Research Paper

Students' Ability in the Use of Speech Act *(Keigo)*: A Comparative Study on Two Japanese Study Programs in North Sumatera and Riau

Siti Muharami Malayu, Yuddi Adrian Muliadi

Faculty of Cultural Science, University of Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Yuddi Adrian Muliadi

ABSTRACT

Japanese speech acts are known as *keigo* consisting of two types, namely *sonkeigo* and *kenjoogo*. The first is used to express respect with regard to activities or circumstances of the other person and the persons being discussed. The second is used to denote respect to other persons or persons who become the topic of conversation by humbling oneself. The purpose of this study is to determine the ability of Japanese non-native learners in the use of *keigo* and to describe the forms of errors and the factors underlying the occurrence of errors in the use of *keigo*. The research was carried out in two Japanese Literature Study Programs at Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of Sumatera Utara and at Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Riau. The research used qualitative and quantitative methods with its main characteristics for the measurement (the questionnaires) are the same. The result shows that the percentage of students' abilities in the use of *sonkeigo* and *kenjoogo* are 39.3% and 43.11% respectively at the Japanese Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of Sumatera Utara and 35.3% and 35.08% respectively at the Japanese Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Riau. The result also shows that, from both institutions, their abilities in using the *keigo* are low (below 50%) meaning the keigo is considered very difficult because of the large amount of vocabularies and of shape pattern changes.

Keywords: Speech acts, *keigo*, *sonkeigo*, *kenjoogo*, ability

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between speaker (S) and hearer (H) when they make speech cannot be considered easy. Some important factors that affect speech are the power and distance that exist between the speech participants. Power refers to three types of social status relationships between the S and H, namely whether the status of the H is higher, equal, or lower than the speaker. Distance refers to the psychology that exists between the S and H. The difficult material for Japanese non-native learners, like Indonesians, is *keigo* (soft language); those who do not use local languages in their family environment (they only speak Indonesian which does not have level of subtlety in the language but only has formal and informal forms) face more difficulties in using the *keigo*. In addition, in Indonesian, an expression that is considered good and right is generally in accordance with the rules of grammar that apply. For example, the word *pergi* 'to go' in Indonesian can be used for all types of subjects, for formal situation or anger and does not have differences in subtle or rough nuances.

The traditional Sundanese has strata and the word *pergi* may have several variations, such as *indit* which is used in

informal situations or between close friends, and *mios* which is a soft word for oneself and is used to respect others. Misuse in speech acts, namely the use of soft language (*keigo*) in Japanese can cause problems in the Japanese learning. This is very interesting to study so that problems that occur in foreign language learners, especially Japanese non-native language learners, can be described get the attention from teachers who are to find solutions for the problems.

PROBLEMS

Japanese non-native learners feel that *keigo* is very difficult because of small number of Japanese who live in North Sumatra and Riau provinces, so it is very rare for them to practice Japanese with native speakers. Thus, they have lack of mastery and even some of them do not understand the proper use of *keigo* that make them not confident and finally they are completely wrong in the use of *keigo*. What happenes then is they dislike *keigo*; feeling dislike then becomes the main obstacles to improve their Japanese skills. The problems in this paper are: to what extent do Japanese non-native learners at the two study programs have ability to use *keigo* and what kinds of errors do they face in their learning process for *keigo*?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research used both descriptive qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze data collected in the forms of Japanese writing tests regarding the use of *keigo*. The time allotted to do the test was 100 minutes. After the data collection, the next steps are to mark the error sentences, to determine the kinds of errors, and to compare their abilities in the use of *keigo*. Quantitatively, the data calculation was applied to know the average of correct answers which were then used to get the percentage of students' ability to use *keigo*.

There were 46 respondents from semester 6, who attended the two study programs; 19 of them have taken of the

keigo (*sonkeigo* and *kenjoogo*) in the *Bunpo* course especially those who used *Minna No Nihongo* Volume II (lessons 49 and 50). The sampling technique involved non-probability sampling especially the systematic sampling (see Sugiyono (2016: 84). For students at USU, the sampling was based on the order of the population members who were given the serial number, that is, the odd serial number of 23 people.

The instruments used in this study were given in the forms of tests and non-tests; the first was carried out by written tests and the second test used questionnaires. The *keigo* materials were taken from KCP International Language Institute. 1993. Nihongo Shinkiso II Bunkei Reshuuchou. Tokyo: Kabushiki Gaisha and Suriee Netto Waaku's book. 1999. Minna No Nihongo Sokyuu II Hyoujun Mondaishuu. Tokyo: 3A Corporation. This research was conducted at two Japanese Study Programs at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of Sumatra Utara being held on July 2, 2019 in Medan and at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Riau on July 8, 2019 in Pakan Baru, Riau.

