



## **Contrastive Analysis of Javanese and Japanese Speech Levels as a Form of Politeness Learning Among the Younger Generation**

**Astiana Ajeng Rahadini<sup>1</sup>, Nirbito Hanggoro Pribadi<sup>2</sup> Kenfitria Diah Wijayanti<sup>3</sup>,  
Favorita Kurwidaria<sup>4</sup>, Dewi Pangestu Said<sup>5</sup>, Prima Veronika<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6</sup>Pendidikan Bahasa Jawa, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Sebelas Maret

Corresponding Author: [ajengrahadini\\_pbi@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:ajengrahadini_pbi@staff.uns.ac.id)

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of our research is: (1) to provide and add references related to the contrastive levels of speech in Javanese and Japanese, (2) to explain the differences in the levels of speech in Javanese and Japanese, and (3) to introduce politeness to the younger generation through the use of good and correct language. The research method we used was a literature study, prioritizing the results of the analysis of a reference as a basis for the data collected during our research. The results of the survey show that: 1) Javanese and Japanese both have levels of speech in their use as daily communication tools as a form and parameter of politeness. 2) Javanese recognizes the level of speech in Javanese, which is divided into four language varieties, namely, Ngoko lugu (Nl), Ngoko alus (Na), Krama lugu (Kl), and Krama alus (Ka). The level of speech in Japanese is classified into three parts. It is used by considering the age or social strata of the interlocutor, how close or familiar the speaker is with the interlocutor, and paying attention to Uchi and Soto. Keego is divided into three parts, namely, Sonkeego (Sk), Kenjoogo (Kj), and Teeneego (Tn). 3) Speech levels are introduced and passed down through examples of everyday life and through learning.

**Keywords:** Levels of speech, language varieties, and etiquette.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Culture belongs to the members of society. Culture is the result of creativity, feeling, and will that are mutually agreed upon by society for everyday life. One manifestation of culture is the set of norms that govern life in a community, serving as

guidelines for its members to follow. These norms are related to various cultural elements, one of which is language.

People use language to communicate and interact with others in

everyday life. However, to achieve these communication goals, people must understand what makes communication smooth. Each language has its own norms and rules, including parameters of politeness. Politeness in language is one way to create harmony in social life. What is considered polite and what is not, each language has its own set of formulations. Ibid. Eelen (2001: 5) states that politeness is essential for the structure of social life and society, as an expression of social relations. Brown-Yule states that the function of language is to strengthen and maintain social relations (1996: 62).

Each culture has its own set of parameters for politeness. All determinations of the value of politeness in language are also greatly influenced by the surrounding speech context. Hymes through Wardhaugh (1986, 245-246) mentions the acronym SPEAKING to explain the components included in the speech context, which include S (Setting and Scene), P (Participant), E (Ends), A (Act Sequences), K (Key), I (Instrumentalities), N (Norm), G (Genre). To produce polite speech, speakers must pay attention to the context of the conversation when communicating. Meanwhile, Brown and Levinson (1987) view politeness as a complex system to soften face-threatening speech. Politeness in language is not only related to

understanding how to say "please" and "thank you" correctly, but also requires an understanding of the social and cultural values of a speech community.

Like social life in general, Javanese society also has unwritten norms or rules regarding language use. Javanese culture contains noble moral values (Harjawiyana and Supriya, 2009: 9). The noble values of Javanese are evident in a sense of politeness and sensitivity based on the principle of respect for others. In Javanese, the parameters of politeness are seen from the content of speech and the language variety used (Rahadini & Suwarna, 2014). The content aspect of speech should comply with the maxims of politeness in Javanese (Gunarwan, 2006). Meanwhile, in terms of language variety, Javanese has a known *undha-usuk basa*, which indicates honorifics or levels of language speech (Sasangka, 2006).

Social factors within Javanese society influence the level of speech. This aligns with Hanafi's (2014: 404) assertion that speech levels can occur if the necessary supporting factors are met. Javanese speech levels are categorized by age, education, position, wealth, kinship, familiarity, and descent (Harjawiyana & Supriya, 2009). In addition to these factors, tone, attitude, delivery, facial expressions, and body language can determine a person's politeness and

courtesy in speaking. Politeness is an attitude of respect, honor, ethics, and morals (Rachmawati, 2022, p. 176).

