Politeness In Students' Speeches When Speaking Japanese With Native Speakers

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Abstract— Obedience and infraction to politeness principles were studied in students' speeches when they were communicating with native speakers. These students were enrolled in Japanese Language programs in 4 universities in Central Java and Yogyakarta Special Region. Politeness is badly needed in communication with the addressee in order to create harmony. Polite speech is used to avoid insulting the addressee during communication. Both in formal and informal situation students should use polite speech in their conversation with newly-met native speakers, older people or people in higher social position like between students and their teacher. By doing so, students not only respect the addressee but also practice polite speech that Japanese society like to do. For that reason, obedience and infraction found in students' speeches were assessed not only from Leech (1983) Universal Politeness Principles but also from Japanese honorifics as well as speaker's expression of discernment hanashite no kimochi o arawasu hyougen: Handan from Iori et.al. 2009. A descriptive qualitative method and a socio-pragmatic approach were used in this study. Students from 4 universities were chosen as the research subject and the data were taken both in formal and informal situations. These 93 students of 5th semester followed the class with native speaker. The research object was students' speeches in Japanese when they had conversation with native speaker. Students' speeches containing obedience and infraction to politeness principles were taken as data. The data were then analyzed with Leech's heuristic analysis. The result shows that most students still broke politeness principles especially tact, sympathy, and generosity maxims. It occurred since they did not fully understand universal politeness principles and Japanese speaker's expression of discernment. Though only a few, agreement to Tact Maxim and Approbation Maxim Sympathy was found however.

Keywords— speech, students, politeness principles, speaker's expression of discernment

I. INTRODUCTION

Politeness signifies things related to grace and kindness; either a polite behaviour or utterance according to the prevailing norms in society. From that point of view, it can be concluded that "the principle of politeness" can be interpreted as the subject or reference to politeness, patience, subtlety, kindness, either in the way of speaking or acting or in interaction with others. Good manners or politeness in using language can be analysed from the speakers' speeches.

One branch of linguistics that studies the utterances of speaker is pragmatics. A linguist, Leech (1983) suggests that pragmatics is the study of the meaning of speech in certain situations or in certain contexts. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that examines the reciprocal relationship between functions and forms of speech. In pragmatics there are principles that govern how a person speaks in certain situations. One of these principles is the principle of politeness or modesty. By knowing the principles of politeness, speakers can apply or implement them to make speeches in certain situations or contexts. However, the criteria for politeness in a certain language is inseparable from the culture that binds it.

Some studies on language politeness, including Rahardi's (2013) study, concluded that studies on language politeness have not progressed significantly due to the absence of adequate theories. However, we can still count on reinterpretation of views on language impoliteness. It is expected that this will trigger immediate studies on language impoliteness so that this new pragmatic phenomenon will not leave a gap in research analysis. Rahardi's research refers to *Impoliteness in Language* written by Bousfield et al (Eds). The data were taken from lecturer's conversation with his/her students, teachers communicating with their students and students with their peers. They all took place in Yogyakarta in 2013.

Other study on language politeness from Liu, Allen (2014) concluded that Japanese linguistic politeness is a complex problem because it is influenced by several factors closely related to social rules, direct context in interaction and choice of communication strategies by using politeness theory from Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987). Their data were taken from Japanese TV series.

Another study was conducted by Idrus (1994) whose data were taken from Toyota commercials on TV especially Doraemon-Nobita version. Idrus concluded that there were still infractions on tact and approbation maxims. Study by Cook (2011) examined honorifics referent in a commissioner meeting in a Japanese company. It was found that honorifics referent generally appears along with the use of *masu* in independent clause. Cook further explained that in Japanese language morphemes are placed on verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. But the most obvious characteristic of all is that verbs are divided into two namely: respectful and humble forms and honorifics addressed to the interlocutor's main predicate ending with *masu*. For example, masu form is a honorifics toward the addressee that shows the addressee's politeness called **teineitai**. Respect form *sonkeigo* shows the speaker's attitude and view toward the addressee (the addressed parties) by heightening the latter while humble form (kenjogo) shows that attitude by lowering the speaker's action. *Suru* verb (to do) is non-honorific, *nasaru* (to do) is its respect form and *itasu* (to do) is its humble form. Cook (2011) stated that Japanese language has a series of morphologically complex references. Japanese traditional grammar categorizes honorifics reference into two, i.e.: respect form (sonkeigo) and humble form (kenjogo). These forms determine the speaker's attitude and view on his/her addressee (the addressed parties) or other parties. Cook claimed that according to researchers of Japanese language, politeness in Japanese society is not an individual willingness but more like a social etiquette or what Ide called '*discernment*'.

