

Intercultural Competence in Japan Language Learning (Case Study at Bali Tourism Polytechnic)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the errors of students in understanding the use of Japanese according to the native cultural context of the speakers. The fault findings were analyzed from the point of view of Japanese culture and Indonesian culture. Common student errors include (1) the inappropriate application of ojigi (bowing), (2) the application of doozo speech (please), shitsurei shimasu (excuse me), sumimasen (sorry, excuse me, thank you) (2) sentence structure where very different from the Indonesian sentence structure, and several other errors. By looking at these misunderstandings, the understanding of Japanese cultural literacy must be taught to students. Learners must have intercultural competence so that they can communicate according to the culture of the origin of the foreign language. Several ways have been done by lecturers to improve students' cultural literacy towards understanding the use of Japanese. These methods are (1) role-playing with situations in the workplace, (2) watching Japanese conversation videos in real life (3) group assignment to look for differences in Japanese and Indonesian culture in communication.

Keywords: *culture literacy, intercultural competency, Japanese language*

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis kesalahan siswa dalam memahami penggunaan bahasa Jepang sesuai dengan konteks budaya asli penutur. Temuan patahan dianalisis dari sudut pandang budaya Jepang dan budaya Indonesia. Kesalahan umum siswa meliputi (1) penerapan ojigi (membungkuk) yang tidak tepat, (2) penerapan ucapan doozo (tolong), shitsurei shimasu (permisi), sumimasen (maaf, permisi, terima kasih) (2) struktur kalimat yang sangat berbeda dengan struktur kalimat bahasa Indonesia, dan beberapa kesalahan lainnya. Dengan melihat kesalahpahaman tersebut, pemahaman literasi budaya Jepang harus diajarkan kepada siswa. Peserta didik harus memiliki kompetensi antar budaya sehingga dapat berkomunikasi sesuai dengan budaya asal bahasa asing. Beberapa cara telah dilakukan dosen untuk meningkatkan literasi budaya mahasiswa terhadap pemahaman penggunaan bahasa Jepang. Metode ini adalah (1) bermain peran dengan situasi di tempat kerja, (2) menonton video percakapan Jepang dalam kehidupan nyata (3) penugasan kelompok untuk mencari perbedaan budaya Jepang dan Indonesia dalam komunikasi.

Kata Kunci: *literasi budaya, kompetensi interkultural, Bahasa Jepang*

1. Introduction

Japanese language courses have been taught to students of the Bali Tourism Polytechnic (Poltekpar Bali) since 1993. This course is a compulsory course in all study programs. Included in the Elective Foreign Language (BAP) course. Students are given the freedom to choose one of three foreign languages other than English, namely German and French. BAP courses are taught for 2 semesters, namely BAP I and BAP II.

The results of observations while teaching at the Poltekpar Bali show that some students, especially those who have just learned BAP 1, are still not right in applying the Japanese language in oral and written communication. This is possible because of the cultural differences between Indonesia and Japan. For example, when introducing themselves, in Indonesian culture, it is enough to shake hands. In Japanese culture, the *ojigi* movement is required when saying *hajimemashite* (introduce) and when saying *doozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu* (nice to meet you). Students only bow their heads when their backs should also be bowed. Several mistakes were also made by students in the use of the words *sumimasen* (sorry) and *shitsurei shimasu* (excuse me). For example, if you pass in front of people saying *sumimasen*, it should be *shitsurei shimasu*. This can be possible because the word "sumimasen" can also mean "excuse me" if in the context of asking for help from others. So this can cause confusion for students in applying these two words. Seeing this gives an idea that students do not understand the use of Japanese in the context of native speaker culture. Therefore, language learning involves not only knowledge of the language, but also being aware of the beliefs and values that frame the language to align with the culture of the native speaker.

Language is closely related to culture. As one of the cultural products, language should be studied along with the culture of the language. Of course, there is a link between sounds, words and sentence structure and the ways in which the speakers of the language experience their lives and behaviors in them (Wardhaugh, 1988).

When communication is associated with language, language becomes a tool that people use every day to express, create, and interpret intentions to create and maintain social relationships as well as personal relationships (Scarino, 2009). So that to carry out daily interactions, people will not be separated from the use of language. In building these social interactions, it is necessary to have a common understanding of the language. It is highly unlikely that one individual can communicate fluently and perfectly with another individual using a different language. Everyone will find it difficult to express their intentions if they don't provide code that is equally understood by their communication partner. To convey a message, everyone must be at the same level of language. Furthermore, Scarino and Liddicoat explained that language is not something that must be learned but is a way of seeing, understanding, and communicating about the world.

