

Students' Perception Of Non-Native Japanese Speaker Teacher's Competencies (Nnjsts) : Gender-Based Review

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Gender-Based Student Perceptions, Non-Native Japanese Language Teachers (NNJSTs), Competencies of Foreign Language Teachers</p>	<p><i>Japanese is one of the foreign languages taught in both formal and informal educational institutions in Indonesia, and the number of Japanese language learners is growing quantitatively. In foreign language courses, collaboration between native and non-native teachers is common, including in Japanese language programs. Currently, there are approximately 6,617 non-native Japanese language teachers in Indonesia (Japan Foundation, 2021). While it is often argued that Native Japanese Speaker Teachers (NJSTs) have advantages over Non-Native Japanese Speaker Teachers (NNJSTs), student preferences between the two groups merit further examination. Previous research has largely focused on students' perceptions of NJSTs and NNJSTs in formal educational settings, with less attention given to non-formal education. This study aims to explore the perceptions of Indonesian students toward NNJSTs in non-formal educational institutions, specifically at LPK Fuji Academy Singaraja, with samples drawn from active students registered between January and August 2024. Utilizing a quantitative research design with a descriptive approach, the study employed a closed questionnaire based on the Likert scale. The findings revealed no significant difference between male and female students in terms of teaching competence based on Nuibe et al. (2006). However, male participants rated NNJSTs higher in teaching effectiveness and communication skills, averaging a score of 9.8, while female respondents scored these areas slightly lower at 7.1. Overall, the study highlights that students value NNJSTs for their effective learning strategies, which facilitate a successful learning process and assist students in overcoming challenges.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

Japanese is one of the foreign languages taught in formal and non-formal educational institutions in Indonesia. The development of Japanese language learners is increasing quantitatively. Interest in the Japanese language is increasing from year to year, both in the number of learners and in the institution. According to the 2021 Japanese Language Education Abroad Survey Report, more than 642,000 people in Indonesia study Japanese at the high school level, making Indonesia the country with the highest number of Japanese language learners in the world for this level.

In foreign language courses, native and non-native teachers collaborate in the pedagogical realm. This trend is also seen in Japanese as a foreign language courses, resulting in the recording of around 6,617 Japanese language teachers who are non-native in Indonesia (Japan Foundation, 2021). The number of non-native Japanese language teachers has increased along with the increase in Japanese language education institutions in Indonesia.

There is an argument that Native Japanese Speaker Teacher's (NJST) has many advantages over Non Native Japanese Speaker Teacher's (NNJSTs) and that students prefer NNJSTs over NJST, but this argument must be evaluated. Many researchers have explored students' perceptions of NJSTs and NNJSTs worldwide in formal education institutions but not in the non-formal education institution sector. This study examines the

characteristics that Indonesian Japanese language learners expect from their teachers. Previous empirical studies of Japanese language teachers have not analyzed NNJSTs in the realm of non-formal educational institutions.

Empirical research on students' perception of teacher competence in this field is still very limited. In fact, few NJST know the understanding of local learners regarding foreign language learning, which is due to the difference in cultural and physical distance between the two countries. Therefore, this study aims to reveal Indonesian learners' conception of good Japanese language teachers through quantitative methods and discuss the differences and similarities in learners' perceptions of good NNJSTs.

Japanese language institutions and teachers in Indonesia are very diverse. For example, some colleges offer master's degree programs in Japanese language studies or elective courses for non-Japanese majors, while others offer such courses at non-formal institutions where anyone can join and learn Japanese for various purposes, for example for work. Several NJSTs have been sent from the Japan Foundation each year in the Nihongo Partners program to assist NNSJTs in promoting the Japanese language and cultural understanding in formal schools but not for non-formal schools. Overall, NNJSTs are proficient in teaching Japanese, but few teachers are trained in the official program. Therefore, many NNJSTs are found to be members of regional seminars coordinated by regional organizations.

