

The Interlanguage Pragmatics of Japanese Daily Greetings by Malaysian Learners

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ABSTRACT

Scholars in pragmatics argue that the teaching of a second language (L2) must pay extra attention to the language forms and expressions within specific cultural contexts. Not being able to use a L2 according to the nature of its cultural context could sometimes lead to misunderstanding and miscommunication. This study aims to explain the interlanguage pragmatic transfer in daily greetings used by Malaysian learners of Japanese. Using a convenient sampling technique, the respondents are 80 Malay students enrolling in a Japanese preparatory program prior to attending Japanese universities. Being competent in using Japanese language in context is therefore crucial for them. This study employs a qualitative research approach using Discourse Completion Tests (DCT) and follow-up interviews. Shleykina's model of greetings is appropriated and used as the framework which allows data to be categorized into six patterns. The findings show that Malaysian learners chose to use less greetings when they greet their Japanese friends vis-a-vis their Malaysian friends. The types of Japanese greetings they use are mostly greeting expressions from what they have learned in the classrooms. Other casual greetings applied are learned from *anime*, dramas and Japanese TV programs. This study revealed that some of the Japanese greetings used are actually a direct translation from Bahasa Melayu. This pragmatic transfer has offered two perspectives, which are, success transfer and failure transfer. The results contribute towards the importance of exposure to and the understanding of the cultural context of a target language in choosing appropriate greetings among L2 in interlanguage context.

Keywords: Pragmatic; Malaysian Learners; Japanese; Greetings; Interlanguage

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is the rules that govern all language system that give contextual meaning of language in use. It is also applied in second language teaching and learning contexts. One

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reason for this is because language needs to be experienced by learners within its context (Stadler, 2018; Jiao et al., 2020) so that it is used competently (Kecskes et al., 2018). As language always has a cultural dimension to it (Stadler, 2018), the teaching of second language needs to pay extra attention to language form and expression within a specific cultural context (Ali et al., 2015). Traditionally, exposure to language use in context for second language learners was limited. Nonetheless, with globalization and the advancement of communication technology, students can expose themselves to language in context via the media. For instance, the study of Japanese language by Malaysian students can include watching anime, dramas, films, documentaries and even TV programs from Japan that are easily accessible via cable channels and even for free on the Internet. Despite this exposure, second language must also be formally taught to students as learning and acquiring new language is known to be different. And this becomes more essential in the case of students learning it for academic purpose.

One important language component in pragmatics that is taught in the teaching and learning of a second language is greetings. Greetings are used in daily interactions as a means to keep social harmony and to communicate (Ebsworth, Brodman & Carpenter, 1996). Despite their deceptive simplicity, greetings are complex speech acts. Greetings are a significant aspect of politeness strategy, and governed by culturally specific social constraints (Nilsson et. al., 2020). Hence, even in the same situation setting, greetings used by people from different communities or countries are predictably diverse as speakers choose not only correct expressions but also socially and culturally acceptable expressions. Although there are many definitions of pragmatics as offered by scholars such as Ariel (2010) and Allan (2012), for the purpose of this study, we believe Crystal's definition is most relevant: "Pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (1985, p.240). Nevertheless, L2 learners are not starting at a zero baseline when they learn new languages since there are pragmatics universals in their native language (Kasper & Rose, 2002), which are common among all languages.

The basis of pragmatics states that humans in society use language in different ways to achieve the same result (Todd, 2010). Pragmatic competence enables people to use their language skills in order to achieve various general goals, such as communicating, thinking and remembering in different situations (Németh, 2004). Indeed, some scholars point that one of the fundamental factors in communication based on a cultural foundation is communicative behaviour, which has a dual structure, verbal and non-verbal (Grice, 1982; Sperber & Wilson, 2002). Looking at pragmatics in the context of L2, we also need to explore the field of Interlanguage Pragmatics as it relates to the Second Language Acquisition Research and a subset of Pragmatics (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). Interlanguage Pragmatics examines L2 learners' knowledge, use and development in performing sociocultural functions whereby L2 learners need linguistic forms and skills to perform in the target language (Taguchi, 2017).

Most studies on interlanguage pragmatics focused on the topics of requests (House & Kasper, 1987; Kasper, 1989; Koike, 1989), invitations (Mizushima, 2012), refusals (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987), complaints (Al Rashidi, 2017), apologies (Olshtain & Cohen, 1989), gratitude (Brodman & Eisenstein, 1988), greetings (Zeff, 2016; Inawati, 2016; Shleykina, 2019) and some other linguistic scenarios. In this study, we explain how interlanguage pragmatics take place on greeting which is the 'door' to most conversations. To do this, the present study aims at elucidating the pragmatics of Japanese daily greetings used by Malaysian learners.

REETING AND INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS

Greetings are basically divided into verbal greetings and non-verbal greetings. For non-verbal greetings, Jenkins (2007) listed shaking hands, holding both hands, touching and waving as some of non-verbal greetings in various cultures. Salmani-Nodoushan (2007) claims that shaking hands and kissing cheeks as the most representative types of non-verbal greetings. However, Maysa'a (2010) claimed that when men are introduced, they generally shake hands while women do this less frequently. Meanwhile, Muslims observe gender and familial rules in their non-verbal conducts. The Japanese people greet each other non-verbally by bowing and the degree of bowing is decided by the level of social distance between them. In this study, non-verbal characters were not analyzed due to the method of data collection that was unable to observe that.