LITERARY REVIEW
Language Politeness

Nurjamily (2017: 4) argued that communication requires politeness for several reasons that polite person is generally judged by his polite language, soft speech, or 'soft language', that a polite language will facilitate the delivery of messages in communication, that inappropriate language often hurts the feelings of others, so that it can be a source of conflict, and in social life politeness and good language are two important aspects to maintain.

Definition of *keigo*

Lexically, *keigo* means words of respect or expression of respect (Mawitjere, 2019: 1). Mawitjere sstressed *keigo* is a way of using language based on various relationships between the speaker and the

interlocutor and between the listener and the person who is the subject of conversation and the form of expression that explains the relationship between humans. In short, *keigo* is the form of expression that explains the relationship among persons (human relations).

Use of *keigo*

Sutedi (2011: 246) thought that *keigo* may be used depending on who is the interlocutor, whether the person is in a higher position, equal, or subordinate or whether he/she is already familiar or not (the first time meeting).

Types of *keigo*

Supardjo (2012: 161-163) argued *keigo* is divided into two types, namely *sonkeigo* and kenjoogo. Nomura and Koike Seiji added (in Sudjianto and Ahmad Dahidi, 2004: 190) also divided the *keigo*「敬 語」into *sonkeigo* 「尊敬語」 (words for respect), and *kenjoogo* 「謙譲 語 」 (humble words).

Types of sonkeigo formation

Sonkeigo is an expression used to respect another person (or party) who becomes the topic of a conversation by raising the person's degree (Sutedi, 2011: 246). In 3A Corporation (2018: 150) the *sonkeigo* can be used to respect something related to the activity and to property or matters of the person to whom he/she is talked to. The types of *sonkeigo* consist of the formation of verbs and nouns. In 3A Corporation (2018: 150) there are four forms of *sonkeigo*, as discussed in the followings.

(1) Verbs for respect
Wulandari (2013: 68) said that the meaning of *sonkeigo* can be applied to a person who does an action and the expression can be characterized by use of [～ reru and ～ rareru] to the verb that describes the action. Consider the examples in (a)-(c).

(a) *yomimasu* 読みます → *yomaremasu* 読まれます
(b) *tabemasu* 食べます → *taberaremasu* 食べられます
(c) *kimasu* 来ます → *koraremasu* 来られます

(2) お Verb forms (ま す) に な り ま す)
In 3A Corporation (2018: 150) it is stated that the pattern of お verb forms (ま す) に な り ま す) seems more respectful and polite than the verb *sonkeigo* in (a)-(c). Some examples of the formation patterns of [o ~ ni naru] can be seen in (d)-(e).

(d) *yomimasu* 読みます → *o yomi ni narimasu* お読みになります
(e) *tabemasu* 食べます → *o tabe ni narimasu* お食べになります

(3) Special words for respect
According to 3 A Corporation (2018: 150) there are a number of verbs that are used for special respect (*Tokubetsu na Sonkeigo* 「特別 な 尊敬」 」) representing the same level of respect for *sonkeigo* in (d)-(e) above (see also Table 1).

(4) Request for respect (お / ご ～ く だ さ い)
This sentence pattern is used to show respect when requesting and inviting the another person. In 3 A Corporation (2018: 150) the verbs in group I and II become have the form [Verb (Form ま す) く だ さ い], and the verbs in group III becomes the form [ご Nomina く だ さ い]. The example あ ち ら か ら お 入 り く だ さ い 。 means 'please enter from there.'

Types of Kenjoogo Formation
According to Sutedi (2011: 246), *kenjoogo* is an expression used to respect another person (or party) who becomes the indirect topic of conversation by lowering the speaker's own position or behavior. According to 3A Corporation (2018: 156)

there are two forms of *kenjoogo*, as noted in (A) and (B).

(A) Form of [お / ご 〜 し ま す] "o / go ~ ni suru"
(f) Verbs in group I / II) (Form ます) します as shown in the example 重 そ う で す ね。 お 持 ち し ま し ょ う か 。 meaning 'to look heavy huh. Let me bring it.'
(g) Verbs in group III) as noted in the example 江 戸 東 京 博 物 館 へ ご 案 内 し ま す。 which means 'let (me) take (you) to the Tokyo Edo Museum.'