Based on the observation of the previous research, it can be stated that a study on students' speech politeness with native speaker has never been conducted before. It is therefore this research is worth doing in order to bring further improvement in Japanese learning in universities.

II.   POLITENESS PRINCIPLES

Many linguists proposed various concepts on politeness since they have different views on that matter. Some formulated that concept into rules called politeness principles. Politeness concept formulated into strategies is called politeness theory. Politeness principles deal with rules for social, etic, and moral things in communication. In his communication, a speaker does not only convey information, assign task, need or message but more than that, he also maintains and keeps social relationship between he-himself as the speaker and his addressee.

Some linguists like Lakoff (1972) and Leech (1983) formulated their ideas into a politeness concept while Fraser (1978) and Brown & Levinson (1978) expressed their ideas into a politeness theory. Regardless the above-mentioned politeness concepts, its criteria should be associated with a culture that binds it like, in this case, is Japanese since a particular culture has certain aspects that other cultures do not. Some cultures may have common principles with other cultures. It is, therefore, polite communication in Japanese may be viewed from universal politeness principles in addition to politeness principles found in its binding culture. It goes the same way with Japanese language which is inseparable from respect form called *Keigo*.

Besides, there are expressions that we must consider in our communication with Japanese people such as the speaker's expression of discernment or *Hanashite no kimochi o arawasu hyougen: Handan*. The speaker uses this expression to make sure that his speech does not insult or harm the addressee.

For that reason, Leech universal politeness principles (1983) along with Japanese honorific (keigo) as well as the speaker's expression of discernment Iori *et.al*. (2009) can be used to explain universal and Japanese politeness principles. Lakoff's (1972) politeness principle contains 3 rules that must be obeyed so that the speech is considered polite. They are: a) Formality Rules. This rule suggests "*Do not force or do not be arrogant*". It means that a compelling and arrogant speech is considered less polite, and vice versa, if a speech is not arrogant and does not force in nature, then it is considered polite. b) Rule of Hesitancy. It suggests that speakers speak in such a way that their speech partners can make a choice. A speech is considered polite when giving a choice to the addressee, and vice versa if a speech does not give a choice to the addressee, then the speech is deemed impolite.; c) Rule of Equality or Friendship. This rule suggests that speaker should act as if his addressee is equal or, in other words, he should make his addressee happy. A speaker's speech is deemed polite when it makes his addressee happy, and vice versa if the speaker's speech causes his addressee displeasure, then it is deemed impolite.

Brown's and Levinson's (1978) politeness principle revolves around face notions, namely positive and negative faces. A positive face refers to the self-image of a person who wishes that what he does, what he has, or what values he believes in, is acknowledged as a good, pleasant, worthy of respect, and so on. Negative face refers to the self-image of a person who wishes that he be rewarded that the speaker let him do his action or let him get rid of doing something.

Brown and Levinson also formulated their politeness principles into the following 5 strategies: 1) perform a speech act as it is, no lip service, by abiding to Grice's cooperation principle; 2) perform a speech act using positive politeness; 3) perform a speech act using negative politeness; 4) perform a speech act *off the records*; and 5) does not perform a speech act or keep silent. Choice of strategies depends on the scale of face-threatening acts. The less face-threatening the act is, the smaller the strategy number will be, and vice versa the more face-threatening the act is, the bigger the strategy number will be.

