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## Shift of Politeness Strategy made by The Indonesian Caregivers in Japan

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## **ABSTRACT**

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#### KEYWORDS

Politeness Strategy, Japanese Honorific, Indonesian Caregivers and Elderly People in Japan Indonesian caregivers in Japan. This current study focuses on two things; they are the strategy of politeness chosen and the shift of politeness strategy made by the Indonesian caregivers. The Indonesian caregivers used as the subjects of the study totaled 68. They were employed at eight homes for the elderly where the elderly people they served stayed, located in Osaka, Toyohashi, and Yokohama Japan. The data in the form of conversational text which was gathered in natural setting when the caregivers interact with the elderly people. The result shows that the Indonesian caregivers used more than one politeness strategy in the process of communication between them and the elderly people. They used both the negative and positive politeness strategies. Even in one event of communication, they alternated the two strategies, indicating that the context of situation in which one utterance was made caused them to shift from one strategy of politeness to another. As already known that Japan is a country with a 'high context culture', meaning that the context in which one event of communication takes place is highly important in the social culture where the Japanese language is used.

This article adresses the shift of politeness strategy made by the

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The dispatch of the Indonesian caregivers to Japan through the Jakarta-based IJ-EPA has been inspired by the Japan's need for caregivers resulting from the increase in the number of elderly people in Japan. Based on the result of the research conducted by the Aging Research Center (in Mutiawanthi, 2016), it is predicted that in 2030 the Japanese people who are older than 60 years old will probably total 36.67 million (31.8% of the Japan's whole population, and that in 2050 they will probably total 37.64 million.

This current study focuses on the politeness strategy used by the Indonesian caregivers when they conversed with the elderly people for whom they were employed. Therefore, the current study is a pragmatic study as its analysis focuses on how speeches are differently applied in different cultures, different speech communities, different social situations, and different social classes. Several linguists who have explored politeness in the Japanese language are Usami (2001), Haugh (2003), Backhaus (2009), Holmes (2017), and Culpeper (2017).

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The negative politeness strategy indicated by the form of politeness is always used by the Japanese people when they serve others. They show formality and enthusiasm to show that there is a distance between the speaker and the addressee (Usami, 2001: and Aryanto, 2011). The research conducted by Backhaus (2009) explored the domain of the service provided to the elderly people, in which the strategy used by the residents in Tokyo area was compared with that used by the German people. It was found that both the residents in Tokyo area and the Germans used jokes and praises to neutralize the interaction between them and the elderly patients. In this way, the process of interaction could take place fluently without threatening the elderly patients' faces. The result of the study conducted by Janson (2016) was the same as that of the study conducted by Backhaus, his predecessor. Janson investigated the nursing homes in Sweden and Denmark, and found out that the caregivers used jokes when they interacted with the elderly people to avoid them from being face-threatened.

From the preliminary study conducted in April 2017, it was observed that the caregivers more frequently used the strategy of positive politeness, which, in the Japanese language, was indicated by the non-formal style (*futsuukei*) when they interacted with the elderly people in the nursing homes in Japan. This phenomenon refutes the concept of the speech level in the Japanese language, in which it is stated that when communicating with someone who is older the honorific form (*keigo*) is used by the speaker. It is this fact which inspired the writer to conduct this current study.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Politeness** 

The theory of politeness proposed by Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987) is the first compared to the other theories of politeness in the pragmatic studies as far as the discourse analysis is concerned. According to Brown & Levinson, politeness is defined as a linguistic study used to create a harmonious relationship between the speaker and the addressee. This theory is related to notion (face). Furthermore, they mainly divide the concept of face into two; they are the concept of the positive face and the concept of negative face better-known as FTA. Based on the theory, what politeness strategy is used depends on the extent to which the face (F) is threatened from three variables; they are the social distance (D) between the speaker and the addressee, the power (P) which the two have, and the loading level (R). The more threatened the face becomes the more polite strategy will be used (Brown and Levinson, 1987, pp. 61-84).

This theory of politeness has been argued by several linguists since it was firstly proposed. It cannot be fully applied in the eastern countries such as Japan as in the Japanese language specific expressions should be used to express social distances. On the other hand, several other linguists are convinced that the approaches it has can cover every language and that the concept of the negative politeness strategy can be applied to all the Asian languages. They are strongly convinced that its universal characteristics can explain the Japanese discourses better (Usami, 2001; 2002). In the current study, the theory of politeness proposed by Brown & Levinson (1978; 1987) was employed to analyze the shift

of the politeness strategy made by the Indonesian caregivers.