On the other hand, verbal greetings are short or long utterances to greet other people or as an introduction to start a conversation. Verbal greeting is seen as an important component of pragmatic competence of those who learn a second language. Greetings are keys for establishing and maintaining contacts and for language learners serve "as a door to the target culture" (Kakiuchi, 2005). Used as an act of courtesy towards others, greetings are linked to politeness. Brown & Levinson (1987) introduced greeting as a 'face-saving' action based on the demonstration of positive politeness. Usami (2002) states that pragmatic politeness is a function of language manipulation that works to maintain smooth human relationships. Meanwhile, Armaşu (2012) emphasizes that politeness is a fundamental element of interpersonal communication in all human cultures - its universality -, adding value to the human cultural background. Among the studies of politeness in a variety of cultures, Brown & Levinson (1987) politeness theory has become very influential, suggesting five strategies to deal with Face Threatening Act (FTA) namely; 1) bold on record, 2) positive politeness, 3) negative politeness, 4) off record, 5) not doing the FTA. However, their theory has been challenged by other scholars in various aspects such as its cross-cultural applicability and conceptualized politeness. Nevertheless, Brown & Levinson did not discuss politeness in the context of greetings in detail.

The often-used definition of greetings is provided by Goffman (1971) who defines a greeting as access rituals, which serves as a bond to initiate social meetings of people by making a clear distinction between 'passing greeting' and 'engaging greeting'. According to him, 'passing greeting' is a non-binding greeting that does not involve social contact, while 'engaging greeting' is accompanied by an appeal of deeper interaction. In other words, both functions are similar to a switch that opens or closes relations. This understanding has been expanded in recent work of Nilsson et al., (2020), indicating that greetings can be a way to index the degree of social distance between interlocutors and thereby reflecting recurring cultural patterns.

The understanding of greetings and their inherent relationship with politeness has instrumental as well as pedagogical implications in second and foreign language classroom settings. Scholars such as Blum-Kulka (1991), Ochs (1996) and Kasper & Rose (2002) have long argued that second language learners already possess pragmatic knowledge and ability, since there are pragmatic universals common in all languages. As Schleicher (1997:334) states, 'the more speakers understand the cultural context of greetings, the better the society appreciates them, and the more they are regarded as well behaved'. According to Wei (2005), a language has two different symbols, where the first symbol is the communication, and the second is the presenter of culture. For second language learners, it is important to understand that the rules of communication are connected with both the culture, and the context, in order to ensure effective and efficient communication (Wei, 2009).

On the other hand, Zeff (2016) pointed out that the failure to properly use the greeting in another cultural environment often causes misunderstanding or inappropriate behavior that could be considered illiteracy. Another study by Inawati (2016) explores how greetings are linguistically presented in textbooks and whether adequate metapragmatic information is provided to facilitate learning about greetings. Often, a second language is learned through textbooks with standard amounts of information, without thoroughly introducing pragmatic constructs. Inawati (2016) draws attention to this problem and points out that textbooks are not always an accurate source of pragmatic information. It shows how understanding of pragmatic concepts are important in second language learning.

In Japanese language, honorifics are an important resource of interaction (Burdelski, 2013). For conversation, the speaker must choose between polite or plain styles according to his/her relationship to the interlocutor. This choice is regardless of personal preferences and occurs without conscious effort (Kikuchi, 1997; Usami, 2002; Jamila & Musaev, 2011). Basically, the speaker must use *Teinei-tai* (polite style) or *Futsu-tai* (plain style) at the end of every utterance, with age, social position, intimacy and conversational situation as main factors in determining which usage. Overshadowing these factors is the *uchi-soto* (in group-out group) concept which distinguishes the relations between speakers. Out-group interlocutors are strangers, people in higher position, customers, etc. On the other hand, in-group interlocutors are family, close friends, people in lower position, etc. Generally speaking, an out-group interlocutor must be honoured whereas an in-group interlocutor must be humbled. For instance, close contacts such as family members and close friends do not use polite style when communicating to each other. Using polite style will put distance in between them.

On the other hand, Malay politeness is not determined by the sets of words or styles used but on how the interlocutors feel during the conversation, as stated by Asmah (1992:1): *Penggunaan bahasa sehari-hari yang tidak menimbulkan kemarahan, kekusaran atau rasa kecil hati dari pihak yang lain boleh dikatakan mewakili penggunaan bahasa yang sopan/* The use of everyday's language that does not cause anger, anxiety or offence towards another party is said to represent polite language (our translation). Indirawati & Arina (2018) added that Malay politeness was formed by three factors which are role, power and differences in social status, titles and rules. Roswati et. al. (2017) claimed that Malay politeness are probably similar with Chinese politeness in terms of emphasizing on friendliness and intimacy, but unfortunately these factors were not counted by local scholars when defining Malay politeness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach. The first research method used for this study is a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) questionnaire with social scenario as a prompt as proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). To verify the answers gathered from DCTs, follow-up in the form of in-depth interviews were carried out. Ebsworth, Brodman & Carpenter (1996) argue that there is a need for multiple measures, that is, by collecting data on greetings in more than one way. The observational data led to the creation of a questionnaire to elicit the primary data. Following this, the data from DCT helps to construct the in-depth interviews that ensue.

