



Kenjōgo Usage Factor on Japan Prime Minister's Instagram Related To Covid 19 Firda Amelia Noor¹, Arianty Visiaty²

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor penggunaan ragam hormat *kenjōgo* 謙讓語 yang digunakan oleh Perdana Menteri Jepang dengan teori *tachiba* 立場 oleh Yasuko Obana. Objek penelitian yang digunakan adalah status Instagram dua Perdana Menteri Jepang yang pernah menjabat, khususnya saat dimulainya pandemi covid-19, yaitu Shinzo Abe dan Suga Yoshihide. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif yang bertujuan mendeskripsikan keadaan yang terjadi pada objek penelitian. Pandemi covid-19 memberikan tanggung jawab besar bagi Perdana Menteri di Jepang untuk membuat kebijakan yang dapat menjamin keselamatan masyarakat. Media sosial seperti Instagram menjadi salah satu media dalam menyampaikan kebijakan dengan mengedepankan bahasa yang sesuai untuk menunjukkan peran yang sesuai dengan identitasnya yaitu sebagai perdana menteri. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa penyampaian kebijakan terhadap penanganan covid-19 melalui Instagram oleh Perdana Menteri Jepang dengan menggunakan *keigo* 敬語, khususnya *kenjōgo* 謙讓語 didasari adanya identitas peran (*yakuwari*, 役割) dengan memberikan jarak (*kyori*, 距離) sebagai tanda hormat kepada pengikut Instagram Perdana Menteri Jepang yaitu masyarakat Jepang dan memperkuat argumen yang disampaikan melalui status Instagram.

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the factors of the use of the kenjōgo 謙讓語 honorification used by the Prime Minister of Japan with the theory of tachiba 立場 by Yasuko Obana. The object of the study used was the Instagram status of two Japanese Prime Ministers. They had served, especially during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Shinzo Abe and Suga Yoshihide. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative, aimed at describing the circumstances that occur in the object of study. The covid 19 pandemic gives the Prime Minister in Japan a great responsibility to make policies that can ensure the safety of the people. Social media such as Instagram is one of the media in conveying policies by prioritizing appropriate language to show a role that matches his identity, namely as prime minister. The results showed that the delivery of policies towards covid-19 countermeasures through Instagram by the Prime Minister of Japan using keigo 敬語, especially kenjōgo 謙讓語 based on the identity of the role (yakuwari, 役割) by giving distance (kyori, 距離) as a sign of respect to the Instagram followers of the Prime Minister of Japan, namely the Japanese people and strengthening the arguments presented through Instagram status.

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INTRODUCTION

Japanese has a variety of respectful languages called keigo. Keigo (敬語) is a variety of language used to respect the interlocutor or third person taking into account the situation when the conversation is taking place (Obana, 2021). *Keigo* belongs to the study of sociolinguistics that has their language structure and use to influence by a wide variety of sociolinguistic factors considered by the speaker (Surya, Marnita, & Usman, 2020). Meanwhile, another opinion states that the term Japanese variety of respect can be referred to as honorification, which is divided into two types, namely referent honorifics (respected position) and addressed honorifics (recipients of respect) (Tsujimura, 2014).

Furthermore, Tsujimura (2014) suggests that of the two classifications, honorifications are subdivided into three, namely respectful forms (a variety of respect to elevating the status of the party spoken of in a conversation) referred to as humble forms (used to express respect to the listener when talking about self-inflicted actions), and polite forms (Respectful form). Through this statement, Tsujimura (2014) does not directly mention the division of *keigo* as *sonkeigo*, *kenjogo*, and *teimeigo*, but respectful forms, humble forms, and polite forms where the meaning and function of respectful forms are related to *kenjōgo* when talking about self-inflicted actions.