Every language user uses their language to do these things. People use language for the purpose of communicating. Meanwhile, learning a new language needs to involve lessons on how to use words, rules and knowledge about the language and its use correctly. With such an understanding, it will be easier to communicate to language users (Scarino, 2009)

Many studies have been conducted that examine the importance of cultural understanding in learning foreign languages. One of them (Visiaty, 2020) with the title "Cultural elements in Japanese-language communication in the corporate world in Indonesia; Study of intercultural conflicts". From the results of his research, it is known that language and culture are interrelated. This study discusses the background of cultural values that can cause misunderstandings in communication. Conflicts or misunderstandings can be in the form of conflicts caused by verbal and non-verbal elements. The element of cultural differences behind language. So that BLP's learning needs to understand the cultural literacy

of the target language.

Rismolita conducted a study that aimed to find out in depth the application of the intercultural approach in Japanese language learning in high school. The results of his research found that speaking activities (*kaiwa*) inside and outside the classroom have a strong influence from the role of native speakers, learning methods, and learning materials, all of which are related to linguistic and cultural aspects so as to increase students' understanding of Japanese language and culture (rismorlita, 2022).

Based on this background, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of the mistakes of Japanese language learners at the Poltekpar Bali and its relationship with the understanding of cultural literacy. This article describes several cases of mistakes made by Japanese language learners at the Poltekpar Bali in applying Japanese in oral and written communication. Then it is analyzed from the perspective of Japanese and Indonesian culture. The results of this analysis are expected to improve the competence of lecturers in providing cross-cultural understanding to students.

2. Method

Qualitative methods are used to examine more deeply this study. The object is studied using a defined theory and is inductive. Data was obtained by making direct observations during the learning process in the classroom. In addition, observations outside the classroom are also carried out on students. Primary data was obtained from the results of observations of students and student work in the form of assignments given. To complete the necessary data, interviews were conducted with students regarding their understanding of Japanese culture. Literature studies are carried out to strengthen the discussion and complete the data. Data was collected by making direct observations to students in the classroom and outside the classroom. Data is also taken from assignment documents, exams and student writings during the teaching and learning process.

3. Result

The purpose of BJP learning at the Poltekpar Bali is to equip students to be able to communicate with guests in their respective fields of work. In the hospitality major, the emphasis is more on communication in serving guests in hotels and restaurants. For this reason, modules with service topics in the hospitality industry such as conversations serving guests in restaurants and hotels are used.

The BJP course is an elective course for students majoring in Hospitality. Students get this course for only one or two semesters under the study program policy. In one semester there are 16 meetings including exams so that the face-to-face time with students is only 14 meetings. Because of the limited meeting hours, this resulted in limited teaching in providing lessons to students. So that a learning module module was prepared that emphasized more on conversation than writing. BJP students at the Poltekpar Bali are still at the beginner level, so the basic foundation of the BJP must still be given.

During the BJP's learning, there were many mistakes made by students in understanding and using the BJP in their daily contexts. The mistakes that are made by the tendency to do the same thing to all students. There are several factors that influence the misuse of the BJP by students. In this discussion, mistakes that are often made by students are presented and an analysis of why these mistakes can occur.

1. Verbal Errors.

Here are examples of verbal student mistakes in using the BJP and the reasons why they occur.

- 1) "Sumimasen" (sorry) is often reversed with "shitsurei shimasu" (excuse me) The

word "sumimasen" is used to apologize, it can also be applied to express gratitude. For example, being helped by others to lift things, as the party being helped usually says "sumimasen", sometimes it is tambakhan "osewa ni narimashita" which means "it has troubled you" and "arigatoo gozaimasu" (thank you) While the word "shitsurei shimasu", means "excuse me". For example, when passing in front of people, picking up or putting objects in front of other people. Its use is exactly the same as the "excuse me" in Indonesian culture. However, students often use the word sumimasen as an excuse as well as an expression of apology. This can be possible because the phrase sumimasen is easier to pronounce and often heard by students considering Bali as a tourist area.

