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Politeness on Public Signs in Japanese and Indonesian Train Cars: A Linguistic Landscape Study

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Abstract

This study compares the explicit linguistic markers of politeness used in public signage within Japanese and Indonesian train cars. Its aims is to examine how politeness is conveyed and in what context politeness patterns are formed in mobile public spaces, specifically through signs in Japanese and Indonesian train cars. This study adopts a linguistic landscape approach, analyzing 36 photos of train car signs-19 from Japan and 17 from Indonesia. This descriptive qualitative study focuses on three types of public signs: prohibitions, warnings, and instructions. The findings are as follows: first, explicit linguistic markers of politeness in Japanese train car signs frequently involve the prefix "di"- and the lexical item "mohon" ('please'). Second, in both Japanese and Indonesian signs, direct expressions are common across all types of signs, with politeness being contextually applied based on the situational demands rather than the sign type. Japanese signs often use polite directives like "ご注意" (please be careful), while Indonesian signs employ terms such as "awas" (beware) or "hati-hati" (be careful). Intructional signs in Japanese typically end with the command "てください" (please), whereas Indonesian signs use both command imperatives and requests, indicated by the use of "mohon". The degree of politeness varies according to the level of urgency or threat. Signs indicating danger or risk tend to be more explicit but less polite, while those in less critical situations are generally more polite but less explicit. This pattern is evident in both Japanese and Indonesian warning and instructional signs, where the severity of the situation dictates the level of politeness explicitness.

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INTRODUCTION

Politeness has always been a part of daily attribute. It defines the attitude of being considerate and respectful towards others in communication and social interactions involving using polite language and nonverbal clues and being sensitive to the feelings and perspectives of others (Nallalingham, 2023). It is vital to promote cooperation, to foster understanding, to create effective communication, and to avoid conflicts in the society so that individuals feel valued and respected (Leech, 1983; Di Fazzio, 2019; Nallalingham, 2023; Sharma, 2023).

As politeness is one of the key factors in the building of harmony in society, people must pay attention to the way they act and communicate and since both action and communication (verbal and non-verbal) are determined by context of situation and culture, people around the world, apart from having universal concept of politeness will also hold particular definition on what constitutes a 'politeness' in their own culture. This is what Brown & Levinson (1987) is concerned with. They center their research on politeness on verbal and non-verbal communication, investigating on how politeness operates in interaction or communication (conversational exchanges) in different contexts or settings, situations, and cultures by referring to the strategies they develop.

Most studies done by researchers using Brown & Levinson theory are in relevance with direct/ face-to-face interaction. Meanwhile, communication is not always direct. Messages, e-mails, and chats are among the examples of indirect communication. In order to investigate politeness in this type of communication that describes a spoken style of language in a written mode, researchers interested in this field need more theoretical supports to confirm their findings other than just relying on Brown and Levinson's theory.

It is the similar case with the language used in the public such as advertisements, billboards, and signs that provide, among others, guidelines, offers, invitations, recommendations, prohibitions, and instructions. The use of the language in these realms involves the thoughts on how the language is designed and presented because verbal signs as instances mentioned earlier have various language variations to convey the same meaning. In other words, despite from attempting to be dialogic, the language used in verbal signs must also consider politeness since its interpretation are likely to depend on its users or readers (Andilolo, 2014). Researchers interested in investigating the language use in those public signs cannot rely on the use of Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. Although the focus is same, on politeness, the context is different. Linguistic Landscape theory, or commonly known as LL theory, is the most relevant for it. The concept focuses on the analysis of the written information that is available on language signs in a specific area (Gorter & Cenoz, 2007). It denotes the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public on government building that tend to form of linguistic landscapes of given territory, region or urban group (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). It is under this framework that the present study is carried out.

This study aims to compare politeness patterns expressed on public signs inside Japanese and Indonesian train cars and to see in what situations/contexts politeness patterns are formulated in both places. In this study, the data are categorized into three types of signs: prohibition, warning, and instruction.

Studies on politeness on public signs under the same framework has been carried out by some researchers, such as Kim (2011), Deng (2014), Nishijima (2014), Thongtong (2016), Gunawan and Afrizawati (2018), Bogdanowska-Jakubowska (2019), Afifah (2023), Ritchey (2023). Kim (2011) compares prohibition expressions in Japanese and Korean settings in open public spaces (e.g., parks, universities, hospitals, shrines), examining how they vary based on location. The results show that Korean uses more direct and explicit expressions than Japanese, indicating that Japanese speakers consider the audience when formulating sign expressions.

