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Probing Socio-Pragmatic Skills of L2 Learners of Indonesian on Japanese Politeness

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Abstract
This study explores how learners of Japanese as a foreign language in Indonesia comprehend and use Japanese politeness. Many linguists mentioned that socio-pragmatic skills can be developed in a classroom. This skill is essential for L2 learners to master communication in L2, such as how to build and express turn-taking, eye contact, and give attention to the interlocutors. Therefore, this study aims to prove whether Indonesian learners of Japanese could use appropriate socio-pragmatic skills, focusing on Japanese politeness in a conversation setting. The subjects are 120 students from two universities whose level of Japanese skills is on the A2-B1 CERF level. We use the role-play method and set a one-on-one conversation/interview setting. Our findings demonstrate that most Indonesian students cannot yet reach the social level of

interactional behaviour in Japanese. Understanding one's social status in conversation is essential. Another finding from the perspective of *Wakimae* is to recognise the formality of appropriateness in a conversation, in this case, in the context of the interview, which results in less formal communication. Therefore, as Japanese learners, most of the students do not experience direct contact with Japanese native speakers. The lecturers in the teaching environment must introduce the nuance and Japanese politeness in context.

Keywords: *japanese politeness, wakimae, indonesian learners of japanese, l2 socio-pragmatic skills*

INTRODUCTION

Among the essential aspects of communication is socio-pragmatic skills. Riddiford and Joe (2010) put forward that these skills can be developed. Their study results report that learners often find it challenging to negotiate culturally, especially speech acts, to request something. Over approximately 12 weeks, learners can analyze and arrange a request using appropriate approaches. The finding emphasizes that socio-pragmatic skills can be developed in the class despite the absence of native speakers in the simulated interaction. Such a notion suggests that teachers should inform their students about the importance of socio-pragmatic comprehension in a class, including a Japanese class.

Second language learners must master the target language vocabulary and grammar and must master sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills. This concept has become a reference for studies on teaching speech acts, such as requests, refusals, and forms of praise (Cohen, 2008; Ishihara, 2010a; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Yu, 2004, 2011). Some researchers also highlight some phenomena of learners' pragmatic awareness in their second language. (Ishihara 2010a; Kasper 2001a; Murray 2009). According to Haugh & Chang (2015), analyzing interactions in a second language authentically at a high level of complexity is an effective way for students to engage more deeply with pragmatic phenomena.

Taguchi (2014) adds that without pragmatic awareness, students may not improve their pragmatic abilities even though

they interact directly with native speakers. In Japanese learning, the learners should comprehend the Japanese language politeness. Politeness can be taught directly using an interactive communicative approach to build students' pragmatic abilities through exercises and strategies (Bou-Franch & Garces-Canejo, 2003). Therefore, the present study attempts to explore socio-pragmatic skills, especially the politeness of Japanese students. It focused on the Japanese politeness formula called *wakimae,* which Ide proposed. It is a framework of Japanese linguistic politeness. In this context, the researchers look at politeness from the traditional perspective, e.g., using honorifics and expressions in specific contexts in line with the rules or norms of a particular language. These expressions index the person's role in the conversation and the source or target of politeness.

Many studies have examined the importance of having socio-pragmatic skills. Meanwhile, other studies also mentioned that Japanese learners should master politeness (Taguchi, 2004). However, a few studies only focus on Japanese politeness by Indonesian learners, such as Wahyuningtias (2014), who explored Indonesian and Japanese native-speaker e-mail communication. Nurjaleka (2019) analyzed the difference between Japanese native speakers and Indonesian learners in giving reasons for refusing speech as a politeness strategy. Furthermore, no study has been found exploring socio-pragmatic skills by Indonesian learners of Japanese. This study will fill the gap in the previous studies on Japanese politeness among Indonesian Japanese learners, focusing on the Japanese context of wakimae.

This study implies that students are expected to usethe Japanese politeness of wakimae and know their position or role in Japanese conversation. This exploration of Japanese politeness in the role-play interview setting contributes to studying the Japanese language and Indonesian socio-pragmatic skills. This study aims to identify and investigate the interactional behaviour of Indonesian students who learn Japanese language politeness in Yakima*.* According to Shibamoto and Smith (2011), honorifics are insufficient for expressing politeness in Japanese. They opine that

other expressions are essential to emphasize politeness in conversation.

