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Research Article

Contrastive Analysis of Action Verb Phrases in Japanese and Minangkabau: A Syntactic and Semantic Review

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Abstract
This study investigates the syntactic and semantic similarities and differences between Japanese and Minangkabau action verb phrases, with particular attention to how both languages encode action, agency, aspect, modality, and pragmatic meaning. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, the study analyses action verb phrase data drawn from *Chūjōkyū no Nihongo Kyōshitsu kara Tobidasō!* and selected Minangkabau texts from *jurnalminang.id*. The data were examined using a translation-based analytical method, supported by determining-element identification and comparative linking techniques to identify structural correspondences, semantic equivalences, and potential areas of crosslinguistic interference. The findings reveal that Japanese and Minangkabau differ significantly in their typological organisation. Japanese action verb phrases generally follow a head-final and agglutinative pattern, in which grammatical meanings such as progressivity, potentiality, passivity, causation, and unintended consequence are encoded through particles and verbal inflection. In contrast, Minangkabau tends to employ a head-initial and analytic structure, relying on independent lexical markers, aspectual elements, and contextual interpretation to express comparable semantic functions. Despite these structural differences, both languages demonstrate functional equivalence in representing core action-related meanings, including volition, prohibition, politeness, and causality. The study contributes to contrastive linguistics by showing that semantic similarity does not necessarily imply syntactic or morphological equivalence. Pedagogically, the findings provide a foundation for developing Japanese teaching materials that are more responsive to the linguistic background of Minangkabau-speaking learners and may help reduce structural interference in Japanese language acquisition.

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Introduction

Japanese is studied in almost all regions of Indonesia, with around 93,000 learners recorded across the ten provinces of Sumatra (Sugishima, 2020). The learners are motivated by a desire to communicate in Japanese (85.2%), interest in the language itself (74.1%), and interaction with Japanese people. Other reasons include employment opportunities (65.2%), history and literature (64.7%), and cultural influences such as anime and manga (56.1%). Among young people, who form the majority of learners, they are mainly driven by career prospects and cultural interests (The Japan Foundation, 2012; Djafri & Wahidati, 2020).

Foreign language learners often face challenges when dealing with linguistic forms that differ greatly from their mother tongue (Chaer, 2007; Ferguson, 1959; Krashen, 1981; Lado, 1957; Hu, 2015; Sudaryanto, 1993; Ullah, 2011). Tarigan (2009) describes contrastive analysis as the comparison of two languages' systems, such as their phonology and grammar. Lado (1957) states that contrastive analysis developed in the 1950s and 1960s within the framework of structural

linguistics. This approach assumes that language-learning difficulties stem from first-language interference, can be predicted through analysis, and may be reduced with tailored teaching materials. Research shows that Contrastive Analysis has been particularly effective in phonology compared with other areas of language study (Richards et al., 1987).

Comparing the structural patterns of the first and second languages being learned allows for the identification of these differences (Pan et al., 2016). These differences provide a basis for predicting the items that may cause difficulties in language learning and the linguistic errors that students are likely to encounter. In this regard, the authors will provide an example: typically, for beginner learners who are about to study the target language, learning and memorising vocabulary is the first step before studying more complex sentence structures. In addition to learning vocabulary, studying phrases is an important aspect of language learning; in this study, the authors will examine action verb phrases in Japanese and Minangkabau.

Tarigan (2009) states that there are two general principles of contrastive analysis: namely, the description of L1 and L2, and the comparison between the two languages. More specifically, the procedure of contrastive analysis involves producing a thorough description of the linguistic features to be contrasted, observing structural differences between L1 and L2, formulating basic assumptions or universal characteristics of the features under analysis, and establishing rules that describe the realization of these features from deep to surface structure in each language, as also described in the analysis of intentional modality in Indonesian and Japanese by Suherman (2023). Similarities between Japanese and Indonesian (or Minangkabau) grammatical categories include the absence of gender distinctions in nouns and the lack of morphemes to indicate singular and plural forms, which aligns with Suherman's findings (Suherman, 2023).