Three years later, Deng (2014) conducts similar research in China, investigating the linguistic and pragmatic features of public signs in three distinct historical stages of the Chinese society and on the new features of public signs in order to shed light on the characteristics of public language and social life in modern China. With respect to politeness, the findings of his research reveal that pragmatic marker like 'please' is often used and the speaker also often resorts to indirect speech act or

sequence of speech acts to adjust its illocutionary force.

In the same year as the research conducted by Deng in China, Nishijima (2014) in Japan carries out a study, comparing functionally equivalent English, German, and Japanese sign expressions in public spaces with respect to politeness and revealing whether and how politeness is formulated in sign expressions in each language in relation to explicitness. The results show that showed that English signs tend to use explicit expressions, whereas Japanese signs frequently contain honorific items, and German signs use infinitive phrases to avoid mentioning personal relationships. The findings imply that each language has its preferred styles of politeness, even for sign expressions, expected to give relevant information or instructions to passengers in a clear, direct manner.

Thongtong (2016) investigates how the linguistic landscape both creates and reflects a tourist space on language choices in creating signs on Nimmanhemin Road in Chiang Mai, Thailand. His study also explores what linguistic devices are used in the creation of signs on Nimmanhemin Road. Among his findings with respect to politeness strategies, it is found that politeness strategies are not limited to Thai readers but may also be directed toward foreign tourists.

Positive and negative politeness strategies are imposed that can be found in several cases under his study. Some shop signs convey direct and precise meaning concerning baldly on record. For instance, "Eat me" represents one literal meaning to attract people to eat food at this restaurant. Another example of a negative politeness strategy used in a shop sign which reads in part, "[You are] welcome to the grand opening." It attempts to address the reader's desire not to be imposed upon with the word 'เชิญ' ('to invite" here meaning 'welcome'), indicating in Thai that sign readers are not forced or imposed on, but they have options to visit the shop.

Positive politeness strategies are found in signs representing attempts to satisfy the reader's desire to be liked or accepted. A smiling iconic expression is considered positive politeness strategy as this shop owner desires to be accepted by customers and wants a lot of customers coming to his or her shop. Using positive politeness strategies is a way of attracting customers.

Further, Gunawan & Afrizawati (2018) conduct a study on the types and markers of politeness depicted in Public Service Advertisement in Pekanbaru. The results show that there are eight types of politeness used in the Public Service Ads in Pekanbaru, including Politeness of Request, Politeness of Instruction, Politeness of Commitment, Politeness of Compliment, Politeness of Expression, Politeness of Giving, Politeness of Emotion and Politeness of Happiness. Meanwhile, there are three politeness markers used in the Public Service Ads in the research setting, those are, mari, ayo and –lah.

Bogdanowska-Jakubowska (2019) does a study on politeness and friendliness in public spaces and transport in Poland. The focus in on inscriptions present in American and Polish urban public spaces and transport. Critical Discourse Analysis is chosen to analyze the results. The findings show that both types of discourse express culture-specific values and follow the moral code. Inscriptions in commercial spaces, such as shopping malls, shops, restaurants, cafés, and medical centers, are intended to establish a good relationship with customers and create a positive self-image of commercial space owners; they follow culture-specific norms of politeness, express a culture-specific way of thinking, and promote values cherished by members of the culture.

Likewise, Afifah (2023) carries out a study to compare politeness pattern on prohibition signs found in open public spaces, especially in train stations in Japan and Indonesia. The research finds that railway companies in Japan and Indonesia have different social backgrounds. Her study also figures out that prohibitive expressions on these signs more often contain negative expressions than positive ones. This is because negative expressions on prohibition signs provide more explicit information, which is cautious and/or warns of potential danger to the sign users.

Finally, Ritchey (2023) conducts a study on building the politeness repertoire through the Linguistic Landscape. The aim of the activities designed by the author for introducing the linguistic landscape and politeness strategies into the French language classroom is threefold. First, students are prompted to consider how linguistic expression modulates politeness in speech. Second, by exploiting the content of public instructional signage, they consider questions of author and audience and

strategies that might underlie (im)politeness in the linguistic landscape. Third, students consider how written and spoken expressions of politeness differ.

The results illustrate some of the strengths as well as some lacunae in students' politeness repertoires. Overall, they were comfortable and engaged in analyzing the socio-pragmatic dynamics of montagne propre but were less able to choose effective pragma-linguistic expressions of (im)politeness for the scenario. Furthermore, the experience demonstrated that certain linguistic expressions are more effective than others in communicating nuance in polite interactions. An interesting finding was the relative ineffectiveness of vous to signal politeness. In spoken French, it indexes vertical distance in the case of a singular addressee. However, this effect is neutralized in signage when the addressee is unspecified. There are occasional uses of tu in instructional signage.