Based on this background, the research question is formulated as follows.

1) What is the framework of the interactional behavior of Indonesian Japanese learners?
2) What are the wakimae of the Japanese language of Indonesian learners? How do Indonesian students recognise their position/role in the conversation?

The Socio-pragmatic concept in Politeness theories

Pragmatics, in general, is dominated by Western theories. However, these theories are seen unable to describe the specifics of local studies using local language and culture databases (Rahardi, 2024) . Therefore, a linguist, such as Trosborg (2010), Scollon and Scollon (2014), and Blum-Kulka and Hamo (2011) initiated cultural pragmatism. Their approach is pragmatics with a local dimension. According to Blum-Kulka and Hamo (2011), cross-cultural pragmatics mainly compares typical linguistic actions across cultures. Meanwhile, Trosborg (2010) emphasized that the ability to master a foreign language is to understand its culture. And culture signifies how an individual thinks, acts and feels as a group member or in relation to other members in the same groups.

Leech (2014) argues that politeness correlates with language use and social attitude, as discussed in pragmatic studies. It can be recognized in two interfaces: pragmatic forms and linguistics forms (well-known as pragma linguistics). Another form of pragmatics in the concept of society is commonly known as socio-pragmatics. Socio-pragmatics focuses on the measurement that brings the tangibility of a specific politeness level, culminating in society's acceptance of the level of politeness. Therefore, the evaluation's socio-cultural aspect is significant to the politeness level. Other elements, such as ages, sexes, social classes, and localities, can also contribute to the evaluation depending on some cultural aspects (Leech 2014: 14).

Socio-pragmatic politeness places greater emphasis on examining politeness strategies within specific contexts. The acquisition of politeness strategies involves adhering to a comparatively restricted conceptualization of "rightness" that depends on situational dynamics and expectations associated with roles (Leech, 2014; Liddicoat & McConachy, 2019).

Some research findings denote that politeness in communicating varies from one language to another. There are two significant domains of politeness: language and socio-cultural (Leech, 2014). The politeness value is generally coded linguistically based on a particular language's morphological differences, syntax, and lexical aspects. Some examples involve the Japanese language with its honorifics as a pragmatic marker, incompleteness of utterances, and other related aspects.

Concerning politeness or impoliteness in second language learning, Haugh and Chang (2015) point out that making learners aware of the differences between L1 and L2 politeness systems is the first step in developing learners' pragmatic competence in the interpretation process and fostering politeness in students' L2.

The capacity to interpret and use politeness in language use is central to developing meta-pragmatics awareness. This is because awareness is only deemed a consideration that language learners have the right to communicate and understand the communicative intent of the interlocutor (Liddicoat & McConachy, 2019). Developing a meta-pragmatic awareness is involved in L2 politeness learning;   the process goes beyond knowledge of open politeness conventions to include insight into how cultural variable assumptions about interpersonal relationships affect how politeness is dynamically constructed and interpreted in context. The development of meta-pragmatic awareness helps learners see language use as a form of social action and, at the same time, helps them become attuned to the consequences of linguistic choices and the broad possibilities for their agency construction (McConachy, 2019).

Japanese Politeness

Japanese politeness is, without doubt, synonymous with the use of honorifics. Recently, politeness strategies other than honorifics have received particular attention in Japanese language research. Ide (2005, 2006) opines that the Japanese language politeness is yet represented in face-threatening theories, one of Brown and Levinson's universal politeness theories (1978, 1987). On that ground, Ide proposes a concept of *wakimae* or discernment. According to its meaning, this concept refers to the competence to assess a person thoroughly. In other words, politeness is identified from individual and social interaction (Mills, 2009).