SAMPLING

Using a convenient sampling technique, the respondents of this research are 50 males and 30 females, a total of 80 Malaysian students from the Malay ethnic group. Their native language is Malay language or Bahasa Melayu. The respondents' age is 19 years old and in Year 2, Japanese Special Preparatory Program, Ambang Asuhan Jepun, Centre for Foundation Studies in Science, Universiti Malaya (henceforth AAJ). The program consists of four semesters. At

the time of data collection, the respondents have been studying Japanese in the program for about 16 months and about to finish Semester 3. As AAJ is an intensive program, at this stage, the respondents' level of Japanese is estimated to demonstrate the level N3 of Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT). Other than the Japanese language, the respondents also study Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry subjects. They studied these Science subjects in English during Semester 1 and in Japanese from Semester 2 onwards. The respondents are studying in AAJ prior to enrolling in under-graduate studies in Japanese universities.

BACKGROUND OF AAJ

AAJ is a two-year preparatory program situated at the Centre for Foundation Studies in Science, Universiti Malaya. This government to government program was initiated under Malaysia's Look East Policy Division, Public Service Department (JPA) back in 1982. It is a cooperation between the Universiti Malaya, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT), as well as the Japan Foundation (JF). The Japanese language syllabus used is based on structural grammar syllabus to utilize reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. The text books used for Japanese are brought from Japan. The aim of the program is to equip students with good command of Japanese language and good knowledge of Science subjects. Upon successfully finishing the program, students pursue their degrees in Japanese universities.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

For data collection, a survey method of DCT and follow up interviews were employed. The DTC survey was conducted on July 10th, 2020. All 80 respondents were gathered in a lecture hall and explained about the survey and its procedure. The respondents were asked to answer the survey through Google Form on the same day. The respondent's response rate was 100%. The DCT survey was based on two open-ended questions. The respondents were asked to write their greetings in Bahasa Melayu to a Malaysian friend and greetings in Japanese to a Japanese friend for two daily situations or scenarios. Respondents had to imagine being in a situation with Japanese friend/classmate as what they will encounter in Japan. In AAJ, respondents are used to being around and communicating with Japanese teachers. Some respondents also have Japanese friends.

The DCT items are listed below;

Situation 1: *In the morning, you met a classmate in the classroom before the class starts. That classmate is of the same gender and your close friend. Please write greetings you will use to greet him/her.*

Situation 1(A): Greet your Malaysian classmate/close friend in Bahasa Melayu.

Situation 1(B): Greet your Japanese classmate/close friend in Japanese.

Situation 2: *During lunch time, you met a classmate having lunch at the cafeteria/canteen. That classmate is of the same gender and your close friend. Please write greetings you will use to greet him/her.*

Situation 2(A): Greet your Malaysian classmate/close friend in Bahasa Melayu.

Situation 2(B): Greet your Japanese classmate/close friend in Japanese.

Next, the interview was conducted after Google Form surveys were analyzed. Based on the results, follow-up interviews were conducted individually a week later involving 80 respondents in Bahasa Melayu. An interview of each respondent took about 5 minutes and

notes were taken. Among the questions asked during the interview were, the kind of greetings/expressions and reasons for using them, from where they learned those greetings/expressions, whether or not respondents translate Malay greetings into Japanese in the case of same meaning greetings were used, were the greetings meant for their meanings or just for the sake of saying something as to greet, etc. The respondents were also asked about their Japanese related activities outside the classrooms, as well as their motivations in studying Japanese language.

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

In choosing the model of analysis for this paper, two models were studied. The first one was by Ebsworth et al. (1996). The second one is by Shleykina (2019). Ebsworth, et al. (1996) and Shleykina (2019) demonstrate precisely on how to classify greetings data. While Ebsworth et al. (1996) classify eight types of greetings, Shleykina introduces five categories.

Ebsworth, et al. (1996) classify eight types of greetings by English native speakers which are :1) **Greetings on the run**; 2) **Speedy greeting**; 3) **The chat**; 4) **The long greeting**; 5) **The intimate greeting**; 6) **All-business greeting**; 7) **The introductory greeting**; and 8) **The re-greeting**. Ebsworth, et al. (1996) model is precise but not quite suitable to classify the data of this study because it covers various specific situations whereas the study has specific groups of people and situations.

Meanwhile, Shleykina (2019) divided English greetings in her study into: greetings proper, address terms, and elements of phatic communication and were coded as follows:

1. **Greetings proper**. This category was further divided into time-free/ time-bound and formal/ informal variants. For example, “Hello” is time-free, neutral greeting proper; “Hey” is time-free, informal greeting proper; “Good afternoon” is time-bound, formal greeting proper.
2. **Address terms**. This category was further divided into personal names, university titles (Doctor, Professor), honorifics (Mr./ Mrs., Sir/ Madam), and colloquial addresses (man, dude);
3. **Phatic questions**. This category was further divided into neutral (How are you?), formal (How do you do?), and informal (What’s up?) questions;
4. **Phatic phrases**. (Nice to see you/ Nice to meet you);
5. **Situational greetings**. This category includes contextualized or individualized phrases or questions which serve as a greeting in specific circumstances of the constructed dialogue. For example, the greeting “Hi, John!