#### The History of *Keigo* and Its Development

*Keigo* was born in Japan in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Before the 13<sup>th</sup> century, all the governmental systems adopted the Chinese governmental system. During the Nara period (710-794), Japan started having characters, although they were still adopted from China. During the Heian period (794-1192) the kana characters adopted from the Chinese characters started being introduced in Japan. Genji Monogatari has been one of the oldest literary works in Japan. It is in this literary work that the honorific language, whose usage was based on the social context, including the status and proximity, started being used. The use of keigo is more dependent on age and the honorific words used when interacting with the older people. In 1986 the Japanese people began having the same opportunity in the public employment, leading to the gender-based honorific language. Since then the Japanese women have tended to use more honorific language than the men.

Bilingualism, a linguistic situation in which both the local language and national language are used at the same time, has also contributed to the usage of keigo. When the national language is mastered, the kegio system will disappear from every regional dialect. Since World War II the usage of keigo has changed its function. Keigo has tended to be used in business communication. It has shifted from the absolute system to the relative system, as explained by Tsujimura (1971 quoted from the Nagata's work (2006:12). As far as the Japanese honorific

history is concerned, the shift from the absolute honorific expression system to the relative honorific expression system cannot be neglected. One example of the shift from the absolute *keigo* system to the relative keigo system is the word father. When a child calls his/her father, he/she will use the word otousama, but when he/she talks to someone else, he/she will refer to his/her father as chichi. The conclusion which can be drawn from the above explanation is that the keigo system started from the Japanese literary work, namely the Genji Story adopted from China. As at that time *keigo* was used within the kingdom territory, it is clear that it was used based on the social context in the form of the social status relationship between the royal families and the common people. As time passed by, keigo was then used based on the social status within the government, meaning that the language variety used by the government was different from that used by the common people. The basic similarity between the keigo used in the past to that currently used is that it is an honorific style of language used based on the

*Keigo* can be broadly classified into three main groups; they are *sonkeigo* (the honorific language), *kenjōgo* (the speaker humiliating language) and *teineigo* (the formal language) (Kikuchi, 1997:29-42).

social status differences.

1. Sonkeigo is a group of honorific expressions used to refer to the addressees or the third people, what they do and and everything which belongs to them. These expressions are only used while they are superior to the speakers. The speakers express their respect using the honorific expressions to refer to

everything which belongs to them by treating

them

superior

to th

themselves.

Table 1 Lexical Form of Sonkeigo Markers

Sonkeigo(Respectful Language)	English Equivalent
なさる	to do
Nasaru	
くださる	to receive
Kudasaru	
おっしゃる	to say
Ossharu	
いらっしゃる	to come · to
Irassharu	go • to be present
ご覧になる	to see
goran ni naru	
召し上がる	to eat · to drink
Meshiagaru	
ご存知	to know
Gozonji	
	Language)  なさる Nasaru くださる Kudasaru おっしゃる Ossharu いらっしゃる Irassharu  ご覧になる goran ni naru 召し上がる Meshiagaru ご存知

The morphological forms as the *sonkeigo* markers are  $o/go\sim ni$  naru,  $\sim(ra)reru$ , and  $go\sim nasaru$  (Kikuchi, 1996; Kaneko, 2010; Kabaya, 2010). This pattern cannot be applied to every verb when they are changed into the *sonkeigo* forms.

2. Kenjōgo refers to a group of expressions used to express the speaker's modesty. The speaker shows his/her respect and modesty and what they do using kenjōgo, treating the addressee or the third person to be superior to him/her. Kaneko (2010) gives some examples of the kenjōugo lexical items in the following table, and terms this kenjōugo as

"watashi ga" 'I'. Here, the term "watashi ga" is intended to indicate that kenjōugo is addressed to oneself or it can also be used to express a language for one family/oneself. The kenjōugo lexical items are highly limited as shown in the following table.