- 2) Expressing 'doozo" (Please) many times. When inviting the interlocutor, Japanese people usually only state once. A mistake that students often make due to a lack of understanding of busaya is how to express the expression of "dozo". In Indonesian or Balinese culture, when inviting others, it is said many times. Phrase; Please, please in Indonesian culture is a teaching thing. But in Japanese culture, it is enough to say it once, it is enough to say the word 'dozo' once. If done repeatedly, "dozo, dozo, dozo" seems impolite and can cause different perceptions. Say doozo more than once.
- 3) Improper vocabulary selection. Asobu and suru. Ochita and Koronda. Students often make mistakes in choosing the right verbs in certain contexts. There are several verbs in Japanese that when translated into BI have the same meaning but different interpretations. An example is the use of the words Suru and asobu. Suru means to do while asobu means to play. It can be seen in the following example sentence;
 1. a) *Ashita Taman Ayun de ayu san to jitensha ni noru* (correct)
 - b) *Ashita Taman Ayun de ayu san to jitensha o asobu* (wrong)
 2. a) *Jitensha ni noru toki korobu* (correct)
 - b) *Jitensha ni noru toki ochiru* (wrong)

BI	Tadashi BJP	Machigai BJP
Bermain sepeda	Jitensha ni noru	Jitensha o asobu
jatuh	korobu	Ochiru

Students often make this mistake. This error is caused by the fact that ochiru and korobu mean "fall" in BI. Meanwhile, in Japanese it has a different meaning. Understanding of cultural background in choosing the right words in a particular context.

- 4) The words Gurai and goro have the same meaning, namely "kirakira". Students often mix the use of these two words. The word goro is used to express hours/times. Example: 9 ji goro desu. While gurai is used for the number/size, for example; 1 kiro gurai. But often students use it in the wrong context. Like nanji gurai desuka, it should be nanji goro desuka.
- 5) The concept of the words *Kimasu* (coming) and *ikimasu* (going).
Example; *Ashita, gakko ni ikimasuka?* (Are you going to campus tomorrow?)
The choice of the word "ikimasu" (go) is not correct. And this is often said by students. The correct one should be the word "kimasu" (coming).
- 6) When calling the Lecturer's name, for example, Mrs. Luki. In Japanese rules, it becomes Luki sensei. But some students often turn around calling Mrs. Luki with the greeting "sensei Luki". Sensei means lecturer., can also mean father or mother as a greeting of respect to people who are educators. This student's mistake is an intervention from local culture where in Indonesian culture, the call of respect is placed in front of the name, such as Ibu Indah, Mr. Made. This may also be due to

the difference in the different phrase structure between BI and BJP. Phrases in Japanese have the structure of Explain Explained (MD) while in BI the structure is DM. This often causes students to use the BI structure included in the BJP sentence

Example; a. Lukia sensei (correct)

b. sensei Lukia. (false)

The student often chooses to use sentence (b) even though it is wrong. The word sensei should be placed after a person's name like the word "san". These two words are polite markers to say other people's names.

- 7) Miss use of particle NO. For example, in the Japanese phrase "ayanan hoteru no maneejaa" (Ayanan hotel manager). Often students mention the reverse. Such as "hotel ayana no maneejaa" or "maneejaa no hotel ayana". We know that the Japanese language structure is MD (explain-explained). The opposite of the structure of the Indonesian language. So it is necessary for students to adapt to Japanese language patterns.
- 8) Eat soup versus drink soup. In Indonesian culture, the verb used is eat. While in Japanese culture it is drinking for the object of "soup". Although "soup" is part of "food" in Japanese culture, the verb "nomimasu" (drink) is used.
- 9) Using word watashi (me) a lot. Meanwhile, in Japanese culture, the mention of the word "watashi" is very rare when the person is communicating. This is also the influence of Indonesian culture.

2. Non verbal Errors

The following is data on nonverbal understanding that causes errors in attitude.

- 1) Dalam tata cara memperkenalkan diri.

In the procedure of introducing.

a) Students in general only bow their heads. Not followed by bending the body/buttocks. In fact, it must be accompanied by bending the back. If analyzed, this is due to cultural differences, where in Indonesian culture the use of ojigi (bowing) is applied but not as often as Japanese in general. Like when they crossed paths, they bent over each other. Indonesians are quite verbally greetings.

b) There are still many students (males), at the time of acquaintance, the position of the hand is in front. It should be on the side while grasping.

c) Often students bend down after finishing saying the introductory sentence. It should be at the time of saying the introductory greeting while followed by the ojigi (bowing) movement. d) At the time of introduction, sometimes the student's face looks forward (the interlocutor). It should have lowered its head while looking downwards.