This study will compare speech levels in Japan. Japan is a country known for its disciplined approach to time and politeness. The Japanese people have achieved remarkable feats. After the Meiji Restoration, Japan quickly became a modern nation, capable of catching up with Western nations. One factor contributing to Japan's progress is its unique character traits that other nations lack (Mulyadi, 2014).

Japan is renowned as a unique and culturally rich nation that places great emphasis on politeness in communication (Suseno, 2017). Suherman (2009: 214) states that in Japan, there is a term called Keigo, which is used to express respect for the person being spoken to or someone who is the topic of conversation. Keigo can be used by paying attention to three aspects: respecting someone of a higher age or social status, respecting the speaker and the person if they are not yet familiar, and being mindful of Uchi and Soto. Uchi refers to one's family environment or the place where one resides, while Soto refers to the environment that is not one's own. In addition to the level of speech, Japan also places great emphasis on nonverbal communication (Iqbal, 2018).

Based on this explanation, it is clear that politeness in language is inseparable from it. This aligns with Diner's (2014: 87) assertion that the existence of a culture will certainly attract others to learn its language. This is because culture is influenced by the language currently used by its speakers.

The existence of a culture of politeness plays a crucial role in social life, aiming to foster a peaceful community. The Javanese language can cultivate a polite and courteous character because its purpose is to convey respect (Wijayanti, 2018). However, according to research conducted by Suryadi (2017: 234), the mastery of the krama language among the younger generation, especially the Javanese community in Semarang City, is valued at only 20.8% to 24.4%. This percentage indicates that the younger generation, who identify as Javanese and even live in Java, still do not master the use of the krama variety of the Javanese language well. In addition, the value of politeness in today's young generation is also questionable. Many children become perpetrators of violence, theft, and even murder. According to KPAI data, between 2016 and 2020, there were 2,626 criminal cases involving children.

A similar study was previously conducted by Pribadi in 2013 with the research title Case Study of Contrastive Analysis of

Indonesian and Arabic and its Implications in Language Teaching (Methodological Descriptive Analysis) with the results, (1) the benefits of using contrastive analysis, (2) the need to use contrastive analysis in foreign language teaching, (3) the implications of applying contrastive analysis. The difference with this study lies in the language object studied. Rini and Aini (2023) studied contrastive analysis of Javanese and Japanese. At the same time, this study focuses on the speech level.

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## METHOD

The research method employed in this study is qualitative. This approach

emphasizes data content expressed through descriptive sentences. A qualitative descriptive approach is suitable for explaining phenomena that occur in life (Khoiriyah, 2023, p. 113). Data collection techniques were employed through literature studies and interviews. Research using literature study techniques is a way of reviewing or conducting research that prioritizes literature reviews as its research source. The activity of reviewing or analyzing various literature is carried out with the aim of meeting research needs (Putrihapsari, 2020, p. 127). The literature used must also be relevant to the researcher's current research interests. Meanwhile, interviews were also conducted with Japanese language experts.

The literature used as data sources, and references in this study are relevant sources such as research results, books, and scientific journals (Jumal, 2018, p. 20). The literature reviewed in this study includes books that examine Japanese language education, Japanese research journals, and the Japanese education curriculum. After obtaining relevant references or references that meet the research needs, the researcher can then analyze the data with a focus on studying the content of the data obtained. The data content is then reanalyzed to determine whether it aligns with the research needs.

The results of this analysis are objective and without researcher intervention. The results of this analysis can then be used as a data source. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with the resource person, namely Mrs. Eny Budi Lestari, a Japanese language teacher at Tenry University, Japan. She is originally from Yogyakarta, Indonesia, but has worked in Japan for 20 years. She was chosen because she has mastered Javanese and Japanese, thus possessing the competence to compare the two languages and their applications in schools.

