

*"Wow Joe...! That's a day's worth of content in an hour. My brain is overloaded, but so excited to explore these technologies!!! Thank you!!!"* (Belinda, Symposium Attendee, 15th November 2024)

This evening, it was my absolute honour and privilege to be the keynote speaker on the first day of the sixth National Symposium on Japanese Language Education at the University of Technology Sydney. My presentation, AI-Enhanced Japanese: Personalising the Learning Journey, was an interactive session designed to showcase practical applications of artificial intelligence in Japanese language education, with a focus on fostering engagement, supporting cultural immersion, and enhancing students' language skills. Throughout the session, I guided the audience through various AI tools, offering live demonstrations and practical examples, while collecting real-time feedback from attendees via Padlet.

#### Introduction: Setting Up the Session with DirectPoll and Padlet

To set the stage, I used DirectPoll to gauge the audience's familiarity with AI. Participants rated their AI expertise on a scale from one (new to AI) to four (experienced users who integrate AI seamlessly into their teaching). Out of 62 total votes, the majority (61.3%) identified at level 2, indicating they had basic knowledge and had experimented with tools like ChatGPT. Another 20.9% rated themselves at level 3, using AI frequently for tasks like lesson planning and resource creation. A smaller group (16.1%) identified as level 1, completely new to AI, with no prior experience, while only 1.6% felt confident at level 4, fully integrating AI tools into their teaching with advanced skills. These results helped me adjust the presentation to focus on the needs of a primarily beginner to intermediate audience, while also including advanced ideas for the more experienced attendees.

I then introduced Padlet as our backchannel for the session, enabling attendees to share thoughts, questions, and reflections throughout the keynote. By customising the Post Fields settings, I allowed multiple formats for contributions: text responses, audio recordings, and image-based inputs through Padlet's "I Can't Draw" feature. This setup gave the audience the flexibility to interact in various ways. For instance, one attendee, Belinda, shared, *"Looking forward to learning new skills!"* while another, Ro, commented, *"Ooh, storytelling! Looking forward to that!"* These inputs not only provided instant engagement but also informed me about areas of interest within the group.

#### Accessing Transcripts on YouTube: An Example from the Japan Foundation

Before diving into specific AI tools, I demonstrated a practical approach to accessing transcripts on YouTube, which is useful for language learning and lesson planning. Using the Japan Foundation's Activate Your Japanese series as an example, I showed how attendees could click on the "More" option in the description below a YouTube video and select "Show Transcript" to view the dialogue. This feature is ideal for extracting spoken content in AI produced text form, allowing teachers to convert it into study material or comprehension exercises. Several attendees were surprised by the simplicity of this feature, with one person exclaiming on Padlet, *"Didn't know I could download worksheets and PowerPoint's from ChatGPT! Thanks!"*

### TurboScribe and ChatGPT: Summarising and Customising Content from Video Transcripts

With the transcript in hand, I demonstrated how to copy it into ChatGPT for summarisation. I pasted the transcript from the Activate Your Japanese video and instructed ChatGPT to create a 100-word summary in simplified English. This summary, tailored for A1 learners, provided a concise overview suitable for beginner-level students.

To enhance accessibility, I generated a QR code from the video URL, allowing students to scan and watch the clip directly on their devices. I then created a downloadable Word worksheet to accompany the video, which included:

- A header section with fields for the student's name, date, and group.
- The QR code image along with instructions for students to scan it and watch the video.
- Several comprehension questions based on the ChatGPT summary and transcript, reinforcing understanding.

Audience feedback on this workflow was enthusiastic. One attendee wrote *"Wow! Can't wait to experiment with TurboScribe and ChatGPT...!!". AI added "I use Turboscribe everyday for a range of languages and absolutely love it. What a game changer."* and Sharon mentioned, *"Never used it before. Keen to try,"* highlighting the interest in these applications.

### AudioPen for Quick Summarisation and Note-Taking

For the next demonstration, I introduced AudioPen, a versatile voice-to-text tool. I set English as the input language and Japanese as the output language, which enabled me to record my spoken notes in English and have AudioPen produce a summary in

Japanese. This tool is excellent for educators who want to capture spontaneous reflections, planning notes, or quick instructional content, which can be summarised in the target language.

On Padlet, a few attendees shared their own thoughts, with an AudioPen enthusiast asking, “Does AudioPen have the ability to read the notes that it has made?” and Katelyn Hurley adding, “I wondered the same thing!”

So to model how AudioPen can assist students with pronunciation, I played back the generated Japanese text using Immersive Reader via the Helperbird Chrome extension.

### Customised Japanese Phrasebooks and NaturalReader for Pronunciation

Using Google Translate’s Phrasebook feature, I showed how students could save commonly used or challenging phrases and later export them to a Google Sheet for personalised study. In this example, I used the following prompt in Google Translate:

*“Write five basic sentences in A1 level Japanese describing opinions about sports and leisure activities.”*

The resulting sentences, including translated phrases like “I like tennis” and “Jogging is a bit boring,” providing a foundation for expressing opinions in Japanese. After exporting the list to a Google Sheet, I imported these sentences into NaturalReader. Here, students could listen to Japanese voices pronounce the phrases correctly, reinforcing listening skills and pronunciation. Several audience members were intrigued, with Tony K asking, “Will the Google Translate phrasebook work in both the website and app versions?”