Leech's politeness principles (1983) are based on rules. These rules are sayings or proverbs that contain advice to be obeyed so that the speech of the speaker meets the politeness principles. They are also based on notions such as: costs and benefits, reproach or dispraise and praise, agreement, sympathy and antipathy. The following are maxims in Leech's politeness principles: 1) Tact Maxim, 2) Generosity Maxim, 3) Approbation Maxim, 4) Modesty Maxim, 5) Maxim of Agreement, 6) Maxim of Sympathy – a) minimize antipathy toward others b) maximize sympathy toward others.

III.   JAPANESE RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE OR *KEIGO*

Keigo can be defined as a foundation in showing 'mutual respect' between one to another. It has consistently played an important role in Japanese language throughout history, from

ancient to modern times. When someone is about to convey a message or feeling through a certain expression, he does not do it as it is but also paying attention to his addressee and surrounding as well as his personal and social relationship with the other party.

According to Keigo Report Year 2007, Keigo is divided into 5 namely: 1) *Sonkeigo,* 2) *Kenjougo I,* 3) *Kenjougo II (Teichougo*), 4) *Teineigo*, and 5) *Bikago.* These 5 types of Keigo are adopted from the old classification.

Japanese Honorifics

Some linguists like Ide (1999) defined Japanese honorifics (keigo) as a linguistic form to express the speaker's statement of his position toward the addressee. Honorifics is closely related to social status and regulations in Japanese society. (Ide (1989) believed that honorifics or Keigo is "socio-pragmatic equivalent to grammatical adjustment', in that the main reason for interactions in Japanese society is politeness (discernment). It is derived from basic assumption that *honorifics* is a direct clue for politeness directed to the addressee or other party.

Nevertheless, Iori et.al (2009) stated that politeness in Japanese language does not only concern the use of *desu* or *masu* endings in the speech. We also have to ponder various expressions of discernment that the speaker conveys. The speaker's expressions of discernment may include expression that the speaker use to tell what will probably happen, expression about the truth of a case or expression telling information obtained from other people. Here are the details:

1) **Expression to tell a certainty/a belief**

   If the predicate ends in common form (*da*) or polite form (*desu*), it indicates that the speaker is expressing a certainty of a case. However, if the predicate is followed by **tabun** or **orosaku** (adverb), it indicates the speaker's uncertainty about something.

   (1) Ano hito wa tabun Tanaka san no okusan da.
       'That person, is may be, Mr. Tanaka's wife.'
   (2) Kono Suika wa osoraku amai desu. 'This watermelon may be sweet.'

2) **Kamoshirenai**

   *(1) Kyo wa Oo ame node, densha ga okureru **kamoshiremasen**.*
       'It is raining heavily today, **may be** densha will be late'

IV. METHOD

A descriptive-qualitative method and socio-pragmatic approach were used in this study. Socio-pragmatic approach enabled us to describe obedience and infraction to Leech's politeness principles (1983) as well as Japanese respectful language and the speaker's expression of discernment. The data were collected through observation technique, recording technique and note-taking. This study was conducted in 4 universities namely: Universitas Negeri Semarang, Universitas Dian Nuswantoro, Universitas Gadjah Mada dan Universitas Muhammadyah Jogyakarta. The research subject were 93 students of 5th semester who followed the class with native

speaker. The research object was students' speeches in Japanese when they had conversation with native speaker. Students' speeches containing compliance and infraction to politeness principles were taken as data. The data were then analyzed with Leech' heuristic analysis (1983). Students' speeches were then interpreted through pragmatic identification, then formulated its hypothesis and examined this hypothesis with the available data.

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result shows that students still violated Leech's politeness principles either Maxim of Modesty or Maxim of Sympathy. It is shown in the following utterances. In speech No 1 – 7 students (STD 1-7) do not maximize losses to themselves because they did not answer native speaker (NS) question completely. It shows from a few number of words used. This in turn maximizes losses to the addressee since the native speaker (NS) used more words than the students.