Tambusai & Nasution (2024) state that, in other regional languages, such as Sundanese, a sentence requires different predicates (verbs) depending on whether the subject is singular or plural, whereas in Japanese and Indonesian/Minangkabau, this distinction does not exist. Likewise, for first-, second-, or third-person subjects, there is no change in the form of the predicate used. The only exception is in Japanese, where predicates are differentiated for first-and third-person; for example, *'...tai'* and *'...hoshii'* become *'...tagaru'* and *'...hoshigaru'* (Putri & Haristiani, 2021).

Grammatically, Japanese and Minangkabau are different (Putri & Haristiani, 2021). Shibatani (1990) states that Japanese syntax has also remained relatively stable, maintaining its characteristic Subject–Object–Verb (SOV) sentence structure. A notable change in that domain is the obliteration of the distinction between the conclusive form, the finite form that concludes a sentence, and the noun-modifying form exhibited by certain predicates. Like Indonesian, the sentence structure of the Minangkabau language generally follows a Subject–Verb-Object (SVO) pattern, although the Verb–Subject (VS) order is also frequently found, particularly in interrogative and complex sentences (Tarigan, 1986; Ramlan, 1993; Alwi, 2003; Lianna et al., 2020).

A complete contrastive analysis of two languages is not feasible, so this study concentrates on ten categories of Japanese and Minangkabau action verb phrases: transitive, progressive, perfective, volitive, potential, imperative, prohibitive, passive, accidental, and causative. These categories were selected because they embody essential grammatical functions and communicative intentions that underpin sentence construction and everyday discourse. They also encompass syntactic and semantic structures that are often challenging for learners, such as expressing desire, issuing commands, conveying ability, or describing causation. The analysis will demonstrate how these verb

phrases operate in both languages, highlighting similarities and differences, and considering their implications for communication and classroom practice.

Dōshi (verbs) are one of the word classes in Japanese, alongside *i*-adjectives and *na*-adjectives, which together form a type of *yōgen* (independent words that function as predicates). This word class is used to express activities, existence, or states of being. Verbs (*dōshi*) can undergo inflectional changes and, by themselves, can serve as predicates (Nomura, in Sudjianto and Dahidi, 2007).

Vendler (in Jacobsen, 1992) divides verbs into four categories: a. states (conditions), b. activities (actions), c. achievements (attainments), d. accomplishments (completions/results). According to Chafe (1970), verbs can be categorised into four basic types: state, process, action, and action-process verbs. State verbs describe the condition or state of a single argument, generally associated with patients, as in the example "The elephant is dead" (Saint-Dizier, 1996). Process verbs: Process verbs carry the semantic feature of process. They describe entities undergoing a change of state or condition.

Bloomfield (1933) defines a phrase as a complex form consisting of two or more free forms, which shows that the phrase is structurally above the level of a single word. Based on this definition and construction, forming a phrase does not merely mean placing words side by side as in forming a sentence; rather, it must be non-predicative and produce a meaning that is broader than that of a single word (Lamuddin, 2010). According to Yamada (1908), the study of grammar (*bunpōgaku*) is the examination of the methods by which individuals express their thoughts and emotions through language. As noted by Maynard (2002), grammar is not just a formal rule, but also a means of expressing meaning and emotion. Therefore, it does not have the potential to become a sentence in the way that a clause does.

The verb phrases analysed in this study are classified as action verbs, known for their dynamic and durative properties. Verbs are central to sentence structure and display various semantic relationships with noun phrases, thereby shaping event structure, force dynamics, and verb semantics (Talmy, 1988; Levin, 1993; Pinker, 1989). In framing the present analysis, the study draws on Fillmore's framework of modality and proposition (Fillmore, 1968), recognising that these categories structure the expression of meaning within a sentence. At the same time, recent research, such as Blaszczak et al. (2016), highlights that traditional categories like tense, negation, mood, and aspect may not always be used consistently or distinctly across languages.

