

Pragmatic Failures in Japanese Conversations Among Beginner Japanese Language Learners Leading to Face-Threatening Acts

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Abstract

This research aims to identify the types of pragmatic failures that occur in beginner-level Japanese language classes. The data was taken from conversation texts created by students in groups over one semester from two different universities. The utterances in the conversation text that were perceived to contain pragmatic failure were categorized and then verified through interviews with native Japanese speakers to understand the impressions they felt when hearing such utterances. Verified utterances containing pragmatic failure were then categorized into pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure. It was discovered that even in simple contexts like self-introductions, there were many pragmatic failures that had the potential to become Face Threatening Acts (FTA) against the positive and negative face of the interlocutor. In the case of basic Japanese students, pragmalinguistic failures are more commonly found than sociopragmatic failures. However, both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failures tend to be more of a face-threatening act against the positive face of the interlocutor. The research finding reveals the linguistic characteristics that threaten the interlocutor's positive face include using first-person pronouns excessively, discriminatory questions about origin, and misusing specific Japanese words like "anata," "sayonara," "dare," and "kore" during introductions, incorrect responses to information and the absence of honorifics.

Keywords: *basic Japanese; pragmatic failure; pragmalinguistic failure; sociopragmatic failure; FTA*

1. Introduction

Basic Japanese language learning does seem easy. Based on over 10 years of experience teaching Japanese, it can be observed that within approximately 20 hours of study, the majority of beginner students can produce Japanese sentences without significant grammatical difficulties. With those sentences, they will be able to have simple conversations on themes such as self-introduction, making appointments, or offering something. However, behind the rapid mastery of basic Japanese grammar, there is an aspect that often goes unnoticed, namely the cultural and pragmatic aspects related to how the Japanese language is used in real life. Neglecting both of these aspects will become a serious issue if not addressed.

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In general, cultural and pragmatic aspects of Japanese language learning are usually more highlighted when students reach the intermediate or advanced level, as they study various types of more complex speech acts such as giving commands, prohibitions, making requests, and so on. This is because such speech acts are considered to be more laden with cultural and pragmatic aspects. However, it turns out that it is not the case. Simpler speech acts, such as those learned by beginner-level students, are also rich in cultural and pragmatic aspects that can have serious consequences if overlooked. When these two aspects are ignored, pragmatic failure may arise, which has the potential to result in a Face Threatening Act (FTA) if used to communicate with Japanese people in real life, even in very simple contexts, such as self-introduction.

At any stage, the emergence of pragmatic failure in the process of second language acquisition is indeed unavoidable. Pragmatic transfer, such as interference from the mother tongue, often becomes the main cause of pragmatic failure, which can lead to communication failure (Qian et al., 2024). Such pragmatic transfer will lead to the use of language that is less accurate and a failure to understand the pragmatic meaning intended by the speaker in cross-cultural communication (Tarawneh, 2023). To minimize pragmatic failure, one thing that can be done is to enhance students' pragmatic competence even from the early stages of learning. Pragmatic competence includes the social and cultural context as well as the communication norms required in communication. Improving pragmatic competence is vital in the process of acquiring a second language because it has a significant impact on the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication. In this regard, examining pragmatic failure during the process of second language acquisition from the basic level can be key to building students' cross-cultural communication competence.

Pragmatic failure is closely related to face-threatening acts (FTA). Pragmatic failure can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts in communication, which will then result in FTA (Hammouri & Al-Khanji, 2023; Ding, 2022). For example, in the context of making requests, a lack of pragmatic competence can lead to a form of request speech that appears impolite in different cultures (Ali, 2018; Rouissi, 2014). Therefore, understanding and explicitly addressing pragmatic errors in second language teaching, providing sufficient pragmatic input, and enhancing students' awareness of cross-cultural speech acts are important steps to mitigate FTAs arising from pragmatic failure (Hammouri & Al-Khanji, 2023; Rouissi, 2014).

One important pragmatic competence in cross-cultural communication is the mastery of politeness principles. One must be able to maintain the face of the interlocutor and one's own face from various threats that may arise during communication. It is important to emphasize that a threat in the mother tongue culture may not be perceived as a threat in the target language culture. Therefore, someone with high pragmatic competence will be able to understand how to maintain the face of the interlocutor in accordance with the principles of politeness in the target language.