Context 1:
(NS) at Udinus University (henceforth UDN) asked a student (STD 1) if he understood the subject already discussed or not and the student gave a short answer.
(NS): *Daitai wakatta*? 'Is it understood?
STD 1: *Hai.* "Yes."
Context 2:
(NS) at UDN asked a (STD 8) if he understood the subject already discussed or not and the student gave a short answer.
(NS): Dou? *wakatta*? 'Is it understood?
STD 1: *Chotto* 'A bit'

In that speech, STD 8 violated tact maxim since he gave a short answer. In fact, he did it because he was not sure if he understood or not. The longer the sentence, the more polite it is. It could be done with conjunction like '... but ...' or ... however ...'

STD should have answered: **Hai, wakarimasuga** ... 'Yes, I understood, but ...'

In context (9), students did not minimize loses to himself because he did not answer completely the native speaker's question. It shows from a few words used. It maximizes losses to the addressee because NS used more words than the speaker (student).

NS asked STD (9) from UNN about his favourite Japanese song. Then STD 9 gave a short answer.
NS : *Nihon no nan no ongaku ga suki desu ka*?
     "What Japanese song do you like?"
STD 3: *Arashi*   *'Arashi (Title of A Japanese song)*

Speech of STD 3 violated tact maxim.

Student 3 should have expressed a tender speech by adding ***desu*** auxiliary at the end because NS also used polite language adding ... ***desu***. In consequence, student should have answered with **"Arashi desu"** 'Arashi (song)'.

Here is another example when NS asked a STD if he understood the subject already discussed or not. STD 10 – 16 gave a short answer.

NS (NP)　　: *Dou desu ka? Wakarimasuka?*
　　　　　　　"So? Is it understood?"
STD 10 - 16:　"*Hai*". "Yes."

NS at UM and UDN asked STD 17 & 18, 19 & 20 if they understood or not. They gave a short answer.
NS　　　　　: *Dou desu ka? Daijobu desuka*? 'So? 'It is okay?'
STD 19 & 20:　*Daijobu 'It's okay.'*

Here is an example native speaker's speech at UG University to STD 21. NS asked students about Japanese students who will come for internship. Only 1 student answered with a short answer.
NS　　: *Ima Jugyou?*
STD 21: *Iie, owata bakari.*

Speech of STD 21 violated tact maxim. STD 21 should have maximized his respect by adding *desu* at the end. Moreover, NS is older than the student. In addition, STD 21 should have given longer answer when explaining why other students came late by saying "**Owatta bakari desuga, kono Auditorium made, chotto toi desu node, kuru no wa okuremasu".** **'**It's just finished, but the auditorium is quite far. That's why they came late.**'**

As shown in speeches no. 1 – 21, not only violating tact maxim, students also violated Japanese politeness maxim as stated in Iori *et.al.* theory. It is stated that Japanese polite language ought to use **masu** and **desu** at the end of the sentence. Masu and desu serve to refine the speech and show mutual respect between the speakers regardless difference in age or status of the instructor and students. Also, it should consider the speaker's expression of discernment.

Infraction to Maxim of Sympathy and Tact Maxim can be seen from SDTS' speeches No. 22 – 50. Students did not maximize sympathy or minimize antipathy to native speaker because he and his friends bluntly said that they would not want to marry Japanese people. They should have said how difficult it would be to marry Japanese people due to cultural differences.
STD 22 - 50: *Watashi tachi wa nihonjin to kekkon **shitakunai** desu.*
　　　　　　'We don't want to marry Japanese people'
NS　　　　: *Doushite nihonjin to kekkon shitakunai desuka.*
　　　　　　"Why wouldn't you want to marry Japanese people?"

STD 22 - 50: *Nihonjin to bunka ga chigaimasu kara. Sono hoka ni shukyo mo chigaimasu.*
"Because our culture is different from theirs. Besides, our religion is also different."

Here is another violation to Maxim of Sympathy committed by STD 51
NS　　: *Jisshin ga atte, chikaku ni neko ga ittara, tasukemasuka*?

"Should there be an earthquake and a cat nearby, would you save the cat?"
STD 51: *Iie, tasukemasen*. "I would not."
NS　　: *Doushite desuka* ? 'Why"
STD 51: *Neko ga sukijanai desu* "I don't like cats"
NS　　: *Neko ga kawai desuyo*. "Really cats are cute, right?"

