

Language Politeness Education through Language Behaviour Habits: Concerning the Indonesian and Japanese Viewpoints

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ABSTRACT

Language politeness has universal characteristics. It means that speech communities from any country have their own language politeness based on the applicable norms. Language politeness education starts from family. Meanwhile, outside family communities, such as schools or society, language politeness education is greatly needed to create positive interactions between language users and certain communities. This research discussed language politeness education in two languages (Indonesian and Japanese) using a comparative qualitative case study in library research. The results of the study informed that Indonesian and Japanese are two languages that implement language politeness through both verbal and non-verbal languages. Verbal language is shown by the chosen polite words, while non-verbal language is shown by the speaking body gestures.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language education is closely related to human morality education. It is because language is not just a means of communication but also a powerful tool for expressing ideas, values, and ethical perspectives (Ibrahim, 2021; Östman, 2010). Language enables individuals to communicate their moral values, beliefs, and ethical principles. Through language, people can express their ideas about what is right and wrong, just and unjust, and fair and unfair (Leeman & Serafini, 2021). Language education provides individuals with the necessary skills to articulate and discuss these moral concepts effectively. As social beings, humans commonly use language to communicate with others as media to meet their social needs. When someone is intended to fulfil his needs for food, he will go to the market and use language as a means of buying-and-selling interactions. When a child tries to fulfil his needs in education, he will also use

language as a means of communication when receiving learning materials from his teachers (Welch & Welch, 2008). Parents use language when giving moral education to their children. A president will use language when delivering speeches conveying government policies to the public. Language has an important position for humans to make social interactions to meet their needs. A mute will also communicate using non-verbal language to convey messages to others. Language has its roles not only in verbal but also in non-verbal forms shown using body signs.

Humans should learn to use language in accordance with the conditions, especially in a nation with a speech level based on the social norms applicable in society. Speech level is language variations different in one and the others determined by the politeness attitude differences belonging to the speaker (O1) and hearer (O2) (Poedjasoedarma, 1979). A nation with royal civilization history will influence the use of speech level focusing on social structure (Wenger, 1998). Honorifics will be a vehicle of language used to reveal people's social differences. In this case, language is not only a means of communication but also shows the social levels of common people or royal members. Honorifics in the Korean language admit someone's social status in communication. Honorific markers can be manifested as nominal suffixes, special honorific forms from nouns, honorific forms in particles, honorific markers in verbs, or special honorific markers from verbs (Kim & Sells, 2007).

Hymes (1964) compares the speech levels of Korean with those of the Japanese. Korean and Japanese show their language politeness by changing verbs into honorific forms. However, before uttering the related verbs, both Korean and Japanese people first select the speech levels determined based on two axes of distinction: axis of reference and the axis of address. Axis of address in the Japanese language, the speech levels are divided into plain, polite, and deferential; while in the Korean language, the axis of address is first selected based on who is in-group or out-group. The options include humble, neutral, and exalted speech forms mainly depending on the attitude of the speaker and speaking subject (Kabaya, et al., 2002; Kabaya, 2009, 2010; Kaneko, 2010; Kikuchi, 1996; Suzuki, 1998; & Yamada, 2010).

The following two expressions have different politeness levels. "Would you like to open a window?" is more polite than "Open window" (Brown & Levinson, 1978). As a means of communication, language should be placed in appropriate positions. Language as a means of communication for selling and buying is certainly different from that placed as a means of communication at school, office, hotel, beach, or others with different formality levels. In the Javanese language, a high speech level is known functioning to convey higher politeness, an intermediate speech level to convey medium politeness, and a normal speech level to convey lower politeness (Poedjasoedarma, 1979). According to Harjawiyana and Supriya (2001) *undha-usuk basa* can be divided into two: *undha-usuk basa* during *kejawen* era and *undha-usuk basa* in the modern era. *Undha-usuk* in *kejawen* era includes that in Keraton Surakarta and Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat eras, approximately in 1900 M. Meanwhile, *undha-usuk* in the modern era is characterized after the Indonesia Independence Proclamation on 17 August 1945. Javanese *Undha-usuk* in *kejawen* era has six speech levels, while that in the modern era has two speech levels (Harjawiyana & Supriya, 2001).