In previous studies on the context of basic Japanese language studies, Yogyanti (Yogyanti et al., 2023) found through response tests and translation that hospitality students learning basic Japanese actually already possessed quite good pragmatic competence in Indonesian. They understood the fundamentals of communication etiquette in the context of interacting with hotel guests. They wrote appropriate responses in the form of polite sentences in Indonesian for each context. However, a set of principles of politeness in the Indonesian language was simply used when translating their responses into Japanese. The result was a pragmatic failure that led to sentences sounding less polite to native Japanese speakers.

Then, regarding the differences in linguistic culture between Indonesian and Japanese, Nurjaleka (2020) highlighted the differences in the production of refusal speech acts in Japanese between Indonesian students and native Japanese speakers. It was known that Indonesian students used indirect rejection in the form of an apology to anyone they were speaking to. Indonesian students did not use the status of their interlocutor or the degree of intimacy as a basic criterion for choosing their speech strategies. On the contrary, native Japanese speakers used the status of the interlocutor as a fundamental reference for their speech strategy. Native Japanese speakers would use negative politeness strategies or other refusal strategies depending on the status or degree of intimacy with the conversation partner.

Furthermore, regarding the relationship between pragmatic failure and the length of study, Miura (Miura, 2021) found that the duration of study did indeed create differences in students' pragmatic competence, although not very significant. Using speech acts of requests as a sample of utterances, it was known that native English speaker at beginner level A1 Japanese class would use declarative forms without modality when making requests. Students at the next level, namely A2, would use more appropriate forms when making requests, although there were still many instances of pragmatic failure in the form of lexicogrammatical errors. In line with Miura, several previous researchers have also stated that the duration of exposure or the amount of time spent with the target language did not necessarily guarantee the achievement of good pragmatic competence. Students who learned a second language over a long period did show an improvement in pragmatic competence, although it was not very significant (Charlebois, 2003; Asif et al., 2019; Luo & Gao, 2011). The experience of living for a few years in a country that spoke the language being learned made only a slight difference in a person's pragmatic competence (Kelly, 2003).

As previously mentioned, the cultural and pragmatic aspects are more highlighted in intermediate or advanced second language learning, so researches focusing on cultural and pragmatic aspects in basic second language learning have not been extensively conducted. Therefore, this research will focus more on basic-level (beginner) Japanese language learning. This research aims to highlight the types of pragmatic failures that can occur even when students are learning to introduce themselves. Considering that pragmatic competence is very important to teach in the early stages of learning, evaluating pragmatic failure that leads to FTA is essential. It is hoped that this research can provide ideas to Japanese language teachers at the beginner level regarding what to be aware of when teaching Japanese at the basic level in Indonesia. It is hoped that teachers can begin to observe the pragmatic failures of beginner-level students to use as material for teaching evaluation. Furthermore, the findings of this research are expected to serve as a basis for the development of a basic Japanese language teaching model, particularly in terms of integrating pragmatic aspects into classroom learning.

2. Methods

The method used in this study is descriptive, with a qualitative approach. The researchers serve as the key instruments determining the research results. In addition, language error analysis is a work procedure that has specific steps. These steps are known as the language error analysis method (Ghufron, 2015). This research employs Sridhar's theory in Ghufron (2015), which outlines six steps, namely: (1) collecting data created by learners; (2) identifying errors based on linguistic levels; (3) ranking errors to order them based on the frequency of occurrence; (4) explaining errors to clarify the causes of errors and how to correct them; (5) correcting mistakes to fix the existing errors and to reduce the occurrence of

ongoing mistakes. These can be achieved by refining the components of the language teaching and learning process, such as objectives, materials, methods, media, and assessment.

The data for this research was taken from 26 student conversation tasks conducted in groups over one semester at two different universities. All the students were beginner students who have just completed Japanese language lessons for a maximum of 108 class hours (the total recommended time for the basic level is 150 meeting hours). The context of student conversations includes a variety of topics, ranging from introductions, daily activities, expressing desires, to making invitations. From 26 tasks, sentences deemed to contain pragmatic failures were selected, resulting in 67 utterances being identified. Those 67 utterances were then submitted to a native Japanese speaker for testing. At this stage, direct interviews were conducted with native Japanese speakers with the following questions for each statement being asked:

1. Does this sentence sound strange?
2. Where does the strangeness lie?
3. What do you think you would feel if a sentence like this were spoken directly to you in real life?
4. What kind of sentence would be better to say in a context like this?

