

Honne and Tatemaie: A Survey on The Teaching of Cross-Cultural Communication at LPK Sumatra & Java

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Abstract

In preparing the life of interns to work in Japan, it is important to teach Japanese culture, especially how to communicate in the cross-cultural context that applies in Japan. Therefore, this study aims to find out the application of *nihonjijo* learning at the Work Training Institute (LPK), especially cross-cultural communication about *tatemaie*. Focus on observing the application of *tatemaie* culture only in the West Sumatra and Java Work Training Institute. The research method used is a quantitative descriptive analysis technique. The research instrument used in this study was a picket or questionnaire. The study participants were teachers who taught at the West Sumatra and Java area Job Training Institute. The sample was 9 person of teachers who taught and worked with Japanese people or still work with Japanese. The results show that 1) Almost all LPKs teach *nihonjijo* in preparation for internship in Japan, 2) A small number of them teach *tatemaie* and *honne* topics in the study of *nihonjijo*/ *ibunkarikai* 3) Observed from the experiences experienced by teachers, most teachers when work and life in Japan they met the *tatemaie* culture more often rather than *honne*, 4) Some teachers hesitate to distinguish whether he experiences a *tatemaie* or a *honne*. Because these reasons, that's why it is important to conduct further research, and to understand better about the Japanese communication culture very well.

Keywords:

cross culture; communication; honne; tatemaie; LPK Bahasa Jepang

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INTRODUCTION

Sitaram defining intercultural communication is an art to understand and be understood by audiences who have other cultures (Suryandari, 2019, p. 11). In addition, Rich also defines intercultural communication occurs between people who have different cultures (Suryandari, 2019, p. 11). Stewart also mentioned in intercultural communication is apart from differences in culture, there are also differences in language, values, customs, habits (Suryandari, 2019, p. 11). Then, Smovar and Poter were completing the definition intercultural communication is considered to occur if the part involved in communication activities brings with it a different cultural background of experience

that reflects the values held by the group in the form of experience, knowledge, and values (Suryandari, 2019, p. 11). So when we will deal with people who have different cultures, it is important for us to study the culture contained in the communication that is usually done by speakers, as a whole.

Cross-cultural communication, very closely related to culture, courses that specifically discuss Japanese culture and life are *nihonjijo* courses (Artarina, 2020). Artarina (2020) conveyed in more detail that in the *nihonjijo* course, manners, Japanese people's ethics, geographic knowledge, sources of livelihood, Japanese culture, and so on. In contrast to students who study *nihonjijo* so that students can understand Japanese culture, geography, and communication habits, and are

expected to be able to retell them, while apprentices prioritize practicality, so that they are ready to face the world of work in Japan.

Japan is one of the most popular destination countries for Indonesian workers or apprentices. Indonesia and Japan have quite different cultures, so they really need to learn *nihonjijo*. The topics taught in the *nihonjijo* curriculum are important to explore, so as not to teach half-assed about Japanese culture. For this reason, a survey was conducted on *nihonjijo* learning in LPK.

Japanese culture is related to the following things, such as 1) *Aimail*/ambiguity; 2) *Amae*/Japanese independent concep; 3) *Amakudari*/political power; 4) *Bigaku*/the beauty of Japanese beauty; 5) *Bushidou*/Samurai class; 6) *Chinmoku*/silence in Japanese communication; 7) *Danjou Kankei*/female-male relationship in Japan; 8) *Do*/Japanese do spirit; 9) *Giri*/A sense of social obligation; 10) *Haragei*/Implicit in communication in Japan; 11) *Hedataru to Najimu*/Japanese private area; 12) *Honne and Tatemaie*/Truth and speech follow social norms in Japan; 13) *Ie*/Japanese house system; 14) *Iitoko-Dori*/adopting good foreign culture; 15) *Ikuji*/practice parenting in Japan; 16) *Kenkyo*/the virtues of Japanese politeness; 17) *Kisetsu*/seasons; 18) *Nemawashi*/basic employment assignment in Japan; 19) *Omiai*/matchmaking in Japan; 20) *otogibanashi*/Japanese legend; 21) *Ryousaikenbo*/Social expectations of women in Japan; 22) *Senpai* and *Kouhai*/Senior and Junior, and others (Davis & Ikeno, 2002).