Kenjōgo, as one of the variations of *keigo*, is used when the speaker respects the interlocutor (listener) or the party being addressed in stating the action he is doing and the interlocutor who is engaged in an everyday situation (Rahayu, 2013). Furthermore, Rahayu (2013) adds that word changes in the *kenjōgo* variety can be seen in lexical terms by changing the verb into a particular form and morphology by adding the prefix お (O) or ご (Go) followed by the verb.

From the above statement, it can be concluded that *kenjōgo* is one of the variations of the *keigo* salute variety that can be used by a person involved in a conversation to respect the interlocutor when expressing actions committed by oneself.

During the covid-19 pandemic, people are required to stay at home and more often take advantage of technological advances such as the ease of the internet in accessing social media to interact with each other. The use of social media has become a necessity for more modern communication because it is more effective and can represent the actions the user wants to take,

especially during the covid-19 pandemic (Andriyani & Jayantini, 2021). The ease of the internet is not only limited to the speed of network access but also the addition of applications on social media, starting from music, the addition of phone call features, video playback, and other developments that will be added in the future (Straubhaar, LaRose, & Davenport, 2012).

Using *keigo* on social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Line will be a forum for profitable interaction for its users because it can provide an overview of a friendly and polite attitude to bring benefits among those who use it (Andriyani, Djatmika, Sumarlam, & Rahayu, 2019). The way to communicate through social media, one of which is Instagram, has not gone unnoticed by Japanese politicians, especially the prime minister as one of the users. Politicians often use social media to interact with the public of social media users. While uploading the status on Instagram, the politician chooses the appropriate language to build his image in front of the public (Bayram, 2010).

The use of *kenjōgo* by Japan's Prime Minister on their social media is inseparable from several determining factors. This determining factor relates to the roles and duties owned, referred to as role identities. Role identities are defined as how an individual behaves either in the form of words or actions to indicate social status (Obana, 2012) Obana (2012) also divides role identities into three:

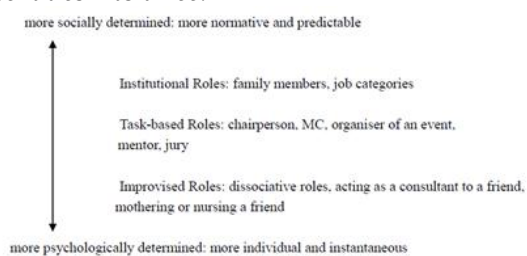


Figure 1. Role Identities

In the picture above, Institutional roles are the role of the position occupied in an institution. Task-based roles are based on specific tasks, and improvised roles are based on interactions that bring about psychological change. These three roles influence the formation of *keigo* respect for parties in a social sphere that considers positions, such as the relationship between the director of the company and his employees involved in particular situations. In this statement, the situation in the conversation dramatically affects the change in the level of speech used by the speaker (Obana, 2016a).

Using *keigo* in a situation will benchmark several aspects of the conversation. *Keigo* can make everyday situations simple and put forward an attitude of mutual respect (Yurniasih, Sudjianto, & Fauziyyah, 2022). With the use of *keigo* by Japanese politicians such as the Prime Minister, it will make the question whether the factors that influence the use of *keigo* on the side that holds the highest power in the Japanese government.

Because Japan Prime Minister use *keigo* on their Instagram, this study aims to analyze the factors of *kenjōgo* use in their Instagram posts related to covid-19. The results of this study are expected to provide an overview and knowledge about the use of *keigo*, especially *kenjōgo*, in the world of politics.

METHOD

The data used in this study was uploaded by Japanese politicians on Instagram, two prime ministers who had served, Shinzo Abe (Japanese prime minister who served from December 2012 to September 2020) on the @shinzoabe account and Suga Yoshihide (Japanese prime minister who served from September 2020 to October 2021) on the @suga.yoshihide account. The two previous Japan Prime Ministers were selected based on their second term at the start of the covid-19 pandemic in December 2019 until the study was conducted.

Instagram posts used as research data were selected in the time range of April 2020 - April 2021 with the category of posts with the phrase *kenjōgo* and related to reports of the covid 19 pandemic in Japan.