On the other hand, Rahayu (2013) found that word changes in Javanese from *ngoko* (plain word) to *krama* (respectful word) were more complicated than those in Japanese. In the Javanese language, *ngoko* word forms are mostly changed into *krama* lexically and unable to be analyzed based on their regular structural changes (Poedjasoedarma, 1979) as follows:

Krama	Ngoko	
<i>Kulo</i>	<i>Aku</i>	' <i>saya</i> ' (I)
<i>Griya</i>	<i>umah</i>	' <i>rumah</i> ' (House)
<i>Tilem</i>	<i>turu</i>	' <i>tidur</i> ' (Sleep)

Meanwhile, word changes in the Japanese language are only added with the prefix *o/go* in front of noun (Rahayu, 2013) as follows:

<i>Futsuutai</i> (Plain word)	<i>Sonkeigo</i> (Respectful Language)	
<i>Kazoku</i>	<i>gokazoku</i>	'family'
<i>Karada</i>	<i>okarada</i>	'body'
<i>Denwa</i>	<i>odenwa</i>	'telephone'

While previous research has explored language politeness and cultural norms in various contexts, there is a noticeable research gap when it comes to examining language behavior habits related to politeness specifically within the Indonesian and Japanese perspectives. Although individual studies exist on politeness in these two cultures, there is a need for a comparative analysis that directly compares and contrasts the language behavior habits related to politeness in these specific cultural contexts. Existing studies may have focused on one culture in isolation or provided limited comparative analysis, making it challenging to draw meaningful conclusions about the differences and similarities between the Indonesian and Japanese perspectives on politeness. Moreover, the majority of the available research has primarily relied on quantitative methods, such as surveys and experiments, leaving a gap in qualitative investigations that delve into the underlying cultural, historical, and social factors influencing language politeness (Haryanto et al., 2018; Kartika, 2018; Rachman, 2022). Furthermore, while language politeness education is recognized as important for effective intercultural communication, there is limited research that directly explores its implications for language education in Indonesian and Japanese contexts. Understanding the language behavior habits related to politeness specific to these cultures can contribute to the development of culturally appropriate language teaching strategies and materials. Therefore, the research gap in this study lies in need for a comprehensive comparative examination of the language behavior habits related to politeness in Indonesian and Japanese viewpoints, taking into account the cultural, historical, and social factors that shape these habits. By addressing this gap, the study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on language politeness education and provide insights into the design and implementation of effective language teaching practices in Indonesian and Japanese contexts.

From the above explanations, it is understood that languages from different nations basically place respectful language in speech levels as an effort to give understanding to communication actors (communicators and communicants) to create good communication. Good communication should be supported by polite language use. Theoretically, the Indonesian language does not reveal its speech levels, yet the Indonesian language has language markers lexically showing honorific language. This research will discuss the relevance between expressions in the Indonesian language and those in the Japanese language showing language politeness, so that it is expected to provide education for the language users to select polite language based on language politeness rules and norms, especially in Indonesian and Japanese. The language attitudes discussed in this research include those used by both Indonesian and Japanese people using linguistic perspectives based on the people's social factors.

2. METHODS

The research object is defined as the specifically observed language units, in which the data are certainly considered as bigger language units containing the research objects (Kesuma, 2007). The language unit discussed included expressions commonly used by Indonesian and Japanese people in language politeness education forms. These habits form culture and reflect someone's character, especially when speaking politely.

This qualitative research discussed the commonly spoken expressions as language politeness education made by Japanese people. The researchers were non-participant observers observing the data sourced from texts, so this study was considered library research. This study adopts a comparative qualitative case study design to examine language behaviour habits related to politeness in Indonesian and Japanese viewpoints. An extensive literature review and analysis of academic papers, books, and relevant sources were conducted to identify existing theories, frameworks, and scholarly discussions on language politeness in Indonesian and Japanese contexts. The literature review provided a foundation for understanding each country's cultural norms and language behavior habits related to politeness. Two case studies were selected, one focusing on Indonesian language behavior habits and another on Japanese language behavior habits. These cases were chosen based on their relevance to the research question and the availability of comprehensive literature. The collected data were analyzed

using thematic analysis. The literature review findings were coded and organized into themes related to language politeness, cultural norms, and language behavior habits in Indonesian and Japanese contexts. Cross-case analysis was employed to identify similarities and differences between the two perspectives.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Language Politeness in Sociolinguistic Perspective