Ide (1993) was a prominent Eastern figure who published some literature from the Japanese perspective. Further, Ide is famous for criticising Brown, Levinson, and Leech due to their "Western" biases concerning interaction strategies. Ide distinguishes two types: volition and discernment. The latter refers to the politeness system associated explicitly with Japanese culture. The discernment or *wakimae* correlates with the roles and obligations of an individual as a group member that associates with hierarchical communities. Ide also integrates the concepts of bivalent politeness and trivalent politeness. Bivalent politeness (possessing social indexing functions) is more likely a domain of sociolinguistics. In contrast, trivalent politeness (continuous interaction driven by the intention of the speaker and listener) is classified in pragmatics.

Ide, Haugh, and Obana (2011) review Japanese politeness at the social and interaction levels. They came up with the concept of 'tachiba' (the place where one stands) or a person's position or social condition as a mediator between the social and interactional levels. Examining the concept of 'tachiba' using a specific culture enables one to explore the politeness system of the Japanese language as a social role.

Fukushima and Haugh (2014) argue that to examine politeness; one must look at the cultural norms of politeness strategies that apply to the community, which is part of the language user. Similarly, *wakimae* and individuals will compete for linguistic ideologies that can be described differently according to cultural

and situational contexts (Shibamoto & Smith, 2011). The same linguistic pattern can be defined from an individual or social perspective.

This study looks at linguistic politeness strategies in Japanese, the second language of Indonesian students, in a predetermined context. It also identifies the forms of Japanese language politeness awareness among students by looking at the *wakimae* point of view of Ide (1989) and the concept of interaction level politeness with the concept of 'tachiba'. In *tachiba* contexts, the context (or in Japanese bamen) and status (or in Japanee mibun) of the speaker and interlocutor become more critical in the selection of the speaker's variety of respect initiated by Haugh and Obana (2011).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research employed a qualitative approach and case study design. It is intended to describe the politeness strategies of Indonesian Japanese language learners. According to Iliyas (2014), case studies are illustrative in providing examples and in-depth descriptions. This study conducted a case study of Japanese language learners at two universities in a role-play conversation. The data was retrieved from a conversation with third-year students enrolling in the speaking course or *Kaiwa*.

Data Participants

The subjects involved 120 students from two universities in Indonesia who enrolled in the *kaiwa chukyu*, or intermediate conversation course, in the sixth semester. They were selected because they had completed A2/B1-level Japanese courses and had learned Japanese honorifics. This study focused only on examining students' Japanese speaking skills, specifically Japanese politeness. The A2/B1 level is a Japanese language education standard from the JF standard. A2/B1 are considered learners who are independent users who can understand, interact, and produce a wide range of topical issues. This study only examined students' speaking skills, specifically Japanese politeness.

Data Collection Technique

A questionnaire and interview were employed to obtain supporting data about politeness in the speech utterances of the participants. The recording is intended to gain information on the utterance forms during the conversation. The data collection technique was carried out by listening and recording the simulated interview, focusing on personal tips and experiences to keep healthy during the pandemic.

Data Collection Procedure

We collected the data from April to June 2021. First, we set up a one-on-one conversation with two students. The role-play is around 4-5 minutes. We set the role play in an interview setting between Indonesian learners of Japanese and native Japanese speakers. The condition is that it is a first-time meeting.

All data were examined using conversation analysis. This method relies on video and audio recordings of social interaction. The present work analyses the inductive use of language in social interaction and workplace settings based on recording empirical data, i.e., a structural conversation (role-play). Students acted as Japanese language learners and native Japanese (Nihongo partner) who just met (shotaimen). The conversation topic focused on each speaker's daily healthy routines.

We analyzed the conversation in the interview setting using the concept of the "wakimae" or Japanese politeness by Ide, and we also want to determine the interactional behaviour of the students and analyze the situations given with the theory of "tachiba" by Haugh & Obana (2011). They emphasize the position of each role of the interlocutors in the interaction and communication at a socio-cultural   level.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Japanese Politeness Interactional Behavior Forms

Teaching language politeness is often oriented towards politeness as a language with higher courtesy than other language forms. According to Swidler (1986), as a central part of the learning

process, learners need to develop a view of language as a code and a semiotic source system that enables them to achieve specific social actions. Learners' awareness of using second language politeness must be developed to be grammatically and socioculturally competent.

