

ATP ASIA

MPM

EMPOWERING ASIA'S WORKFORCE

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Innovation Roadshow

Can You Speak the Language — or Can You Do the Job?

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A-ATP 2026 · INNOVATION ROADSHOW

Can You Speak the Language—or Can You Do the Job?

AI Assessment for Workplace Readiness

Basil Tonks | Potential Plus

Kuala Lumpur · Malaysia

AISATS
AI Skill Assessment & Training System

Workplace language assessment should answer the question:

What can this person actually do?



WHY THIS MATTERS

Japan’s Workforce is Becoming Multilingual

Language assessment is moving from an education issue to an operational workforce issue.

4.28M

foreign residents

June 2026 · record high

2.57M

foreign workers

Oct. 2025 · +11.7% YoY

24.7%

of foreign workers

work in manufacturing

**Japan needs to know not only who knows Japanese —
but who can function in Japanese.**

Sources: Immigration Services Agency of Japan (June 2026); Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Oct. 2025 foreign employment data).

THE PROBLEM

Case study: A Score Does Not Answer the Employer's Question

ANONYMIZED CASE

Major Japanese manufacturing workforce company

1971	founded
50+ yrs	workforce deployment & training
~14,000	workers on assignment*
Field	manufacturing & engineering services

**Rounded from FY2025 year-end workforce figure.*

What the employer receives

- JLPT N3 / N2 certification
- Speaking score from interview
- Vocabulary / grammar / listening evaluation
- Writing sample
- Interview impression

What the employer really needs to know

Can this person…

- ✓ Understand an instruction accurately?
- ✓ Recognize what is unclear & confirm?
- ✓ Explain a problem or change?
- ✓ Report, coordinate and hand over?
- ✓ Understand a manual or warning?

FROM "How much Japanese do you know?" →
TO "What can you do in Japanese?"

Case-study construct adapted from the Japanese workforce assessment project materials. Organization name withheld; profile figures rounded.

THE CONSTRUCT

Workplace Readiness Has Two Dimensions

The case study led us to separate what a person can do from how well they can do it.

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

What can you do?

1. Understand instructions
2. Understand documents
3. Explain a situation
4. Report / coordinate
5. Write a record or report
6. Clarify / rephrase
7. Summarize / hand off

LANGUAGE QUALITY

How well can you do it?

1	**Clarity / pronunciation**	Can the listener understand?
2	**Fluency**	Does the message keep moving?
3	**Vocabulary**	Is the language fit for the situation?
4	**Grammar**	Is meaning clear?
5	**Coherence**	Is information organized logically?

WORKPLACE READINESS = ACTIVITY × QUALITY

Scale: CEFR
Context: workplace Can-dos

Assessment Must Look More Like the Work

REALISTIC TASK

製造現場の例

機械に異常音があります。
作業を止め、状況を上司に報告してください。

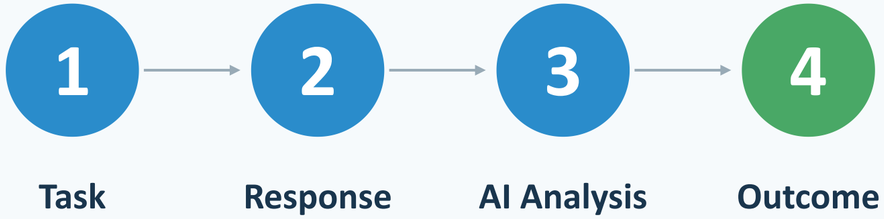
There is an unusual noise from the machine.
Stop work and report the situation to your supervisor.

A conventional speaking test may ask:

Was the pronunciation good? Was it fluent?

The more useful question:

Did the candidate accomplish the task?

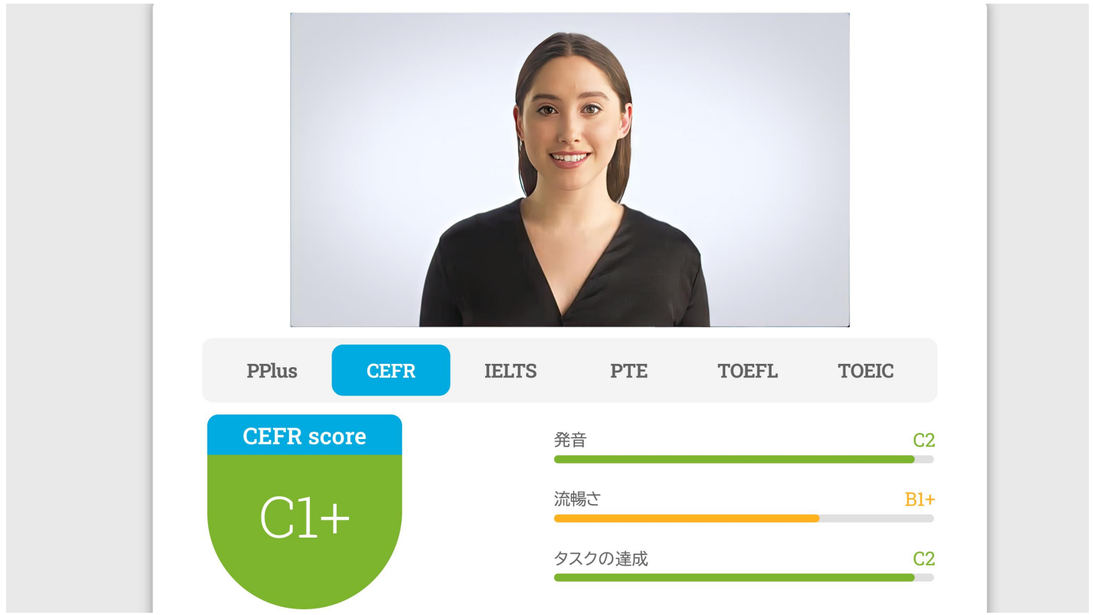


Language quality + **Task achievement**

= a closer approximation to readiness

HOW AI HELPS

AISATS: AI Language Skill Scoring Plus Task Achievement



Example AISATS Score Report

One platform can combine:

1	**Custom Tasks**	Create prompts around a role, process or domain knowledge.
2	**Easy Administration**	Browser-based; no special app required.
3	**Language-quality Scoring**	Pronunciation, fluency and related dimensions.
✓	**Task Achievement Scoring**	Did the response meet the communication objective?
5	**Fast Accurate Feedback**	Immediate results for assessment or learning.

AISATS examples adapted from the user-provided AISATS presentation.

BEYOND A SINGLE RESPONSE

Real Communication is Interactive

The next step is not a longer test — it is a more realistic interaction.

CUSTOMER

“Can you help me change my reservation?”

WORKER

“Yes, we have a non-smoking room available.”

SUPERVISOR

“Did you make the guest happy?”

LISTEN → **RESPOND** → **CLARIFY** → **ADAPT** → **ACHIEVE**

ASSESS

Can this person perform in context?

TRAIN

Practice → feedback → retry in new scenarios

AI-supported role play can make both scalable.

TAKEAWAY

The Shift: From Language Scores to Communication Readiness

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

“What do you know?”

Scores · Levels · Linguistic Accuracy
Performance in a Test Task

Necessary — but incomplete

WORKPLACE READINESS

“What can you do?”

Task Achievement · Interaction · Can-do
Performance in a Realistic Context

Closer to the decision employers make

Can you speak the language — or can you do the job?

AI can help us measure both.

ありがとうございました

Arigato gozaimashita.

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POTENTIAL PLUS

Q&A

Why Scenario Practice Matters

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

32 **peer-reviewed role-play studies (2000–2023)**

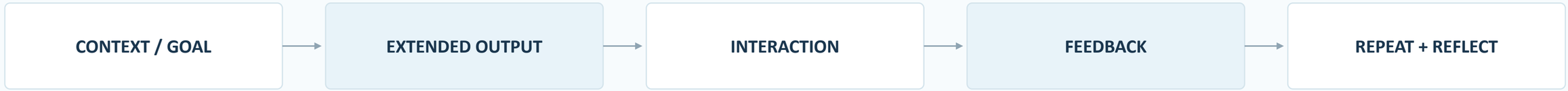
Reported benefits across fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and affective outcomes.

10-week AI-Assisted Speaking Study

65 adult CEFR B1 learners · AI-assisted group vs teacher-led group

Speech rate	70.6 → 79.3 words/min
Utterance complexity	9.79 → 12.82 words/T-unit

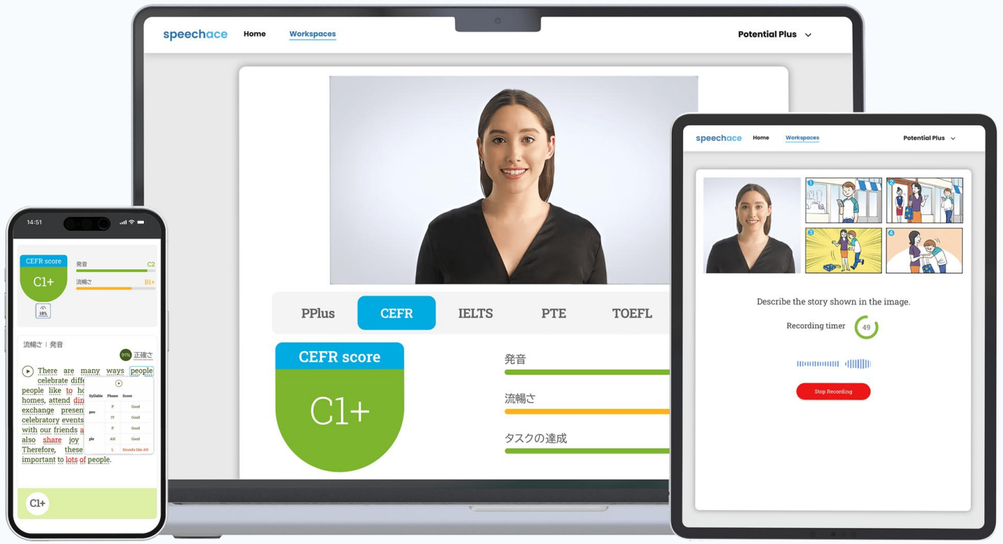
Why it can work



Sources in user-provided role-play research deck: Kaygısız & Akar (2025); Karami, Feizarbabi & Xodabande (2026).

Q&A

AISATS Assessment Architecture



Question Design — Library + custom questions; read-aloud, image description, free response.

Delivery — Unique URL / browser; mobile, tablet and computer.

Scoring — Overall, pronunciation, fluency and task achievement.

Reference Scales — CEFR plus predictive links to major English test scales in current implementation.

Use Cases — Recruitment, placement, training diagnostics and progress checks.

Adapted from the user-provided AISATS overview presentation.