All of those studies as outlined in several paragraphs above, despite having similar concerns on politeness on public signs under the same framework of study show different focuses. Either they have different subjects and aims, or they have different settings and results. In the last research, for example, Ritchey (2023) centers her activities on French study, creating activities that could be used in a variety of language learning contexts in order to activate linguistic inventories and social conventions across languages and cultures, both the socio-pragmatic and the pragma-linguistic dimensions of politeness. In this case, her study is actually under the scope of education making use of the linguistics landscape as the means to teach how French politeness expressions are used on public signs.

Her study is not comparative study which is also aligned with Gunawan & Afrizawati's (2018) study focusing only on public service advertisement in Pekanbaru. In the case of Bogdanowska-Jakubowska (2019), although her research is a comparative one and the approach used is LL the tool for analysis is CDA.

Further, Afifah (2023) and Nishijima (2014) studies are similar with respect to the type of research which is comparative and the focus of research; politeness on public signs, However, their subjects are different. While Nishijima (2014) compares those English, Japanese, and German public signs, Afifah (2023) just involves Indonesian and Japanese public signs as her subjects of study.

To conclude, studies on politeness of sign expressions in general is considered still limited. This is attributed to several factors. First, the main purpose of sign expressions is to convey relevant and useful information to the general public in a clear, direct manner, within the spatial constraints of the sign itself, not to establish or maintain a relationship with readers (Nishijima, 2014). Second, since sign expressions address the general public, it is fairly difficult to suppose a specific personal relationship, which is relevant in determining politeness strategies (Isono & Long, 2012 in Nishijima, 2014).

Therefore, it is commonly assumed that sign expressions are formulated without regard to interpersonal relationships, and thus, it is not surprising that only a few studies have addressed politeness in sign expressions (Nishijima, 2014).

Similarly previous studies of sign expressions have not paid much attention to how politeness strategies are realized on public signs particularly in train cars. This research is conducted in order to fill in that gap. As outlined earlier, this study is to compare politeness expressed on public signs inside Japanese and Indonesian train cars. Further, the study seeks in what situations/contexts politeness patterns are formulated in both places. The two subjects (Indonesian and Japanese) become the main focus of the study because despite politeness constitutes a universal concept on its definition and practice (Brown & Levinson, 1987), it is still influenced by the context of situation and culture where it is practiced as also outlined by Watts (2003).

Although both countries have high context of culture, both reveal distinctive ways in politeness pattern in general. While in Japan, specific honorific form known as keigo has become a part of their everyday attribute as one of the forms to express politeness, Indonesians tend to add lexical items such as tolong, mohon, silakan, mari, ayo, biar, harap, coba, hendaknya, hendaklah sudi kiranya, sudilah kiranya, sudi apalah kiranya (Sneddon, 2000; Alwi et al., 2003; Djenar, 2003; Kosasih, 2003; Kentjono et al., 2004; Rahadi, 2005; Chaer, 2006; Sutedi, 2006) to the sentences or affixation in the forms of passive voice using prefix di- or passive persona and in the forms of confix -lah or (Sneddon,

2000; Alwi et al., 2003; Djenar, 2003; Kosasih, 2003; Kentjono et al., 2004; Rahadi, 2005; Chaer, 2006; Sutedi, 2006) to the words to signify politeness. Those differences are expected to be seen in the use of language describing politeness in signs expression in train cars. Therefore, this study is worthwhile investigating.

METHOD

This qualitative-descriptive research compares politeness expressions used on public signs inside Japanese and Indonesian train cars. It explores in what situations/contexts, politeness patterns are formulated in both places. This research employs Linguistic Landscape theory as the framework and thus the data used in this study were comprised of 36 photos of the sign expressions in train cars (17 photos in Indonesian train cars and 19 photos in Japanese train cars). In this study, the data taken and used were only limited to three types of signs, including prohibitions, warnings, and instructions so that the data can be analyzed comprehensively.

The data from Indonesia was specifically sourced from public signs on the *Jabodetabek* commuter trains well known as *KRL Jabodetabek* specifically from the train cars number 3 and 4 from the total of 12 cars per train set. Train in *Jabodetabek* Line runs in an agglomeration area consists of Jakara, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi city. As it is an agglomeration railways system, *KRL Jabodetabek* Line has six sub-lines, with the data in this research were collected from train cars that loops in *Bogor/Nambo-Jakarta Kota* Line.