Below is the transcript of the role-play between the two students. The two speakers, who just met for the first time, talked about the condition of their countries during the pandemic and personal tips to stay fit and healthy. Na is the speaker, a Japanese language student. Ek acts as a native Japanese speaker and a hearer in this conversation. The place where they meet is at the university.

Data 1   Conversation

Na: Konnichiwa. Nadya to moushimasu. Indonesia no gakusei desu. Yoroshiku onegai shimasu.
Na: Good afternoon. My name is Nadya. I am a student from Indonesia. Pleased to meet you.
Ek: Hai, doumo. Eka to moushimasu. Douzo yoroshiku onegai shimasu.
Ek: Hello, I am Eka. Pleased to meet you.
Na: Eka san, doko kara kimashita?
Na: Where   do   you   come   from,   Eka-san?
…

The above conversation data 1 illustrates a simulated situation (bamen). From Ide's Waimae perspective (1989), it is important to determine each speaker's position during a conversation. This allows the speaker and the speaking partner to get the gist of the politeness norm. In the conversation, both students comprehended the predetermined situation (the two speakers never met). Therefore, they introduced and stated their position at the beginning of the conversation. From a social perspective, the interactions were related to Japanese politeness. The students   understood the situation as illustrated in conversation data 1. Understanding one's condition and position in

the conversation is essential to applying appropriate politeness strategies.

However, there is an expression in the interview deemed inappropriate to use, i.e., "doko kara kimashitaka?" (where do you come from?). It is inappropriate to ask the country of origin in an interview, even if it is the first time the two speakers meet. This is because the interview is simulated, and students involved in the activity should have known that one will act as a native Japanese speaker.

Meanwhile, the data 2 conversation is between Tau and Yo. Yo is the speaker, a Japanese language student; Yo acts as a native Japanese speaker and a hearer in this conversation. The place where they meet is at the university.

Data 2   Conversation
Tau: Hai, hajimemashite Taufik to moushimasu. Intabyu- shitain desuga, yoroshii deshouka.
Tau: Hello there, my name is Taufik. I'd like to interview you, do you have any time available?
Yo   : Hai, douzo
Yo   : Yes, please.
Ta   : Mazu, onamae wa?
Yo   : Yofan to moushimasu.
Yo   : My name is Yofan.
...

Based on the above data, both speakers demonstrated their capability to understand each other's position in a first-time conversation. Their comprehension helped them start the conversation correctly by introducing themselves. After the introduction, speaker Ta explained his intention to invite his speaking partner to an interview. If the context refers to a street interview, using "...Intabyu shitain desuga yoroshii deshouka" (I would like to interview you, do you have any time available?) can be deemed appropriate based on the social perspective. At the interaction level, however, the expression lacks politeness as Ta went straight to the point after introducing himself. 'Tachiba,' i.e.,

the interviewer did not explain the position of a person who plays a role in social interaction. The position of speakers needs to be explained as a form of politeness to position oneself.

In Japanese interaction, knowing the position of oneself and the other person is crucial. This is because recognizing the identity and status of a person, whether the other person is a friend, customer, teacher, or foreigner, is a   priority in communication. In a conversation involving people meeting for the first time, introducing oneself still needs to be improved, thus indicating a need to provide self-identity to help others position themselves.

In data 2, the conversation is between An, the speaker (an Indonesian student) who studies Japanese, and Ce, who acts as a native speaker and a hearer in this conversation. The place where they meet is at the university.

Data 3 Conversation
An   : Konnichiwa. Anita to Moushimasu. Indonesia no gakusei desu. Yoroshiku onegai shimasu.
An   : Good afternoon. I am Anita. I am a student from Indonesia. Pleased to meet you.
Ce   : Hai, Yoroshiku onegai itashimasu. Watashi wa Celia desu.
Ce   : Hello, it's nice to meet you. My name is Celia.
An   :Ano, sumimasen. Celia san wa nihon no kata desuka.
An   : Pardon me, are you (Celia) Japanese?
Ce   : Hai.
Ce   : Yes I am.
…

As in the previous examples, conversation data conversation three shows that at the beginning of the interview conversation, the student acting as the interviewer was aware that the meeting was the first time for the speakers involved. The introduction of each speaker emphasizes this. However, the student who acted as the interviewer explained his position in the following speech. This information was deemed insufficient for the speakers in the first

meeting, resulting in requests that could disrupt the speaking partner's time.