Another difference concerns word order in compound words of phrases with modifiers. In Indonesian and Minangkabau, the principle of 'described-describer' (DM) applies, whereas in Japanese, the opposite is used: 'describer-described' (MD). For example, the Indonesian phrase *'sepatu putih'* ('white shoes') corresponds directly to the Japanese *'shiroi kutsu'* ('white shoes'), maintaining the literal order of adjective followed by noun, and additionally, certain Japanese particles that follow nouns can function similarly to prepositions in other languages (Lidra & Haristiani, 2024). For instance, in Japanese, prepositions corresponding to Indonesian *di, ke, dari,* and *sampai*, as seen in *di Bandung*, *ke Bandung*, *dari Bandung,* and *sampai Bandung,* are placed after the noun, resulting in expressions such as *Bandung de, Bandung e, Bandung kara,* and *Bandung made* (Sutedi, 2011).

Aspect is a grammatical category of a verb that states the condition of an action or event, whether it has just begun, is ongoing, has been completed, or is repeated. Kindaiichi (1988) classifies the types of verbs that determine aspect in Japanese into four categories: (a) *Shunkan-dōshi,* verbs

that express instantaneous or momentary activities; (b) *Keizoku-dōshi,* verbs that express continuous or ongoing activities; (c) *Jōtai-dōshi,* verbs that express states; (d) *Danyonshu-dōshi,* verbs specifically used to express the condition or inherent quality of something.

The forms used to express aspect in Japanese can be divided into two types. By employing the construction *te + auxiliary verb (hojo-dōshi)*. The auxiliary verbs (*hojo-dōshi*) that follow the main verb (*hondōshi*) in the *te* form and are related to aspect include *iru, kuru, iu, aru,* and *oku*. These are: a. *'... te iru'* (〜ている), whose meanings include: (1) An activity or event currently in progress; (2) The resultant state of an action or event; (3) A naturally occurring state; (4) Experience; (5) Repetition (an action carried out repeatedly), b.*'... te kuru'* and *'... te iku'* (〜てくる・〜ていく), whose meanings include: (1) The process of something appearing or disappearing; (2) The process of change; (3) The beginning of an activity or event (for '*te kuru*'); (4) An activity or event that continues over time. c. *'... te aru'* (〜てある), whose meanings include: (1) A state resulting from change caused by an action; (2) An action that has already been carried out. d. *'... te oku'* (〜ておく), which expresses an activity undertaken as preparation. e. *'... te shimau'* (〜てしまう), whose meanings include: (1) An activity or event carried through to completion; (2) An unintended or undesirable action that has already occurred. To illustrate several verb constructions that indicate aspect in Japanese, Sutedi (2011) sets out a table of verb constructions and their meanings.

Table 1. Verb construction and its meaning.

No	Verb Construction	Meaning
1	*~Te iru*	Progressive meaning, resultative, static, continuous, frequency, and habituative meaning.
2	*~Te kuru* and *~te iku*	Argumentative and diminutive meaning, resultative, incoative, and continuous meaning.
3	*~Te ita*	Meaning of incomplete, momentary.
4	*~Te shimau*	Complete meaning.
5	*~Ta tokoro*	Complete meaning.

Using verb forms other than the '-te' form: Aspects expressed with verb forms other than the '-te' form include the use of suffixes in compound verbs and certain specific verbs, as follows: (a) The suffixes *...hajimeru* or *...dasu*, and verb forms such as *you/ou + to suru*, *ru + tokoro*, or *(masu) + sou da* are used to indicate the beginning of an activity or event. (b) The suffixes *...kakeru*, *...tsuzukeru*, and *...toosu*, as well as the verb form *(masu) + tsutsu aru*, are used to express the continuation or ongoing nature of an activity or event. (c) The suffixes *...owaru* and *...ageru*, together with verb forms such as *ta + bakari* and *ta + tokoro*, are used to denote the completion or conclusion of an activity or event.