Data were collected periodically from January to February 2024. Meanwhile, the data in Japanese train cars (*Yamanote* Line *and Osaka Kanjo* Line) were collected from October to December 2023, specifically from the signs in train cars number 2 and 3 from the total of 11 cars per trainset. *Yamanote* Line loops through the capital of Tokyo and passing through some of the city most famous neighborhoods such as, Shibuya, Ikebukuro, Shinjuku, and Akihabara, while *Osaka Kanjo* Line loops in the capital of Osaka city. The *Jabodetabek* commuter line was chosen for data collection because it serves a similar function to the *Yamanote* Line and *Osaka Kanjo* Line in Japan. This is evidenced by the use of these trains as public transportation within urban areas and specific urban agglomerations. Further, the types of trains used are quite similar, the train cars on the *Jabodetabek* commuter line were originally donated from Japan Railways (JR), the company that operates the *Yamanote* Line and *Osaka Kanjo* Line.

Thus, there is a functional and typological similarity between the trains in both countries, making them suitable subjects for this study. The analysis involved several steps: First, the data were put into categories of three types of signs and whether each data contained politeness or not. Second, each category was analyzed by referring to the theories relevant with the types of signs under investigation. Finally, the results of the analysis were discussed by relating it to the theory and to the previous studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As stated in the introduction section, this study is carried out to compare politeness expressed on public signs inside Japanese and Indonesian train cars. Further, the study aims to find out in what situations/contexts politeness patterns are formulated in both places. The findings are illustrated by firstly putting into categories of three types of signs and whether each data contained politeness or not. Afterwards, the data are analyzed by referring to the theories relevant with the types of signs under investigation. Finally, the results of the analysis were discussed by relating it to the theory and to the previous studies.

Category of Politeness based on Types of Signs

The collected data were categorized by referring to whether each data contains politeness expression or not based on the types of the signs. The results are summarized in the table 1.

Table 1: Categories of Politeness and Non-Politeness of Public Signs in Japanese and Indonesian Train Cars

Type	Japanese Train Cars		Indonesian Train Cars	
	With Politeness	Non-Politeness	With Politeness	Non-Politeness
Prohibition	8	1	12	0

Warning	3	0	1	1
Instruction	7	0	2	1
Total	18	1	15	2

The table 1 informs categories of politeness and non-politeness of Public Signs in Japanese and Indonesian train cars. The table 1 shows that out of 19 Japanese public signs of train cars, 18 types of signs contain politeness expressions (eight prohibition types, three warning types, and seven instruction types) and one contains non-politeness expression (one prohibition type). Meanwhile, in Indonesian train cars, there are 17 types of signs in total, 15 contains politeness expressions (twelve prohibition types, one warning types, and two instruction types) and two non-politeness expressions (one warning type and one instruction type).

Apart from that information, the data above also illustrates the difference amount of data between Japanese and Indonesian public signs of train cars. Even so, both Japanese and Indonesian public signs of train cars have higher numbers of politeness expressions than non-politeness expressions. Furthermore, of all types of signs presented in the table above, prohibition type of public sign with politeness in both countries have the highest number.

That high number of prohibition signs is quite consistent with what Pingler (2010) stated that prohibition signs have become much more prevalent in the century due to an explosion of spaces in which people who can no longer be expected to share the same set of norms meet and circulate (airports, for instance, are a prime space where prohibition signs appear) and at the same time, spreading of rules has been seen and these are often vary across spaces that even one single urban person might frequent in the course of their daily activities (e.g., the increase in smoking bans). This huge number of prohibition signs across the world is accompanied with the tendency that prohibition signs are more likely to be multilingual than other types of signs based on the fact that humans often take a dim view of "the other" and tend to expect outsiders to be less compliant than insiders (Pingler, 2010). Even so, whether prohibition is multilingual, bilingual, or monolingual, is not the main concern of this study since the data collected are also both bilingual and monolinguals and the analysis will just look at the realization of politeness in those data.

Further, Table 1 indicates that public signs of train cars have different types of signs including prohibitions, warning, and instruction. They may be more varied types of signs than what this research is focused on, however, due to the constraint of space and the limited time in data collection, other types of signs are not included in this study. The three types of signs of train cars under investigation have different functions and language features, as also what Searle (1969) stated that prohibition and instruction are more directive, while warning is more representative. In other words, each serves differently in that prohibition signs prohibiting behavior likely to increase or cause danger, warning gives a warning of a hazard or danger used to make people aware of nearby dangers, and instruction indicates mandatory requirements prescribing specific behavior to indicate actions that must be carried out in order to comply with statutory requirements (Allen, 2020).