Furthermore, interlocutor Ce, who acts as a native Japanese speaker, did not use the polite speech commonly used by people when they first met. This can be seen from the use of the *teineigo* form. If the student who acts as the interviewee understands the context of 'bamen' and the concepts of uchi and soto in Japanese, the indigo form can be avoided.

Participants who understand the concept of 'tachiba' in a conversation can apply appropriate strategies to the ongoing interaction. The speech social level politeness system used by the student acting as the interviewee (…My name is Celia) is still not categorised as polite behaviour.

Meanwhile, the data 4 conversation is between Na and Ir. Na is the speaker, a Japanese language student. Ir acts as a native Japanese speaker and a hearer in this conversation. The place where they meet is at the university.

Data 4   Conversation

Na: Irfan san, ohayou gozaimasu.
Na: Good morning, Irfan.
Ir: Hai, Naufal san, ohayou gozaimasu.
Ir: Hi, Naufal. Good morning.
Na: anou, ogenki desuka, Irfan san?
Na: How are you, Irfan-san?
Ir: Haii, genki desu. Naufal san.
Ir: I'm doing fine. Naufal san.
Na: Sou desune, anou, ima
Na: I see. Well, you know today...
Ir: a, Naufal san…..
Ir: What is it, Naufal-san?
Na: eeto, ima, sono joukyou wa akaku shite imasuyone. Sono korona virus no koto, kenkoutekina karada o tsukuru koto mo nanka hitsuyou, hitsuyou arimasuyone.

> Na: You know, the condition becomes worsen. You know, the coronavirus. So, what's your suggestion to stay healthy?
> …

The above conversation data 4 illustrates the initial fragment in a role-play interview involving two Japanese language learners. In conversation data 4, the speaker and speech partner failed to position themselves in a simulated conversation. This is seen in the introductory part of Na and his speaking partner, Ir. At the beginning of the conversation, *aisatsu* or greeting is usually done to someone when a person meets for the first time. However, the follow-up speech used by both speakers must reflect that the speakers just met each other.

This is seen when one of the students went straight to the point after the greeting (You know, the condition becomes worse. You know, the coronavirus. So, what's your suggestion to stay healthy?). As a result, the two speakers seem to be friends rather than people who have met for the first time.

From the examples above, the context of politeness in students' second language has not yet reached a social level focused on one's position in a conversation and its context. There are several disadvantages of politeness strategies for Japanese language learners, including understanding one's social status in conversation. In addition, students also fail to realize the roles they are given and what obligations they have to do based on the context of the simulated conversation.

Wakimae (Japanese Linguistics Politeness) of Japanese learners of Indonesian

The conversational data of Japanese language learners are also examined from the perspective of *wakimae* proposed by Ide (1992), which states that the concept of wakimae is a type of linguistic politeness. The word *wakimae* is derived from the verb "wakimaeru"） or to know, which is correct and incorrect. Ide further divides the types of *wakimae* into micro and macro levels. According to Masahiro (2017), *wakimae* is oriented to the need to recognise the position or role of all conversation participants,

including adherence to the norms of formality appropriate to certain situations.

Micro-level *wakimae* refers to a situation where a person behaves in a situational context, i.e., bowing or using polite language. Specific Japanese phrases are mandatory in certain conditions, e.g., ('yoroshiku onegai shimasu'). This phrase is a typical speech when someone enters into new partnerships or relationships. Further, this speech is usually unrelated to the face of the speaker or the interlocutor, yet it usually becomes an obligation in Japanese.

There were 61 conversation data items of Indonesian Japanese language learners. The role-play interview situation between the interviewer and interviewee is formal by nature, where the interviewer positions himself as someone who needs information from the interviewee. Some contexts of conversations incorporating the expression '*yoroshiku onegai shimasu*' can be seen below.

