated adaptability and sustainability of learning, a crucial component for navigating complex real-world issues.

Previous research has suggested that a positive and inclusive classroom environment is essential for engaging students in language tasks [31], [32]. This study advanced that concept by showing that

incorporating sustainability-focused content into language tasks could significantly enhance students' cognitive flexibility and adaptability. By embedding such parts within JTGP materials, this study provided a fresh contribution to the field, demonstrating that task diversity and thematic relevance could effectively prepare learners for professional success and personal growth in an ever-evolving world [33]. Overall, this study represented an evolution in task-based material design by integrating language learning with sustainability. It extended the application of task-based approaches to enhance the adaptability and sustainability of learning.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provided valuable insights that can be considered by Japanese as foreign language practitioners for creating necessary materials within the context of JTGP. For instance, the results of the needs analysis offered a foundational framework that guided educators in designing all elements of learning, encompassing not only materials but also media, required instructional techniques, and methods for assessing learning. The formative assessment stage validated the consistency of the new task-based materials in JTGP through expert analysis and learner feedback. Learners unanimously acknowledged the significant advantages of task-based materials in enhancing their tour guide's Japanese oral proficiency scores. Moreover, they believed that task-based materials helped them focus on professional language and facilitated engagement in the learning process. On the other hand, experts argued that task-based materials involved in JTGP were intended to enhance learners' personal experiences, making them significant contributing elements to the learning environment. Bridging the gap between classroom learning cycles and real-life situations outside the classroom enhanced the task-based tour guide Japanese oral proficiency of the learners. Through task-based materials tailored for tour guide purposes, learners were able to apply practical and communicative tour guide Japanese skills according to their needs. Therefore, this type of material design could be utilized by various stakeholders and serve as a prerequisite for further research. Future endeavors should continue to explore this field.

FUNDING INFORMATION

This research was funded by the 2021 District-Level First-Class Course Construction Grant.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

This journal uses the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) to recognize individual author contributions, reduce authorship disputes, and facilitate collaboration.

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Qiannan Liu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Bee Eng Wong		✓		✓				✓	✓		✓	✓		
Richard Peter Bailey		✓		✓				✓	✓		✓	✓		

C : Conceptualization

M : Methodology

So : Software

Va : Validation

Fo : Formal analysis

I : Investigation

R : Resources

D : Data Curation

O : Writing - Original Draft

E : Writing - Review & Editing

Vi : Visualization

Su : Supervision

P : Project administration

Fu : Funding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.





DATA AVAILABILITY

Data are not publicly available but can be obtained from the corresponding author [QL], upon reasonable request.