STD 51 violated Maxim of Sympathy for not showing sympathy in his answer "*If there was an earthquake, I would not save the cat nearby*", simply because he did not like cats. Even when the native speaker argued that "Cats are cute.".... In addition to violation to Leech's universal politeness principles, the speaker also broke Japanese honorific as stated by Iori. Although he used "*masu*" at the end of the verb which was then conjugated to "*masen*" in the verb *"tasukemasen"* (I would not save the cat), he still violated Japanese politeness for using expressions of certainty. In fact, the Japanese tend to avoid it by adding adverb of possibility or "tabun" / "osoraku in its predicate.

Besides using expressions of uncertainty or "*dantei shinai" atau hi dantei / dantei o sakeru hyogen*, Japanese people like to use expressions of possibility or *kanosei o arawasu hyogen*. It is done by adding *kamoshirenai* (may be). Its purpose is to express a possibility no matter how small it is.
Here is another example of violation to Tact Maxim
NS　　: *Nihondewa watashi wa hitori de sunde imasu*.
　　　　　"I live alone in Japan."
STD 52: *Sakki, hitori de sunde imasu. Seikatsu hi wa **dou desu**ka*.
　　'You said (that) you live alone. What about the living cost?
The speaker should not have asked the native speaker directly like "*dou desuka/What about ....?* in order not to violate Tact Maxim. Instead, in order to look wise and polite, they should have said ""**dou omoimasuka .... (**Well, what do you think about ....?")
Students' Speech that Obey Politeness Principles
Although only a few, some students' speeches turned out to obey politeness principles like the following.
STD 53: *Sensei, sumimasen shitsumon **shitemo ii deshouka**.*
NS　　: *Hai douzo*.

In the speech above STD 53 obeyed Tact Maxim since STD 46 expressed a polite request in his question with **... te mo ii deshouka** '*May.....?'*
Other obedience to Tact Maxim is shown in STD 54 speech:
STD 54: Indonesia no seikatsu wa **do omoimasuka.**
　　　　　"**What do you think about** life in Indonesia?"
NS　　: **Asa** ga totemo hayai desu. Nihonjin wa nemui desu.
　　　　　"Morning comes so early. The Japanese would (still) be sleepy".

It obeyed Tact Maxim simply because STD 54 asked the native speaker using structure of 'opinion' **"...,do omoimasu" (what do you think about ....)** instead of **......... dou desuka.**

STD 55 also shows obedience to Tact Maxim obviously recognized from its structure ..... *deshouka.*

STD 55: *Nihon de wa ichiban yoku saigai wa* **itsu goro deshouka.**
"**When do you think** disasters occur most frequently in Japan?"
S*ono saigai wa nan no saigai* **deshouka.**
"What kind of disaster do you think?"

In this speech STD 55 asked the native speaker using *itsu deshouka and nan deshouka* structure, "When do you think?" Not only complete but it is also conveyed indirectly so to give a chance to the addressee to think. However, the native speaker (NS) finds it difficult to tell exactly what month disaster occur most frequently. So, NS used **"... nan deshouka"** instead of **.......... nan desuka.**

Obedience to Maxim of Approbation is found in STD data no. 56 – 61. Here the students showed their willingness to marry Japanese people since the latter are smart and fair-skinned. This way the students may have a chance to have better offspring. STD 56 – 61 maximized their appreciation to others.

STD 56-61: *Watashi wa nihonjin to kekkon shitai desu.*
"I want to marry Japanese".
Nihonjin ga atama ga ii shi, hifu mo shiroi desu.
"Japanese are smart and fair-skinned so that I could have better offspring."

VI. CONCLUSION

In short, most students from these 4 universities violated politeness principles particularly Tact Maxim and Maxim of Sympathy. Yet, obedience to Tact Maxim and Maxim of Approbation was found although small in number.

This violation occurred because most students did not use neither the speaker's expression of discernment nor *Keigo* correctly like the Japanese do. In addition, they did not know that understanding universal politeness may help them to use Japanese expression of politeness in the right way.

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