

Transforming English Education: Leveraging ChatGPT for Conversational Style Mastery in Japanese Universities

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要 旨

本研究は、生成 AI の一種である ChatGPT を日本の大学における英語教育に統合する可能性を探究するものである。特に、学生の間で根強い課題となっている、フォーマルな英語とインフォーマルな英語のスタイルの区別に焦点を当てる。研究手法として、二段階のプロセスを採用した。まず学生が作成した英語のスピーチ原稿の文法的正確性を ChatGPT によって修正し、次に同じく ChatGPT を用いてそれをインフォーマルな会話体に変換する。この手法は、従来のフォーマルな学術的文章に重点を置く方法とは対照的である。研究結果は、トップレベルの大学ではフォーマルな文章作成の訓練が有益である一方、卒業後に就職する大多数の学生にとっては、会話体英語の習得がより有用であることを示唆している。本研究は、言語学習における AI ツールの使用が持つ文化的・教育的影響を強調し、状況に応じた適切なコミュニケーション能力の重要性を指摘するものである。結論として、AI は言語教育を向上させる可能性を持つものの、包括的な学習成果を確保するためには、従来の手法と併用すべきであると提言する。

キーワード：生成 AI, ChatGPT, 英語スピーチ, 文語体・口語体の英語,
英語文体論, レジスター, 大学英語教育

1. Introduction

Around 33 years ago, the late Kiyooki Nakao, Professor Emeritus of Waseda University and the teacher of the author's teacher, wrote the following in his renowned work "The Basics and Practices of English Expression" (1991, p. 158):

"It seems that many of today's university students cannot properly distinguish between Formal Style and Informal Style. Using abbreviations or contractions in a letter requesting a professor to be a judge in a speech contest, such as 'Dear Prof. Nakao, I hope you'll be able to be one of the judges...', is highly improper. Conversely, it is odd for a student spending the summer in America to begin with a formal salutation like 'Dear Professor Nakao (or Dear Sir)' and write in a stiff formal style, such as 'It gives me great pleasure to inform you of my safe arrival in Cleveland, Ohio...' They should simply start with 'Dear Mr. Nakao' and write in an extremely informal tone, like 'Believe it or not, here I am in Cleveland, Ohio...' *The Formal Style discussed in Chapter 9 and the Informal Style discussed in this chapter are two different types of English prose style that all Japanese English learners must be able to use with confidence.*" (Italics by the author).

Unfortunately, even 33 years later, the situation described above has not changed much in today's universities. The late Professor Nakao was apparently a master of English, so he could easily pull off the kind of performance indicated by the underlined text. However, can the author and many other Japanese university English instructors do the same? It is highly doubtful. Moreover, are we adequately instructing students on these style differences?

However, a powerful support has emerged since November 2022 to help with this—the generative AI represented by ChatGPT.

Yanase (2023) of Kyoto University has reported on a practice where he aims to improve students' English compositions in two stages using ChatGPT. In the first stage, ChatGPT is used to correct simple English errors (grammar, usage, etc.), and in the second stage, the same tool is used to convert the draft into an academic paper style.

This type of education may be feasible at top-level universities like Kyoto University, where the goal is to nurture researchers (especially science students) who will need to read and write academic papers in English. However, it is difficult to say that this meets the needs of the majority of students who do not go on to graduate school and instead directly enter the workforce after graduating. Unless they are science or English majors,

most students have little need to write academic papers in English.

Therefore, in this study, instead of upgrading students' written English to a formal academic paper style, we will attempt to downgrade or "dumb it down" to an "informal conversational" style, as Japanese students often try to mimic the formal, high-level English they have been exposed to in reading comprehension tests up to high school, using words and expressions that are not normally used in casual speech, resulting in failure.

The purpose of this qualitative study with emphasis on the students' narratives (Polkinghorne, 1995) is to examine how ChatGPT can be used not just to simply correct students' written English speeches, but to specifically convert them into an informal conversational style, and how students can perceive and utilize this transformation in their learning.