- 2) Concept of Outer and inner groups. For example, ordinances, calling one's own family and other people's families. In Japanese culture, different ways of addressing one's own family and other people's families are used. This is influenced by the concepts of outer groups and inner groups. An outside group is a group outside of a family member. When Japanese people communicate with "Outer Groups", the use of vocabulary chosen is different from when talking about "Inner Groups". For example, calling the greeting "daddy". In Japanese, the word "chichi= my father" is used. Otoosan (your father). Another example, the word "he" when referring to "superior". This greeting can be used by internal parties when talking to external parties. However, this does not apply in Japanese culture, even to one's own superiors.

- 3) Asking about age, status, is a taboo thing for Japanese people. Because it is someone else's personal business. In contrast to Indonesian culture, for small talk, asking for status is a natural thing. This should be avoided so as not to cause disorientation.

4. Discussion

From the data above, it can be seen that there are several misunderstandings in the application of Japanese by Japanese language learners in the Poltekpar Bali campus environment, both verbally and in writing. We know that language lives in society as a means of communication that is regulated by culture. Therefore, understanding how to communicate across cultures is very important. In relation to learning Japanese, it is necessary to provide students with an understanding of the Japanese cultural background. By providing an understanding of Japanese culture, students will learn other cultures, be able to adapt to differences, be able to build bridges between cultures, and improve their communication skills.

As stated by Liddicoat, Scarino & Kohler (2003), language is not merely structural, but also communicative and social. There is a close relationship between linguistic forms and their sociocultural aspects.

Therefore, cultural understanding of a target language must be taught to students, so that they have intercultural competency (IC) so that they can communicate according to the culture of the foreign language. IC appears when target language learners are able to develop cultural sensitivity, which is marked by a change from previously "seeing reality only from their own cultural perspective" to "being aware of the existence of many other perspectives in this world."

Bennet, Bennet & Allen (2003), stated that IC is the ability to move from an "ethnocentric" attitude to an attitude of respecting other cultures, until finally giving rise to the ability to behave appropriately in a culture that is different from the culture that a person (language learner) has.

IC emerges when language learners are able to develop cultural sensitivity, which is marked by a change from "seeing reality only from one's own cultural perspective" to "being aware of the existence of many other perspectives in this world."

With IC, language learners can intelligently explain to people who have the same culture what is in the target culture and vice versa.

Cultivating intercultural competence (IC) in language learners needs to be attempted by foreign language teachers. Creative ways need to be thought of to cultivate IC in students. These ways include:

- (1) teach Japanese culture from the beginning of language teaching. For example, at the beginning of the meeting, teach introductions. Then the students are also explained the Japanese way of introducing themselves which is characterized by ojigi (bowed back).
- (2) Discuss with students their views on the character of Japanese tourists and Japanese people in general. This can be explored from personal experiences, where Balinese people have many opportunities to socially interact with Japanese people who live in Bali. Or it can be explored from students' experiences watching anime, Japanese dramas from YouTube media and so on. With this discussion activity, it is hoped that students will gain an understanding of the differences between Japanese and Indonesian cultures. so that they understand how to practice Japanese according to the target culture.
- (3) The ability to build awareness of cultural differences and to appreciate people who have different cultural practices.
- (4) By showing videos of native Japanese speakers talking. By paying attention to native speakers' conversations in the context of certain situations, it is hoped that students will

find it easier to understand the content of the conversation, including expressions, how to respond to what the other person is saying, gestures and so on.

5. Conclusion

In the process of learning Japanese at Bali Tourism Polytechnic, several mistakes were found by students in using Japanese, both verbally and non-verbally. From the data analysis, it is known that these mistakes are influenced by differences in the learner's culture and the target language culture. Therefore, the introduction of cultural literacy is very necessary in learning the target language, namely Japanese. By having an understanding of culture (intercultural competency) in students, it will make it easier for them to communicate correctly and appropriately according to the socio-cultural context of Japanese society. By looking at the profile of Bali Tourism Polytechnic graduates who generally work in the tourism world, it is very important to understand the cultural elements that accompany verbal communication. This is done so that there are no misunderstandings and as an effort to avoid offending Japanese guests. Several ways that lecturers do to improve students' intercultural competency in learning Japanese.

These methods are as follows:

- (1) teaching Japanese culture from the beginning of language teaching.
- (2) inviting students to discuss their views on the character of Japanese tourists and Japanese people in general.
- (3) raising students' awareness to seek and build their own knowledge about the target culture so that they are able to describe, analyze, and compare their culture with the target culture.
- (4) building awareness of cultural differences and to respect people who have different cultures.
- (5) showing videos of native Japanese speakers' conversations. By paying attention to native speakers' conversations in the context of certain situations, it is hoped that students will find it easier to understand the content of the conversation, including expressions, how to respond to the other person's speech, gestures and so on.

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