The research method used is descriptive qualitative with a content analysis method. Data analysis is carried out through the following steps;

- 1) Looking for primary data in the form of posts on social media Instagram of the Japanese prime minister who once served, namely Shinzo Abe, which started in April until May 2020 based on the hashtag #安倍総理からの#メッセージ (#Abe dairi kara no #Messe-ji) and #新型コロナウイルス感染症 (#Shingata korona wirusu kansenshō)
- 2) Suga Yoshihide's Instagram posts related to covid-19 from April 2020 until April 2021
- 3) Analyzing the form of *kenjōgo* and the factors of use of *kenjōgo* found in Japanese politicians' Instagram posts based on social position factors (立場, *tachiba*), especially

role (役割, *yakuwari*) according to Obana's theory (2012)

- 4) Make a classification of the data collected regarding the theory of role identities proposed by Obana (2016a), namely Improvised Roles, Task-Based Roles, and Institutional Roles.
- 5) Conclude from the results of research that has been carried out based on the analysis carried out by the researcher.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of this study uses the theory of role identities categories (Obana, 2016b) divided into three: institutional, task-based, and improvised.

In the study, data showing the factor of *keigo* use in *kenjōgo* was found more in the categories of improvised roles and task-based roles, as follows:

Category	Data findings
Task-based roles	7 Data
Improvised roles	5 Data

a. Improvised Roles



(Uploaded on May 21, 2020)
(<https://tinyurl.com/3j7yn7dv>)

"緊急事態にあつて、最前線で全力を尽くしてくださつた、医療従事者の皆様に改めて敬意を表し、そして、外出自粛をするなど大変なご協力をいただいたすべての皆様に、心から感謝申し上げたいと思います。"

Kinkyu jitai ni atte, saizensen de zenryoku wo tsukushite kudasatta, iryou jujisha no minasama ni aratamete keii wo arawashi, soshite gaishutsu jishuku wo suru nado taihen na go kyoryoku wo itadaita subete no minasama ni, kokoro kara kansha moushi agetai to omoimasu.

"I would love to express my respect to all medical professionals who have done their best on the front lines during the covid 19 pandemic

situation, and I would like to express my deepest gratitude from the bottom of my heart to all those who have worked together to stay indoors in the emergency of the covid-19 pandemic."

Situation:

Data was uploaded on May 21, 2020. The status contains Shinzo Abe's message conveyed to the public through media crews regarding the spread of covid 19 in Japan and Shinzo Abe's gratitude to medical professionals and the Japanese public.

Discussion:

In data (1), Shinzo Abe uses *kenjōgo* (心から感謝申し上げたい (*Kokoro kara kansha mōshiagetai*)) by the influence of improvised roles due to psychological elements that arise temporally. Data (1) shows that Shinzo Abe has received help from medical personnel serving the frontline communities and has expended all his energy related to the covid-19 response. Not only that, but Shinzo Abe also received assistance from the whole community, such as staying indoors during the covid 19 pandemic. This is a massive help for Shinzo Abe in carrying out his duties. In the end, Shinzo Abe uses *keigo* when thanking medical personnel and the public, as described in the data analysis.

Using *keigo* will give a distance (距離, *kyori*) psychologically from medical experts and society as a sign of respect. By using *keigo* in expressing gratitude, the feeling of gratitude can be conveyed more deeply. Since the act of thanks is performed by Shinzo Abe, the *keigo* used is a type of *kenjōgo*. This follows the statement of Obana (2016): giving distance (距離, *kyori*) to the interlocutor means showing respect.



(Uploaded on May 21, 2020)
(<https://tinyurl.com/3j7yn7dv>)

(2) 先般、定めました基準に基づいて感染状況、そして医療提供体制などについて専門家の皆様にご評価をいただいた結果、関西の大阪府、京都府そして兵庫県について、緊急事態宣言を解除することといたしました。

Senpan, sadamemashita kijun ni motodzuite kansen jōkyō, soshite iryō teikyō taisei nado ni tsuite senmonka no minasama ni go hyōka o itadaita kekka, Kansai no Ōsakafu, Kyōtofu soshite Hyōgo ken ni tsuite, kinkyū jitai sengen o kaijo suru koto to itashimashita.