There are disagreements in research on Non-Native Speaker Teacher (NNST) and Native Speaker Teacher (NST), especially regarding the difference between these two labels (Selvi et al., 2024). Throughout history, NST has been seen as an ideal figure compared to NNST (Rivers, 2018). This deep-rooted perception has created a language ideology known as native speakerism that causes negative implications for NNST (Holliday, 2006; Tsuchiya, 2020; Zhang & Zhang, 2021). These negative beliefs have an impact on students' learning experiences, and are directly connected to the negative affective realm of NNST such as anxiety, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and inferiority (Colmenero & Lasagabaster, 2024; Faez & Karas, 2017; Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010). In addition, research shows that NNST experiences problems in the workplace, such as recruitment and lack of opportunities to teach outside of basic classroom learning (Kamhi-Stein, 2018; Kiczkowiak & Wu, 2018; Ruecker, 2018)

Teachers are artists, so teaching is often considered an art. Therefore, a teacher is considered to be able to present learning by attracting and motivating students' interests, so that students can enjoy the entire learning process and feel enthusiastic. When students feel satisfied and actively participate, it will be easier to understand and master the material presented. Conversely, if the teaching is less engaging, students may become disinterested and unhappy. Supports this view by stating that good teachers play the role of facilitators who are able to make the learning process fun and interesting for students.

Previous research has shown that teaching becomes more engaging when effective teaching techniques are used, teachers demonstrate pedagogical competence and professionalism, materials relevant to student needs, and appropriate facilities and media are provided (Prasetyo et al., 2022). Therefore, this study was conducted to further explore how the role of good NNJSTs in the context of teaching by using the perception between male and female students.

METHOD

The research design is an integrated systematic plan on how to obtain, analyze, and interpret the data compiled in detail. (M. Sugiyono, 2008) in his book mentions that the process in planning and implementing research, starting from the preparation stage to the report preparation stage is referred to as research design. The design of this study uses a descriptive quantitative method because the data is presented in numerical and descriptive form (P. Sugiyono, 2015)

This research is a quantitative research to obtain information about the appearance and performance of teachers based on student perceptions at LPK Fuji Academy Singaraja based on the theory of Nuibe et al (2006). This means that all the data collected is analyzed and described quantitatively. To collect students' perceptions based on the theory of Nuibe et al (2006), the researcher distributed questionnaires to male and female students through an online form that was distributed according to each class. The questionnaire contains questions that have been tested for validity on the Likert scale in accordance with the theory of Nuibe et al (2006). The collected responses were then quantitatively analyzed using the T-test to identify trends and correlations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The following is discussed about the perception of male and female students of LPK Fuji Academy Singaraja based on the results of the test with SPSS in the form of a T-test. First, it will be displayed about the respondent data which can be seen through table 1. as follows:

It	Sex	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Man	6	8%
2	Woman	69	92%
	Total	75	100%

Table 1. Respondent Data by Gender

The demographic profile of the respondents in this study consisted of 75 students from various educational backgrounds, for example high school/vocational school graduates and S1 graduates from various disciplines. Of these, 6 students were male (8%) and 69 students were female (92%), indicating the dominance of female respondents in the sample. The age of students ranges from 18 to 27 years old, with an average age of 19, highlighting a relatively young group, which is most likely to fall into undergraduate-level language studies. In addition, most students are once enrolled in formal Japanese language learning, with about 70% having studied Japanese for more than two years. This reflects a significant level of familiarity with the Japanese language, which has the potential to influence their perception of NNJSTs. Additionally, most students report previous experiences with NNST, which provides additional context for evaluation. These demographic factors are crucial in understanding the different perceptions of male and female students towards NNJSTs, as they can inform their expectations and experiences in a language learning environment.

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Persepsi	Laki-laki	7	88.4286	9.89709	3.74075
	Perempuan	68	86.7647	7.10921	.86212

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Persepsi	Equal variances assumed	.774	.382	.568	73	.572
	Equal variances not assumed			.433	6.653	.678

Figure 1. Students' Perception of NNJSTs based on Nuibe et al (2006)

Based on figure 1, it can be concluded that the T-test shows that there is no significant difference between the perception of male students ($M = 88.42$, $SD = 9.89$) and female students ($M = 86.76$, $SD = 7.1$) towards NNJSTs, $t(73) = 0.568$, $p = 0.572$. Therefore, the result obtained was a p -value ≥ 0.05 , which indicates that there was no significant difference between the two groups.