2. Literature Review: Using generative AI like ChatGPT in English education at Japanese universities

As mentioned in Mikawa (2024), the use of generative AI in higher education institutions is not yet sufficiently widespread. Despite the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) recognizing the usefulness of generative AI for translation and other purposes in foreign language education, provided the risks of plagiarism are addressed, the examples of using ChatGPT and other generative AI in Japanese universities are still limited at this point. Although more reports are expected to emerge in the future, here are summaries of the two most recent relevant studies on the use of AI, specifically ChatGPT, in ESL and EFL settings at Japanese universities, as well as one comprehensive review article on the global use of ChatGPT:

2.1. Japanese University EFL Student Insights on the Emerging ChatGPT Phenomenon:

Price(2024) explores the insights of Japanese university EFL students regarding the use of ChatGPT. It provides a qualitative analysis of students' perceptions, highlighting both the motivational benefits and challenges associated with integrating ChatGPT into language learning. The study found that while students appreciated the immediate feedback and personalized learning opportunities offered by ChatGPT, there were concerns about the accuracy of the information and the potential for reduced traditional learning practices. The article suggests that careful

integration of ChatGPT into language curricula can enhance learning outcomes by leveraging its strengths while addressing its limitations.

2.2. ChatGPT's Motivational Effects on Japanese University EFL Learners: A Qualitative Analysis:

Yamaoka (2024) examines the motivational effects of ChatGPT on Japanese university EFL learners through qualitative analysis. The study found that ChatGPT positively influenced students' motivation by providing engaging and interactive learning experiences. However, it also noted that the novelty of the tool might wear off over time, and the motivational impact could diminish without proper pedagogical strategies. The article concludes that while ChatGPT can enhance student motivation, educators should implement it alongside traditional teaching methods to maintain long-term engagement.

2.3. A Systematic Review of ChatGPT for English as a Foreign Language Writing: Opportunities, Challenges, and Recommendations:

Teng(2024) presents a systematic review of research on ChatGPT's role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing instruction. He analyzed 20 relevant studies published in 2023–2024 to explore opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for integrating ChatGPT into EFL writing contexts. Key findings include:

1. Students generally have positive perceptions of ChatGPT for writing assistance, particularly for editing, proofreading, and feedback.
2. ChatGPT shows promise as an automated writing evaluation tool, though it has limitations in detecting deeper structural and pragmatic errors.
3. Collaboration between teachers and learners is crucial when implementing ChatGPT in writing instruction.
4. ChatGPT can enhance various aspects of writing, including register knowledge and feedback literacy.
5. While ChatGPT offers significant opportunities for innovation in EFL writing instruction, it also presents challenges related to academic integrity and potential over-reliance on AI.

The article concludes by emphasizing the need for a balanced approach to integrating ChatGPT into EFL writing curricula, highlighting its potential to revolutionize writing instruction while acknowledging the continued importance of human oversight and critical thinking skills.

The above articles provide valuable insights into the use of ChatGPT in Japanese university EFL settings, highlighting both the potential benefits and challenges of integrating AI tools into language education.

3. Methodology

The participants were 133 second-year university students in a general education course (not English majors), with an average TOEIC score of around 500. They were asked to choose a topic from a text and write an English speech of between 100 to 150 words on that topic. At this stage, the use of generative AI like ChatGPT and translation software was not allowed (dictionary use was permitted).

Then, these speeches were submitted to a generative AI such as ChatGPT (other generative AIs could be used, which would be specified) for editing and correction. Subsequently, the edited drafts were further converted by the generative AI into an “informal conversational style,” including filler words, as if speaking to a friend. In other words, a two-stage revision process using the generative AI was implemented.

This process is the reverse of the modification method used by Yanase (2023) mentioned in the introduction, who first had ChatGPT correct the students’ compositions and then further converted them into an academic paper-like style. For top-level universities like Kyoto University, which aim to nurture researchers, this would be an extremely valuable experience for students (especially science students) who will need to write academic papers in English in the future.

However, for universities where the majority of students (especially non-English-major humanities students) will have little need to write academic papers in English in the future, such highly demanding advanced training can be highly demotivating.

On the other hand, if the English they have written can be converted into a casual, colloquial style (but still correct English) that can be used for oral communication with their peers, both now and in the future, it would lead to the immediate experience of being understood (disregarding issues of pronunciation and intonation here). This would likely increase their motivation as well. Conversely, speaking academic paper-style English directly would make it difficult to be understood right away.

Regarding this two-stage process, students were finally asked to provide free comments. The purpose was to make them aware not only of the grammar and vocabulary

errors in their written English speeches, but also of the expressions, grammar, and vocabulary specific to the conversational style, through the two-stage modification by ChatGPT.