Sociolinguistics discusses languages and communities by separately relating two investigated fields: formal language structures by linguistics and community structures by sociology (Clyne, 2017; Holmes, 1992; Hudson, 1980; Wardhaugh, 1986). If we discuss language from a sociolinguistic perspective, the study will relate speech acts with social status (Dittmar, 1976). 1952 was considered the year when the term 'sociolinguistics' first appeared as mentioned in a book written by Currie (in Dittmar, 1976). Haver wrote the urgency of a study on speech spoken by humans based on social status. This is greatly related to language politeness as speaking behaviors or ways mutually agreed by society as social behavioral forms.

Language politeness, attitudes, and ethics are considered relative, depending on the social distance between the speaker and the hearer. Besides, the meaning of politeness and courtesy is similarly understood in general. In fact, both have differences. Polite refers to grammatical sentence structures, lexically chosen words, and consciousness-based expressions that everyone has the right to be respectfully served. Meanwhile, courteousness is the consciousness of social distance (Thomas, 1995; Westlund et al., 2016).

Politeness in a broader context, not only refers to language politeness but also to non-verbal aspects, such as behaviors, facial expressions, and voice tones. Politeness as the treatment reduces friction within an interaction (Lakoff, 1975). In a sociolinguistic study, language politeness is related to community culture. In Japanese people, language politeness is shown by greeting culture with the bowing body position. Language politeness and body position is a unity influencing each other (Rahayu, 2013). In this regard, Trisnani & Anggriana (2015) suggested that some Javanese language teachings or principles, such as '*wong Jowo nggone sewu*', '*dhupak bujang esem mantra, semu bupati and sasmita narendra*', '*nguwongke lan diuwongke*', '*cacah agawe bubrah-rukun agawe santoso*', and '*rasa pangrasa*'. One principle showing politeness values is '*dhupak bujang esem mantra, semu bupati, and sasmita narendra*' which can be interpreted that when communicating, a Javanese man will pay attention to whom he is speaking. This principle teaches that when speaking to an older person, he should use polite language in the form of *krama*.

In sociolinguistics, language politeness is discussed based on social factors, so language politeness education made at schools should make the students understand how to use language when related to social factors belonging to the communication actors.

3.2. Language Politeness Education

It is not easy to express language in polite ways, yet language politeness is an initial capital from someone's morality education, so language politeness education is included in the curriculum applicable at primary, secondary, and tertiary school levels. From language politeness education, someone can learn to respect others. Polite language shows someone's education level. Thus, in society, one characteristic of someone with higher education is language use. Many problems have arisen in society caused by the improper use of language. Many criminal actions which have been recently made ending up in court are caused by harsh words published on social media. Fights frequently result in criminal actions due to the harsh words offending someone's feelings which are then reported and resulted in legal consequences. The existing freedom of speech, in fact, adds legal cases initially from language. Language education starting from saying sorry, thank you, and other polite expressions is

used as an initial introduction to language politeness education to realize good morality. Politeness is a system of interpersonal relationships designed to ease interactions and minimize the potential of conflicts and confrontations commonly happening in human social interactions.

School is a vehicle to provide education for children after family. The school has a huge responsibility in educating children because most children's time is spent at school. Besides as a place for learning, school is also used as a means of communication between a student and the other student or a student and his teacher, so that language politeness learning should be properly placed.

Learning situation greatly influences students in their learning processes and interactions, such as teachers' and students' attitudes and politeness during the teaching-learning processes, including in their expressions, attitudes, moves, and gestures (Bambaeroo & Shokpour, 2017; Soekanto, 1997). Communication at school is one language communication example discussed in sociolinguistics. Children are taught to use polite language to their teachers. Children are taught to select their language when communicating with their friends and teachers (Rahayu, 2013). The principle of language politeness is our ethics when making social interactions by selecting the proper language and paying attention to where, when, to whom, and what intention to politely communicate (Wijana, 1996).