Shleykina (2019) model is more general and applicable with the data of this study. Thus, this study applies Shleykina’s model with some amendments to suit Bahasa Melayu and Japanese greetings in the data. This is particularly important because Japanese language sentence and utterance including greetings are either in polite or plain styles (Kikuchi, 1997; Jamila & Musaev, 2011) so they have to be defined in the respective categories.

Having appropriated Shleykina’s model, all greetings in the data of this study are divided into 6 patterns as in Table 1:

TABLE 1. GREETING PATTERNS

1	Pattern 1 (P1): Formal Greetings: The type of formal greetings basically learned from the text books and language classrooms. Formal greetings are in complete form and style. For example: <i>Assalamualaikum /Peace be upon You,</i>
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Ohayou Gozaimasu/Selamat Pagi /Good Morning, *Konnichiwa/Selamat Tengahari* /Good Afternoon/Hello,
Yoroshiku Onegaishimasu /Please, *Otsukaresama desu* /Good job, etc.

- 2 **Pattern 2 (P2): Informal Greetings:**
These greetings are the informal and shorter version of Pattern 1.
For example: *Hai* /Hi, *Helo* /Hello, *Pagi/Ohayou/Ohayo* /Morning, *Yoroshiku* /Please, *Otsukare* /Good job, etc.
- 3 **Pattern 3 (P3): Casual Greetings:**
A slang form of *Hi!*
For example: *Oi, Wei, Yo, Hei, Uii / Yahhoo, Ossu, Ya.*
[a form of greeting probably derived from popular culture such as anime or rap music].
- 4 **Pattern 4 (P4): Address Greetings:**
Greet by calling the name of the interlocutor.
For example: (*Nama kawan/Tomodachi no namae/~san*) / (Name of a friend).
- Note: Respondents just wrote something that means “name of a friend” but did not write any actual names. This is from the raw data.
- 5 **Pattern 5 (P5): Phatic Greetings:**
Apa khabar? /How are you?, *Genki/Sihat?* /Are you well?,
Sudah makan? /Have you eaten?
- 6 **Pattern 6 (P6): Situation Focused Greetings:**
Contextualized or individualized phrases or questions in specific settings or situations. Any type of words and sentences used to greet and no specific rules guided as in the language textbooks or classrooms. These types of greetings are influenced by socio-linguistics contexts.
For example, *Buat apa tu?* / *Nani shiteru no?* /What are you doing?, *Tengah makan ke?* /Are you eating?, etc.
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The analysis of the result of DCT is based on a theoretical concept of interlanguage pragmatics that focuses on non-native speakers’ comprehension and production of speech acts (Kasper & Dahl, 1991) within the area of pragmatic transfer. These are true in case the respondents translated Malay greetings into Japanese. The interviews are used to help explain the answers given in DCT.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data is presented and discussed here. The data is analyzed based on the two situations/scenarios provided in the DCT survey. Bahasa Melayu and Japanese greetings data was analyzed and coded into six greeting patterns according to the model explained earlier. Later, the respondents’ Japanese greetings were compared to their Bahasa Melayu greetings in order to identify elements of pragmatic patterns and pragmatic transfer.

ANALYSIS SITUATION 1

Situation 1: *In the morning, you met a classmate in the classroom before the class starts. That classmate is of the same gender and your close friend. Please write greetings you will use to greet him/her.*

Situation 1(A): Greet your Malaysian classmate/close friend in Bahasa Melayu.

Situation 1(B): Greet your Japanese classmate/close friend in Japanese.

In situation 1(A), as shown in Table 2, 14 types of greeting patterns in Bahasa Melayu were used. 62 (77.5%) respondents chose to use a single pattern of greetings to their classmates. Among them, 29 respondents (36%) use Pattern 1 with the most is *Assalamualaikum* /Peace be upon you, followed by *Selamat Pagi* /Good Morning. *Assalamualaikum* is an Arabic phrase, meaning “Peace be upon you” and is a common greeting among Muslims around the world regardless of their language background including in Malaysia; therefore, the expression *Assalamualaikum* is used as it is in this paper. 23 respondents (29%) use Pattern 2, with mostly saying *Hai*/Hi. Five respondents (6%) use Pattern 6, four respondents (5%) use Pattern 3 and one respondent (1%) uses Pattern 5. Pattern 4 was not used in this situation.