According to Sutedi (2011), *kala* (*jisei*) is a grammatical category that denotes the time at which an event occurs or an activity takes place, relative to the moment when the sentence is uttered. The temporal reference of an event or activity is divided into three: (*kako*) 'past', expressed by verbs in the *ta (mashita)* form; (*genzai*) 'present', expressed by verbs in the *ru (masu)* and *te iru* forms; (*mirai*) 'future', expressed by verbs in the *ru (masu)* form. An illustration of these temporal categories can be seen in the following diagram.

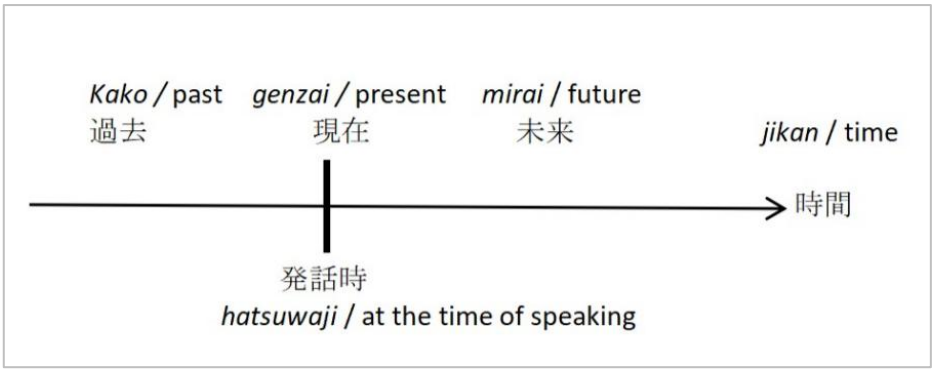

Figure 1. Tense Illustration in Japanese.

Rasyad et al. (1985) state that a verb phrase (VP) is a structural unit in a sentence that functions as the predicate. As a predicate, this unit consists of a verb as the core element (CE) and one or more non-core elements (NCE). The position of the non-core elements is occupied by one or more function words. In the examples provided, the core element is marked with two short lines (~~), while the phrase boundary is indicated by one long line (__).

Table 2. The position of non-core element (NCE) and core element (CE).

None-Core Element				Core Element
			ka	*pai*
			ka	*pai*
	alah	*sadang*	*ka*	*pai*
mungkin	*alah*	*sadang*	*ka*	*pai*
may/may be	was/were	verb-ing	will	go
	NCE			CE

Table 3. Core Element (CE): The verb, as the core, has various forms, ranging from the base form to those with affixes.

No	Minangkabau	Indonesian	English
1	*Amak pai.*	*Ibu pergi.*	Mother has gone.
2	*Kami makan.*	*Kami makan.*	We are eating/ We eat.
3	*Ayamno batalua.*	*Ayamnya bertelur.*	The hen laid eggs.
4	*Ino mamukek.*	*Dia memukat.*	He/She is casting a net.
5	*Ayamtu lah tajual.*	*Ayam itu telah terjual.*	The chicken has been sold.
6	*Bajuko ka dipakai.*	*Baju ini akan dipakai.*	This shirt will be worn.
7	*Lalokanlah pajatu.*	*Tidurkanlah anak itu.*	Put the child to sleep.
8	*Turuiklah sabanta.*	*Ikutilah sebentar.*	Follow (me) for a moment.
9	*Baa malaluanno?*	*Bagaimana melakukannya?*	How to do it?
10	*Baa dek diajai juo?*	*Mengapa masih juga diajari?*	Why is he/she still being taught?

As part of the verb phrase, the non-core element occupies the position before the core element. Its function is to explain or narrow down the meaning contained in the core element. In other words, the non-core element restricts the meaning of the core element and is therefore referred to as a modifier. As a modifier, the non-core element may restrict the core element itself, or a particular unit within the verb phrase that also contains both non-core and core elements. Examples illustrating this are provided below (Rasyad et al., 1985).

