

Difference of Grammatical Usage and Actual Usage of Honorifics in Japanese Language

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Japan is a country which is significantly concerned about the use of honorifics in conversation with another individual. In the Japanese language there are three types of honorifics namely, '*Sonkeigo*', '*Kenjōgo*' and '*Teineigo*'. The usage of these honorifics differs according to the relationship between the two parties who are conversing. This disparity in usage of honorific terms have thus caused much difficulty not only to foreign learners of the Japanese language, but also to native Japanese speakers. Many Sri Lankan students in Japan argue that despite their formal grammatical study of Japanese honorifics, its practical usage in the Japanese society is relatively complex. Hence, this study will analyze the possible differences between Japanese honorifics that are taught formally through grammar lessons, in relation to the honorific terms that are used practically in the everyday Japanese society. As Japanese honorifics possess a vast scope of study, only one of the three afore-mentioned types; '*Sonkeigo*' will be considered in this study. As participants of this study, fifty students who are currently pursuing a Special degree in Japanese at the University of Kelaniya, and fifty native Japanese students who are studying in Japanese universities were selected. The distinction between the usage of Japanese honorifics in formal grammar and its practical usage ('*Sonkeigo*') will be analyzed through a survey conducted via questionnaires given to the selected participants. This study will be conducted as a comparative research study, where the responses submitted by the Sri Lankan students (University of Kelaniya), will be studied to examine the grammatical usage of honorifics, while those of the native Japanese students will be examined for the practical usage of honorifics. The outcomes of this study will aspire to help modify the teaching of Japanese honorifics in Sri Lanka, in accordance with the everyday usage of honorifics in the Japanese society, while functioning to minimize the difficulties Sri Lankan students face in using honorifics in the Japanese society.

Key words: practical usage, difference, grammatical usage, Japanese honorifics, *Sonkeigo*

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