Next, 18 respondents (22.5%) use a combination of two greeting patterns. Five respondents (6%) combine Pattern 2 and Pattern 4. For example, “*Hai* + (name of the classmate)”. 4 respondents (5%) combine Pattern 1 and Pattern 5 (*Assalamualaikum*, *sihat?* /Are you well?, *Assalamualaikum*, *dah makan?* /Have you eaten?). Two respondents (2.5%) each combine Pattern 1 and Pattern 4 (*Assalamualaikum* + (name of the classmate)), Pattern 3 and Pattern 4 (*Hei* + (name of the classmate)), respectively. One respondent (1%) each combines Pattern 1 and Pattern 2 (*Assalamualaikum*, *Hai* /Hi), Pattern 2 and Pattern 5 (*Hai*, *sihat?* /Hi, Are you well?), Pattern 2 and Pattern 6 (*Hai*, *kerja sekolah dah siap?* /Hi, have you done your homework?), Pattern 3 and Pattern 1 (*Uii*, *Selamat pagi* / *Uii*, Good morning), as well as Pattern 3 and Pattern 5 (*Yo*, *dah makan?* /Yo, have you eaten?).

Interestingly, the greeting *Dah makan?* /Have you eaten? was used by three respondents (4%) despite the scenario given does not provide such context. Through follow-up interviews, all three respondents who used this expression explained they asked “Have you eaten?” not because they were really concerned about whether their classmates had eaten breakfast or not; rather, for them, this kind of greeting is widely used as just one of the common daily greetings in Malay culture. This shows that this greeting is not used for its meaning but rather just to be friendly. This kind of greeting is accepted into the cultural convention of the Malays, as it was pointed by Zainal Abidin (1950), as an indication of good manners. So, as the usage and justification, this greeting is categorized under the group of Phatic Greetings (Pattern 5).

From the results in Situation 1(A), it is shown that lots of respondents use *Assalamualaikum* (Pattern 1) in both single and combination type of greetings. It shows that even *Assalamualaikum* is proper and categorized as formal, Muslims also use it widely among people of close relationships, showing that this greeting is acceptable in any situations with Muslim interlocutors. And this greeting is commonly used among Muslims in Malaysia.

TABLE 2. SITUATION 1(A)

	Greeting Patterns in Bahasa Melayu	Times	%
1	Pattern 1	29	36
2	Pattern 2	23	29
3	Pattern 6	5	6
4	Pattern 3	4	5
5	Pattern 5	1	1
6	Pattern 2 → Pattern 4	5	6
7	Pattern 1 → Pattern 5	4	5
8	Pattern 1 → Pattern 4	2	2.5
9	Pattern 3 → Pattern 4	2	2.5
10	Pattern 1 → Pattern 2	1	1
11	Pattern 2 → Pattern 5	1	1
12	Pattern 2 → Pattern 6	1	1
13	Pattern 3 → Pattern 1	1	1
14	Pattern 3 → Pattern 5	1	1
	TOTAL	80	100

On the other hand, in situation 1(B), as shown in Table 3, 8 types of greeting patterns in Japanese were used. The respondents show different tendencies in greeting their Japanese classmates, in which majority 77 (96%) respondents chose to use a single pattern of greetings. Out of them, 58 respondents (73%) chose Pattern 2 with all greetings being *Ohayou* /Morning. Respondents wrote using Japanese character *Hiragana* or alphabet and read as *Ohayou/Ohayo/Ohhayo/Ohaiyoo*. These informal greetings in plain styles are appropriate to be used among classmates since they are of the same age and belong to the same group level (Kikuchi 1997; Jamila & Musaev, 2011). Meanwhile, 13 respondents (16%) use Pattern 1 and all written *Ohayou Gozaimasu* /Good morning. However, *Ohayou Gozaimasu* is a polite style and used for interlocutors of higher position or in formal situations, thus this usage to classmates is considered inappropriate. As Jamila (2009) pointed out, many Japanese L2 learners have difficulties to differentiate usage of polite style and plain style in Japanese speech styles. As expected, follow-up interviews reveal that the respondents just wanted to say “Good Morning” and did not pay attention to the speech styles. Other four male respondents (5%) use Pattern 3, which are, *Ossu!* /Hi! and *Ya!* /Hi!. In Japanese, *Ossu!* is a slang of Hi! and this expression is mainly used by males among their peers in Japan. But this slang is not taught in the Japanese classrooms at AAJ so the source is questionable. The four male respondents explained in the interview that they learned this greeting from *anime*, dramas and Japanese TV programs. Besides that, two respondents (2.5%) use Pattern 6: *Kinou, nani o shimashita ka?* /What did you do yesterday? This greeting is not appropriate since *shimashita* /did you do? is in a polite style. One respondent (1%) uses Pattern 5: *Genki?* /Are you well?. Even this greeting is in a plain style, Japanese do not commonly ask this to the people whom they meet every day. As in Situation 1(A), Pattern 4 was also not used in Situation 1(B).

Next, in Situation 1(B), only three respondents (4%) use a combination of two greeting patterns. One respondent each combines Pattern 1 and Pattern 5: *Ohayou Gozaimasu. Genki desuka?* /Good Morning. How are you?, Pattern 2 and Pattern 4 (*Ohayou* + (friend’s name) /Morning + (friend’s name)), and Pattern 4 and Pattern 1 (*~san, Ohayou Gozaimasu* /~san, Good Morning). *~san* is used with Japanese names to address them. Out of these three, only the *Ohayou* + (friend’s name) /Morning + (friend’s name) is appropriate for this situation. Other two greetings are inappropriate because of the use of a polite style.