(B) Special words for humbleness

Some verbs have a special self-degrading strategy (or *Tokubetsu na Kenjoogo* 「特別 な 謙 譲」) as explained in 3A Corporation, 2018: 156)(see also Table 1). Examples can be seen in (h)-(i) below.
(h) A: あ し た は だ れ が 手 伝 い に 来 て く れ ま す か。
'Who will come to help tomorrow? '
B: ... 私 が 伺 い ま す。
'I am coming'
Table 1 shows special words for respect (*tokubetsu na sonkeigo*) and special words for condescension (*tokubetsu na kenjoogo*) and their meanings in English.

Table 1. Special words for respect and for condescension (*Tokubetsu na Sonkeigo to Tokubetsu na Kenjoogo*)

No	Japanese	Sonkeigo	Kenjougo	English
1	行く 'iku'	いらっしゃいま 'irasshaimasu'	参りま 'mairimasu'	To go
2	来る'kuru'	いらっしゃいます 'irasshaimasu'	参ります 'mairimasu'	To come
3	いる'iru'	いらっしゃいます 'irasshaimasu'	おります'mairimasu'	there is / there are
4	食べる 'taberu'	召し上がります'meshiagarimasu'	いただきます'itadakimasu'	To eat
5	飲む 'nomu'	召し上がります'meshiagarimasu'	いただきます'itadakimasu'	To drink
6	もらう'morau'	—	いただきます'itadakimasu'	To accept
7	言う 'iu'	おっしゃいます'osshaimasu'	申します 'moushimasu'	To say
8	知っている'shitte iru'	ご存じです 'gozonji desu'	存じます'zonjimasu'	To know
9	見る 'miru'	ご覧になります 'goran ni narimasu'	拝見します 'haiken shimasu'	To see
10	する 'suru'	なさいます'nasaimasu'	いたします'itashimasu'	To do
11	くれる'kureru'	くださいます'kudasaimasu'	—	To give
12	きく（うちへ　行く）'kiku' (uchi e iku)	—	伺います'ukagaimasu'	To ask, to listen, to visit
13	会う'au'	—	お目にかかります 'omeni kakarimasu'	To meet

Factors that Cause Errors
According to Lightbown and Spada (2006: 78-79) there are four reasons why errors occur, namely: over generalization, ignoring rule of restrictrion, incomplete application of rules, false concept of hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
   With regard to *keigo* there are five problems provided. Problem 1 with four questions is directed to change from verb form 〜 て く だ さ い to the form お / ご 〜 く だ さ い. After the test, it is found that the ability of students from USU and UNRI is 38.04% and 21.04% respectively. In case of form of errors, the students cannot distinguish that in group III the verbs

use ご noun く だ さ い, not お noun く だ さ い. With reference to problem 2 with four questions, the direction is that students should answer question sentences from the form 〜 ん で す か to the form お verb (form ま す) に な り ま す. The students' ability from USU and UNRI is 34.78% and 31.58% respectively. The form of error shows that students do not understand the basic form of verbs from group I and II. In case of problem 3 (8 question), the instruction is to change the verbs in parentheses into special *sonkeigo* verbs. After the test, it is found that the ability of students from USU and UNRI is 67.15% and 59.24% respectively with the form of

error indicates that students do not understand the specific form of *sonkeigo* verbs. For problem 4 (8 questions), the students are directed to change the verbs in parentheses to the *sonkeigo* verbs by adding the auxiliary verb "~ reru and ~ rareru" in the verb. The students' ability from USU and UNRI is 34.78% and 44.07% respectively. For form of error, the students from both institutions often feel confused with the use of adding 〜 reru to the verb in group I and 〜 rareru to the verb in group II.

With reference to problem 5 (8 questions), the direction o answer questions is to select one word in the box and change it to *sonkeigo* (お 〜 く だ さ い), and also fill in the verbs in accordance with the context of the contents of the sentence. The students' ability from USU and UNRI is 21.74% and 20.39% respectively with the form of error is related to students' wrong choice for words and they wrongly change in the form of *sonkeigo*. Table 2 shows that the total percentage of students' abilities in using sonkeigo from USU and UNRI is 39.3% and 35.3% respectively. Figure 1 indicates that the students' ability from both institutions when using *sonkeigo* is low (under 50% on average).