"Recently, experts have evaluated the status of infection and the system of providing medical care based on established standards. Therefore, the emergency will be lifted for Osaka, Kyoto, and Hyogo prefectures in the Kansai region."

Situation:

Data (2) is a status uploaded on May 21, 2020, containing Abe's answers to journalists about the new covid 19 virus spread in Japan. This answer comes from the statements of medical experts regarding emergencies in the Kansai region, namely Osaka, Kyoto, and Hyogo prefecture.

Analysis:

In data (2), Shinzo Abe uses *kenjōgo* (ご評価をいただいた (*Go hyōka o itadaita*) or 'Judge'. ご評価をいただいた (*Go hyōka o itadaita*) is a form of *kenjōgo* ご_いただいた, of the form 評価をもらった (*Hyōka o moratta*).

Shinzo Abe intends to send this data (2) to the Japanese public Instagram users to report the situation of the spread of covid-19 in Japan. Shinzo Abe as the prime minister of Japan, explained the policies taken by the government and made important announcements to the public through the media that have been provided. Shinzo Abe announced his policy of lifting the state of emergency imposed on the Kansai region in Japan; Osaka, Kyoto, and Hyogo. One of Shinzo Abe's jobs is to keep people safe, including from covid 19, by deciding policies and others. When deciding on a policy, Shinzo Abe must coordinate with various parties, one of which is a medical expert, the party who provides reports on the covid 19 situation, and

also maintains relationships with medical parties for further coordination.

The use of *keigo* in data (2) is based on an improvised role. According to Obana (2016a), improvised roles arise because they are motivated by temporal elements of psychology. In data (2), Shinzo Abe received a massive amount of help that will facilitate his work to overcome covid 19, and he is very grateful to the medical personnel who have helped him.

When using a variety of respects, Shinzo Abe gives psychological distance (距離, *kyori*) from medical personnel. According to Obana (2016b), to distance (距離, *kyori*) to the interlocutor is to show respect. The use of *keigo* is a sign of giving distance (距離, *kyori*) to the interlocutor, or it can also be said to be a sign of respect. With the use of a variety of respect in data (2), the feeling of gratitude can be conveyed more deeply. Obana (2011) says that *kenjōgo* is used to express one's actions (the speaker or the author) that serve to respect the interlocutor. Since the action of thanks to data (2) is performed by Shinzo Abe, Shinzo Abe uses *keigo* with the type of *kenjōgo*.



(Uploaded on April 30, 2020)
(<https://tinyurl.com/2253sv7d>)

(3) 新型コロナの克服に向けて、多くの医療関係者の皆様のご協力を心からお願い申し上げます。

Shingata korona no kokufuku ni mukete, ōku no iryō kankei-sha no minasama no go kyōryoku o kokoro kara onegai mōshiagemasu.

"We sincerely expect the cooperation of many medical personnel in tackling the novel coronavirus."

Situation:

Data (3) is Suga Yoshihide's Instagram status uploaded on April 30, 2020, which contains a request for cooperation with medical

personnel to overcome the spread of a new type of covid-19 in Japan.

Analysis:

In data (3), Suga Yoshihide uses *kenjōgo* お願い申し上げます (*Onegaimōshiagemasu*), which means "I expect (corporation)" which is a change in the form of 言います, *imasu*. Suga Yoshihide intended the use of *kenjōgo* for medical personnel in Japan.