TABLE 3. SITUATION 1(B)

	Greeting Patterns in Japanese	Times	%
1	Pattern 2	57	71
2	Pattern 1	13	16
3	Pattern 3	4	5
4	Pattern 6	2	2.5
5	Pattern 5	1	1
6	Pattern 1 → Pattern 5	1	1
7	Pattern 2 → Pattern 4	1	1
8	Pattern 4 → Pattern 1	1	1
		80	100

The results show that in Situation 1, most respondents chose to greet Malaysian friends with *Assalamualaikum*. Whereas, they use greetings that mean “Good Morning” to Japanese friends. Short forms and plain style of this “Good Morning” such as *Ohayou, Ohayoo, Ohayo* are used to close friends. Nevertheless, some respondents do not differentiate polite style and plain style in Japanese greetings that they mistakenly used a polite style, such as *Ohayou Gozaimasu* /Good morning in this situation.

The findings in Situation 1 also show that the respondents chose to use less greeting patterns when they greet their Japanese friends compared to when they greet their Malaysian friends. The types of Japanese greetings they use are from what they learned in the classrooms and some applied the greetings that they learned from *anime*, dramas and Japanese TV programs. As for the *anime-based* learning, Chan & Wong (2017) emphasized that Japanese language used in *anime* is casual in most of the contexts involving daily life. From this, it is understood that respondents who watch *anime* are more exposed to Japanese casual language or plain style which is appropriate to be used among close friends. It is also learned from the follow-up interviews that respondents started watching anime from their high school days. Their motivations have enabled them to capture Japanese language competence outside classroom settings.

Zooming in both Bahasa Melayu and Japanese greetings data of each respondent in Situation 1, it is learnt that throughout the process of choosing the greetings, the respondents fall into two categories as below:

1. Respondents who chose different greetings. 59 respondents (74%) show different greetings between Bahasa Melayu and Japanese. Through the follow up interviews, they stated that greetings in Bahasa Melayu and Japanese were chosen separately based on their perspective of the languages accordingly. Table 4 shows three examples. R1 uses *Assalamualaikum* (P1) to greet a Malaysian friend and *Ohayou Gozaimasu* /Good Morning (P1) to greet a Japanese friend, claiming that he was not aware of *Ohayou Gozaimasu* /Good Morning is not appropriate to be used to close contacts. R2 and R3 chose to greet Malaysian friends with conversation-like greetings but have simple and appropriate greetings in plain style of *Ohayou* /Morning (P2) to Japanese friends. In terms of the content of greetings, R1, R2 and R3 chose proper topics referring to the cultural norms of each language.

TABLE 4: EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT GREETINGS

Respondent	Greetings in Bahasa Melayu	Greetings in Japanese
R1	<i>Assalamualaikum</i> (P1)	<i>Ohayou gozaimasu</i> / Good Morning (P1)
R2	<i>Yo! Dah makan?</i> /Hi! Have you eaten? (P3 - P5)	<i>Ohayou</i> /Morning (P2)
R3	<i>Hai! Kerja sekolah dah siap?</i> /Hi! Have you done homework? (P3 - P6)	<i>Ohayou</i> /Morning (P2)

2. Respondents who chose similar greetings. 21 respondents (26%) wrote greetings in Japanese similar to greetings in Bahasa Melayu. Asked whether they merely translated the greetings from Bahasa Melayu to Japanese, five respondents (24%) said that they think separately but it happened that the greetings are the same. Majority of 16 respondents (76%) admitted they directly translated the greetings. In other words, they transferred the greetings from Bahasa Melayu into Japanese. This kind of non-native speakers' comprehension and production of speech act is known as pragmatic transfer (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Table 5 shows three of those examples. R4 translated Japanese *Ohayou Gozaimasu* (P1) from Bahasa Melayu's *Selamat Pagi* /Good Morning (P1). As both are formal greetings, they are not appropriate to be used in this situation so this transfer is considered as a failure. R5 translated *Ohayou* (P2) from *Pagi* /Morning (P2). Both are informal greetings and appropriate to be used in this situation so this transfer is a success. R6 translated *Hayai ne* (P6) from *Awal datang* /You came early (P6). This greeting is in informal style and the topic is considered acceptable in this context for both cultures so this is a success transfer.

TABLE 5. EXAMPLES OF SIMILAR GREETINGS

Respondent	Greetings in Bahasa Melayu	Greetings in Japanese
R4	<i>Selamat Pagi</i> /Good Morning (P1)	<i>Ohayou gozaimasu</i> / Good morning (P1)
R5	<i>Pagi</i> /Morning (P2)	<i>Ohayou</i> /Morning (P2)
R6	<i>Awal datang</i> /You came early (P6)	<i>Hayai ne</i> /You are early (P6)

ANALYSIS SITUATION 2

Situation 2: During lunch time, you met a classmate having lunch at the cafeteria/canteen. That classmate is of the same gender and your close friend. Please write greetings you will use to greet him/her.

Situation 2(A): Greet your Malaysian classmate/close friend in Bahasa Melayu.

Situation 2(B): Greet your Japanese classmate/close friend in Japanese.