The responses from native speakers were used to categorize the 67 utterances into two types of pragmatic failure: pragmatic failure and sociopragmatic failure. Next, the errors in each statement would be color-coded to differentiate the causes of linguistic failure. The final stage involved data analysis by relating it to FTA.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Based on 67 speech data collected from 26 conversations of beginner-level students, there were a total of 60 error data points that could be discussed and further examined. From the data, it was discovered that there were two categories of pragmatic failure, namely:

3.1.1. Pragmalinguistic Failure

Pragmalinguistic failure refers to errors that occur due to the inappropriate use of language in its practical application. Such errors can occur at the levels of vocabulary, grammar, syntax, expression, and so on. Mistakes like this occur when the choice of words, sentences, or expressions by the speaker does not align with the expectations or habits of native speakers, which is caused by cultural differences in language use (Chen, 2023).

Based on the analysis conducted, the majority of pragmatic failures found in the students' translations occurred at the grammatical level, specifically the use of first and second person pronouns at the beginning of almost every sentence referring to the speaker. Another mistake in the realm of pragmatic failure was the use of inappropriate expressions and vocabulary errors. Based on the data analysis, 49 speech data points containing pragmalinguistic failures that were found. Here is the detail.

Table 1. Distribution data of pragmalinguistic failure towards FTA

Error		Frequency	FTA	
Grammatical error	Lexical error		positive face	negative face

Using clear pronouns	23	√	
Wrong expressions	4		√
<i>anata</i>	15	√	
<i>sayounara</i>	3	√	
<i>dare</i>	2	√	
<i>kore</i>	2	√	

3.1.2. Sociopragmatic Failure

Sociopragmatic failure refers to mistakes caused by differences in cultural backgrounds and cognitive habits among speakers. Often, the speaker's utterance does not align with the social and cultural norms of the native speaker (Chen, 2023; Luo & Gao, 2011). Based on the data analysis, 11 speech data points containing socio-pragmatic failure were found. Here is the explanation:

Table 2. Distribution of sociopragmatic failure data regarding FTA

Error	Frequency	FTA	
		positif face	negatif face
Wrong response	6	√	
Not using honorific	3	√	
Wrong expression in offering	1		√
Too straightforward sentence (without hedge)	1		√

3.2 Discussion

Related to pragmatics, which is always closely linked to politeness in communication, the mistakes made by beginner Japanese language learners were surprisingly just as serious as those made by advanced learners who have studied more complex speech acts, such as giving commands, prohibitions, and so on. This research proved that utterances in very simple contexts could also become fatal FTAs. The results of this study also indicated that a lack of understanding of grammar was not the main cause of pragmatic failure; rather, it was the lack of familiarity with the pragmatic context of the Japanese language that led to the students' pragmatic failure. Examples given below are the most common errors made by beginner Japanese language learner.

3.2.1. FTA towards the positive face of the interlocutor

Referring to the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (Brown, Penelope & Levinson, 1987), positive face refers to an individual's desire to be accepted and appreciated. From the data analysis, the pragmatic errors that posed a Face Threatening Act (FTA) to the positive face of the interlocutor were the most frequent mistakes made by beginner Japanese language learners. This was due to certain parts of the discourse that indicated the speaker did not pay attention to the feelings of the interlocutor in terms of feeling accepted and

appreciated, when viewed from the perspective of Japanese culture. FTA towards the positive face of the interlocutor was caused by both pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure.