Table 2. The Kenjōugo Lexical Item Markers

Table 2. The Kenjougo Lexical Item Markers		
Jishokei(Dic	Kenjougo	English
tionary	(Humble	Equivalent
Entry)	Language	
	)	
行く	まいります	to go
iiku	mairimasu	
来る	おります	to come
kuru	Orimasu	
いる		to be present
ru		to be present
言う	もうします	to say
iu	moushimasu	
	(人に)もうしあげます	
	(hito ni) moushiagemasu	
見る	拝見します	to see
miru	Haikenshimasu	
飲む	いただきます	to drink
nomu	Itadakimasu	
食べる		
taberu		
知っている	もの をぞんじており	to know
shitteiru	ます/知っております	
	mono	
	ozonjiteorimasu/shitteorim	
	asu	
	人 を ぞんじあげて	
	おります	
	hito ozonjiageteorimasu	
思う	ぞんじます	to think
отои	Zonjimasu	
する	いたします	to do
suru	Itashimasu	
あげる	さしあげます	to give
ageru	Sashiagemasu	<i>5</i>
<b>1867 1</b>	いただきます	to receive
morau	Itadakimasu	
あう	お目にかかります	to meet
au	o me ni kakarimasu	
きく	うかがいます	to listen
kiku	Ukagaimasu	

The *kenjōugo* sentence is formed by adding the The following prefix o/go-followed by *futsuukei* lex

The following table shows the change of the futsuukei lexical item into the kenjõugo form

~shimasu/moushiagemasuas as the verb marker.

Table 3 The Morphological Form of the Kenjōugo Markers

Jishokei	Kenjougo	English
(Dictionary	(Humble	Equivalent
Entry)	Language)	
買う	お買いします	to buy
Kau	okaishimasu	
聞く	お聞きします	to listen
Kiku	okikishimasu	
書く	お書きします	to write
Kaku	okakishimasu	
待つ	お待ちします	to wait
matsu	omachishimasu	
立つ	お立ちします	to stand
matsu	otachishimasu	
飲む	お飲みします	to drink
поти	onomishimasu	
読む	お読みします	to read
yomu	oyomishimasu	
呼ぶ	お呼びします	to call
Yobu	oyobishimasu	

3. As opposed to the first two groups, *teineigo* is not used to express respect; instead, it is used to express formality by the speaker to the addressee based on their relationship or situation. *Teinego* is formed with the copula *desu* and the polite verb *masu*. In addition, it can also be formed with the copula *degozaimasu*, which is more polite than the first two and is usually used in a very formal situation or a very specific situation (when answering telephone in the workplace). *Desu* is the formal form of the auxiliary *da* and is attached to verb and adjective, and *masu* is the formal form of verb. How the speaker speaks, whether he/she will use an honorific

expression or not, whether he/she will speak based on the speech level or not, whether he/she will use specific lexical items or not and so forth, is closely related to the theory of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987), based on which the strategy of politeness is used when the speaker intends to maintain a harmonious relationship with the addressee when they communicate with one another. Kabaya (2009:3) formulates the communication situation in this honorific language by classifying the communication variables into two; they are ningen kankei (人 間 関係) and ba (場) as shown in the following chart;

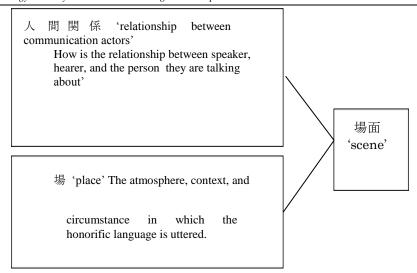


Chart 1. Communication Variables (Kabaya, 2009:3)

#### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### **Participants**

This study was conducted to observe the interaction between the Indonesian caregivers and the elderly. The 68 caregivers which were the subjects of this study were from Java, Sumatera, Bali and their mother tongue was Indonesian language. These participants had been working for one until five years. All of them held certificates indicating their ability in communicating in Japanese language was in level 3. The caregivers who had been working for three and a half years until five years also held certificates of national nurse which was obtained by taking state nursing examination, which they did after working for three years. The average age of the caregivers who were the subjects of this study was 20 until 30 years. In average, they worked for 8 hours a day with three shifts. The elderly which were the subjects of this study were from 65 until 105 years old. They had various employment background, namely civil servant, bussinessman and farmer.

#### **Data Collection**

Data were collected by recording the interaction between the Indonesian caregivers and the elderly for 4 hours a day in average. The interaction then was divided into different types of scene. Guided interview was used to ease the interview process so that in-depth interview could be conducted well.

#### **Data Analysis**

- The recorded data were coded based on the analysis needs. They were then transcribed based on the research problems.
- The data included in the data corpus were the utterances of the Indonesian caregivers, which then were analyzed by taking into account their contexts.

#### 4. RESULT & DISCUSSION

Politeness is one of the pragmatic popular studies in different language in the world. As a pragmatic phenomenon, politeness cannot only be seen from words but it can also be seen from

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the function and social meanings they refer to.it is affected by the situational and social context.