Therefore, the language feature of these three types of signs, one of which is politeness, is different from one another. It reveals that each type of sign is distinctive or politeness pattern is varied from one another. It is in consistent with what Nishijima (2014) stating that the level of politeness in sign expressions varies based on their location and the relationship with the intended audience. In a broad sense, it also implies that any forms of language/ communication are highly influenced by the contexts of situation and culture (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Wierzbicka, 1991; Martin & Rose, 2003; Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Emilia, 2011) and public sign is no exception. Language used in public signs tend to be more direct (less polite) and explicit, whereas those in more private settings are generally more polite but less explicit (Yang, 2009). The next section highlights the results of each data (prohibition, warning, and instruction). Each is described separately in order to maintain clarity.

Prohibitive Signs in Japanese and Indonesian Train Cars

As aforementioned, there are 8 prohibition signs in Japanese train cars and 12 prohibition signs in Indonesian train cars. With respect to prohibition signs in Japanese train cars, there are varying classifications of prohibition signs found in Japanese train cars, including negative prohibition expressions (prohibitive expressions without honorifics and those with honorifics) and positive prohibition expressions (non-prohibitive expressions without honorifics and those with honorifics) as also outlined by Afifah (2023). Some examples can be seen in the following sets of data.

Figure 1: 「マナーモードに設定の上、通話はご遠慮ください (Please set your mobile phone to silent mode and refrain from talking on the phone)

Figure 2: 「すきまに指を入れないでください」 (Please do not insert your fingers to the closing doors)

Figure 3: 「防犯カメラ作動中」 (Security camera in operation)

Those three sets of data examples show varying classifications of prohibition signs in Japanese train cars. Figure 1 and 2 are comprised of negative prohibitions expressions with honorifics or expressions politeness as shown in the last sentence of each expression in Figure 1 and 2 (ください or please). It is in line with what Nishijima (2014) and Afifah (2023) stated that Japanese sign expressions contain polite linguistic items like the honorific expression *kudasai* 'please'. The use of this ください expression further implies an imperative form of request, although it is framed with honorific forms, it is almost demanding (in the English sense) the visitor to do a specific action (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Masako, 2006; Haugh and Obana, 2011; Burdelski, 2013; Koper, 2015; Mizusawa, 2017; Takebe, 2023). This kind of direct request even appears in interactions with others who are properly located in 外 soto (out-group) relative to the speaker, which one would expect would be treated very deferentially (Ide, 1989b).

Furthermore, the construction of the prohibition expressions is also different in Figure 1 and 2. While Figure 1 uses imperative realized by politeness marker + infinitive verb (*please* +*avoid* …), Figure 2 uses imperative realized by politeness marker + negating verb + infinitive verb (*please* + *do not* …). The realization of different construction just reveals the variation use of prohibition expressions, yet, both denote command and request not to do something limiting other party's behavior as outlined by Afifah (2023), constituting prohibition expressions or in Japanese, it is known as Kinshi *Hyougen* (禁止表現).

In contrast, the construction of expression in Figure 3 does not show any prohibition expression as well as politeness pattern. The sentence 防犯カメラ作動中 (Security cameras in operation) appears to be a standard informational sign, notifying all passengers or sign users that there are security cameras in the train cars they are taking and the camera is working. The form of expression in Figure 3 is declarative and none of politeness marker is found there. However, looking at the context that build this expression, this sign still serves its social

purpose, to prohibit people from doing something that violates the rule, or in other words limiting someone's behavior (Afifah, 2023) because he or she is on the camera's watch. Therefore, Figure 3 is a non-prohibitive expression without honorifics or politeness since it explains negative politeness, an assertion to command by using indirect speech (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and serves to deter potential unwanted actions from irresponsible people and to protect the passengers in the train cars.

In Japanese train cars, prohibition signs tend to include negative prohibition expressions but still use politeness patterns. It is in consistent with Brown & Levinson (1987) stating that politeness expressions are necessary to hide negative expressions, which in this case would otherwise threaten the listener's face due to direct expressions. The use of negative prohibition expressions is clearly to emphasize prohibition to sign users, especially when the signs indicate danger or something that could threaten their safety.

Further, with respect to Indonesian train cars, most prohibition signs are negative prohibition expressions with politeness. Some examples can be seen in the following sets of data.