In situation 2(A), as shown in Table 6, nine types of greeting patterns were used. 52 respondents (65%) chose Pattern 6 in Bahasa Melayu as greetings to their Malaysian friends. Pattern 6 is a pattern that contains various types of words and sentences used to greet and contextualize or individualize phrases or questions in specific circumstances of the situation. These types of greetings are influenced by socio-linguistics context that explains how text and talk are adapted to their social environment (Van Dijk, 2009). Among 52 greetings in Pattern 6, 43 asked what their friend was eating, such as *Makan apa tu?* /What are you eating? and *Tengah makan apa?* /What are you eating? Interestingly enough, in Pattern 6, three respondents asked *Tengah makan ke?* /Are you eating? to the classmate who is obviously eating. This kind of greeting is considered strange in Japanese but being used widely in Bahasa Melayu. Thus, the same greeting used in Japanese can be explained as a pragmatic transfer from Bahasa Melayu. 10 respondents (12.5%) chose Pattern 2 (*Hai* /Hi) which is an informal and shorter version of Pattern 1 and appropriate for this situation. Five respondents (6%) use Pattern 1 (*Assalamualaikum*) and (*Selamat Tengahari* /Good Afternoon). *Assalamualaikum* is fine but *Selamat Tengahari* /Good Afternoon would be too formal to greet a close friend. Three respondents (4%) use Pattern 3 (*Yo!* /Yo!), Two respondents (2.5%) use Pattern 5 (*Dah makan ke?* /Have you eaten?). However, Pattern 4 was not used in this situation.

Next, eight respondents (10%) use a combination of two greeting patterns. Four respondents (5%) combine Pattern 2 and Pattern 6. For example, *Hai, makan ke?* /Hi, are you eating? Two respondents (2.5%) combine Pattern 3 and Pattern 6 (*Uii, makan beli mana tu?* / *Uii*, where did you buy the food?). One respondent (1%) combines Pattern 2 and Pattern 4 (*Hai, + (nama kawan)* /Hi, + (friend's name)). Another respondent (1%) combines Pattern 4 and Pattern 6 (*(nama kawan), + makan apa tu?* / (friend's name), + what are you eating?).

TABLE 6. SITUATION 2(A)

	Greeting Patterns in Bahasa Melayu	Times	%
1	Pattern 6	52	65
2	Pattern 2	10	12.5
3	Pattern 1	5	6
4	Pattern 3	3	4
5	Pattern 5	2	2.5
6	Pattern 2 → Pattern 6	4	5
7	Pattern 3 → Pattern 6	2	2.5
8	Pattern 2 → Pattern 4	1	1
9	Pattern 4 → Pattern 6	1	1
		80	100

Meanwhile, in situation 2(B), seven types of greeting patterns were used as shown in Table 7. Same as in Situation 2(A), the respondents also chose Pattern 6 as the most used greetings (62%) in Japanese. Single greeting patterns are more preferable by 76 respondents (95%). Among them, 36 respondents (47%) asked what their friend is eating. Two respondents asked *Tabeteru no ka?* /Are you eating? to a friend who obviously is eating. 21 respondents chose Pattern 1 (*Konnichiwa* /Good Afternoon) which is formal greetings and not suitable to be used to a close friend in this situation. Four respondents (5%) chose Pattern 3 (*Osu!* /Hi!). One respondent (1%) uses Pattern 4 by just calling his friend's name.

Next, only four respondents (5%) use a combination of two patterns of greetings. Two respondents (2.5%) combine Pattern 1 and Pattern 6 (*Konnichiwa. Nani o taberu no?* /Good Afternoon. What do you eat?). One respondent (1%) each combines Pattern 4 and Pattern 6 ((*friend's name*), + *nani o taberu?* /(friend's name), + what do you eat?), as well as, Pattern 3 and Pattern 6 (*Ya! Nani o taberu no?* /Ya! What do you eat?).

TABLE 7. SITUATION 2(B)

	Greeting Patterns in Japanese	Times	%
1	Pattern 6	50	62
2	Pattern 1	21	26
3	Pattern 3	4	5
4	Pattern 4	1	1
5	Pattern 1 → Pattern 6	2	2.5
6	Pattern 4 → Pattern 6	1	1
7	Pattern 3 → Pattern 6	1	1
	TOTAL	80	100

In Situation 2, some characteristics of using different and similar greetings between Japanese and Bahasa Melayu are synonymous with Situation 1. Bahasa Melayu and Japanese data of each respondent in Situation 2 reveals that the respondents are divided into two categories during the process of choosing the greetings. This is illustrated below:

1. Respondents who implemented pragmatic transfer greetings. 45 respondents (56%) wrote greetings in Japanese similar to greetings they wrote in Bahasa Melayu. All respondents admitted they directly translated the greetings. In the follow up interviews, they revealed that they were not familiar with Japanese greetings in Situation 2 so it was safer to just translate them from greetings in Bahasa Melayu. Table 8 shows four examples in which the respondents use exactly the same expressions in Japanese and Bahasa Melayu. R7 greets *Tabeteru no ka?* /Are you eating? (P6) in Japanese, which is the same meaning as *Tengah makan ke?* /Are you eating? (P6) in Bahasa Melayu. This kind of phatic greeting is considered normal in Malay culture but sounds weird in Japanese culture; so this is considered as a failure transfer. This is because, for native speakers of Japanese, they never ask what one is doing when they can obviously see what one is doing. R8 asked *Nani wo tabete iru no?* / What are you eating? in plain style and the topic is also acceptable; so this is considered as a success transfer. Same goes with R9's success transfer who also uses adequate topic, as well as plain style when asking *Oishii?* / Is it tasty? However, R10's transfer on the same topic is considered as a failure transfer because of the usage of polite style in asking *Oishii desu ka?* / Is it tasty?.