The analysis conducted in this study employed contrastive analysis, focusing on the differences between the two languages, Japanese and Javanese, and their role in instilling polite values in the younger generation. This aligns with Pribadi (2013: 164), who stated that the use of comparative analysis focuses more on comparing the two objects and places little to no emphasis on similarities between them.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Contrastive analysis of the level of Javanese and Japanese speech**

As an element of culture, language binds its speakers to rules. Etymologically, the word "communication" derives from the

Latin word "communicate," which implies the activity of two or more people conveying a message, idea, or concept (Hariyanto, 2021). The message, idea, or concept conveyed will naturally elicit a response or response as expected. Regardless of whether it has an impact or not, communication requires a medium called language. The language chosen will undoubtedly influence the rules that accompany its use.

The linguistic hierarchies in Japanese and Javanese languages emerged due to the social stratification that has existed in these languages for hundreds of years. In Japan, there were distinct social classes, including the emperor, nobility, samurai, farmers, merchants, artisans, and commoners. Similarly, in Java, there were classes of kings, nobility, merchants, aristocrats, farmers, fishermen, and ordinary people. The existence of these social classes in Japanese and Javanese society gave rise to a variety of linguistic hierarchies that differed from one another. Japanese people use polite language (respectful language) for several reasons:

1. Politeness and Courtesy: Japanese people highly value politeness and courtesy in communication. Using respectful language is a way to show respect and courtesy to others, especially those older or of higher social status.

2. Social Hierarchy: Japan has a highly hierarchical social structure, and respectful language is used to indicate one's position in the social hierarchy. Using respectful language to someone older or of higher social status is a way to acknowledge their position and show deference.

3. Culture and Tradition: The use of respectful language in Japan has been part of its culture and tradition for centuries. Japanese people are taught from childhood to use respectful language when communicating with others.

4. Avoiding Conflict: Using respectful language can help avoid conflict and misunderstandings in communication. By using respectful language, Japanese people can show that they have no malicious or impolite intentions.

5. Respecting Others: Using respectful language is a way for Japanese people to show that they respect others and their values. This can help build stronger relationships and foster deeper social bonds.

In terms of usage, Japanese and Javanese *undha-usuk* have several differences, including: 1. The use of *futsuugo* levels in Japanese is almost the same as the use of *ngoko* in Javanese. The difference is that in Japanese, when communicating within the family circle, the *futsuu* variety is generally used,

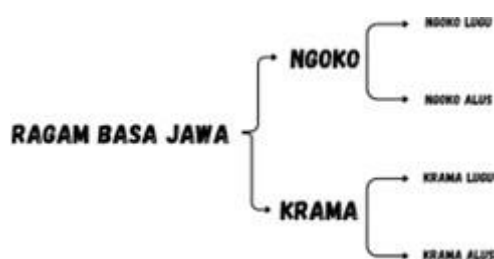
because if the *teinei* form is still used according to the rules, it is considered to indicate a sense of distance, suggesting a lack of closeness within the family. In Javanese, when communicating with family, especially parents, the *ngoko* variety is generally not used. In this case, the *krama* variety should be used, as parents are the individuals who have provided the most service, making it appropriate for them to be respected.

However, in recent years, many children in Javanese society are still found using the *ngoko* style when communicating with their parents. This could be due to the upbringing of their own parents, whether the parents still instill the Javanese language etiquette rules in their daily lives or not. 2. The *sonkeigo* and *krama inggil* levels both function as respectful language, while the *kenjoogo* and *krama andhap* levels also both function as humble language. The difference is that, in Japanese, there are *uchi* and *soto* rules, while in Javanese, there are no such rules. In Japanese, if someone in Company A discusses another person in Company B without considering that the person being discussed has an equal, lower, or higher position. The language used is at the *sonkeigo* level. Then, if someone in Company A discusses someone in Company A who holds a higher position (as a superior), the

language used is at the kenjoogo level. On the other hand, in Javanese, whether you want to talk about someone in your own company or someone else outside another company, if their position is lower or higher than the person you are talking about, you use the krama inggil form.