1. Pragmalinguistic failure

The main error that caused pragmatic failure lay at the grammatical level, specifically in the use of the first-person pronoun "*watashi*." It is important to note that Japanese is a language that uses a system of zero pronouns. This system leads to the omission of subjects, objects, or possessive pronouns in sentences when their references are already clear in the context (Ri et al., 2021). Zero pronouns in Japanese are generally found in the subject position (Ueno & Kehler, 2016). In other words, the subject is indeed intentionally omitted in Japanese sentences. The omission of the subject in the Japanese language is a manifestation of the social pressures present in society. This actually represents a pragmatic set related to the honorific strategies chosen by Japanese society when communicating (Brown, Penelope & Levinson, 1987). Therefore, although the sentences constructed do not violate the syntactic rules of the Japanese language, the use of those pronouns does not align with the habits of native Japanese speakers. Please pay attention to the following example of a conversation:

(1)

- Jendra : *Ohayou gozaimasu. Hajimemashite watashi wa Jendra to moushimasu.*
Watashi wa Oosutoraria jin desu
(Good morning, I am Jendra, I am Australian.)
Harsa : *Ohayou gozaimasu, watashi wa Harsa to moushimasu.*
(Good morning, I am Harsa.)
Naren : *Watashi wa Naren desu. Watashi wa Kankoku jin desu.*
(I am Naren. I am Korean.)

From the conversation above, it is evident that the intensity of the use of the word '*watashi*' at the beginning of each sentence is noticeable. The use of the word '*watashi*' at the beginning of each sentence seems to be influenced by the habit in Indonesian, which indeed requires placing the subject at the beginning of a sentence for it to be acceptable. However, in the cultural background that leads to the use of zero pronouns in Japan, the word '*watashi*' used repeatedly in every sentence can be seen as a display of self-importance. The intensity of using the first-person pronoun indirectly indicates that the speaker always wants to highlight themselves without paying attention to the presence of the interlocutor. This is what causes the use of the first-person pronoun to be a face-threatening act against the positive face of the interlocutor. For that reason, the first-person pronoun is often omitted in Japanese sentences.

Next, the mistakes in expression that could potentially be a Face Threatening Act (FTA) against the positive face of the opponent can be seen in the example below.

(2)

- Nana: *Anata wa nan no jin desuka?*
(What group are you in?/What group do you belong to?)
Nita: *Watashi wa Indonesia jin desu.*
(I am Indonesian.)

In example 2, the sentence '*anata wa nan no jin desu ka*' can sound very impolite to Japanese people. The use of '*nan no jin*' from the perspective of Japanese people can indicate a discriminatory attitude. The speech makes it seem as if the speaker is trying to categorize the listener into a different social group that is distinct from their own. The use of such interrogative sentences can be considered an act that humiliates the interlocutor or an offensive action towards the interlocutor.

Next, referring to table 1.1 above, the most frequent lexical error was found in the use of the word "*anata*." Please take a look at the example below.

(3)

Nana : *Anata wa nan ji ni doubutsuen he ikimasuka?*
(What time do you want to go to the zoo?)
Titan : *Gozen rokuji desu.*
(at 6 a.m.)

(4)

Mark : *Sono boushi wa sen en desu.*
(The hat is one thousand yen.)
Johnny : *Sou desu ne, anata no boushi wa ii desu*
(Yes, that's right, your hat is nice.)

The context of the conversation in examples 3 and 4 is a light exchange between two people whose relationship is not yet very close. In addition to violating the zero pronoun rule regarding the omission of objects, the use of the second-person pronoun '*anata*' in the above context can create an offensive impression. This word should actually only be used by someone in a higher position or status towards someone who is socially in a lower position, such as from a superior to a subordinate. In another context, this word is used to indicate intimacy and feelings, affection towards the interlocutor. In that context, this word is commonly used by a wife to her husband or by a woman to her friend. However, in an inappropriate context, like in the example conversation above, the word '*anata*' can be very sensitive for the conversation partner. The interlocutor may feel that their status is being belittled or demeaned, which can become a Face Threatening Act (FTA) for the positive face of the interlocutor.

Another example of pragmalinguistic failure at the lexical level can be found in the use of the word '*sayounara*'. Here is an example:

(5)

Damar : *Kore wa nan no hon desu ka.*
(What book is this?)
Hafiz : *Nihon go no hon desu.*
(It's Japanese book)
Damar dan Yuda : *Hai, sayounara.*
(Ok, goodbye.)
Hafiz : *Sayounara.*
(Goodbye.)