REFERENCES

- [1] Y.-Y. C. Ho, "Communicative language teaching and English as a foreign language undergraduates' communicative competence in Tourism English," *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, vol. 27, p. 100271, Nov. 2020, doi: 10.1016/j.jhlste.2020.100271.
- [2] Y.-H. Lin, "Where English and Taiwanese Culture Meet: Investigation of Student Tour Guides' 'Speaking in English Tourism' Course," *Taiwan Journal of TESOL*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 1–37, 2023, doi: 10.30397/TJTESOL.202310_20(2).0001.
- [3] S. Kolsut and M. Szumilas, "Exploring student engagement in task-based and communicative language classrooms," *Language Teaching Research*, p. 13621688231188800, Aug. 2023, doi: 10.1177/13621688231188800.
- [4] N. Spada, "Reflecting on task-based language teaching from an Instructed SLA perspective," *Language Teaching*, vol. 55, no. 1, pp. 74–86, Jan. 2022, doi: 10.1017/S0261444821000161.
- [5] R. Ellis, P. Skehan, S. Li, N. Shintani, and C. Lambert, *Task-Based Language Teaching: Theory and Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020, doi: 10.1017/9781108643689.
- [6] D. O. Jackson, *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2022.
- [7] Z. B. Nudin, R. A. Rashid, and A. S. Bin Kamaruzaman, "The Use of Politeness in Tourism Communication: Research on Japanese Language Interaction During Tour Trip," in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Science, Technology, Engineering and Industrial Revolution (ICSTEIR 2020)*, 2021, pp. 541–547, doi: 10.2991/assehr.k.210312.087.
- [8] E. T. Rahayu, Hartati, and A. Stovia, "Request Expressions in Japanese Language for Educational Purpose," *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 1–7, Jan. 2020, doi: 10.13189/ujer.2020.080101.
- [9] M. Alizadeh, "Virtual reality in the language classroom: Theory and practice," *Computer-Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 21–30, 2019.
- [10] G. V. Crookes and N. Ziegler, "Critical Language Pedagogy and Task-Based Language Teaching: Reciprocal Relationship and Mutual Benefit," *Education Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 6, p. 254, May 2021, doi: 10.3390/educsci11060254.
- [11] M. S. Aldosari and H. N. Alsager, "A step toward autonomy in education: probing into the effects of practicing self-assessment, resilience, and creativity in task supported language learning," *BMC Psychology*, vol. 11, no. 1, Dec. 2023, doi: 10.1186/s40359-023-01478-8.
- [12] C. Mínguez, C. Martínez-Hernández, and C. Yubero, "Higher education and the sustainable tourism pedagogy: Are tourism students ready to lead change in the post pandemic era?," *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, vol. 29, p. 100329, Nov. 2021, doi: 10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100329.
- [13] Y. Kim, S. Kang, M. D'Arienzo, and N. Taguchi, "Comparing traditional and task-based approaches to teaching pragmatics: Task design processes and learning outcomes," *Language Teaching Research*, Oct. 2023, doi: 10.1177/13621688231195876.
- [14] B. Kanoksilapatham and T. Suranakkharin, "Tour Guide Simulation: A Task-Based Learning Activity to Enhance Young Thai Learners' English," *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 1–31, 2019, doi: 10.32890/mjli2019.16.2.1.
- [15] P. Skehan and S. Luo, "Developing a task-based approach to assessment in an Asian context," *System*, vol. 90, p. 102223, Jun. 2020, doi: 10.1016/j.system.2020.102223.
- [16] Q. Wang, "Foundational principles of task-based language teaching," *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 687–693, Sep. 2023, doi: 10.14746/ssl.38285.
- [17] J. Toyoda, T. Yashima, and S. Aubrey, "Enhancing Situational Willingness to Communicate in Novice EFL Learners through Task-Based Learning," *JALT Journal*, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 185–214, Nov. 2021, doi: 10.37546/JALTJJ43.2-3.
- [18] J. Gordon, "Pronunciation and Task-Based Instruction: Effects of a Classroom Intervention," *RELC Journal*, vol. 52, no. 1, pp. 94–109, Apr. 2021, doi: 10.1177/0033688220986919.
- [19] L. Ravindran, I. Ridzuan, and B. E. Wong, "The Impact of Social Media on the Teaching and Learning of EFL Speaking Skills during the COVID-19 Pandemic," in *International Academic Symposium of Social Science 2022*, Sep. 2022, p. 38, doi: 10.3390/proceedings2022082038.
- [20] K. Tachom, "Enhancing Thai EFL Students' EFL Vocabulary Knowledge through the Use of Task-Based Language Teaching and Storytelling Technique Adopting Thai Folktales," *Asian Journal of Education and Training*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 235–243, Nov. 2021, doi: 10.20448/journal.522.2021.74.235.243.
- [21] M. Ikeda, "Technology-Supported Learning In and Out of the Japanese Language Classroom: Advances in Pedagogy, Teaching and Research," *Japanese Language and Literature*, vol. 55, no. 1, pp. 395–401, Apr. 2021, doi: 10.5195/jll.2021.195.
- [22] J. W. Creswell, *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2021.
- [23] P. Pandey and M. M. Pandey, *Research Methodology: Tools and Techniques*. Buzău: Bridge Center, 2021.
- [24] P. Khanna, "Book Review: Title: A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research," *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 36–37, Jun. 2016, doi: 10.1177/1035719X1601600206.
- [25] A. Gacs, S. Goertler, and S. Spasova, "Planned online language education versus crisis-prompted online language teaching: Lessons for the future," *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 53, no. 2, pp. 380–392, Jun. 2020, doi: 10.1111/flan.12460.
- [26] L. S. Lotto, "Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 329–331, Sep. 1986, doi: 10.3102/01623737008003329.
- [27] Y. Liu and G. Hu, "Mapping the field of English for specific purposes (1980–2018): A co-citation analysis," *English for Specific Purposes*, vol. 61, pp. 97–116, Jan. 2021, doi: 10.1016/j.esp.2020.10.003.
- [28] N. Fujii, "Teaching Japanese as A Foreign Language with A Cultural Context," M.S. thesis, World Languages and Cultures, Utah State University, Logan, UT, USA, 2022.
- [29] V. Bonsignori and G. Cappelli, "Specialized and culture-bound knowledge dissemination through spoken tourism discourse: Multimodal strategies in guided tours and documentaries," *Lingue e Linguaggi*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 213–239, 2020, doi: 10.1285/i22390359v40p213.
- [30] K. Ozano *et al.*, "Guiding principles for quality, ethical standards and ongoing learning in implementation research: multicountry learnings from participatory action research to strengthen health systems," *Health Policy and Planning*, vol. 35, no. Supplement 2, pp. ii137–ii149, Nov. 2020, doi: 10.1093/heapol/czaa123.
- [31] F. Xie and A. Derakhshan, "A Conceptual Review of Positive Teacher Interpersonal Communication Behaviors in the Instructional Context," *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 12, p. 708490, Jul. 2021, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.708490.
- [32] W. Wiboolyasarin, N. Jinowat, K. Wiboolyasarin, R. Kamonsawad, P. Tiranant, and P. Boonyakitanont, "Enhancing L2 speaking proficiency through collaborative tasks in RILCA world: the case of East Asian learners," *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 37, Nov. 2023, doi: 10.1186/s40862-023-00209-1.
- [33] V. Lin, N. E. Barrett, G.-Z. Liu, N.-S. Chen, and M. S.-Y. Jong, "Supporting dyadic learning of English for tourism purposes with scenery-based virtual reality," *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, vol. 36, no. 5–6, pp. 906–942, Jul. 2023, doi: 10.1080/09588221.2021.1954663.





BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

Qiannan Liu     graduated from Shandong University in China with a master's degree in Foreign Literature. She is currently a lecturer at Xinhua College of Ningxia University, China, and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Education at UCSI University. Her primary research interests include second language acquisition of Japanese, cultural factors in language, and curriculum studies of Japanese as a second language. She has published several articles related to Japanese as a foreign language. She can be contacted at email: qiannanliu521@gmail.com.



Bee Eng Wong     is currently an associate professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts at UCSI University. Her current research interests include language teaching and learning, language assessment at the workplace and L2 acquisition. She can be contacted at email: wongbe@ucsiuniversity.edu.my.



Richard Peter Bailey     is professor of Education in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts at UCSI University. His academic contributions span a wide range of fields, including philosophy, mental health, and sport. He places strong emphasis on inclusion, sustainability, and health, and has explored the anthropology and history of Malaysia, martial arts, educational neuroscience, and international and comparative education. His work has significantly impacted the intersection of education, physical well-being, and mental health. He can be contacted at email: richardbailey@ucsiuniversity.edu.my.