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## Transformation of Japanese Culture for Increasing Japanese Communicative Competence

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### ABSTRACT

The transformation of Japanese culture plays an important role in studying the Japanese language. The learner will be motivated to master the language skills, especially the speaking skills by knowing the Japanese culture. However, in reality, mid-intermediate students' lack of competence in communicative competence becomes an unresolved problem until today. Communicative competence is a strategy that is able to improve the skills of speaking Japanese. This study aims to assess the preparation of the design model of learning, teaching materials conversational skills for intermediate level, which focuses on the transformation of Japanese culture as innovation and efforts to improve speaking skills in learning *Chukyu Kaiwa*. This research uses the Research and Development (R & D) and experiment. The result shows a significant increase in students' Japanese speaking skills and their understanding of Japanese culture. The transformation of Japanese culture is able to attract the students to compare and find similarities with Indonesian culture.

### KEYWORDS

Communicative Competence; Japanese Speaking Skills; Transformation of Japanese Culture

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### INTRODUCTION

Mastering Japanese speaking skills is an important requirement that is related to the level of success in learning the foreign language and facing the global challenges. Mastering Japanese speaking skills can be acquired through speaking lessons (Kaiwa)

which start from the basic level (*Shokyu Kaiwa*), intermediate (*Chukyu Kaiwa*) and advanced level (*Jokyu Kaiwa*). Speaking skills can be mastered if the student is able to convey the content of conversation to the speaking partner and the partner grasps the content of the conversation. Students are expected to have the ability to communicate simple

Japanese language effectively in their daily activities. Rubin and Thompson (1994 : 30) state:

*“For most people, the main goal of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate. It is through communication that people send and receive messages effectively and negotiate meaning. Nowadays, how to communicate effectively in Foreign Language Learning becomes much more important than reading and writing. As a result, communication strategies have turned into a crucial topic for all foreign language learners and teachers.”*

Besides the ability to read and write, the main goal in foreign language learning, in particular, Japanese, is the ability to communicate. By communicating, the purpose and effectiveness of foreign language learning can be achieved. The ability to communicate in Japanese is one of the competencies or life skills that must be mastered in globalization era.

Japanese communication skills can be acquired if the learning activity in the classroom can attract students and stimulate students' affective and cognitive attitudes to apply their previous psychomotor knowledge. Interesting and stimulating teaching materials encourage students to speak and communicate with their peers or the other speaking partners. In addition, it would

be easier to understand the Japanese teaching materials if the materials are easy to learn and remember.

At the basic level, the lecturers still guide the students' speaking skills. The use of sentence patterns, phrases and basic vocabulary that has been learned is applied in simple conversations. Memorizing and reciting (drill) are dominant in learning to listen. However, at the secondary level (*Chukyu Kaiwa*) students have difficulties in speaking Japanese. It is because of the material level of difficulty and the freedom given to the students in making conversation to be displayed in a role play in the classroom.

Japanese language learning requires various elements to support the teaching and learning activities. It is including teaching materials, media, teaching methods, textbooks and many others. Students indirectly learn Japanese culture when they are learning Japanese. Therefore, the Japanese culture and the language have a very close relationship, even though they are two different subjects. We know that language and culture can influence each other. A language used by a community reflects their culture (Diner, 2014 : 81).

Students from Department of Japanese Language Education FPBS UPI, especially those in the intermediate level have a lack of knowledge about Japanese culture. Thus, it is difficult for them to create phrases that are

appropriate for their conversation. Furthermore, teaching materials for speaking that contain Japanese culture are infrequent. This condition leads to the monotonous learning activity. The students are not active in speaking and responding the lecturers. There are some problems in students' speaking skills, such as:

1. The material is less attractive
2. The lack of knowledge of Japanese Culture
3. Students are not confident
4. Students are embarrassed because of limited vocabulary and sentence structure.

Besides the mentioned problems, the text book plays an important role. It must encourage the students to speak actively and dig the communication gap so that the communicative target is reached. 'Nihongo Shuuchuu Toreeninggu shokyuu kara chuukyuu e' is the main textbook for teaching *Kaiwa*. It contains illustrations and story in comic form. This textbook has some flaws. The students have difficulties in imagining the pictures. Moreover, they do not understand the situation, culture, and customs in Japan. Therefore, it is difficult for the students to understand the teaching materials and the usage of proper discourse (Aneros and Juangsih, 2012).