4. Results (Examples of speeches with the two-stage modification by ChatGPT)

Speech Example(1)

【Biden Signs Marriage Law】

(1) Original Speech by the Student(sic)

In 2022, President Biden signs “Respect for Marriage Act”. Therefore, it becoming that people can marriage even they’re same sex or interracial. People’s freedom rights are protected. It’s a pleasant thing. Focus on Japan, same sex marriage isn’t recognized even if there’re many people proposed that. I think it should be recognized for people’s equality. But, in this month, Hiroshima Court admit that changing sex on register without changing genitalia surgery. This is unusual judgement. I disagree this judgement. Because, women’s rights are threatened. In the world, many incidents happened caused by admitting changing sex without surgery. This judgement can protect the people who transgender, but women are not. I hope that all people live freedom and safety even if sexual minority or not.

(2) Standard Correction by ChatGPT

In 2022, President Biden signed the “Respect for Marriage Act.” As a result, people can now marry regardless of their sex or race. This protects people’s freedom and rights, which is a positive development. However, in Japan, same-sex marriage is still not recognized, even though there are many people who support it. I believe that same-sex marriage should be recognized to ensure equality for all individuals. Additionally, this month, the Hiroshima Court issued an unusual ruling allowing individuals to change their sex on official records without undergoing genitalia surgery. I disagree with this judgment because it could threaten women’s rights. There have been many incidents around the world where recognizing sex changes without surgery has led to situations that endanger women’s safety. While this judgment might protect the rights of transgender individuals, it does not necessarily protect the rights of women. I hope that everyone can live in freedom and safety, whether they are part of a sexual minority or not.

(3) Casual Conversational Style by ChatGPT

Hey [Friend's Name], can we talk about something for a sec? So, you know how President Biden signed the "Respect for Marriage Act" back in 2022? It's this awesome law that allows people to marry regardless of their sex or race. I think it's such a great thing because it really protects people's freedom and rights. But here's the thing: in Japan, same-sex marriage still isn't recognized, even though a lot of people are pushing for it. I honestly think it should be recognized there too. It's important for equality and making sure everyone is treated fairly.

And there's another thing that happened recently. The Hiroshima Court made this pretty unusual decision. They ruled that people can change their sex on official documents without having to get genital surgery. I'm actually not a fan of this ruling. I think it might put women's rights at risk. Around the world, there have been cases where allowing sex changes without surgery has led to situations that are unsafe for women. So, while this ruling might be good for transgender people, I'm worried it doesn't do enough to protect women. I just hope we can have a world where everyone, whether they're part of a sexual minority or not, can live freely and safely. What do you think about all this? I'd love to hear your thoughts!

(4) Student comments (verbatim)

First, looking at the corrections made to the original text, I noticed that most of the words were ones I knew, so I could see that the content hadn't changed but had become a more polished piece of writing. However, there were also words that I wouldn't have thought of using myself, which made me impressed by the AI's vast amount of information. In the original text, and even when writing English in other classes, I tend to overuse the word "people," but seeing it changed to "individual" and "all people" corrected to "everyone" made me realize how much more cohesive and refined these alternatives look, so I plan to incorporate them in the future. I didn't have much confidence in my English writing, but after seeing the corrections, I found it much more readable, which made me realize how much I lack in knowledge and writing skills.

As for the casual conversational style, it was completely different from both my original speech and the corrected version in how it started by addressing a friend and introducing the topic with "So, you know how~". From there, it continued in a conversational style, as if the AI was talking about situations in America and Japan. When I actually read it aloud, I realized how different the conversational style was, and

I thought it would be difficult for me to create such a natural-sounding conversation at my current level. Specifically, I noticed that “unusual ruling” became “pretty unusual decision,” which I thought might be due to the conversational style. The text ended with “What do you think about all this? I’d love to hear your thoughts!” which I felt would lead to sharing opinions and starting a discussion. Particularly with this last sentence, I felt that this kind of speech isn’t very common in Japan. In my experience, we rarely discuss such topics (like social issues) in casual conversations with friends, and even if we did, we wouldn’t typically end with such a phrase. The conversation partner would naturally respond with their comments. I wonder if this might be related to Japan’s culture of “reading the air.” I personally have rarely used phrases like “What do you think about this?” When a topic is brought up, the other person generally continues the conversation about it. In my impression, Western communication tends to be more direct or straightforward, leading to expanded discussions.