In data (3), Suga Yoshihide expressed his request to medical personnel to work together to overcome the spread of a new type of covid-19 in Japan. The use of *keigo* in data (3) includes improvised roles because of the psychological elements that appear in the short term. The psychological element in the data (3) is a profound appeal to medical personnel. Suga Yoshihide uses *keigo* to psychologically give distance (距離, *kyori*) to medical personnel as a sign of respect. Suga Yoshihide uses *kenjōgo* お願い申し上げます (*Onegai mōshiagemasu*) for his act of begging for cooperation. So based on this, the determining factor for using *kenjōgo* in data (3) is *kenjōgo*

b. Task-Based Roles



(Uploaded on April 12, 2021)
(<https://tinyurl.com/4ebbkma>)

(4) "接種される皆様のご協力と、現場の医師、自治体職員、スタッフの皆様のご尽力により、非常に手際良く接種が進む様子を拝見しました。"

Sesshu sareru minasama no go kyouryoku to, genba no ishi, jichitai shokuin, sutaffu no minasama no go jinryoku ni yori, hijōni tegiwa yoku sesshu ga susumu yousu o haiken shimashita.

"I see how vaccination is going so efficiently thanks to the cooperation of all vaccinated

individuals and the efforts of doctors, local government officials, and staff."

Situation:

Data (4) is the status of Suga Yoshihide's Instagram upload on April 12, 2021. This status is Suga Yoshihide's statement on the vaccination process in the Hachioji area that runs efficiently.

Discussion:

In data (4), Suga Yoshihide uses *kenjōgo* 拝見しました (*Haiken shimashita*), which means 'To have seen' which has changed shape from 見ました (*Mimashita*). *Kenjōgo* on data (4) addressed by Suga Yoshihide to the Japanese public, including vaccinated individuals, doctors, government officials, and staff at vaccination sites.

The *kenjōgo* used in data (4) refers to Suga Yoshihide's role during the covid 19 pandemic, which is to see the development of vaccination in Japan by paying attention to the efforts of doctors, local government officials, and staff at vaccination sites which is his duty. Therefore, the role that determines Suga Yoshihide to use of *keigo* is the task-based role. Suga Yoshihide's use of respect occurs due to the situation factor (環境, *kankyo*), which is the official situation.

On this status, Suga Yoshihide also casts distance (距離, *kyori*) as a sign of respect to the intended party. Suga Yoshihide uses a variety of *keigo* salutes on the *kenjōgo* type when saying *haiken shimashita*, an act he performed. Therefore, the task-based role is the determining factor for using *kenjōgo* in data.

This analysis corresponds to Obana's (2016) statement regarding the situation (環境, *kankyo*), which is also a factor in consideration of the use of respectful variety in Japanese. Furthermore, distancing (距離, *kyori*) needs to be done in the official (環境, *kankyo*) situation (Obana, 2016b). Because of Suga Yoshihide's position as prime minister of Japan and his role in reducing the spread of covid-19 in Japan said that his actions used *kenjōgo* on his Instagram account, which is an official media.



(Uploaded on 9 April 2021)

(<https://tinyurl.com/32723fkw>)

(5) 20時までの飲食店の時間短縮を行い、罰則を適用できるようにするなど、期間、区域を限って緊急事態宣言並みの強い措置を実施をいたします。

20-Ji made no inshoku-ten no jikan tanshuku o okonai, bassoku o tekiyō dekiru yō ni suru nado, kikan, kuiki o kagitte kinkyū jitai sengen-nami no tsuyoi sochi o jisshi o itashimasu.

"We will implement affirmative measures equivalent to emergencies for restricted periods and areas, such as shortening restaurant times to 8:00 p.m. and allowing the application of penalties."

Situation:

Data (5) is a status from Suga Yoshihide's Instagram, containing a statement regarding the implementation of restrictions on restaurant operating hours that will be imposed in certain areas and the provision of sanctions if they violate the rules of this social restriction.

Analysis:

Data (5) contains *kenjōgo* 実施をいたします (*Jisshi o itashimasu*), which is deformed from します and means 'To do.' The use of *kenjōgo* in data (5) is addressed by Suga Yoshihide to the Japanese public, especially restaurant owners.