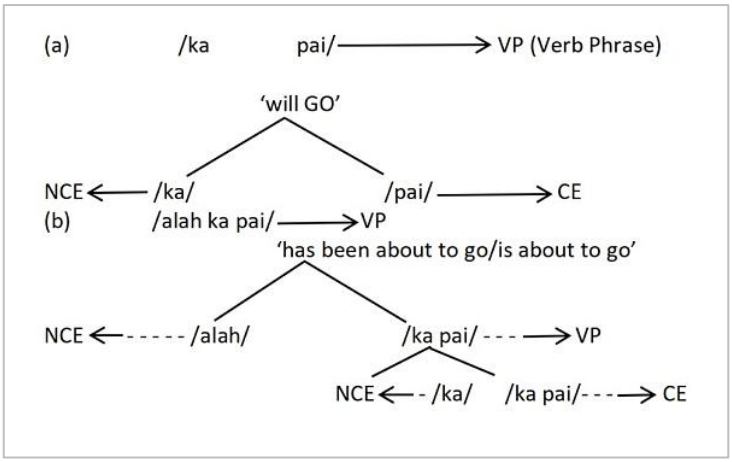

Figure 2. Verb phrases containing non-core elements and core elements.

In the verb phrase */ka pai/* 'will go', there is the core element */pai/* 'go' and the non-core element */ka/* 'will'. As a modifier, */ka/* functions to limit or specify the meaning of */pai/* and similary, in the verb phrase */alah ka pai/* 'has already been about to go,' there are also two elements. The element */alah/* functions as a modifier of the meaning contained in */ka pai/,* the element */ka pai/* is, in turn, a smaller verb phrase unit. Within it, there are again two elements, namely */ka/* as the modifier of the meaning of */pai/*.

Words that belong to the non-core element can be classified into those that indicate aspect and those that indicate modality. The former are called aspect markers (AM), while the latter are referred to as modal markers (MM). The following discussion will address both types, namely aspect markers and modal markers.

Table 4. Five different words that appear as aspect markers.

No	Aspect Markers
1	*/ka/* 'will', as found in */ka pai/* 'will go'
2	*/alah/* 'has/have' (perfective), as found in */alah pai/* 'has gone'
3	*/sadang/* 'be, in the process of', as found in */sadang pai/* 'is going'
4	*/baru/* 'just', as found in */baru pai/* 'has just gone'
5	*/alun/* 'not yet', as found in */alun pai/* 'has not yet gone'

From the examples above, it can be observed that a single aspectual limiter may occupy the non-core position. This one word non-core-core structure can be expanded into a two word non-core-core structure, as in */alah ka/* 'has already intended to go'. This expansion may be further developed into a three-word non-core structure, as in */alah sadang ka pai/* 'has been in the process of being about to go'.

One point that requires clarification here is that the occurrence of two or more words in the non-core position follows a specific rule or ordering, as illustrated in the final example above. In addition, there is another structural pattern involving the element */baru/*, as in */baru sadang ka pai/* 'has just been about to go'. Accordingly, the structure of verb phrases containing more than one non-core element may be described as shown in the diagram below.

Table 5. Diagram of verb phrases containing more than one non-core element.

	VP	Non-core element/limiter		
Order	1	2	3	
1		*alah*		
2	*(alah)*	*sadang*	*(ka)*	*pai*
3		*alun*		

VP	Non-core element/limiter
	baru

The schema above shows, among other things, that each aspect marker may occupy the second position of the non-core element. However, the first position can only be occupied by the word *alah* optionally preceding the aspect marker *sadang*. The third position may also optionally be occupied by *ka*. Thus, the following order of aspect markers in these verb phrases is ungrammatical (Rasyad et al., 1985).

Table 6. Order of ungrammatical aspect markers in these verb phrases.

No	Ungrammatical Aspect Markers
1	*/alah ka sadang pai/* 'already will be in the process of going'
2	*/ka alah sadang pai/* 'will already be in the process of going'
3	*/sadang alah ka pai/* 'is in the process of having already intended to go'
4	*/ka sadang alah pai/* 'will be in the process of having already gone'
5	*/sadang ka alah pai/* 'is in the process of having already gone'

Table 7. Non-core element-modal limiter and core element-verb.