Seeing the conversational style was interesting because it felt a bit different from how we typically talk in Japan. I already knew that AI had vast knowledge and was highly capable, but seeing how much both the corrections and the conversational style changed, and how it provided Japanese translations and key expressions, made it very easy to understand and enjoyable to read. When generative AI first came out, I only used it for fun and never for studying, but through this assignment, I was deeply impressed and now think I’ll try using it in appropriate situations for learning.”

Speech Example (2)

【A New Treatment for Alzheimer’s】

(1) Original Speech by the Student(sic)

I am going to talk my thoughts about Alzheimer’s disease and a new treatment for it. Around a million people are thought to be living with dementia in the UK. When I heard this, I was so surprised. There is not a person with dementia around me. So, I hardly knew about Alzheimer’s disease and any care for it. Fergus Walsh said, “Lecanemab is not a cure. It can only help patients in the early stages of Alzheimer’s, but it is the first drug to convincingly slow cognitive decline.” I think that even if patients cannot completely cure dementia, it is important for them to slow the progression of symptoms. I hope that the new drug, lecanemab can be used for Alzheimer’s patients around the world and as many patients as possible can help.

(2) Standard Correction by ChatGPT

I am going to share my thoughts about Alzheimer's disease and a new treatment for it. Around a million people are thought to be living with dementia in the UK. When I heard this, I was very surprised. There is no one with dementia around me, so I hardly knew about Alzheimer's disease or any care for it. Fergus Walsh said, "Lecanemab is not a cure. It can only help patients in the early stages of Alzheimer's, but it is the first drug to convincingly slow cognitive decline." I think that even if patients cannot completely cure dementia, it is important to slow the progression of symptoms. I hope that the new drug, lecanemab, can be used for Alzheimer's patients around the world and help as many patients as possible.

(3) Casual Conversational Style by ChatGPT

Hey, I want to share my thoughts on Alzheimer's disease and this new treatment for it. You know, about a million people in the UK are living with dementia. I was really surprised when I heard that. I don't know anyone with dementia, so I didn't know much about Alzheimer's or how to care for it. Fergus Walsh said, "Lecanemab isn't a cure. It can only help people in the early stages of Alzheimer's, but it's the first drug to really slow down cognitive decline." Even if we can't completely cure dementia, I think it's important to slow down the symptoms. I really hope this new drug, lecanemab, can be used for Alzheimer's patients all over the world and help as many people as possible.

(4) Student Comment (verbatim)

First, I will discuss the changes from Task 1 to Task 2. Looking at the corrections, I noticed many points for improvement, such as not using appropriate words or not placing them in the correct position, as well as simple mistakes. I also observed that some parts were omitted, making the text more concise and easier to understand.

Next, I will discuss the changes from Task 2 to Task 3. When converting to colloquial (conversational) style, I realized that simply placing 'Hey' at the beginning of a sentence greatly changes the impression given by the text. Upon researching initial greetings, I found that among options like 'Hello' and 'Hi', 'Hey' is the most casual greeting, which made me feel the need to choose appropriate greetings based on the person you're talking to. Also, commonly seen in this process were the addition of emphatic expressions and changes in word order. Regarding emphatic expressions, I noticed that 'really' was used more frequently. For example, 'I hope...' changed to 'I really hope...'. There were also cases where other words were replaced with 'really'. Changes like '...I was very

surprised’ to ‘I was really surprised...’ and ‘convincingly slow’ to ‘really slow down’ occurred. The word ‘convincingly’ means with certainty or persuasively. Using this in colloquial (conversational) text might create a stiff impression, but I learned that changing it to ‘really’ can give the text a softer impression. Regarding word order changes, there were instances of completely reversing everything around a comma, or moving parts to the end of the sentence. Comparing the original text with the colloquial (conversational) version, I felt that using inversion not only changes how the receiver perceives it but also makes what you want to emphasize or highlight stand out more. There were also cases where ‘a’ or ‘the’ were replaced with ‘this’, and ‘patients’ was replaced with ‘people’, which made me think this change might be similar in Japanese. In Japan, it’s common to change demonstrative pronouns when speaking to superiors or customers versus family and friends, and I felt this difference was reflected in the text. I thought it’s important to omit or simplify expressions for easier understanding when it’s clear what you’re referring to without directly naming objects or people in conversation.