### Differences in the level of Javanese and Japanese speech

Similarly, the languages discussed in this study, namely Javanese and Japanese, are divided into four varieties: Ngoko Lugu (NL), Ngoko Alus (NA), Krama Lugu (KL), and Krama Alus (KA). More specifically, these can be schematized as follows:



**Figure 1.** Language Usage Scheme

Ngoko lugu is the lowest level of Javanese language variety. Ngoko lugu is used to speak to interlocutors who are considered familiar or not distant. In the application of NL, it has the following characteristics: (1) using all ngoko language varieties, (2) more often accompanied by tripurusa ngoko ater-ater, such as (dak-, kok-, di-) and panambang

ngoko, such as (-ku, -mu, -e, -ake), (3) using personal pronouns such as aku (I), kowe (you), and the third person pronoun, namely dheweke (himself). Ngoko lugu is typically used between speakers of the same age, between older and younger people, and between individuals of higher and lower social strata.

Ngoko alus (Na) is used when the speakers are of the same age, have a higher level of familiarity, but want to show mutual respect. In its application, Na has the following characteristics:

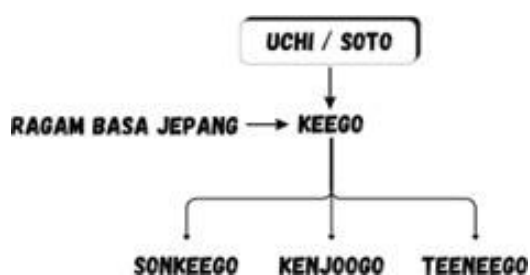
(1) uses ngoko vocabulary but uses krama vocabulary for verbs, (2) uses ngoko tripurusa ater-ater, such as (dak-, kok-, di-) and ngoko panambang, such as (-e, -ake), (3) uses personal pronouns such as aku (I), sampeyan (you), piyambake (himself). In its use, "Na" is typically reserved for use between elders, with elders addressing younger people out of respect, and younger siblings addressing older siblings.

Innocent krama (Kl) is a variety of polite or refined language with a low level. The characteristics can identify this: (1) all the vocabulary used uses a variety of krama, (2) uses tripurusa krama characters (ku-kula, kok-sampeyan, di-dipun) and panambang (-ipun, -aken), (3) the personal pronouns kula (me), panjenengan (you), piyambakipun (himself). Use it alone with people of the same age but not close, such as those who

have just met, or with parents and young people who are not familiar with each other.

Krama alus (Ka) is the most refined level of the Javanese language and is often referred to as krama inggil. The Ka language variety has the highest level with the following characteristics: (1) all vocabulary uses the krama alus variety when addressed to others and uses the K1 level for oneself, (2) uses the *ater-ater tripurusa krama* (*ku-kula*, *kok-sampeyan*, *di-dipun*) and *panambang* (*-ipun*, *-aken*), (3) the personal pronouns *kula* (I), *panjenengan* (you), *panjenenganipun* (himself). Used by young people towards older people, people with lower social status towards people with higher social status, and parents towards people with higher positions.

Meanwhile, Japanese language experts agree that Keego is divided into three parts, namely, Sonkeego (Sk), Kenjoogo (Kj), Teeneego (Tn) (Kindaiichi, 1984, p. 1002). The following is a chart of the levels of Japanese language variety:



**Figure 2.** Levels of Japanese Language Variety

Sonkeego is a Japanese language variety used to emphasize the actions or deeds of the listener or the person being discussed. Kenjoogo is used to show respect to the other person by lowering the speaker's voice. Kenjoogo is often referred to as *Kensongo*, which means self-deprecating language intended to honor others. Teeneego is a language used with unfamiliar people, in formal situations, and to elevate the status of the person being discussed.

As explained above, both the Javanese and Japanese languages recognize politeness or Keego. Keego recognizes the aspects of Uchi and Soto. The presence of Uchi and Soto certainly influences the level of speech used by Japanese people. This can be observed when someone speaking to someone of higher status but not from their circle uses a different language variety, specifically Kenjoogo (Kj) rather than Sonkeego (Sk). Thus, it can be seen that the respect given is not as high as in the application of Javanese. In the application of Javanese, more emphasis is placed on social status; when someone speaks to a superior, they will still use polite krama (Ka). This suggests that subordinates show the highest respect to their superiors, even if they are not from the same group or circle. The Japanese language forms of speech, prioritizing the behavior of others (Sk) and



humbling oneself (Kj), are incorporated into the speech level. In contrast, in Javanese, humbling oneself and elevating others as a form of respect are included in the lexicon, as well as variations of respect and politeness. Furthermore, in Japanese, the form of familiarity is not included in activities that respect others, as a way to humble oneself (Kj); however, in Javanese, it is included in (NI) or the lowest language variety. The ngoko lugu language variety is used to communicate with interlocutors who are familiar or unfamiliar to the speaker.