Table 2. The percentage of students' ability from USU and UNRI in answering *Sonkeigo* questions

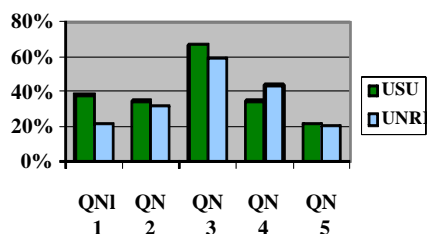| Question	USU	UNRI
Number 1	38.04 %	21.04 %
Number 2	34.78 %	31.58 %
Number 3	67.15 %	59.24 %
Number 4	34.78 %	44.07 %
Number 5	21.74 %	20.39 %

Figure 1. Students' ability from USU and UNRI in answering *sonkeigo* questions

With regard to *kenjoogo* there are three problems provided. In problem 6 (4 questions) students are requested to change the existing verbs to special *kenjoogo* verbs.

The students' ability from USU and UNRI is 46.73% and 23.67%. For the form of error, students do not yet understand the special form of *kenjoogo* verbs. For problem 7 (4 questions) the students should select one word in the box and change it to *kenjoogo* in the form [お / ご 〜 し ま す] "o / go ~ ni suru", and fill in the verbs according to the context of the sentence. As a result, the students' ability from USU and UNRI is 41.30% and 56.57% respectively. In case of form of error, students cannot distinguish and tend to be confused with the use of "お verb (group I. II) (form ま す) し ま す" with "ご verb (group III)". With reference to problem 10 (8 questions) the students are requested to change the verb in parentheses to the *kenjoogo* verb in the form "お verba (form ま す) し ま す". The percentage of students' ability from USU and UNRI is 41.31% and 24.99% respectively. For form of error, students do not understand the basic form of verbs, and the formation of *kenjoogo*.

Table 3 shows that the percentage of students' abilities in using *kenjoogo* from USU and UNRI reaches 43.11% and 35.08% respectively. Meanwhile, figure 2 indicates that the students' ability in using *kenjoogo* from both institutions is low (under 50% on average).

Table 3. Students' ability from USU and UNRI in answering *Kenjoogo* questions

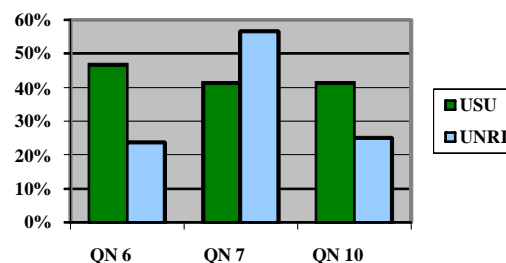| Question Number	USU	UNRI
Number 6	46.73 %	23.67 %
Number 7	41.30 %	56.57 %
Number 10	41.31 %	24.99 %

Figure 2. Students' ability from USU and UNRI in answering *Kenjoogo* questions

With reference to *sonkeigo and kenjoogo,* there are only two problems

provided for students from USU and UNRI. For problem 8 (4 questions), students are advised to answer sentences from *tokubetsu na sonkeigo* (special respect) to form *tokubetsu na kenjoogo* (special humbling words). The percentage of students' ability from both institutions is 39.12% and 19.73% respectively and for form of error, students are often confused between the verbs of special forms of *sonkeigo* with the special form verb *kenjoogo*. In case of problem 9 (6 questions), students should respond to *question and answer* sentences between A and B. They are asked to change question sentences from ordinary verbs to *sonkeigo* (special respect) and to change the answer from normal verbs to *kenjogo* (special humble words). The percentage shows that the students' ability is 15.94%

and 2.63% respectively from both institutions. For form of error, students are often confused between the verbs of special forms of *sonkeigo* with the special form of *kenjoogo* verb.

Table 4 shows that the percentage of students' abilities in choosing the verb *keigo* (*sonkeigo* and *kenjoogo*). Their ability is: 27.5% and 11.2% respectively from both institutions. While, figure 3 indicates that the students' ability is low (under 50% on average) when using *keigo*.

Table 4. Students' ability from USU and UNRI in answering *Keigo* questions
(Mix of *Sonkeigo* and *Kenjoogo*)

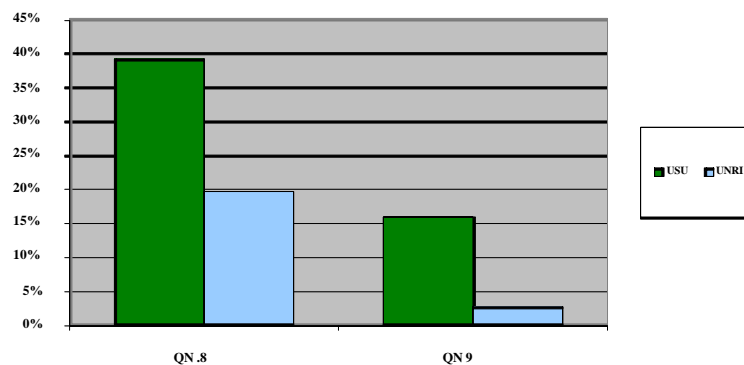| Question Number	USU	UNRI
Number 8	39.12 %	19.73 %
Number 9	15.94 %	2.63 %