Most of my previous English writing experiences were in formal style, with few opportunities to write in colloquial (conversational) style, so I gained many new insights and learnings through this task. However, I believe there are many more changes in expressions and writing styles when converting from formal to colloquial, so I want to continue researching this actively in the future.”

Speech Example (3)

【Nurses on Strike】

(1) Original Speech by the Student(sic)

I will give a speech about nurse’s strike. I have never done part-time job, but I think that it is necessary to know working in society before getting a job. Therefore, I want to do part-time job in a short period of time from this summer vacation. That’s way, I was interested in labor’s wages this time and I chose this topic. In Unit6, nurses insist that their wages are low. Recent years, prices are rising around the world. Japan is no exception. In addition, wages for part-time job and small and medium-sized businesses are still not rising. I think that this case can say the same thing about Japan. Maybe we need to speak up for these problems. I would like to finish my speech. Thank you for listening.

(2) Standard Correction by ChatGPT

I will be delivering a speech about nurse strikes. Although I have never held a part-time job myself, I believe it's crucial to experience working in society before entering a full-time career. Therefore, I intend to take on a part-time job for a brief period during this summer vacation. This decision sparked my interest in labor wages, leading me to choose this topic. In Unit 6, nurses have emphasized their low wages. In recent years, prices have been rising globally, and Japan is no exception. Furthermore, wages for part-time jobs and in small and medium-sized businesses have not seen significant increases. I believe this situation mirrors challenges in Japan. It's possible that we need to address these issues openly. With that, I would like to conclude my speech. Thank you for your attention.

(3) Casual Conversational Style by ChatGPT

Hey, so I'm gonna talk about nurse strikes in my speech. You know, I've never actually had a part-time job myself, but I think it's super important to get a taste of working life before diving into a full-time career. That's why I'm planning to pick up a part-time gig this summer break. It got me thinking a lot about wages and stuff, which is why I chose this topic. You know in Unit 6, nurses are really stressing about their low pay. And lately, prices have been going up all over the world,. Plus, wages for part-time gigs and in smaller businesses haven't really budged much. I feel like this situation is a big deal here in Japan too. Maybe we need to start talking more openly about these issues. Alright, that's about it for my speech. Thanks for listening, guys.

(4) Student Comment (verbatim)

As I'm not very proficient in English, I believe I created the original draft using basic grammar that we learn in textbooks. With that in mind, the first correction by ChatGPT made me realize that my original text had each sentence separated, and it helped me notice such small details through the edits. However, as you can see from the table comparing before and after corrections, there were several instances where I questioned whether it was necessary to use more difficult expressions when the meaning was already clear, and I was curious about the reasons for these modifications.

In the second correction by ChatGPT, I felt that greetings like "Hey," concluding remarks, and conjunctions were the main focus of changes. There were also parts that seemed to be clear typos, making me feel that it might still be unstable when dealing with complex instructions. I've only used well-known conjunctions until now, so I plan to be more conscious of them when writing English comments or reports in the

future. In conclusion, I think the first correction mainly focused on modifying words, grammar, and phrases, while the second correction centered on adding addressing words and changing conjunctions. Although I've been curious about what ChatGPT is, I hadn't had the opportunity to use it until this report. If permitted, I'd like to refer to it for future reports and papers. However, as mentioned earlier, there are issues such as whether certain corrections are necessary, and it seems dangerous to rely on it entirely. Therefore, when using it, I believe we should be cautious—for English, we should verify if the outputted grammar is truly correct, and for other reports, we should confirm the accuracy of the information.”

5. Analysis and Discussion

In Sections 5.1 through 5.2, I will discuss the characteristics of English correction and conversion to colloquial speech with reference to students' comments on ChatGPT; in Section 5.3, I will discuss the linguistic characteristics of subjects' speech that was converted to colloquial speech with reference to (Biber et al., 2002, 2021). Finally, in section 5.4, I will discuss areas for improvement in spoken English that are common among Japanese learners of English in general, based not only on the subjects but also on the author's experience teaching in the classroom.

5.1. Standard Correction:

5.1.1. Clarity and Cohesion

The standard corrections made by ChatGPT focused on improving grammatical accuracy, enhancing clarity, and increasing cohesion. For example, in the first speech about the “Respect for Marriage Act,” the correction involved grammatical adjustments and the use of more appropriate vocabulary, such as replacing “people” with “individuals” or “everyone,” which made the text more polished and cohesive.