VERB	PHRASE
Non-core element-Modal limiter	Core element-Verb
/mungkin/	*/pai/*
'mungkin'	*'pai'*
/dapek/	*/pai/*

The typological mapping of foreign languages contrasted with the structural traits of Indonesian vernaculars has increasingly captured the attention of descriptive linguists in recent years. For instance, Pradhana & Udayana (2023) specifically dissected the morphological mechanisms underlying verbal reduplication in Balinese and Japanese, demonstrating how repetitive meanings are structurally managed across both languages. Mirroring this comparative approach, Ningsih & Solihat (2023) utilised contrastive analysis to examine the boundaries of lexical interference within regional dialectal variations, specifically focusing on Betawi. Meanwhile, cross-regional verbal affixation was explored by Tambusai & Nasution (2024) to discern the typological relationship between Riau-Malay and Sundanese. The reliability of this qualitative-comparative framework was also proven effective by Qistifani (2019) in unraveling the complexities of conditional sentence markers across differing language families.

Furthermore, the expansion of contrastive studies into phrasal structures and functional categories within local languages is exemplified by Lumiwu (2017) through a comparison of Manadonese Malay prepositions, alongside Pricilya et al. (2018), who mapped out the structural divergences in the Bugis prepositional system. This comparative operational pattern is further supported by Tapilatu (2021), who demonstrated that identifying semantic and syntactic features can predict crucial theoretical obstacles faced by language learners. Complementing this academic body of work, a synchronic investigation by Suhardi & Santoso (2009) into the syntax of Javanese and Banjarnese indicates that contrastive identification at the core phrasal and clausal levels is vital for constructing consistent language mapping models. Although prior research has successfully documented unique grammatical intersections across these various vernaculars, scholarly descriptions specifically unpacking the syntactic friction and semantic space of action verb phrases

between Japanese and Minangkabau remain largely untouched. It is precisely this theoretical gap that reinforces the urgency of the present study.

Method

The authors, who also serve as the researchers, act as the key instrument, collecting and presenting the data descriptively in accordance with the original condition of the data, and conducting an experiment on one part of the data. The research data consist of words in the form of action verb phrases found in Japanese and Minangkabau sentences. The authors then organise the data according to their respective categories. In general, the procedures undertaken in this study are as follows: conducting a literature review, collecting the data, classifying the data, analysing the data, and drawing conclusions from the findings.

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. According to Sutedi (2011), descriptive research is research conducted to describe and explain a phenomenon occurring at present by using scientific procedures to address problems accurately. Meanwhile, according to Mahsun (2005), qualitative research is research that focuses on revealing meaning, providing description, clarifying issues, and placing data within their respective contexts, and it is often presented in words rather than numbers. The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand social phenomena, including linguistic phenomena, that are being investigated.

To clarify, the core analytic procedure in this study follows a reproducible sequence: (1) identify relevant verb phrase data, (2) align equivalent categories across Japanese and Minangkabau, (3) contrast linguistic features, and (4) interpret the findings within their syntactic and semantic contexts. The data analysis method used in this study is the translation method, using two advanced techniques: basic identification and determination of elements, and comparative linking to identify core similarities. The analytical tools employed include the comparative power to identify similarities, the comparative power to identify differences, and the comparative power to identify core similarities. Sudaryanto (2015) states that the basic technique referred to as the "identifying determining elements" technique is known as such.

Result and Discussion

Result

In this section, the authors present the data and analysis of action verb phrases in Japanese and Minangkabau. The discussion begins with example sentences containing action verb phrases in Japanese and Minangkabau, followed by a comparison of the similarities and differences in their structure and meaning. The data used in this study are drawn from *Chūjookyū no Nihongo Kyōshitsu kara Tobidasō!* and *jurnalminang.id*. With the various sources of data that the authors have obtained, the understanding of verb phrases in Japanese and Minangkabau will be enriched.