So that this research is not so broad in scope, this study will only review how to apply *tatemaie*, because *tatemaie* is a communication culture that is difficult to distinguish (Rice, 2007), because Japanese people are very good at hiding their true feelings (Rice, 2007).). Although difficult to

trace, as foreign language learners we need to study the signs of *tatemaie* culture based on the traits that speakers tend to display when using this culture.

However, when a survey was conducted regarding the implementation of *tatemaie* teaching and LPK teachers' understanding of *tatemaie* abilities and the experiences they had when dealing with Japanese people, things did not make sense. Even though *tatemaie* always appears in daily life when interacting with Japanese people, from 9 different LPK teachers who answered the questionnaire, it was found that only 3 LPKs taught *tatemaie* at work LPKs, the rest never taught. Sensitivity to culture, especially *tatemaie*, needs to be introduced early before departure, in order to reduce the culture shock that interns may experience. Therefore, this study was written to describe the urgency of teaching *tatemaie* in LPK.

The formulation of the problem to be described in this study is how to apply *nihonjijo* learning, especially regarding the topic of *tatemaie*, how is the ability of Japanese language teachers to provide appropriate actions, to deal with *tatemaie* in daily life, how are the *tatemaie* they experience when they work with Japanese people both in Indonesia or in Japan directly. In previous studies, it was explained that innovation was needed for *nihonjijo* subjects, so that students' motivation to study *nihonjijo* could increase. In addition, it is also known that even students cannot explain important terms in Japanese culture, such as *hanami*, *wabi-sabi*, *honne* and *tatemaie*, the reason being that they do not really understand the urgency of studying *nihonjijo* (Artarina, 2020, p. 52). Responding to the problems faced by students that they do not understand the urgency of why it is important to understand Japanese culture as a whole so that we can understand Japanese culture well. That way, both students and interns can understand

Japanese culture and are ready to work with Japanese people with a sense of comfort with each other. In addition, this research also only focuses on discussing the application of the topic of tatemae in learning nihonjijo, in contrast to previous studies that work on how to increase student motivation in studying nihonjijo.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Nihonjijo–Nihonshi at the University

'Nihonjijo–Nihonshi' is a course that provides knowledge about Japanese given in the 2nd semester in the Japanese Language Education Department, FPBS UPI as much as 2 credits. The contents of the course include knowledge of Japanese geography, population, Japanese people's life, culture, history and various matters relating to the existence of the State of Japan and its people (Sutjiati, Dewi, Herniwati, & Renariah, 2008). Japanese studies are lecture materials that include various information about the country of Japan, both the state and condition of the country, its culture and history, which in general, Japanese language students in the UPI Japanese Language Education Department, are summarized in one course 'Nihonjijo–Nihonshi'.

The learning process in this course is given through the lecture method, or sometimes it is also carried out through the discussion method during several face-to-face meetings in class. Japanese studies in the subject matter of the 'Nihonjijo–Nihonshi' course include various knowledge related to the following matters:

- 1) Geographical state of Japan (with respect to the shape of the state of Japan in the world map, names and locations of islands and so on related to the geography of Japan).

- 2) Population (with respect to population, occupation, government system and others).
- 3) Japanese society life (with respect to various customs in the religious and social order).
- 4) Japanese Culture (related to the introduction of Japanese cultures that are well known and need to be known by students).
- 5) Specific things about something related to Japan that foreigners are interested in (related to for example food, anime and others).
- 6) An introduction to Japanese history (in connection with the transition from era to age).