TABLE 8. EXAMPLES OF PRAGMATIC TRANSFER

Respondent	Greetings in Bahasa Melayu	Greetings in Japanese
R7	<i>Tengah makan ke?</i> /Are you eating? (P6)	<i>Tabeteru no ka?</i> /Are you eating? (P6)
R8	<i>Makan apa tu?</i> / What are you eating? (P6)	<i>Nani wo tabete iru no?</i> / What are you eating? (P6)
R9	<i>Sedap?</i> / Is it tasty? (P6)	<i>Oishii?</i> / Is it tasty? (P6)
R10	<i>Sedap ke?</i> / Is it tasty? (P6)	<i>Oishii desu ka?</i> / Is it tasty? (P6)

2. Respondents who do not implement pragmatic transfer greetings. 35 respondents (44%) show different greetings between Bahasa Melayu and Japanese. They wrote greetings in Bahasa Melayu and Japanese based on their perspective of the nature of each language. Table 9 shows three examples. R11 asked what his friend is eating in Bahasa Melayu but in Japanese he said, *Oishisou desu ne* /Looks tasty. The topics are both relevant but Japanese greeting is inappropriate because it is in a polite style. R12 just said *Hai/Hi* (P2) in Bahasa Melayu but in Japanese he said *Tabeteru no ka?* /Are you eating? (P6). This Japanese greeting is appropriate in speech style but not in terms of topic for the same reasons discussed earlier. R13 asked what her friend is eating in Bahasa Melayu but in Japanese she says *Konnichiwa* /Good Afternoon. Even the topics are both fine but the Japanese greeting is considered inappropriate because it is a proper formal greeting. In order to use proper greetings in Japanese, L2 learners need to make sure that both topic and speech style are appropriate.

TABLE 9. EXAMPLES OF NON-PRAGMATIC TRANSFER

Respondent	Greetings in Bahasa Melayu	Greetings in Japanese
R11	<i>Makan apa tu?</i> / What are you eating? (P6)	<i>Oishisou desu ne</i> / Looks tasty (P6)
R12	<i>Hai /Hi</i> (P2)	<i>Tabeteru no ka?</i> /Are you eating? (P6)
R13	<i>Makan apa?</i> / What are you eating? (P6)	<i>Konnichiwa</i> / Good Afternoon (P1)

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that choosing appropriate greetings in Japanese requires L2 learners to at least consider two things; one is using proper speech style and another is choosing a topic that is according to the Japanese cultural norms. These are among the pragmatic constraints L2 learners encounter in using language in social interaction as proposed by Jamila & Musaev (2011). This kind of interlanguage pragmatics competence could be achieved through exploration of variety of situations especially during classrooms context as well as exposure with guidance to extra materials of Japanese popular culture such as anime, dramas, comics, TV programs, etc. Japanese L2 learners need to experience the language in various contexts of interaction in order to be competence in interlanguage pragmatics.

This paper also suggests a data collection of Japanese greetings by Japanese native speakers to serve as basic reference other than textbooks and formal teaching materials used during the teaching of greetings. As the settings of both situations in this study are conversations among close friends, it is expected that informal greetings are used. The results show that most respondents use informal greetings, as well as using plain style in Japanese greetings which are appropriate. However, some of the greeting topics that they chose are not common in daily greetings in Japanese cultural norms. From the interviews, the respondents admitted that this usage mostly come from their decisions to translate the Malay expressions directly into Japanese. This tendency is more significant in a situation that L2 learners are not

familiar with, in this study it is Situation 2. We found that this strategy is used when L2 learners find difficulties in finding expressions in certain given situations. It is believed that this type of pragmatic transfer stems from a natural habit of the L2 learners to just simply apply social-cultural norms of their native language when using the second language as supported by Takahashi & Beebe (1987) and Kasper & Blum-Kulka (1993).

On the other hand, the setting of Situation 1 is more common to be found in textbooks and classroom settings so the respondents had not much difficulties in finding proper contextual greetings. That explained the reason why pragmatic transfer greetings were found more in Situation 2 compared to Situation 1. Nevertheless, the transfer has two sided implications, success transfer and failure transfer, based on the chosen speech style and topic. This finding echoed Shleykina's (2019) finding who found that among the major factors that influenced the L2 production of greetings are induced instruction, L1 transfer, low competence in a particular greeting phrase or strategy and desire to sound polite. Thus, the findings suggest the importance of exposure to and the understanding of the cultural context of a target language in choosing appropriate greetings among L2 in an interlanguage context.

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