In that context, *sayounara* is used to close the conversation. In reality, the word *sayounara*, which means goodbye, is rarely used in conversations among native speakers because it carries a harsh meaning. *Sayounara* can be interpreted as a farewell greeting for good or to end a relationship. Therefore, the use of "*sayounara*" in that context is a face-threatening act that threatens the positive face of the interlocutor. The conversation partner may feel abandoned or no longer accepted. Another example of lexical error can be seen in the example below.

(6)

Titan : *Anata wa dare desuka?*
(Who are you?)
Nita : *Watashi wa Nita desu*
(I am Nita.)

In the context of asking for the name of someone who is not yet known, besides the word "*anata*," the use of the word "*dare*" would clearly sound inappropriate, as it could threaten the positive face of the interlocutor. The statement will generally be expressed as "*sumimasen, onamae wa*" without a second-person pronoun at the beginning of the sentence. to making them feel more valued.

Next, an lexical error example of pragmalinguistic failure in the use of the word "*kore*" can be seen in the example below.

(7)

Adinda : *Konnichiwa. Hajimemashite. Watashi wa adinda desu. Bangka kara kimashita.*
(Good afternoon. Let me introduce myself. I am Adinda. I am from Bangka).
Neema : *Hajimemashite, watashi wa Neema desu. Klaten kara kimashita, kore wa Ingrid san desu.*
(Let me introduce myself. I am Neema. I am from Klaten. This is Ingrid.)

In the context of introducing someone else, referring to others with the demonstrative pronoun "*kore*" is not something that native Japanese speakers typically do. The word "*kore*" refers to objects, so using demonstrative pronouns for objects to refer to people can be seen as demeaning to others. It is more appropriate to use the pronoun "*kochira*" as demonstrative pronouns. This will help maintain a respectful tone in the conversation.

2. Sociopragmatic failure

Sociopragmatic failure that poses a threat to the positive face of the interlocutor can be seen in the example below.

(8)

Aditya Prasetyo : *Rais-san wa enjinia desu ka?*
(Rais, are you an engineer?)
Aditya Rais : *Iie, watashi wa enjinia ja arimasen. Gakusei desu.*
(No, I am not an engineer. I am a college student.)
Aditya Prasetyo : *Ohh, hai.*

(Oh, alright.)

(9)

- Sisca : *Konnichiwa. Watashi wa fransisca desu dozo yoroshiku.*
(Good afternoon. I am Fransisca. Nice to meet you.)
Neema : ***Aa..wakatta.** Dozo yoroshuku sisca san*
(I see. Nice to meet you too Sisca.)

In both examples above, the underlined sentences are responses that are too blunt and assertive regarding the information provided by the conversation partner. Such a response can be misunderstood as an uncooperative attitude in the conversation. The response seems to indicate that the speaker is not interested in what the interlocutor is saying, thus wanting to end the conversation quickly. Another example of a response error can be seen in the example below:

(10)

- Dito : *Ichinen ni nankai nyuu yooku e ikimasu ka.*
(How many times do you go to New York in a year?)
Rama : *Ikkai ikimasu.*
(Go there once)
Dito : *Sou desu ka. Dakara anata wa eigo ga yoku wakarimasu ka.*
(Oh, I see. Therefore, do you understand English very well?)
Rama : ***Hai, watashi wa eigo ga yoku wakarimasu.***
(Yes, I understand English very well.)

The bold sentence in example 10 is a response that is not in accordance with Japanese culture when receiving compliments. In Japanese culture, mentioning one's own strengths is considered impolite. The Japanese tend to humble themselves to maintain relationships with their conversation partners (Miller via Yogyanti, 2015). By responding as in example 10, the speaker can be considered to be elevating themselves. Boasting can be interpreted as the speaker trying to create a sense of discomfort for the listener (Brown, Penelope & Levinson, 1987).

In addition to errors in providing responses, sociopragmatic failure, which constitutes a Face Threatening Act (FTA) to the positive face of the interlocutor, also occurs due to the absence of honorific markers. The example below is a fragment of a conversation where honorific markers are not used.

(11)

- Aldi: ***Kochira wa Rizal.***
(This is Rizal.)
Rizal: *Hajimemashite, watashi wa Rizal desu.*
(I am Rizal, pleased to meet you.)