5.1.2. Student Perception

Students noted that the corrections helped them realize the potential of using varied vocabulary and more refined expressions. They appreciated the readability and coherence of the corrected texts, which boosted their confidence in English writing.

5.2. Colloquial Style Transformation:

5.2.1. Conversational Tone

The transformation into a colloquial style involved introducing informal elements, such as starting with “Hey” and using filler words like “you know.” This change aimed to make the text sound like a natural conversation, which is particularly evident in the speech about Alzheimer’s disease, where phrases like “really slow down” were used instead of “convincingly slow”.

5.2.2. Cultural Observations

Students observed that the conversational style felt different from typical Japanese communication, which tends to be less direct. The inclusion of phrases like “What do you think about all this?” was noted as uncommon in Japanese casual discussions, highlighting cultural differences in communication styles.

5.2.3. Impact on Learning

The exercise helped students understand the nuances of informal communication and the importance of context-appropriate language. They recognized the value of using conversational English in appropriate settings, which could enhance their communication skills in informal contexts.

After correcting errors in students’ English speeches, if prompts like ‘convert to colloquial style’ are simply used without sufficient detail, there isn’t much stylistic modification from the second to the third stage of speech conversion. For students who follow the teacher’s instructions and ask to ‘rewrite in a tone that includes connecting words as if speaking to a friend,’ the revised speeches contain many colloquial expressions and become quite informal. Moreover, exceptional students give multiple revision instructions to the AI and recognize that the output differs slightly each time.

When given a theme and asked to write a speech draft, students typically write in formal language and use little to no spoken language that considers the audience, or they are unable to do so. This seems to stem from a lack of knowledge about colloquial English, or it not being taught, even though students may know about using contractions in conversation.

5.3. Linguistic features of vocabulary and usage after conversion to colloquial style in detail (cf. Biber et al., 2002, 2021):

1. **Use of Sentence-Final ‘Though’:** This technique is employed to soften statements,

making them less definitive and more conversational.

2. **Engaging Questions:** Phrases like “Did you hear about~?” are used to draw the listener in, often accompanied by questions at the end to encourage interaction, such as “What do you think?”

3. **Empathy Expressions:** Words like “~right?” are frequently used to build rapport and create a sense of shared understanding with the listener.

4. **Colloquial and Degree Adverbs:** Terms like “super” and “pretty” are commonly used to emphasize points, e.g., “It’s super promising, right?” or “pretty unusual.”

5. **Colloquial Adjectives:** Words such as “awesome” are used to convey enthusiasm and informality.

6. **Attention-Getting Expressions:** Phrases like “But here’s the thing” are used to draw attention and maintain the listener’s interest.

7. **Colloquial Words and Expressions:** Informal terms like “veggies” for vegetables, “little kids” for preschoolers, and “folks” for people are used to create a casual tone.

8. **Nominal Endings:** Sentences may end with just a noun to add emphasis, e.g., “But a happy song? Total mood booster.”

9. **Colloquial Sentence Structures:** Informal sentence constructions are used, such as “it got me thinking about how many people are in the same boat.”

10. **Imperative Sentence Starters:** Sentences often begin with imperatives to capture attention, e.g., “And get this.”

5.4. Improvements to Colloquial English:

In Japanese schools, English education often focuses on formal aspects of the language, such as grammar and vocabulary, primarily to prepare students for exams. However, several linguistic features of informal English are not well taught, which can hinder students’ ability to communicate effectively in casual settings. Here are some of these features:

1. Idiomatic Expressions and Slang

Japanese English education tends to emphasize standard vocabulary and formal language, often neglecting idiomatic expressions and slang that are common in everyday English communication. This omission can leave students unprepared for informal conversations where such expressions are frequently used.

2. Conversational Phrasing and Pragmatics

The curriculum often lacks a focus on the pragmatics of English, which includes understanding the nuances of conversational phrasing, such as when and how to use certain expressions appropriately depending on the context. This can lead to difficulties in engaging in natural, flowing conversations.

3. Discourse Markers (most relevant to the present study)

Discourse markers like “well,” “you know,” “I mean,” etc., which are used to manage the flow of conversation and indicate the speaker’s attitude or intention, are not typically taught. These are crucial for sounding natural and maintaining the rhythm of informal speech.