Figure 4. *Dilarang bersandar pada pintu otomatis* (Do not lean against automatic door)

Figure 5. *Dilarang merokok* (No smoking)

Both Figure 4 and 5 illustrate prohibition signs using the word 'dilarang (to be prohibited)' as a marker for prohibition. It conveys an explicit prohibition, using direct speech to avoid misunderstandings by sign users, yet it still employs politeness markers indicated by the use of passive voice 'di-'. In Indonesian context, passive voice is used, one of them, as a politeness marker, to make impersonal, and to signify that the action is emphasized (Sneddon, 2000; Alwi et al., 2003; Djenar, 2003; Kosasih, 2003; Kentjono et al., 2004; Rahadi, 2005; Chaer, 2006; Sutedi, 2006). In fact, all data with respect to Indonesian train cars show that the use of 'di-' is highly dominant as the politeness marker.

It is highly possible because in Indonesian context, the use of 'di- + verb' to indicate prohibition is considered the most polite and formal form compared to other forms (Sneddon, 2000; Alwi et al., 2003; Djenar, 2003; Kosasih, 2003; Kentjono et al., 2004; Rahadi, 2005; Chaer, 2006; Sutedi, 2006). This uniformity in the use of similar expression politeness patterns is likely because Indonesia has only one state-owned railway company. This monopoly means the railway authority does not compete with similar transport services.

However, in Japan, politeness patterns signify a hierarchical relationship between the railway company and its customers, where the service provider must be more polite to the customers, who are considered to have a higher hierarchical status. There are also significant railway company numbers in Japan, which makes them compete to each other in order to get customer's awareness. The use of politeness expressions in prohibition signs in Japanese train cars also considers the location and situation where the sign is located.

Therefore, the use of prohibition expressions on signs focuses more on the context of the sign's urgency as a signal to protect passengers from potential danger. This is also evident from the sign's location; for example, in figure (4), the sign is placed directly in front of the train door. This is used for safety reasons and to raise passenger awareness, especially during peak hours when many passengers stand near the door and may not realize the danger of leaning against it. Hence, such prohibition signs are crucial to prompt passengers to stay in safe conditions. In other words, the train car is part of a mobile public space, and passenger safety is the primary concern of the transport authority.

Nonetheless, politeness markers are still added to the prohibition signs to make them look polite while remaining explicitness.

Warning Signs in Japanese and Indonesian Train Cars

With respect to warning signs in train cars, the study categorizes the signs into four classifications based on the hazard level, including danger, warning, caution, and notice (Drake et al., 1998). Warning utilizes signal words to capture attention and convey the hazard's severity swiftly (Drake et al., 1998) that are intended to communicate knowledge about potential dangers and how to avoid them, but they can also be understood as reminders that a hazard is happening or will be happening immediately (Sodikin, 2019).

Meanwhile, caution uses as a warning or advice to be careful which extends beyond personal safety to include actions that might harm others, such as warning signs for drivers indicating that stopping in certain areas can disrupt traffic and cause accidents (Summer, 2003).

Even so, in this research, only caution and warning signs found both in Japanese and Indonesian train cars. In Japanese, warning signs are expressed in various ways, such as V注意、ご注意, ご注意ください and others. Meanwhile, caution signs are expressed by using words such as, 気を付けてor 気を付けてください. Based on the data found in Japanese train cars, warning signs frequently begin with ご注意 or ご注意ください. Examples:

Figure 6: ご注意。ランプ点灯中。ボタンを押せば、ドアが開閉します (Caution. Lamp is on. If (you) press the button, the door would be open or close)

Figure 7: 急停車に注意。電車は事故防止のため急停車することがありますのでご注意ください。 (Watch for sudden stop. Caution. Train may stop suddenly in case of emergency)

Figure (6) is a warning on conventional train doors, indicating that when the light on the button is turned on, the door can be opened and closed. This expression indirectly asks customers to pay attention and not to open the door carelessly by pressing the button, especially when the train has not fully stopped at a station. Instead of being a prohibition sign, it is a warning sign because it does not imply a danger situation as well as the button must be pressed to allow passengers to exit the train under normal circumstances. Likewise, figure (7) also contains a warning sign, indicating that if the train stops suddenly, it suggests potential danger. The train will stop to prevent from train crash or other potential accidents. In this case, the train is stopped by railway management, not passengers, so the warning sign is to alert passengers to remain cautious throughout their train journey.

In terms of the language usage, Figures (6) and (7) are quite similar, both using the phrase ご注意 and ご注意ください to remind passengers to stay careful. The word 注意 in Japanese has meanings such as "to be careful," "to be cautious," and "to be alert." Regarding politeness, the phrase ご注意 in (6) is a polite form (*teineigo*) because of the prefix "ご" before "注意." In (7), politeness is expressed through ご注意ください, consisting of ご注意 (*teineigo*) and the addition of ください, which originally comes from くださる, a respectful form (*sonkeigo*) used to make a more polite request, indicating respect for the interlocutor who has a higher status than the speaker.