3.3. Verbal Language Politeness

The expressions produced by humans' speech organs are in the form of verbal communication actions. The verbal language characteristics include verbally conveyed, spoken in front of the hearer, directly given feedback from the hearer, and missed expressions that can be directly revised. The word type related to language politeness in mentioning hearer is using a personal pronoun. In the Indonesian language, the personal pronoun is known as *kata ganti orang*, while that in the Japanese language is known as *ninshoudaimeshi*. Both languages have personal pronouns with different respect levels. The use of personal pronouns found in the following sentences has politeness meaning to respect the hearer.

1. *Apakah Anda berkenan hadir pada acara pembukaan besok?* [Are you willing to attend the tomorrow's opening ceremony?]
2. *Apakah Bapak berkenan membuka acara besok?* [Would you mind opening the tomorrow's event, sir?]

The use of the word '*Anda*' [you] is a second personal pronoun. The speaker tried to respect the hearer using the word '*Anda*'. In Indonesia, the second personal pronoun instead of the word '*Anda*' is '*kamu*' [you]. One example of using the word '*kamu*' is in informal conversation and used by the speaker to a hearer whose age and position are lower.

Verbal politeness leads to verbal conversation or communication, for example, speech, seminar, and broadcasting either on radio or television. In this case, the speaker is expected to use good, polite, and courteous language when using personal pronouns in a speech to greet the participants in a plural context. Meanwhile, when delivering a speech referring to someone who is respected, the word '*Beliau*' or title/position, such as '*Bapak Pimpinan*' (director), '*Ibu Kepala Sekolah*' (principal), and '*Bapak Rektor*' (rector) should be used.

Similarly, the Japanese language has a respectful language through differences in personal pronouns. Company staff will show respect to his leader using the word '*shachou*' (*Bapak/Ibu pimpinan* [Leader]), *Buchou* (*Bapak/Ibu manager* [Manager]), and in the educational domain, a student usually calls his teacher using the word '*sensei*' (teacher), as well as a patient usually calls his doctor using the word "*sensei*". Meanwhile, in level 0 (without any respecting intention (neutral)), the personal pronoun of '*omae/kimi*' and '*anata*' can be equally used as the word '*Anda*' in the Indonesian language.

In the Japanese language, the use of verbs to respect the hearer is more complicated than that in the Indonesian language, especially related to the verb changes from neutral to honorific forms. In the Indonesian language, verb changes are based on lexical formation, while those in the Japanese language are based on both lexical and grammatical formation.

3. Sensei wa pan o *meshiagarimau*.

The boldly written word is a verb in the Japanese language that means eating at the honorific language level. The neutral verb (without any intention to honor the hearer) from the word *meshiagarimasu* is *taberu*. This change is made based on lexical formation. Meanwhile, in the Indonesian language, verb changes are similarly made, yet not in the word '*makan*' because the word '*makan*' in the Indonesian language has no lexical changes at the honorific language level. For example, the sentence '*Saya makan buah* [I eat fruit]' can also be used in the sentence '*Presiden makan buah* [The president eats fruit]'. However, the words '*memberikan*' and '*menghaturkan*' have different meanings in the sentence '*Saya memberikan kamus kepada teman* [I give the dictionary to my friend]' with '*Saya menghaturkan kamus kepada Bapak Rektor* [I give the dictionary to the Rector]'. The word '*memberikan*' has an honorific language level with a lexical change. Meanwhile, the word '*menghaturkan*' is surely inappropriate when used for the hearer whose age/position lower than the speaker.

Verbal language politeness refers to the speaker's expertise to select the most appropriate words to respect the hearer. An individual is considered polite if he can choose the words appropriate with the position of the speaker to the hearer. Conversely, someone is considered impolite if the spoken words make the hearer inconvenience.

3.4. Language Politeness Behaviors based on Language Attitudes

Language attitudes, in this case, are body gestures. When having conversations in Japanese speech communities, the words '*irasshaimase*' (*selamat datang* [welcome]), *mata irasshatte kudasai* (*silakan datang lagi* [please, come again next time]), *taihen omataseshimashita* (*maaf telah membuat Anda menunggu* [sorry for waiting]), *doumo arigatou gozaimasu* (*terima kasih banyak* [Thank you very much]), and others are respectful sentence/expression forms addressed to customers. The examples of greeting expressions (*selamat pagi* [good morning]) in Japanese have various expressions:

- *Ossu*;
- *Ohayou*;
- *Ohayougozaimasu*.