The scope of the study material for the 'Nihonjijo–Nihonshi' subject based on the syllabus is as follows:

- 1) Geography, including the division of Japan's territory, large islands, mountains, rivers, climate and seasons. (2 times meeting)
- 2) The system of government, population and community life, including housing, employment, economy, clothing, food and others. (1 meeting)
- 3) Customs and culture, including religion, arts, traditional culture, and community habits such as in traditional and annual celebrations. (2 times meeting)
- 4) Education system. (1 meeting)
- 5) Cutting-edge science and technology, as well as transportation systems. (1 meeting)
- 6) Introduction to Japanese history, covering pre-historic times, the Nara, Heian, Kamakura, Muromachi, Azuchi, Edo, Sakoku and Meiji eras. (6 meetings)

Honne and Tatemae Culture

Honne (本音) which consists of 2 kanji (*moto*) which has a basic meaning, beginning, beginning, principle. While (*ne/oto*) means sound. The literal meaning, the initial sound or sound that comes from the heart. *Honne* is an opinion that reflects the real situation and comes from the heart. Or, *hon* is what a person really thinks (Saputri, 2018).

「本音は心の中で実際に考えること」
(*Honne wa kokoro no naka de jissai ni kangaeru koto*)
[*Honne* is someone's true thoughts from the heart].
(Nilamsari & Nugroho, 2020)

Similar to the opinion in the previous paragraph, Doi describing *hon* pointed out that everyone has a personal opinion that is only kept in their hearts even though they prioritize group opinions (Nilamsari & Nugroho, 2020). In contrast, *tatemae* (建前) is written with the letters '*tate*' and '*mae*'. *Tate* means building, and *mae* 前 means front. The literal meaning, the front of a building, looks outward that outsiders want to see (Nilamsari & Nugroho, 2020) explains that,

「建前は TPO や社会的道徳、話す相手によって変化 する表向きの意味」
(*Tatemae wa TPO ya shakai teki doutoko, hanasu aite ni yotte henka suru omote muki no imi*)
[*Tatemae* is a change in a person's attitude according to the social context, interlocutor, place and topic of conversation].
(Nilamsari & Nugroho, 2020)

So, *hon* is what a person really is and thinks, while *tatemae* is the attitude taken by someone to adjust the situation of the speech event.

Honne (本音) means 'conscience' while *tatemae* is 'attitude' (Hartati, 2008). More

specifically, *hon* is the inner voice that represents the individual while *tatemae* is the voice that represents the group (Hartati, 2008). In addition, Hartati (2008) adds again that the influence of *hon* and *tatemae* has developed an expression that 'no' means 'yes' or no' or it can also be called *Aimai Hyougen* (ambiguous expression). This fact further adds to the difficulty of foreign students to really understand the true meaning of an utterance spoken by Japanese people.

The Japanese notion of sincerity is intimately intertwined with the notion of omote (front) and ura (back). In everyday, normal circumstances, individuals display tatemae as "face" i.e., omote, and conceals honne, their real feelings, behind it. The cultural consensus is that individuals have their individualized and idiosyncratic honne behind tatemae. Respect for this general rule helps to maintain harmony among people. Should a conflict arise within an individual or group, however, the equilibrium between tatemae and honne is disrupted. It is such a time of trouble that the Japanese most often revert to the use of the concept of sincerity. In fact, there is one scholar who stated exactly this at the end of Tokugawa period; that to be "sincere" is to temporarily set aside the distinction between tatemae and honne, and to deal with the conflict on a "man-to-man" basis. To me, the latter signifies a temporary agreement, due to the emergent nature of the situation at hand, between the two (or more) parties that amae can be brought to the surface – i.e., to reveal one's naked heart, undisguised by tatemae. This, I believe, is at the heart of the Japanese notion of "sincerity."

(Shimizu & Le Vine, 2001)

So even though in Japanese life there are concepts of *honne* and *tatemae*, in addition to the above concepts there is also the concept of sincerity, which is when the concepts of *honne* and *tatemae* are not balanced, the concept of sincerity is more used. Of course, sincerity is also difficult for us to know with the naked eye, it takes sensitivity to feelings and hearts to be able to feel the sincerity of others.