In data (5), Suga Yoshihide informed about the policies he will implement against social restrictions, such as shortening restaurant operating time and providing sanctions for violators to prevent the spread of covid-19. This policy is his duty as prime minister, which is to protect the safety of the Japanese people from covid-19.

In data (5), the use of *keigo* is determined by the role associated with this task, namely the task-based role. This situation, or *kankyo* on Instagram, is the official situation. Then, Suga Yoshihide also gives distance (距離, *kyori*) as a sign of respect to his Instagram readers, namely the Japanese. The *keigo* used in data (5) is a type of *kenjōgo* because it expresses the action it is referring to is 実施をいたします (*Jisshi o itashimasu*). Therefore, the task-based role is the determining factor for using *kenjōgo* in data (5).



Uploaded on March 3, 2021
(<https://tinyurl.com/pp323v67>)

(6) 専門家や関係者の皆様のご意見を伺ったうえで、最終的に判断をします。

Senmonka ya kankeisha no minasama no go iken o ukagatta ue de, saishūteki ni handan o shimasu.

"I will make the final decision on policy during this emergency period after listening to the overall opinion of the parties and experts concerned."

Situation:

Data (6) is a status from Suga Yoshihide's Instagram, stating what he will do next after discussing with the parties and experts concerned.

Analysis:

In data (6), the *kenjōgo* used is 伺った *ukagatta* which has changed shape from 聞きます *kikimasu* and means 'Listening.' Suga Yoshihide showed this *kenjōgo* to the Japanese people and all parties related to the covid-19 pandemic in Japan.

In data (6), Suga Yoshihide reported that he had made a decision based on the results of listening to the opinions of medical personnel before making a decision. Suga Yoshihide's task is related to his role. Therefore, in data (6), Suga

Yoshihide uses *keigo*, the determining factor being his duty as prime minister or task-based role. The situation or *kankyo* on Suga Yoshihide's Instagram is official. Therefore, Suga Yoshihide puts some distance (距離, *kyori*) to respect the medical personnel.

Because Suga Yoshihide stated his act of listening to the opinions of medical personnel to make the final decision, he used *kenjōgo*, *ukagatta*. So based on this, the task-based role is the determining factor for using *kenjōgo* in data (6).

CONCLUSION

Based on the sample analysis of Instagram status data, Shinzo Abe and Suga Yoshihide, it can be concluded that the factor of using *keigo* seen from *yakuwari* or role identities consists of task-based roles and improvised roles. From the results of this analysis, it can be said that the factor of the use of *kenjōgo* by the Japanese prime minister is not only due to *chii* or position but also the involvement of *yakuwari* or roles.

The first determinant of the use of *keigo* on the Instagram status of the two previous Japan Prime Ministers was a task-based role or a role-related task determined by the situation or (環境, *kankyo*), which was official. If the situation is official, then *keigo* is used. Obana's (2016) statement that *keigo* can be used in official situations even though the speaker's social position is higher than that of the interlocutor.

Furthermore, the second factor is the improvised role related to psychology. This factor occurs so that emotional changes when delivering words with *kenjōgo* can be conveyed more deeply to the intended party, such as expressing gratitude, expressing high spirits, and begging for cooperation.

In addition to the above two factors, *kyori* or distance is also essential for determining the use of *keigo*. The use of *keigo* is a sign of giving distance (距離, *kyori*) to the interlocutor, or it can also be said to be a sign of respect. It is also said by Takiura (2008) that using *keigo* is communication that provides distance to avoid territorial violations. Giving distance in language will show respect (Takiura, 2008).

The use of a variety of respect by the Japan prime minister can be attributed to the statement

that language can influence the strength of the arguments spoken by a politician and can give rise to the confidence of the broader public regarding the duties of the politician. Therefore, according to Beard (2000), the use of *keigo*, including *kenjōgo*, will show some respect, and also psychological factors can corroborate the statement of a prime minister and can give rise to public confidence in the performance of the prime minister

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