(12)

- Nanda : ***Souka** nichiyoubi anata no kaisha wa yasumi desuka.*
(Oh, I see. Is your office closed on Sundays?)
Aprilia : *Watashi wa Endang san to yasumi desu.*
(I am off with Endang.)

Examples 11 and 12 are examples of speech that do not use honorific markers. In the example 11, the honorific marker '*san*' as a term of respect for others is not included. In addition, the sentence in example 11 and the phrase *souka* in the example 12 does not use '*desu*'. In Japanese society, honorific markers are very important for facilitating social relationships and communication. In Japanese culture, the use or non-use of honorific markers in communication can only be determined once the status or position of each participant in the conversation is clear. Honorific markers may not be used in the context of superiors to subordinates, seniors to juniors, or to very close friends.

Meanwhile, in the context of the conversation above, the relationship between the participants is not yet clear. When social status cannot be determined, it is mandatory to use honorific markers as a form of politeness. In Japanese society, honorifics are used to reflect the speaker's assessment and interpretation of a social relationship (Liu & Allen, 2014). Honorific markers are important to indicate the speaker's intention to be polite in order to protect the positive face of the interlocutor (Kaur & Yamada, 2021). The absence of honorifics, as in the example above, can indicate a social insensitivity that violates the concept of *uchi-soto*, which will certainly lead to friction. The concepts of *uchi* (inner group) and *soto* (outer group) in Japanese culture are crucial in determining the type of language used in interactions. In Japanese communication norms, the use of informal language without the form *desu* can only be done if the relationship between the conversation participants is *uchi* (close friends) (Arfianty & Mulyadi, 2024). The inconsistency in the use of the form "desu," as seen in examples 11 and 12, can undermine the concept of *uchi-soto* in social interactions. The students' mistakes in this regard are caused by the fact that the concept of *uchi-soto* is not very significant in the social culture of the Indonesian language.

3.2.2 FTA towards the negative face of the interlocutor

a. Pragmalinguistic Failure

A negative face is a desire for territorial boundaries or the right not to be disturbed, such as the freedom to act and freedom from imposition (Brown, Penelope & Levinson, 1987). (Brown, Penelope & Levinson, 1987). FTA towards the negative face of the interlocutor among beginner Japanese language learners in the realm of pragmalinguistic failure usually occurs due to errors in the use of particles at the end of sentences, as seen in the example below.

(13)

- Inggar : *Shokudo wa doko ni arimasu ka.*
(Where is the canteen?)
Pras : *Kono biru no 2 kai ni arimasu.*
(On the second floor of this building)
Dzaky : *Sou desu ka, shokudo de nani wo shimasu ka.*
(Oh, I see, what are we going to do in the canteen?)
Pras : *Tabun hiru gohan wo tabemasu yo ne.*
(Maybe having lunch)

Basically, the particle "yo" is used when the speaker wants to emphasize a piece of information they are providing. However, in the context of example 13, the use of the particle "yo" can indicate a stronger degree of imposition compared to when the particle "yo" is not used. Because in the context above the speaker is not providing information but rather expressing an opinion, the use of the particle "yo" will give the impression that the speaker's opinion is final, leaving no room for others' input.

b. Sociopragmatic Failure

Sociopragmatic failure among basic Japanese language students that becomes a FTA (Face Threatening Act) for the negative face of the interlocutor is evident from the errors in expressions used when making offers and the absence of hedges, which makes the sentences too direct, as seen in the example below.

(14)

Titan: *Kyou wa atsui desune.*

(It's hot today, isn't it?)

Dewi: *Sou desu ne.*

(Yes, that's right.)

Titan: ***Ocha o nomitai desuka.***

(Would you like to have some tea?/do you want to drink tea?)

(15)

Rafli: ***Ima kara tomodachi ni narimasu.***

(We will be friends from now.)

Budi: *Hai, narimashou.*

(Okay, let's be friends.)

Example 14 shows an error in expression when offering something. Such sentences are often produced by beginner students. In Japanese culture, the use of the '*tai*' form in offer sentences can pose a serious Face Threatening Act (FTA) to the negative face of the interlocutor. The sentence actually doesn't have a strange meaning in Indonesian and is grammatically correct in Japanese. However, the use of the form '*tai*' in an offer sentence can be seen as the speaker violating the personal territory of the interlocutor.