Meanwhile, the conversation in data 6 is between Ti and Ri. Ti is the speaker, a Japanese language student. Ri acts as a native Japanese speaker and a hearer in this conversation. The place where they meet is at the university.

Data 6   Conversation

Ti: Doumo, hajimemashite Tia to moushimasu. Indoneshia kara kimashita. <u>Yoroshiku onegai itashimasu.</u>
Ti: Good afternoon, my name is Tia. I am from Indonesia. Pleased to meet you.
Ri: Yoroshiku onegai shimasu.
Ri: Pleased to meet you.
…

The use of 'yoroshiku onegai shimasu' in the above data is a form of '*kimari monku*' or an expression pattern in the closing of the introduction. In the context of the present work, the speaker is the one who established a new relationship with the conversation partner. The expression 'yoroshiku onegai shimasu' is a verbal

behavior that shows the norm in introducing oneself; it is also an example of *wakimae.*

Still, the use of this phrase as a pattern of social politeness in the context of an interview is rarely seen. More than 60% of students did not incorporate the form of introduction when starting a conversation in the interview. This condition is also seen in the data below.

Data 7 Conversation

Am: Hajimemashite, watashi wa amikku to moushimasu. Sumaran kokuritsu daigaku nihongo kyouiku puroguramu o benkyou shite imasu, Intabyu- o shitai desuga, doudesuka, Fafa san.

Am: Hi, my name is Amik. I am a student at the Japanese Language Education Study Program at Universitas Negeri Semarang. I'd like to interview you. Are you available, Fafa-san?

Fa: hai, daijoubu desu.

Fa: Yes, please.

In the above conversation, data 6 and data 7, one of the speakers introduced herself and stated her position as an interviewer. However, neither the interviewer nor the interviewee used the expression 'yoroshiku onegai shimasu'. Common phrases that are obligatory in Japanese social life are widely used. This concept   dictates that Japanese language learners remember common expressions, e.g., 'itadakimasu', 'yoroshiku onegai shimasu', etc. Thus, wakimae has established a set of social norms of appropriate behavior and must be obeyed by people to be considered polite.

Meanwhile, the data 8 conversation below is between Tr and Wi. Tr is the speaker, a Japanese language student. Wi acts as a native Japanese speaker and a hearer in this conversation. The place where they meet is at the university.

Data 8 Conversation

Tr: Windy san, anou, anata wa intabyu-wo shite wa moraemasu. Karada, jibun no kenkouhou toka kimi no shitteiru kenkouhou toka, sukoshi setsumei shite itadakemasenka.
Tr: I'd like to interview you. Would you mind sharing your personal tips on staying fit and healthy?
Wi: Hai, kenkou o iji suru tameni watashi wa kudamono o tabemasu. Sono uchi no hitotsuwa orenji no kudamono desu.
Wi: I eat fruits, such as orange.
...

The example of conversation data 8 show the absence of Ide's micro-level *wakimae* in the early part of the interview. The absence of general, obligatory phrases or expressions are also identified in the two-conversation data. In more than 60% of the conversation data, the phrase 'yoroshiku onegai shimasu' is not incorporated although this utterance must be present when closing a conversation.

According to Ide (1992), recognising interpersonal relationships and situational contexts is subject to the choice of speech. This concept further suggests that the students, based on the above two conversation data, could not position themselves.

The macro-level *wakimae* refers to the acceptance of the role and position of a speaker in a specific hierarchy. People express their social identity based on age, gender, status, and other related aspects. One example in the context of Japan is that wearing a suit suggests that an individual is a businessperson. In Japan, a suit is synonymous with the image of white-collar workers. Another example is when a person with a high position uses respectful language when speaking publicly. The goal is not only to respect the interlocutor but also to reflect the image and expression of the language appropriate for his or her position.

There were two social groups within the Japanese social sphere: *uchi* and *soto*. Affiliating with these groups impacts the language style of a person. Another contributing factor to using

language style is the situation (formal or nonformal). Conversation topics also influence a person's language style when communicating with others.