METHODS

This research is a quantitative research. Qualitative research is research whose data is in the form of numbers based on measurement results or based on calculations (Asra & Prasetyo, 2015). Approach in collecting data by using a sample survey. Sample survey research is widely used in the purpose of describing a group or population (Asra & Prasetyo, 2015). So in this study the population used was Japanese teachers who teach in West Sumatra and Java, through an open questionnaire, it was found that 16 respondents responded to Japanese teachers in West Sumatra and Java. Then, the sample from this study was selected by purposive sampling, in this procedure the sample was taken based on a specific purpose (Asra & Prasetyo, 2015, p. 37). In this study, the aim is to see the application of the use of *tatemae*/experience of teachers who have worked in Japan or with Japanese people, must have experienced *honne* or *tatemae*, thus finding the urgency of holding *honne* and *tatemae* topics in the *nihonjijo* learning design, so based on this reason the sample The selected teachers are teachers who teach at LPK and have been/are working with Japanese people, based on these criteria previously, the sample obtained was 9 people from 16 population data collected. This questionnaire was distributed on 25-29 July 2022. Questions in the questionnaire included whether there was *nihonjijo*

learning at the LPK where you worked, whether material about *honne* and *tatemae* was taught, the reasons why they were not taught about *honne* and *tatemae* culture, teachers' insights about *honne* and *tatemae*, How did the teacher experience the *honne* and *tatemae* cultures, from his experience how to distinguish the two cultures was also questioned.

Overall the questions given in the questionnaire are open-ended questions that allow respondents to fill in freely and honestly as they are. Therefore the answers will be grouped into categories. The results are then analyzed and presented descriptively using pictures and tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, we will discuss the results of the questionnaire obtained. The results will be described based on the order of the questions in the questionnaire/questionnaire that has been distributed.

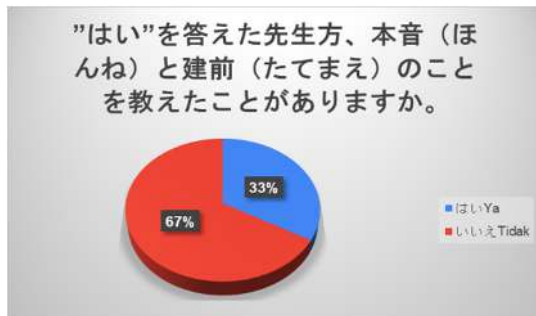
Chart 1. “*Gakkou de nihonjijo mata wa ibunka rikai no jugyou ga arimasuka.*” [Are there nihonjijo/ibunka rikai lessons at school?]



Based on the chart above, it can be seen that 89% of *nihonjijo* learning in LPK in West Sumatra and Java.

Chart 2. “*Hai o kotaeta senseigata, honne to tatemae no koto o oshieta koto ga arimasuka.*” [For the teacher who answered yes to the previous question, is there the

topic of *honne* and *tatemae* in the *nihonjijo* lesson taught?



Based on this 2nd picture, it can be seen that there are still few (33%) LPKs who teach *honne* and *tatemae* culture when learning *nihonjijo*. Whereas *honne* and *tatemae* are one of the cultures that interns need to know because they are often encountered in daily life in Japan later. The fact that the culture of *Tatemae* and *Honne*, is contained in all aspects, both in media, politics, foreign policy and communication [Trinidad, 2014]

Chart 3. "Iie" o kotaeta sensei wa doushite oshiemasenka." [Why are honne and tatemae not taught at the LPK where they teach now?]