Table 8. Contrastive Analysis of Action Verb Phrases in Japanese and Minangkabau.

No	Action Category	Japanese (L1)	Minangkabau (L2)	Translation (English)
1a	Transitive	日本では食事のとき、器を手に持って食べる。 *Nihon dewa shokuji no toki, utsuwa o te ni motte taberu.*	*Di Japang, katiko makan, urang mamacik mangkuak di tangan.*	'In Japan, when eating, people hold the bowl in their hands'.

No	Action Category	Japanese (L1)	Minangkabau (L2)	Translation (English)
1b	Transitive	突然、ラノのお父さんがコーヒーを持って入ってきた。 *Totsuzen, Rano no chichi oya ga kōhī o motte haitte kita.*	*Tibo-tibo ayah Rano masuak sambia membao kopi.*	'Suddenly, Rano's father came in with coffee.'
2a	Progressive	あなたは他の人が家でぐっすり寝ているとき機械のうるさい音に耐えながら仕事したことがありますか？ *Anata wa hoka no hito ga ie de gussuri nete iru toki kikai no urusai oto ni taenagara shigoto shita koto ga arimasuka?*	*Pernah ndak sanak tapaso manangguang bunyi kareh masin samantaro urang lain sadang lalok lamak di rumah?*	"Have you ever had to endure the loud noise of machinery while others were sleeping soundly at home?"
2b	Progressive	ウェンティの話を聞いてから一週間後、静かな夜、午前 2 時頃、ぐっすり眠っていた私は突然目が覚め、尿意が非常に強く感じました。 *Wentii no hanashi o kiite kara isshūkan go, shizukana yoru, gozen ni ji goro, gussuri nemutte ita watashi wa totsuzen me ga same, nyōi ga hijō ni tsuyoku kanji mashita.*	*Sasudah saminggu carito Wenti tu, di suatu malam nan sunyi, sakiro pukua 2 dini hari, ambo nan sadang lalok lamak tibo-tibo tasintak jago, taraso sasak bana nak buang aie ketek.*	'After a week of Wenti's story, on a quiet night, about 2 o'clock in the morning, I was sleeping soundly suddenly woke up, feeling a strong urge to urinate.'
3a	Perfect Tense	自分でも意外だったが、弁当工場でアルバイトをすることになった。 *Jibun demo igai datta ga, bentō kōjō de baito o suru koto ni natta.*	*Nan mambuek ambo takajuik, akhianyo ambo karajo paruah wakatu di pabrik bento.*	'To my own surprise, I ended up working part-time at a bento factory'.
3b	Perfect Tense	アルディの母親は、他人の田んぼで働き始めた。 *Arudii no haha oya wa, tanin no tambo de hataraki hajimeta.*	*Amak Ardi alah mulai karajo di sawah urang.*	'Ardi's mother has started working in other people's rice fields'.
4a	Volitive	「どんな仕事でもいいから、とりあえず経験したい」と考えていたので、先生にアルバイトを紹介されるとすぐに応募した。 *"Donna shigoto demo ii kara, toriaezu keiken shitai" to kangaete ita node, sensei ni arubaito o shōkai sareruto suguni oubo shita.*	*Ambo sadang bapikia, "Indak paduli karajo apo, ambo hanyo ingin mandapekkan pangalaman," jadi katiko guru ambo memperkenalkan ambo ka karajo paruah wakatu, ambo langsuang malamar.*	'I was thinking, "I don't care what kind of job it is; I just want to gain experience," so when my teacher introduced me to a part-time job, I applied right away'.