Ossu is not appropriately used by a student to his teacher/lecturer. *Ossu* can be used among classmates or close friends. The greeting expression of *ohayou gozaimasu* is more appropriately used by a student to a teacher/lecturer, while the teacher/lecturer can answer with the expression of *ohayou*. In Indonesian language, *ossu* is equal to '*ya* [yes]', *ohayou (pagi* [morning]), and *ohayou gozaimasu (selamat pagi* [good morning]). The followings are the apology expressions.

- *gomen*;
- *gomenasai*;
- *moushiwakegozaimasen/Moushiwakearimasen*.

The longer the expression, the more polite the meaning. Of the 3 expressions above, *moushiwakegozaimasen/moushiwakearimasen* is more polite than the others. *Gomen* is apologizing expression among friends or close-friends; *gomenasai* is a more polite apologizing expression than *gomen* and is addressed to those older than the speaker; and *moushiwake gozaimasen/moushiwake arimasen* is an expression addressed to someone feeling very guilty to someone whose position higher than the speaker, such as to leader, teacher/lecturer, or senior.

In the Indonesian language, there are no language attitude rules following a speaking person. Meanwhile, in the Japanese language, there is *Ojiki*, a language attitude regulating the body's bowing degree when greeting as an honorific form to the hearer. In Indonesia, when someone greets others, there are no body bowing degree rules. However, in Indonesian communities, there is a good habit in

which someone will bow a little bit when passing other people. It is considered impolite when passing others without bowing.

Hand-shaking is also considered a language attitude in Indonesian communities when meeting or greeting others. Meanwhile, in Japanese communities, body bowing is used to greet others without hand-shaking (Nishiyama, 2000). There are attitude changes after the Covid-19 pandemic due to social distancing so that hand-shaking/direct contact is avoided. In some Indonesian communities, there is a greeting attitude of bowing the body a little bit, especially in places providing services, such as in hotels, cafes, restaurants, and offices placing customer services in their front offices. This body-bowing attitude is an honorific form for guests or customers. This communication will surely provide convenience for customers.

The respect given to the hearer when making communication can also be shown through hand/palm attitudes. Inviting customers to sit down or head to a specified place shown by the customer services, is made by opening palms to welcome the customers. Meanwhile, the body gestures shown in the above examples indicate that language politeness through words/sentences, such as greeting, hand-shaking, and making introductions with others is greatly related to body attitudes/gestures. Someone will receive different impressions when respectful language is politely spoken (Mykhalchuk & Chala, 2016). Language politeness education is greatly required from an early age. Polite speaking and attitudes greatly influence people's impressions of someone's character (Chen et al., 2023). This education starts from the communication made in the family. Meanwhile, the communication made outside the family/house is regulated by norms to use language in the related speech communities. The goal of language politeness is that good communication is created and comforts all communication participants.

4. CONCLUSION

Language politeness has universal characteristics, meaning that language communities in any country have their own language politeness based on the applicable norms. However, the purpose is the same, that is, to create good communication. Impolite language use is one causing criminal actions frequently shown through social media or reported news, so language politeness education is greatly needed. Language politeness education starts from family. Meanwhile, outside family communities, such as schools or society, language politeness education is greatly needed to create positive interactions between language users and certain communities. Indonesian and Japanese are two languages that implement language politeness through both verbal and non-verbal languages. Verbal language is shown by the chosen polite words, while non-verbal language is shown by the speaking body gestures. The use of personal pronouns in both languages has different levels which influence respect given to the hearers. The use of verbs in Indonesian has lexical changes from neutral to respectful forms, while that in Japanese has both lexical and grammatical changes when someone makes changes from neutral to respectful forms. In body gestures, the Japanese body bowing degree shows the respect level to the hearers. Meanwhile, the Indonesian body gesture also shows respect, yet still random and not regulated based on the body bowing degree. Language politeness education eventually has a similar objective, that is, as a form of character, moral, and politeness education. This is also considered an effort to create good communication and safety for the communication participants. To further address the research gap, future studies can involve empirical research that directly compares and contrasts the language behavior habits related to politeness in Indonesian and Japanese contexts. This could include surveys, interviews, or observations conducted with participants from both cultures to gather firsthand data on their language behavior habits and perceptions of politeness.

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