The analysis of two examples of the utterances in which the Indonesian caregivers shifted the

strategy of politeness when they were interacting with the elderly people as can be seen in data (1).

**(1)** 

The Speech Context The Interactants:

The Indonesian Caregiver: Wati (aged 21, years of service: 2.5 years)

The Elderly : Miyake san (aged, 67)

Location : Dining Room

Situation : Serving breakfast for the elderly

Date : 14 April 2017

The Speech Context : Caregiver (-P), Meeting intensity (-D), Imposition Level (+R, Formal Situation

The speech is as follows:

ICG:みやけすずるさんや。今日は、おやこ どんなんですが、ごはんの うえに 食べても 大丈夫? (a)

> Miyake Suzuru san ya. Kyou wa, oyakodon nan desukedo, gohan no ue ni tabetemo daijoubu?

> [Miyake Suzuru. The today's menu is *oyakodon*; is it ok if it is served over the

rice?

EP : [Say nothing] CGI : <u>みやけさん</u>。 *Miyake san*.

のせてもいいですか。(b)

Nosetemo ii desuka.

[Mrs. Miyake]

[Is it ok if it is spread?]

みやけさん。たべやすいように。(c)

Miyake san. Tabeyasui youni.

[Miyake. To make it easily consumed]

EP : [Say nothing]

CGI: 今日おやこどんなんですけど、おやこ どん。ご飯の上にのせて、 大丈夫 ですか。別にしますか。ご飯の上 にのせて、大丈夫ですか。おやこ どんは。(d)

> Kyou oyakodon nan desukedo, oyakodon. Gohan no ue ni nosete, daijoubu desuka. Betsu ni shimasuka. Gohan no ue ni nosete, daijoubu desuka. Oyakodon.

[The today's menu is oyakodon.

*Oyakodon.* Is it ok if it is spread over the rice? Do you want it separated? Is it ok if it is spread over the rice?]

EP : あー うん。 *Aa-Un*.

[Ah, yes]

IN : <u>じゃ、のせますよ</u>。(e)

Jya, nosemasu yo.

[If it is, I'll spread it over *oyakodon*,

ok.

In example (1) show that the conversation took place in a formal situation in which an Indonesian caregiver named Wati served breakfast for an elderly named Miyake Suzuru. In speech (a) the caregiver used a non-formal style (futsuukei) indicated by the absence of the copula desu and the question word gimonshi ka in the utterance. In the Japanese language, the utterance without the question word gimonshi characterizes the use of the non-formal style (futsuukei). In utterance (a) the caregiver used the rising intonation to indicate that the utterance was in the form of an interrogative sentence. If utterance (a) is related to the concept face proposed by Brown & Levinson (1978; 1987), such an utterance could threaten the elderly's

face. However, in the domain in which the caregiver served food for the elderly, it was possible to use utterance (a) in the beginning of the conversation in order that the elderly could easily understand what was meant by the caregiver. In utterance (b) the caregiver changed the strategy of politeness she used; in the beginning she used the positive strategy and then she shifted to the negative strategy of politeness, indicated by the use of the formal style (teineigo) characterized by the presence of the copula desu. Through an interview, the caregiver said that it was possible to use different utterance styles in one event of communication. The caregiver intended to make sure that her message could be understood by the elderly. As an illustration, in utterance (a) the elderly patient did not give any response; as a result, in utterance (b) she used the formal style (*teineigo*).

Apart from that, the repeated utterance reflected the attempt made by the speaker to ask the addressee for his approval (Takiura, 2008: 186-204). Takiura classifies it as the fifth strategy of positive politeness, namely the strategy used by the speaker to ask his/her addressee for approval of the topic they are discussing. This can be reflected through both a safe topic utterance and a repeated utterance. As a comparison, in the following conversation the caregiver used the strategy of negative politeness in the beginning of the conversation before she shifted to the positive of politeness. strategy

**(2)** 

The Utterance Context

The interactants:

ICG : Apri (aged 25, years of service: 3 years

The Elderly Patient : Oshima san (aged 80)

Location : Dining Room

Situation : Serving lunch for the elderly patient

Date : 20 April 2017

The utterance context: the Caregiver (-P), Meeting intensity (-D), Imposition Level (+R), Formal Situation

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Utterance:
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ICG : 今日のみかんですよ (a)

Kyou no mikan desu yo.

[Today is orange]

EP: みかん要らん

Mikan iran

[I don't want orange]

ICG: <u>~~?いつも食べてるじゃん</u>。(b)

Hee? Itsumo tabeteru jyan?