One of the most common ways to express politeness in Japanese is to add 'desu/masu' at the end of a verb. This form of *teineigo* is used primarily by Japanese language students. Furthermore, many people use this teineigo in formal situations, such as business meetings, the interaction between bank tellers and customers, and professional workers attending conferences. In the case of macro-level wakimae, such as the use of polite forms, it is found that almost 80% of students understood the situation and applied the formal style   'desu/masu'.

Meanwhile, the data 9 conversation is between Re and Al. Re is the speaker, a Japanese language student. Al acts as a native Japanese speaker and a hearer in this conversation. The place where they meet is at the university.

Data 9 Conversation

Re: Sumimasen. Hajimemashite, renaldi to <u>moushimasu</u>. Intabyu-intabyu shitai no <u>desuga</u>. Intabyu shita ii <u>desuka</u>.

Re: Hello there, my name is Renaldi. I'd like to interview you. Is it alright?

Al: Hai, <u>ii desu</u>.

Al: Yes, please.

Re: A, hai hai. E- mazu wa doko kara <u>kimashitaka</u>.

Re: Right. First, where do you come from?

Al: hai, padan kara <u>kimashita.</u>

Al: I am from Padang

…

Based on conversation data 9 students have incorporated desu/masu to express politeness, signifying their awareness that the conversation is, by nature, formal. However, from the choice of language or personal and social relations, the two speakers cannot

distinguish whether they should place themselves as uchi or soto. The use of the expression 「doko kara kimashitaka」, (where are you from?) and its response 「, padang kara kimashita」, (I'm from Padang) does not reflect the politeness form of Soto. This is because the person knows the speaking partner is not classified as uchi. For this reason, the speaker should turn the expression 「doko kara irasshaimasuka」, (Where are you from?) to sonkeigo form. Another approach is to respond using the kenjogo form or 「Padang kara mairimasu」, (I am from Padang). This emphasizes the relationship between the two speakers, classified as soto. Ide's *wakimae* concepts categorize such a politeness form as macro-level.

Another issue in the conversation data above is that the choice of language style depends on the psychological and emotional condition of the speaker. This condition leads to *wakimae* concept violation. The choice must be made depending on the relationship between the speaker and the listener and the speaker, the listener, and the speech situation. From all the data displayed above, the students cannot fully comprehend the interview context, which results in less formal communication. Awareness of politeness in the Japanese language is quite complex to understand.

All students are less aware that they are engaged in a formal situation during the simulated interview. They mainly incorporated the *teineigo* form during the role-play. According to Maynard (1997), native Japanese who are accustomed to formal situations, such as workplace contexts, can apply proper politeness strategies in communication thanks to training programs provided by their companies.

The situation contrasts with L2 learners as they have less exposure to politeness strategies in social interaction. Consequently, understanding the concept of Japanese linguistic politeness should be done not only by teaching the use of various politeness strategies but also by improving the awareness of the position of a person during a conversation.

CONCLUSION

This study discusses the forms of *wakimae* or the Japanese language politeness and identifies mistakes of Indonesian students who learn the Japanese language. From the discussion results, students tend to use the *teineigo* form frequently and are aware of the context of the situation given in the role-play interview. The interview is formal between two people who just met. Based on the research data, more than 75% of the students can apply the concept of *teineigo.*

From the students' results of the use of politeness, the present work investigates the application of *wakimae* politeness in students. This is also to find out the contributing factors of the variation of politeness in students, which is only limited to t*eineigo*. Haugh and Obana (2011) suggest that 'tachiba' or a person's position in a conversation can shape the speaker's politeness strategy. If learners understand the concept of 'tachiba,'   they should apply proper politeness strategies in a conversation. Comprehension of the concept of Japanese politeness, both at the social and interaction level, is also essential. One of the students' awareness problems is using the common phrase form 'yoroshiku onegai shimasu' commonly found in Japanese textbooks.

Ide's concept of *wakima*e in Japanese politeness involves the variety of respect and the phenomenon of linguistic politeness from social norms. Understanding this politeness strategy is essential for Japanese language students to help them interact with native speakers in social contexts.

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