Based on the current problems, it is important to create a teaching innovation that

can improve the students' speaking skills. According to Hymes (1972), Canale (1983), Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), Kida M.dkk (2009), communicative competence is a solution to improve speaking skills since it has four competencies such as discourse competence, socio-cultural competence / Shakai Gengo noryoku, linguistic competence / bunpō noryoku, and actional competence / danwa noryoku, which is based on the strategic competence/sutoratejinoryoku. The connection between the sub-competences can create the active communication. The speaker must have the language knowledge, the cultural knowledge and proper expressions that are in accordance with the communication in order to create a harmonious communication. Based on the study conducted by Brumfit and Johnson (1979), Savignon (1972), Azies and Alwasilah, (1996 : 24), there are some principles of learning communicative competence:

1. Learner will effectively learn the language when he/she is treated as an individual who has needs and interests.
2. Learner will efficiently learn the language when he/she is given the opportunity to use the target language in various activities.
3. Learner will correctly learn the language when he/she is exposed to the understandable and relevant

communicative data based on their needs and interests.

4. Learner will learn the language well when he/she deliberately focused on learning the shape, skills, and strategies that support the process of language acquisition.
5. Learner will successfully learn the language when he/she is given the sociocultural data and direct experience with the culture of the target language.
6. Learner will learn the language well if he/she is aware of the role and nature of language and culture.
7. Learners will successfully learn the language if he/she is given the right feedback related to their progress.
8. Learner will learn the language well if he/she is given the opportunity to control their own learning activities.

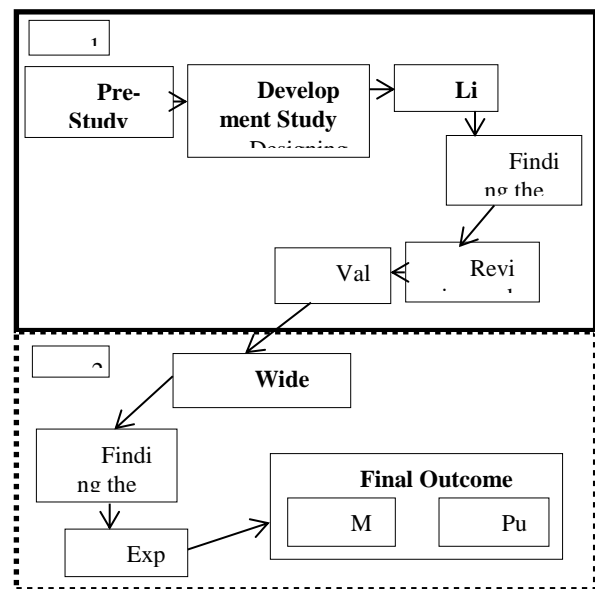
Thus, this study is expected to produce an innovative teaching material on learning conversational skills by transforming the cultures of Japan to the students. In the end, the students can understand the Japanese culture and implement their understanding within their Japanese speaking skills.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the Research and Development (R & D) and quasi-experimental

method. The Development method is utilized in the field of education and learning. The method aims to develop and validate the product of education and learning. It does not test the implementation of theories. The main goal of this method is improving the quality of education and learning. In addition, it can be used widely in this field (Sukmadinata, 2011 : 164). This research focuses on the learning condition of 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup>-semester students on *Chukyu Kaiwa I* and *Chukyu Kaiwa II* course.

**Picture 1  
Research Design**



## RESULT

This study aims to solve the students' lack of competence in speaking through materializing the teaching materials of communicative competence based on the transformation of Japanese culture to the

students of intermediate level (*Chukyu*) on speaking course (*Chukyu Kaiwa I*) and (*Chukyu Kaiwa II*). The material increases students' ability in speaking and their knowledge of Japanese culture. The teaching materials are

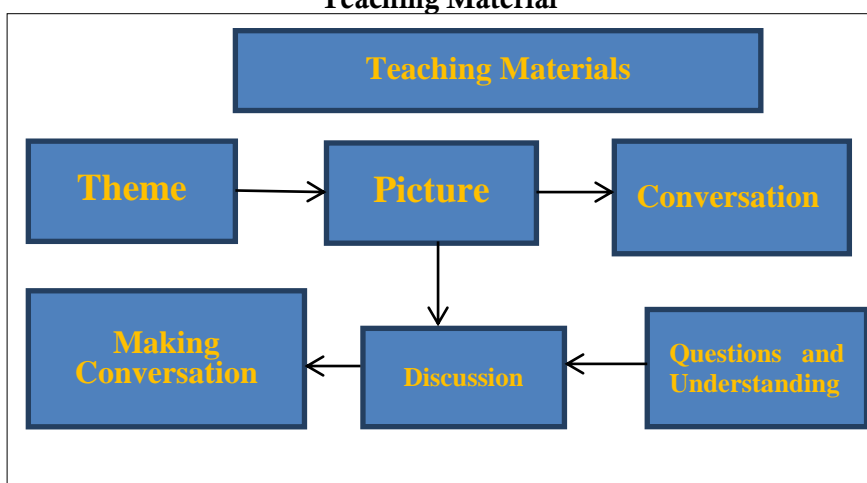
based on Japanese culture that is closely related to the daily life of Japanese people. The first step is determining the themes of Japanese culture:

Themes of Japanese Culture	Themes of Japanese Culture
1. <i>Shokuji no Shikata</i>	10. <i>Namae no yobikata</i>
2. <i>Nihon de no Seikatsu</i>	11. <i>Heya no tsukaikata</i>
3. <i>Nihon no kodomo wa yoku benkyou shimasune</i>	12. <i>Nihonjin no hanashi no shikata</i>
4. <i>Nihon no omoshiroi shukan</i>	13. <i>Nihonjin no kanjou no arawashikata</i>
5. <i>Nihon wa zuibun urusai desune</i>	14. <i>Nihon de no shokuji no shikata</i>
6. <i>Ima no nihon no wakaihitotachi</i>	15. <i>Nihon no depaato</i>
7. <i>Nihon no ie</i>	16. <i>Nihon no toire</i>
8. <i>Nihon de zen ga Iyana koto</i>	17. <i>Nihon no kodomo</i>
9. <i>Zen to no seikatsu</i>	18. <i>Nihon no daigakusei</i>

14 themes are chosen from the entire 18 themes to cope with the number of meetings

in *Chukyu Kaiwa* course. Here are the teaching materials based on the Japanese culture:

Picture 2  
Teaching Material



### Picture 3 Conversation

#### 1. 食事の仕方

学習目標：学生は日本の食事の文化をわかるためです。そして、インドネシアの食事の文化をディスカッションすることができます。

田中：アメリカの家ではよく御飯を食べる前にお祈りをして、それから御飯を食べますね。  
ミラー：そうですね。短いお祈りをしてから食べることがよくありますね。日本ではお祈りをしないんですか？  
田中：ええ、しません。大抵「頂きます」と言っすぐ食べます。  
ミラー：日本ではいつも箸で食べるんですか？  
田中：そうですねえ、和食を食べる時は箸で食べますが、洋食の時はナイフとフォークをいいますね。  
ミラー：私も箸を使ったことがあります、むずかしいですね。  
田中：そうですね。子供の時に使い方を教えられて毎日使いますから、上手になるんでしょうね。  
ミラー：でも何回練習しても上手に使えない人もいますよ。  
田中：御飯を食べる時アメリカでは音を立てて食べてはいけませんが、日本では大丈夫です。味噌汁を食べる時にすすってもいいですし、お茶などをのむ時に音を立ててのんでもいいです。それから、アメリカでは塩などが自分の近くでない時、“Pass me the salt, please”と言って取ってもらいますが、日本では、ほかの人に頼む代わりに自分で取ってもいいです。  
ミラー：分かりました。  
田中：それから、アメリカでは食べたい物を大きな皿から自分で取りますが、日本ではお母さんが一人一人の皿に料理を盛ってくれます。  
ミラー：おなかがすいていて、もっと食べたい時はどうするんですか？  
田中：御飯と味噌汁はお母さんに頼んで、お代わりをもらってもいいです。  
ミラー：晩御飯は家族みんなで食べられますか？  
田中：お父さんが仕事でいそがしくて、お父さんといっしょに食べられない家族が多いんじゃないでしょうか。  
ミラー：そうですね。それは残念ですね。

<http://language.tiu.ac.jp/materials/jpn/yomi/yomi21.html>



Picture 4



To find the teaching materials that are relevant with the aim of this study, the researchers collect them from various teaching materials and websites that are related to Japanese culture. The researchers have been compiling the teaching materials and Japanese culture materials to be discussed and tested in a limited trial. Furthermore, the researchers also choosing some Japanese cultures to improve the speaking skills. The next step is searching some Indonesian-based themes as comparisons. They are beneficial in improving understanding between the two different cultures as Japanese culture and Indonesian culture.

The speaking skills of intermediate level students in Chukyu Kaiwa I and Chukyu Kaiwa II are expected to reach the significant level of communicative competence through the preparation of the teaching materials. The Japanese language teaching and learning process in the classroom are redesigned with groups and discussion. The students should be able to reconstruct the conversation based on the themes using the Japanese and then present it in front of the class. By using this method, the learning activity is more interesting and entertaining. In addition, the students are able to have a better understanding of Japanese and Indonesian culture. The transformation of Japanese

culture is intended to enhance students' motivation in understanding the Japanese language and Japanese culture as well. They can take the good values and compare it with the Indonesian culture. In addition, the students can respect and understand the differences of Japanese and Indonesian culture.

## CONCLUSION

1. Communicative competence is arranged based on Japanese cultures that are relevant to Japanese language teaching and the daily life of Japanese people
2. Transformation of Japanese culture focuses on some themes such as Japanese eating customs, the proper etiquette of visiting someone's house, speaking with Japanese and education in Japan.
3. The basic design of teaching communicative competence based on the transformation of Japanese culture are: 1) Defining the teaching goals on each material, 2) The teaching material consists of conversation or reading texts, 3) The questions are related to the teaching material, 4) Discussion.

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