In Japanese pragmatic rules, the '*tai*' form that indicates desire can only be used by the first person to express one's own wishes. That is because desire is a feeling that can only be known and felt by the first person. The use of "*tai*" that refers to someone else's desires, even in the form of a question, can be interpreted as if the speaker is determining what the interlocutor wants without considering their actual wishes. The use of that form also indicates that the speaker will only offer tea without any other options. In such a context, especially in the relationship between two people who are not very close (as indicated by the use of the honorific '*desu*'), Japanese people usually add hedges at the end of a sentence by changing '*desu ka*' to '*deshou ka*' or by adding the hedge '*demo*' after the word *ocha* as a form of uncertainty to avoid crossing the boundaries of the conversation partner. Hedges like this are important for expressing the speaker's reluctance to perform a Face Threatening Act (FTA) (Liu & Allen, 2014).

The use of '*narimasu*' without hedges in the bold sentence in example 15 makes the sentence too straightforward. Such a statement may indicate that the speaker seems to disregard the desires of the listener. Statements that are too straightforward make the speaker

sound authoritarian in determining how the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor will continue.

Based on the results of the study, it can be known that beginner-level students will unintentionally perform FTAs against their interlocutors' positive and negative faces. The FTAs can result from pragmalinguistic failure or sociopragmatic failure. In this case, mother-tongue interference seems to be the most dominant factor. The mother-tongue interference is most apparent in the frequent use of subject '*watashi*' or '*anata*' in every sentence and the absence of honorifics in the contexts that should require them. Another factor causing this problem is the lack of appropriate diction and expression in a certain context. To overcome this problem, the integration of cultural norms of communication in classroom learning is crucial. Beginner-level students still need to be introduced to the concepts of zero pronouns, honorifics, and special expressions in certain contexts.

4. Conclusions

Similarly to advanced Japanese language students who have studied complex speech acts, beginner-level students also face the same issues when confronted with the cultural and pragmatic aspects of the Japanese language. Beginner students are indeed very quick in mastering basic Japanese grammar. With a fairly simple grasp of grammar, they will be able to hold conversations on basic topics such as introductions, making appointments, or offering something in just about 20 hours of study. Unfortunately, their speed in mastering grammar is often not accompanied by input on the cultural and pragmatic aspects of the Japanese language. What happened next is that even in very simple contexts, pragmatic failures can be occurred and lead to cultural friction in communication if applied in the real world when speaking with Japanese people. That pragmatic failure will be a threat to both the positive and negative face of the interlocutor.

From 67 speech data taken from 26 student conversation tasks, 60 pragmatic failures were found, consisting of 49 pragmalinguistic failure and 11 sociopragmatic failure. Pragmalinguistic failure consist of 27 errors at the grammatical level and 22 errors at the lexical level. Grammatical errors consist of 23 mistakes related to the use of pronouns that do not align with Japanese societal norms and 4 mistakes that are errors in expression. At the sociopragmatic failure, 11 errors were found. In this type of failure, with a total of 6 mistakes, the use of incorrect responses dominated the sociopragmatic failure of beginner Japanese language learner. Other forms of errors included 3 instances of the absence of honorifics, 1 error in expression when offering something, and 1 error due to the lack of hedging in the sentence.

Of the various types of failures mentioned above, 70% of failures have the potential to become a face-threatening act (FTA) for the positive face of the interlocutor. The form of pragmalinguistic failure that becomes a Face Threatening Act (FTA) for the positive face of the interlocutor includes the use of first-person pronouns at the beginning of each sentence, expressions that indicate discrimination when asking about someone's origin, and errors in the use of the words *anata*, *sayonara*, *dare*, and *kore* in the contexts of introduction. The form of sociopragmatic failure that poses a Face Threatening Act (FTA) to the positive face of the interlocutor is characterized by an incorrect response to information and the absence of honorifics. Next, the misuse of the particle "*yo*" at the end of sentences, errors in expressions when offering something, and overly blunt statements are failures that have the potential to become Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) for the negative face of the interlocutor.

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