With respect to Indonesian warning signs in train cars, there are various types of warning signs, usually take the form of imperative sentences. Similar to Japanese warning signs, in Indonesian trains, it is found two variations of warning signs, as illustrated in the examples below.

Figure 8: *Hati-hati pada celah peron saat turun/naik kereta* (Mind the platform gaps when getting on/off the train)

Figure 9: Awas tangan terjepit (Watch your hands)

Figure (8) shows a warning sign, specifically a caution expression indicating a potential danger in the gap between the platform and the train when boarding or on the contrary as mentioned by summer (2003). This sign begins with the word "*Hati-Hati*" (Be Careful), which originally comes from the word "*Perhatian*" (Attention), implicitly requesting attention from the reader. Essentially, the word "*Hati-hati*" is a way of advising caution without being overly direct or commanding, thereby respecting the listener's autonomy and minimizing imposition. This is aligned with Nishijima (2014), that such phrases contain a form of an imperative request, which in terms of politeness, it is a negative politeness strategy, as it does not directly command the reader.

In contrast, Figure (9) presents a more explicit warning with the use of the word "*Awas*" (Watch Out), aimed at ensuring that users keep their hands away from the train doors to avoid getting caught. The word "*Awas*" directly commands users to be cautious, thus lacking a politeness strategy as it is more forceful and face threatening. However, despite this word, (9) is placed in the center of the automatic train doors, indicating a clear and immediate danger if ignored, potentially leading to accidents such as hands being caught in the doors.

Similar to prohibition signs, the use of politeness strategies in Indonesian warning signs tends to prioritize the context and purpose of the sign rather than maintaining politeness and personal relations. On the other hand, warning signs on public signs in Japanese train cars puts an emphasis more on politeness, even though the sentences used are imperative or command forms (negative expressions). In line with Brown & Levinson (1987), in warning signs, politeness is also used to mitigate the negative expression, making the signs more courteous despite being commands, thus preserving the negative face of the interlocutor or the sign users.

Instruction Signs in Japanese Train Cars

Fundamentally, instructional sentences in signs encompass various linguistic expression patterns. In this study, it is discovered an indication that every instructional sign, whether in Japanese or Indonesian, takes the form of imperative sentences. In Japanese, imperative sentences can be expressed as imperative of command (*meirei hyougen*) and imperative of request (*irai hyougen*), both aiming to instruct the reader to perform or refrain from a specific activity. Generally, in everyday conversational contexts, the use of *meirei* forms is avoided as they tend to be authoritative. Conversely, *irai* forms are more frequently used in daily conversations because they are perceived as polite and less forceful (Rachman, 2022).

However, this trend is reversed in the use of imperative sentences found in instructional signs within Japanese train cars. By referring to the data, instructional signs in Japanese train cars most likely use the imperative of command or *meirei hyougen*. This can be observed in the following two examples of instructional signs.

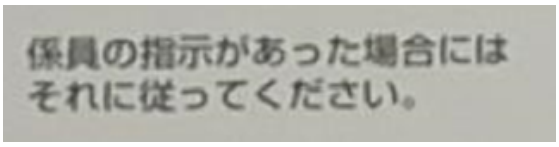

Figure 10: 係員の指示があった場合にはそれに従ってください (If there are instructions from the staff, please follow them)

Figure 11: 優先座席付近では、混雑時には携帯電話の電源をお切りください (Those who's near the priority seats, please turn off your mobile phone during busy times)

In Figures (10) and (11), there are expressions or utterances of instructions, both employ an imperative form, specifically the sentence pattern "~てください" at the end of the sentence. The imperative form in these instructional signs essentially involves the use of the V-て pattern, or the て form of a verb, which implies a command to the listener to do a certain action. The request to follow directions when there are instructions from the train staff in figure (10) clearly conveys an action that users are expected to perform. This request is not mandatory but given as a recommendation when needed. Similarly, in (11), the sign author wants the users to turn off their mobile phones when the train is crowded, especially when they are near the priority seats. If violated, this could obviously disturb other passengers.