Figure 3. Students' ability in using *keigo*

In case of results from questionnaire, the following is an overview obtained from students from USU and UNRI. To the question 'Do you think *keigo* is difficult? ', consider the result in (A) and to the question 'Which type of *keigo* do you think is the most difficult?, pay attention to (B) below.
USU students: a. yes (difficult) = 52%
                b. very difficult = 48%
UNRI students: a. yes (difficult) = 48%
                b. very difficult = 52%
(B)   USU students: a. *sonkeigo* = 2%
                b. *kenjoogo* = 19%
                c. *sonkeigo* and
kenjoogo = 75%   d. No answer = 4%
UNRI students: a. *sonkeigo* = -%
                b. *kenjoogo* = -%

                c. *sonkeigo* and
kenjoogo = 89%   d. No answer = 11%
The following points are the general reasons why students think that *keigo* is very difficult:
They feel very difficult to distinguish and use the words *sonkeigo* and *kenjoogo* when they are in sentences.
The changes in shape and use is complicated.
Keigo is rarely used in everyday conversation but only ordinary verbs are used instead of *keigo*.
They feel doubtful to choose the right words when distinguishing the use of *sonkeigo* and *kenjoogo*.

It is very difficult because its use depends on certain situations so they must determine who talks to whom and who is speaking.

CONCLUSIONS

Japanese non-native speakers' skills from semester VI from two Japanese study programs at University of Sumatera Utara (USU) and University of Riau (UNRI) indicate that the overall causes of errors are related to the lack of competence they get. Their ability in *keigo* low (under 50%). This is due to the changes in form and use and to the strategy to memorize and use it, because Bahasa Indonesian does not have language levels. Based on the test of errors and of information related to the use of *keigo*, four potential factors of errors are the over generalization (learners assume parts or rules in other parts that might be expected by them), and the ignorance of rule of restrictrion and ignorance of the rules that govern the rules to use the *keigo* (*sonkeigo* and *kenjoogo*); instructor is predicted to be unclear in explaining *keigo* materials, such as sentence structure, verb placement, conjugation etc. The third factor is incomplete application of rules, namely the learner's carelessness in using *keigo* and all this causes the wrong choice to select vocabulary and the wrong perception change verbs for special forms of *keigo* (*sonkeigo* and *kenjoogo*). The last is false concept of hypothesis, namely the learner's misunderstanding to interpret the meaning and function of the material given for *keigo*, *sonkeigo*, and *kenjoogo*.

REFERENCES

- Djodjok, S. 2012. Linguistik Jepang. Surabaya: Bintang.
- Ishiwata, T. and T. Makoto. 2000. (terbitan ke-9). Tiashou Gengogaku. Tokyo: Oufuu.
- KCP International Language Institute. 1993. Nihongo Shinkiso II Bunkei Reshuuchou. Tokyo: Kabushiki Gaisha.
- Lightbown , P. M. and N. Spada. 2006. How Language are Learned. 3rd Ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mawitjere. I. 2019. Analisis Kesalahan Penggunaan 'Keigo' Oleh Pembelajar Bahasa Jepang. Kompetensi Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa dan Seni, 16 (1).
- Nurjamily, W.O., 2017. Kesantunan berbahasa indonesia dalam lingkungan keluarga (kajian sosiopragmatik). *Jurnal Humanika*, *3*(15).
- Sudjianto, A. D. 2004. Pengantar Linguistik Bahasa Jepang. Bekasi: Kesaint Blanc.
- Sugiyono. 2016. Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R & D. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Sutedi, D. 2011. Dasar-dasar Linguistik Bahasa Jepang. Bandung: Humaniora.
- 3A Corporation. 2018. Minna NoNihongo Sokyuu II Dai 2- Han – Honyaku – Bunpo Kaisetsu – Indonesiago Ban (Minna No Nihongo Sokyuu II, 2nd Ed. A Translation. Surabaya: Lintas Cipta Pustaka.
- Waaku, S. N. 1999. Minna No Nihongo Sokyuu II Hyoujun Mondaishuu. Tokyo: 3A Corporation.
- Wulandari, A. D., 2013. Komparatif Keigo Bahasa Jepang dengan Krama Bahasa Jawa.

Prosiding Pesat, 5.

******