### **Pattern of instilling manners through the Javanese and Japanese**

#### **Javanese Language Learning**

Education, both informal and formal, is the process of incorporating each new generation into the control of a particular cultural system (Syukur, 2014). Education is a tool used by society to shape the desired new generation. Many values are taught, including cultural values, so that the younger generation can know and master them.

In Indonesia, Javanese language learning aims to familiarize the younger generation with the Javanese language, literature, and culture, which in turn fosters a sense of politeness. One of the subjects taught is Javanese politeness. This subject is taught

at all school levels. Javanese is a regional language spoken by the people, particularly in East Java, Central Java, and Yogyakarta. Javanese play a crucial role in Javanese life, embodying the noble cultural values of the Javanese people. Learning Javanese in elementary and secondary schools serves as a means of character education. According to the local curriculum, Javanese is now a compulsory subject. Teaching Javanese from an early age is crucial, as it serves to preserve cultural values, guide students in their development, and build and strengthen national character.

#### **Japanese language learning**

The Japanese education system is highly competitive. The government ensures that the curriculum, materials, and educational staff meet national standards. Currently, Japan ranks sixth in the world in terms of learning quality (Syukur). The goal of education in Japan is to develop personality and cultivate quality human beings, fostering loyalty and obedience to the Emperor of Japan. Interviews with key informants indicate that education in Japan is always geared toward recognizing, mastering, and respecting indigenous culture. It is natural for Japanese society to be resistant to the influx of new cultures brought about by globalization.

Japanese is one of the main subjects taught from kindergarten to university level. Japanese language learning is carried out by packaging learning, focusing on active activities by students. Noviana (2017: 97) stated that with literary works such as the short story entitled *Chuumon no Ooi Ryouriten*, students are more active and foster a sense of creativity in rewriting the short story in their own language. Language skills are developed through Japanese language learning by packaging learning and focusing on active activities by students. According to research conducted by Noviana (2017: 97), students are more active and foster a sense of creativity when rewriting the short story "*Chuumon no Ooi Ryouriten*" in their own language. Passive language skills combined with active writing skills make learning run smoothly. Researchers suggest that learning related to foreign languages can be further developed by incorporating literary works into it, especially by applying the method of rewriting the contents of short stories. This approach not only hones writing skills but also enhances listening and speaking skills. Both research projects related to learning Javanese and Japanese certainly have their own levels of difficulty. However, each of these challenges falls on the teacher and the adults around the child to

maintain a culture of familiarity. Habituation inevitably fosters a culture that facilitates and indirectly trains children to master language use according to their speech level and the aspects that govern language use. In addition to habituation, it is also crucial to implement appropriate media and learning methods.

## CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be seen that both Japanese and Javanese have speech levels that serve the function of showing respect or politeness to the other person. The two languages, of course, have different ways of expressing respect.

Japanese is divided into three speech levels and has two important aspects in implementing speech levels: *Uchi* and *Soto*. In Javanese, speech levels are divided into four varieties, with application taking into account social strata, age, position, and level of familiarity. However, the language that should be preserved by habitually using good and correct language varieties is now increasingly fading; for this reason, this research was conducted as an effort to remind us that our language, namely Javanese, contains polite values when applied according to the speech level. The preservation of politeness is equivalent to the restoration of a sense of peace and

tranquility, aiming to create a comfortable life within the community.

Considering the importance of politeness, which can be cultivated through proper and correct language use, researchers recommend that teachers choose engaging media and methods for using Javanese or foreign languages in instruction, tailored to the characteristics of their students. In daily life, this practice requires guidance from all stakeholders, including parents and community members.

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