[Heh? You consume (it) everyday, don't

you?]

EP:あまり好きじゃない!

Amari suki jya nai.

[I don't like it]

ICG: <u>何が好きなの?</u> (c)

Naniga suki na no?

[What do (you) like?]

EP :りんご。

Ringo.

[Apple]

ICG : <u>ええ、りんご あってないよ。この</u>

時間はじきがないとおもうよ。

<u>あるけど、たかい</u>。(d)

Eee, attenai yo. Kono jikan wa jikiganai to omou yo. Arukedo, takai.

[Yah, there's no Apple. I think it is not in season now. If there is, it's

expensive.]

EP :わかった

Wakatta

[I know]

ICG:今、あのうこといい、いいですよ。

(e)

Ima, anou koto ii, ii desuyo

[Now, this is good]

EP : [Nodding while taking the apple in front of him)

ICG: [The caregiver approached the elderly patient when she found that it was difficult for the elderly patient to eat the orange]

<u>おしまさん、食べにくいじゃないで</u> すか。(f)

Oshima san, tabenikui jyanai desuka? [Oshima san, is it difficult to eat the orange?]

EP :すみません
Sumimasen
[I'm sorry]

In data (2) show that the conversation between the Indonesian caregiver and the elderly patient took place in a formal situation and in the dining room. The elderly patient ate an orange after finishing having lunch. In the beginning of the conversation the caregiver used the formal style (teineigo) in utterance (a), indicated by the copula desu in the end of the sentence. The ~\$\mathbb{L}\$ added to the end of the utterance is usually used in the Japanese language to emphasize what is intended to convey. In utterances (b-d) the caregiver shifted to the strategy of positive politeness, indicated by the non-formal style (futsuukei).

In the Japanese language, the use of the non-formal style (*futsuukei*) is acceptable if the speaker has more power than the addressee. The reason is that the concept of the speech level is affected by the hierarchical relationship. However, such a concept cannot be applied to the speech context involving the caregiver and the elderly patient. In the domain in which the elderly patient was served, the non-formal style was used although the addressee (the elderly patient) had power over the caregiver. Based on

the information obtained through the questionnaire, the caregiver used the strategy of positive politeness to show empathy, to shift the elderly patient's attention, to reduce the social distance, and to show tolerance.

The above conversation shows that the caregiver changed the strategy of politeness after the orange offered was refused. Utterance (b) was intended to express the caregiver's surprise at the elderly patient's refusal. She attempted to remind the elderly patient of the fact that the elderly patient had frequently consumed oranges. However, the elderly patient refused what had been reminded of by the caregiver by saying "あまり好きじゃない 1", meaning 'dislike'. In utterances (c) and (d) the caregiver used the *futsuukei* style again to show family relation by telling the usefulness of oranges and ascertaining that the fruit, which the elderly patient wanted, was not in season.

The caregiver used the non-formal style to reduce the social distance between her and the elderly patient. After the elderly patient nodded and said that he had understood, as can be seen from utterances (e) and (f), the caregiver shifted to the strategy of negative politeness again. This is in accordance with what is stated by Brown and Levinson that the speaker can create the social distance between him/her and the addressee using the strategy of negative politeness, for example, the formal style. The formal style, according to them, also shows that the speaker does not want to interfere with the addressee's personal domain.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be drawn from the current study is that the Indonesian caregiver used more than one strategy of politeness, namely the strategy of negative politeness and the strategy of positive politeness in the process of communication between him/her and the elderly. Even in one event of communication the Indonesian caregiver alternated the two strategies of politeness, indicating that the caregiver shifted from one strategy of politeness to another when he/she conversed with the elderly, depending on the context of situation in which utterances were made. In the domain where the elderly was served, the strategy of politeness used shifted from one to another in the situations ranging from the eating activity (shoku kaijo), the activities in the bathroom (ofuro) to the mouth cleaning activity (hamigaki and ugau). This also took place in the activity of going for a walk (sanpo), the recreational activities such as singing and listening to music, and the activity of playing sports. Both interactants were aware of their social distance, as shown by the initial use of the honorific forms showing their social statuses, ages, and unfamiliarity. They shifted from one strategy of politeness to another to show empathy, as can be seen from how the speaker behaved to reduce the social distance between him/her and the elderly as the addressee. In other words, the shift from the strategy of negative politeness to the strategy of positive politeness mostly resulted from the situation in which the speaker found empathy or in which the speaker intended to draw the addressee's attention to him/her or the topic being discussed.

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