The sentences on signs (10) and (11) can both clearly be considered polite. In (10), the form of "てください" (te kudasai) is originally from two merged language structure, such as Vて (the form of Japanese verb-te) and "ください" (kudasai) which conveys the politeness form, known as *sonkeigo*, used to show respect and speak with someone of higher status, such as a superior or a customer. The addition of the prefix お (o) or ご (go) will make a part of *teineigo*, or polite speech, aimed at maintaining respect between the speaker and the listener (Sudjianto, 2020). In the imperative form, the sentence in (11) also includes the prefix お (o) + noun (切り) and "ください," so the phrase "お切りください" (okiri kudasai) holds a meaning of *teineigo.*

In Indonesia, as in Japanese, instructional signs take the form of imperative sentences, meant to command or request the listener to do something as desired by the speaker and are divided into several types, namely imperative of commands, imperative of requests, imperative of questions, and imperative of prohibitions (Rahardi, 2005).

Based on the data, the imperative expressions in Indonesian train car instructional signs include command imperatives *(meirei*) and request imperatives (*irai*). Command expressions are linked to negative face, which refers to the desire to be free from imposition. When issuing commands, the speaker reduces the listener's freedom, thus threatening their negative face and requiring politeness strategies. In contrast, request expressions in Indonesian language are more polite, using expressions, such as *"Mohon*" indicating a polite request (Rahardi, 2005). One example can be seen in the followings.

Figure 12: Mohon kesadarannya untuk memberikan tempat duduk kepada penumpang yang lebih membutuhkan (Please be considerate and give your seat to passengers in greater need)

In figure (12), the sentence pattern demonstrates politeness. The word "Mohon" at the beginning of the sentence aims to protect the listener's negative face by softening the request made by the sign's creator. Indirectly, the word "Mohon" also minimizes the imposition of the command, indicating a polite request or *irai hyougen*. This instruction is placed directly in front of the windows on the left and right sides of the regular passenger seats, not the priority seats. This sign is typically used when all seats in the train cars, including priority seats, are full, but there are passengers such as pregnant women, the elderly, and others in greater need who should be seated rather than standing.

Essentially, this request is not mandatory and does not carry any urgent threat. If the instruction is followed, it is beneficial and helps other passengers, ensuring they can travel comfortably despite certain limitations. However, not following the instruction does not result in any serious consequences. Thus, the presence or absence of politeness patterns in instructional signs in Indonesian train cars can be influenced by several factors, including the sign's location and the intended message. In threatening or dangerous situations,

explicit imperative commands are used to emphasize the importance of the action. In contrast, in non-threatening situations, polite requests are used, incorporating politeness markers to convey the instruction respectfully.

Hence, in Japanese case, the instructional sentence used in the sign is more explicit and tends to be an instruction with a negative expression to prevent from misinterpretation. However, given Japanese society's strong culture of *keigo,* or hierarchical relationships, even negative instructional signs in sentence (10) are imbued with politeness to mitigate the negative expression. Thus, despite being explicit, the sentence can still be considered polite to maintain the hierarchical relationship between the sign authors and their customers.

CONCLUSION

This study compares the politeness patterns used in mobile public signs within Japanese and Indonesian train cars, revealing significant differences influenced by social and cultural contexts. Japanese signs are generally more explicit yet maintain politeness due to the cultural emphasis on hierarchy and respect (*keigo*). Likewise, Indonesian signs demonstrate politeness through politeness markers like "*Mohon*" (please) and polite prefix '*di-'*. These findings are aligned with Afifah (2023), stating that Indonesian prohibition signs involve polite markers by adding lexical item or by adding affixation.

Further, as stated in Nishijima (2014), in Japanese open public spaces, direct expressions are typically used for instructions, while indirect expressions are used for prohibitions. However, this study reveals different results. Train cars, as mobile public spaces, limit users' movements and present various potential dangers, including the risk of accidents. Consequently, direct expressions are favored over indirect ones to minimize the risk of misinterpretation. This study found that direct expressions appear in almost every type of sign, not just prohibitions, indicating that explicitness is applied based on the situational needs of the signs, rather than their type. In contrast, Indonesian railways are operated by a single company with no competition, yet politeness markers are still considered.

The degree of politeness in sign expressions varies depending on the situation. Signs indicating danger or threats are typically less polite but more explicit, while those in regular areas are more polite but less explicit. This variation is evident in warning and instructional signs, where the severity of the situation dictates the level of politeness and explicitness.

As the data in this study is limited, future research should explore a larger data set and delve deeper into theoretical considerations. Even so, the current study provides valuable insights into intercultural communication, particularly between Japanese and Indonesian, which have significantly different sociolinguistic backgrounds. In line with it, conducting research in mobile public spaces, such as train cars, is crucial for understanding the linguistic landscape in dynamic environments. This research highlights the importance of cultural and contextual factors in shaping communication strategies in public spaces, highlighting the need for context-sensitive approaches in designing public signages.

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