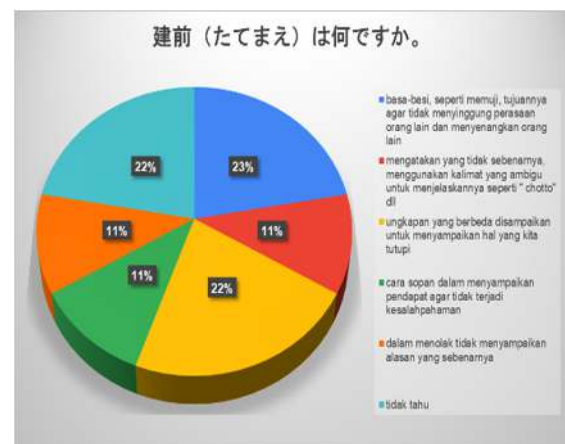
Based on the graph above, it can be seen that 88% of teachers have not realized the importance of *honne* and *tatemae* lessons in *nihonjijo* learning even though *honne* and *tatemae* are habits that always exist in interaction with Japanese society [Trinidad, 2014]. Because it does not include or propose to hold material about *honne* and *tatemae* in the *nihonjijo* lesson plan.

Chart 4. "Honne wa nan desuka?" [What is honne?]



Based on the graph above, it is known that the *honne* ability of the respondents is "good".

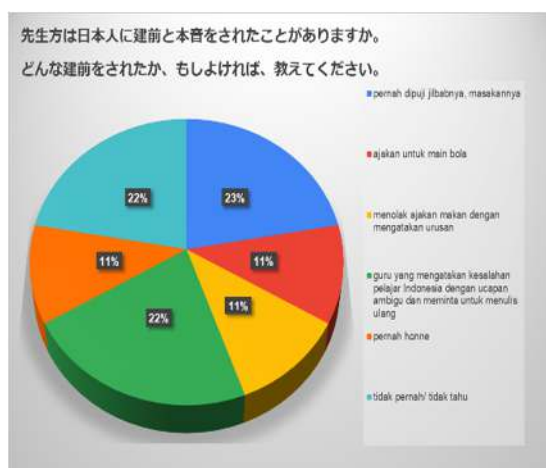
Chart 5. "Tatemae wa nan desuka?" [what is tatemae?]



Based on the graph above, it can be seen that the respondent's *tatemae* ability. 23% thought that *tatemae* was like small talk, which is usually used when praising someone, or an expression that is spoken differently from what is in the speaker's mind (22%), or a polite way of telling the truth (11%). The trend seen in the respondent's understanding of *tatemae* is an oral expression. If you look again at the definitions presented by experts, *tatemae* can also be in the form of attitudes [Hartati, 2008]. However, it has not been explained more clearly, what kind of attitude is meant. It is necessary to examine more deeply

about the attitudes that describe the *tatemae* culture of the Japanese.

Chart 6. “*Senseigata wa nihonjin ni tatemae to honne wo sareta koto ga ariikuta. Donna wo saretake, moshiyokereba oshiete Kudasa!*” [have you ever encountered *honne* and *tatemae* in everyday life in Japan. If so, please provide an example].



Based on the graph above, it can be seen that *tatemae* are more commonly encountered (67%) by Indonesians in Japan than *honne* (11%). From the answers given by the respondents, they felt hesitant to distinguish whether it was *tatemae/honne*.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on a survey of LPK teachers who have or are interacting with Japanese in the company, it can be concluded that almost all LPKs hold *nihonjijo/ibunkarikai* lessons in their institution's curriculum, then in their learning plans only a small proportion teach *tatemae* and *honne* culture as topics that must be taught. to apprentices, even though if we look at the experiences of teachers who are faced while working with Japanese people, this is a culture that is always present and encountered, especially *tatemae*. Because Japanese people have a *wa* culture which really maintains harmony between groups, so that work activities can run smoothly. Therefore, the conclusion that can be drawn is that *tatemae/honne*

culture is very important to be taught to apprentices because it will often be encountered in everyday life when working in Japan in the future. In addition, to distinguish *tatemae* and *honne* is still quite difficult, especially for foreigners who have different cultures, it is important to conduct further research on the practice of *tatemae/honne* in everyday life, especially in the world of work because there are still few sources/research that discusses *honne* and *tatemae* let alone discuss in terms of communication in the work environment.

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