### Simulating Real-Life Scenarios with Mizou Chatbots

To provide students with realistic conversation practice, I introduced Mizou, a conversational AI that simulates a Japanese waiter in a restaurant setting. For this demonstration, I used two prompts.

The first prompt for Mizou was:

*“You are a Japanese waiter in a Japanese restaurant. My students are working at A2 level Japanese and will order food and drink from you. Answer them in Japanese only. Answer in short, simple sentences. Always be kind and polite.”*

This created a friendly, structured conversation environment where students could practise ordering food and drink in Japanese.

To support comprehension, I provided a second prompt in ChatGPT:

*“I’m having a conversation with a Japanese waiter, but I don’t understand Japanese. Can you help me translate the Japanese into English?”*

This allowed me to copy Mizou’s Japanese replies, paste them into ChatGPT for translation, and use the English response to continue the conversation. This setup bridged the gap for my lack of understanding of Japanese and allowed for a smooth bilingual exchange. One participant and Mizou Fan, commented, “Mizou looks amazing! I haven’t used this yet, but it looks like it could really enhance language practice.”

### Cultural Exploration with Google Earth Projects and Interactive Quizzes

For an immersive cultural activity, I showed the audience how to create a virtual tour of Tokyo using Google Earth and the following prompt in ChatGPT:

*“Create the code for a KML file to be imported into Google Earth describing 10 great places to visit in Tokyo at B1 level Japanese using the exact location. Create quiz questions for students to answer based on the descriptions you create. Add an answer key underneath. You must write all the code in one code block. It needs to end with </kml>. Create a downloadable KML file.”*

This prompt generated a downloadable KML file, which, when imported into Google Earth, provided students with a virtual journey through significant locations in Tokyo, each accompanied by a short description in Japanese. Each stop included a quiz question, designed to check students’ comprehension and reinforce vocabulary. This activity offered an engaging way to situate language learning within real-world contexts, deepening cultural appreciation.

Using Brisk Teaching, I transformed these quiz questions into self-marking Google or Microsoft quizzes. Students could complete the quiz on their own and receive instant

feedback, which would encourage active learning and reinforce their understanding of Tokyo's cultural landmarks. Attendees responded enthusiastically, with Linda sharing, *"Drinking in the knowledge,"* and Belinda noting, *"That's a day's worth of content in an hour. My brain is overloaded, but so excited to explore these technologies!"*

To complement the keynote and provide attendees with a unique way to review the session's content, I used NotebookLM to create a 13-minute AI-produced podcast summarising the presentation. I uploaded a PDF version of the Google Slides presentation and copied and pasted the summary of the keynote from the NSJLE website. NotebookLM used this information to generate a dynamic podcast featuring two AI-generated presenters, one male and one female. The result was an engaging audio summary that covered key concepts and examples from the presentation. I thought this would be a valuable resource for attendees to listen to after the session, helping them revisit and reflect on the practical applications of AI in Japanese language education.

#### Q&A Session: Addressing Audience Questions

During the Q&A, I received several thoughtful questions, and I appreciated the opportunity to address common concerns around AI in education.

*Q: How do you respond to those who feel that AI is taking the humanity out of language teaching?*

*A: This is a common concern. I believe AI should complement, not replace, the unique skills that teachers bring, like empathy, cultural insight, and the ability to build relationships. AI is a tool to ease workload, spark student curiosity, and provide additional practice, but the heart of teaching—understanding students' needs and guiding them—will always require a human touch. It's about giving teachers and students agency and confidence rather than taking something away from the teaching experience.*

*Q: How child-safe is the image generator on Padlet? My students are creative and might test its limits.*

*A: Padlet's "I Can't Draw" feature includes built-in guardrails to prevent inappropriate images, though with any AI tool, teachers should monitor its use. The tool was designed for educational contexts, so it generally avoids inappropriate outputs. You also have the option to turn on moderation so that posts don't go live until you've approved them, which is great for situations where students might get too creative!*

*Q: Does TurboScribe allow transcription in multiple languages within one recording, say Japanese and English in the same clip?*

*A: TurboScribe does support bilingual transcription to an extent. If the recording switches between two languages, it often recognises this and provides both languages in the transcript. However, it can occasionally struggle with rapid switching, so manual editing may sometimes be necessary.*

## Conclusion: Reflections and Audience Engagement

In closing, I summarised the tremendous potential of AI in personalising Japanese language education, encouraging educators to integrate it thoughtfully. I emphasised the importance of combining AI with quality, published resources to create a well-rounded educational experience. Feedback on Padlet was overwhelmingly positive, with Wow! posting, *“Thank you for your wonderful insight and expertise in using AI for languages,”* and 'Mr Dale' replying, *“You’re welcome. It was recorded so I presume you will be able to watch again with the pause button :-)”*

This evening’s keynote was not only an opportunity to share tools but also to engage with the insightful questions and enthusiasm from educators in Japanese language education. I’m inspired by their readiness to embrace AI as a tool for deeper student engagement, cultural immersion, and skill-building. I look forward to hearing how they continue to apply these technologies in their classrooms, pushing the boundaries of language learning into new, innovative territories.

Here is the presentation:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1d81ep9CNe5H9-4AgpQxKvc2KXQ2yNQdIDgV4uIIRSol/edit?usp=sharing>