Discussion

The findings of this study show a striking difference in the perception of NNJSTs between male and female students. Male students rated NNJSTs higher in terms of teaching effectiveness and communication skills, with an average score of 9.8. In contrast, female students gave slightly lower ratings in these areas with an average of 7.1. However, statistical analysis using an independent sample t-test showed no significant difference between the two groups of $t(73) = 0.568$, $p = 0.572$, which suggests that male and female students generally have a positive

view of NNJSTs competencies. Although the difference is not significant, the results of this study underscore the differences in views shared by each gender towards NNJSTs. Higher scores of male students reflect expectations or different experiences in the context of language learning, while slightly lower scores from female students may indicate the use of different evaluation criteria. Further investigation of these perceptions can provide valuable insights into the pedagogical strategies used by NNJSTs, and how these methods can be developed to accommodate differentiated learning in individual students that can improve the overall effectiveness of language teaching.

Implication

There are several methodological limitations inherent in this study. First, the results of this study could not confirm whether the survey respondents fully understood the questionnaire items and instructions. Second, the findings in this study are greatly influenced by the scope of the survey items. The respondents were limited to providing answers within a predetermined framework set by the authors, which may have limited the emergence of unanticipated insights (Brown, 2009). For example, the questionnaire does not include questions related to teacher competencies related to administration, information technology, or information literacy skills (Hirahata, 2007).

For future research, it will be very useful to explore the conception of teachers and compare the views with students' perceptions of the characteristics that teachers should have ((Brown, 2009; Kobayashi et al., 2013)The existing literature shows that there are often differences between the views of teachers and students about language learning ((Brown, 2009). Additionally, although previous studies have noted the potential impact of learning duration, as highlighted in this study, the relationship between students' expectations of teachers and their level of language proficiency has still not been adequately explored. Therefore, further research using more in-depth methodologies is needed to better understand students' perceptions of ideal language teachers.

In addition, it is also important to research the characteristics of language teachers that are expected by other relevant stakeholders, such as the Japan Foundation as a non-profit institution owned by the Japanese government engaged in international cultural exchange. Particular attention should be paid to the social competencies of teachers, including international sensitivity and administrative skills, which were largely overlooked in previous research (Hirahata, 2007). Based on these findings from various perspectives, it is important to further discuss the various competencies that Japanese language teachers need to effectively promote cultural understanding on a global scale.

CONCLUSION

This research quantitatively describes Indonesian students' perceptions of effective Non-Native Japanese Speaker Teachers (NNJSTs), categorizing their views into four main dimensions based on Nuibe et al. (2006). The findings indicate that students expect NNJSTs to significantly contribute to their academic progress, reflecting high expectations for a broad range of teaching competencies. This reliance on NNJSTs stems from the unmet demand for qualified local teachers in Japanese language education in Indonesia. Consequently, the study emphasizes the necessity for ongoing development and training of local Japanese language teachers to support the field's growth. Additionally, novice learners with more extensive language learning experiences and female students demonstrated particularly high expectations of their teachers. The research highlights that effective foreign language education requires teachers to make informed pedagogical decisions aligned with institutional guidelines while considering students' expectations and broader educational trends.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for research related to male and female students' perceptions of NNJSTs. First, it is suggested that future studies can use other theories in exploring the influence of gender on students' perceptions. Additionally, including a broader sample in terms of age, cultural background, and language proficiency will help identify whether these factors also affect the perception of teacher competence.

Second, future research is required to expand the scope of teacher competency evaluation. The study focuses primarily on teaching skills, experience and qualifications, classroom management, and pedagogical competence. However, it is important to add the competencies of NNJSTs in technology integration, administrative tasks, and intercultural sensitivity. Finally, it is recommended to compare the perception of students with the perception of the teachers themselves. This is to be able to trace the differences in the views of teachers and

students in looking at their own teaching competence and effectiveness which can help map the potential gap between teacher intentions and student expectations.

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