4. Register and Style Shifting (most relevant to the present study)

Japanese students often struggle with adjusting their language register to suit different social contexts. The ability to shift between formal and informal styles is not well-developed, partly because the education system focuses heavily on formal written English.

5. Fluency and Interaction Skills

The emphasis on reading and listening skills over speaking and interaction means that students may lack fluency and confidence in informal spoken English. This can result in hesitations and long pauses in conversation, as students search for the right words or expressions.

These gaps in teaching informal English features can limit Japanese students’ ability to engage in casual, everyday conversations in English, which are essential for effective communication in many real-world situations. Addressing these areas could enhance students’ overall communicative competence.

6. Summary and Conclusion

This study demonstrated that ChatGPT can effectively enhance students’ written English by providing standard corrections that improve grammatical accuracy and coherence. Additionally, the transformation into a colloquial style offered insights into informal communication, which is valuable for students learning English as a second language. The process not only improved the students’ writing skills but also increased their awareness of cultural differences in communication styles. However, students also noted the importance of not relying entirely on AI for corrections, emphasizing the need

for critical evaluation of AI-generated content. Overall, the study suggests that tools like ChatGPT can be valuable educational aids when used thoughtfully and in conjunction with traditional learning methods.

As seen in the speech examples of this study, informal English, or spoken language, has been largely neglected in English education. This is evidenced by comments stating that the text became “harder to understand” when converted to casual conversational style by ChatGPT. However, as noted in the comments, the grammar and sentence structure are naturally simplified compared to written language. Therefore, if we intensively and systematically teach vocabulary, expressions, and filler words specific to colloquial speech, it could be fruitful for students. As mentioned in the comments, learning expressions “often heard in movies and dramas” in advance in the classroom can enhance learners’ motivation and enthusiasm for English study.

In the future, it is certain that the creation of complex documents will be taken over by generative AI like ChatGPT. Such AI is already being utilized for this purpose in companies and government offices. In this context, the most effective means for building human connections and relationships will be “face-to-face dialogue and conversation.” Therefore, typical boring “self-introductions and situational conversations (such as at restaurants)” conducted in so-called English conversation classes are inappropriate as teaching materials.

The author firmly believes that generative AI like ChatGPT, which can instantly convert “what one wants to say” into friendly colloquial language, will become a powerful tool in future English education. With proper guidance and checking for so-called “hallucinations,” there should be no problems. This could quickly resolve the kind of struggles experienced by the late Donald Keene, a Japanese literature researcher whom the author deeply respects. It would be beneficial to read the following quote, replacing “Japanese” with “English”(Keene, 1970, pp. 154–163):

Foreigners who don't have the ideal of speaking correct Japanese can sometimes communicate more effectively than students studying Japanese. If they ask “You, candy, eat?”, the Japanese person they're talking to can understand the meaning of the statement. However, there's a vast distance between this primitive broken Japanese and correct Japanese. A Japanese language student asking the same question might hesitate over various points:

“Anata (But since we're close, should I use ‘kimi’, or would ‘Yamada-san’ be better?),

wa (But since it's the subject of the sentence, maybe 'ga' would be better), kashi (No, it's called 'kashiya', but what's sold there is 'okashi'), wo (In this case, 'ga' could also be used, which should I choose?), tabetai (No, even if we're friends, polite language might be better, should I use 'meshiagaru'?), and so on."

In the end, if they say "Anata wa okashi ga meshiagaritai desu ka?" with perfect pronunciation, the Japanese person will of course understand, and there won't be any grammatical errors, but it will sound more like a direct translation from English than natural Japanese. It takes a considerable amount of time to learn to say "Okashi wa ikaga desu ka?"

Go on to read the following quote, replacing "Japanese" with "English" again:

If one tries to master Japanese, which boasts the reputation of being the world's most difficult national language, they must be prepared to face disappointment or even despair many times. Even if you think you've become quite proficient, you might encounter a manga that you can't understand at all, or on the same day you're complimented on your fluent Japanese, you might be mocked by a friend's child for speaking poor Japanese. While your self-esteem may be wounded many times, if you succeed in overcoming the fortress that is the Japanese language, you'll experience a satisfaction that makes you forget your past struggles. The difficulty of Japanese reflects the complexity and richness of Japanese culture, so one could study it for a lifetime without getting bored.

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