No	Action Category	Japanese (L1)	Minangkabau (L2)	Translation (English)
4b	Volitive	アイクは「後で続きをお願いします。病院に行くので」と言った。 *Aiku wa "Ato de tsuzuki o onegaishimasu. Byōin ni iku no de" to itta.*	*'Kecek Si Aik, toloang beko lanjuik an lai, ambo ka pai ka rumah sakik'.*	'Aik said, please continue later, I'm going to the hospital'.
5a	Potential	そして、青い帽子を被っている社員の方が私たちを「日本語ができる人」と「日本語があまりできない人」の二つのグループに分けた。 *Soshite, aoi bōshi o kabutte iru shain no kata ga watashi tachi o "Nihongo ga dekiru hito" to "Nihongo ga amari dekinai hito" no futatsu no gurūpu ni waketa.*	*Sudah tu, pagawai nan mamakai topi biru tu mambagi kami manjadi duo kalompok: nan bisa bahaso Japang jo nan indak bisa bahaso Japang bana.*	'Then, the employee wearing the blue hat divided us into two groups: those who could speak Japanese and those who could not speak Japanese very well.'
5b	Potential	ラナ・ミナン歌が経験した挫折は、「沈んだ茎を引き上げるように」徐々にしか復活できない。 *Ranah Minang uta ga keiken shita zasetsu wa, "Shizunda kuki o hiki ageru yōni" jojo ni shika fukkatsu dekinai.*	*Kamunduran-kamunduran nan dialami dek dendang Ranah Minang ko, hanyo bisa sacaro baransua-ansua dikamukoan baliak bak "mambangkik batang tarandam".*	'The setbacks experienced by the Ranah Minang song can only be gradually resurrected as "raising the sunken stem".'
6a	Imperative	多辺田さんどうぞお入りください。 *Tabeta san, dōzo ohairi kudasai.*	*Pak Tabeta, silakan masuklah.*	"Mr. Tabeta, please come in."
6b	Imperative	「急いで！」と彼は言った。寝起きのせいで少し声がかすれていた。 *"Isoide!" to kare wa itta. Neoki no sei de sukoshi koe ga kasureteita."*	*"Capeklah kok yo!" kato baliau, suaronyo agak sarak dek jago lalok.*	"Hurry up!" he said, his voice a little hoarse from waking up.
7a	Prohibition	ビーフ君、女に振られたぐらいでくよくよするなよ。 *Biifu kun, onna ni furareta gurai de kuyokuyo suruna yo.*	*Beef, jan cando itu bana lah, baru diputuihan paja tu nyo.*	'Beef, don't dwell on it just because a girl broke up with you.'
7b	Prohibition	だから、祖先からは常に「森に行くなら、心を清め、あまりおしゃべりをしないように！」というメッセージが伝えられているのだ。	*Makonyo, salalu ado pasan dari niniak: "Jikok pai ka rimbo,*	Therefore, there is always a message from the ancestors: "If you go to the forest, cleanse

No	Action Category	Japanese (L1)	Minangkabau (L2)	Translation (English)
		Dakara, Sosen kara tsune ni "Mori ni iku nara, kokoro o kiyome, amari oshaberi o shinai yōni!" to iu messeeji ga tsutae rarete iru noda.	*barasiahkan hati, jan suko takabua mangecek!"*	your heart, do not like to talk too much!"
8a	Passive	コンビニでにせ一万円札を使おうとした男が通貨偽造の疑いで逮捕されました。 *Konbini de nise ichiman en satsu o tsukaou to shita otoko ga tsuuka gizō no utagai de taiho saremashita.*	*Saurang laki-laki ditangkok karano dicurigai mamalsukan pitih sasudah mancubo mamakai uang kertas 10.000 yen palsu di toko serba ado.*	'A man was arrested on suspicion of counterfeiting currency after attempting to use a fake 10,000 yen bill at a convenience store'.
8b	Passive	「じゃあ…学校で教えればいいじゃない？それか、特別な博物館を作ればいいのに。このまま消えてしまうのはもったいないね」とアンディは静かに言った。 *"Jyaa… gakkō de oshiereba ii janai? Soreka, tokubetsuna hakubutsukan o tsukureba ii noni. Kono mama kiete shimau nowa mottainai ne" to Andii wa shizuka ni itta.*	*"Kalau baitu… baa ndak diajakan di sakola? Atau dibuek museum khusus, yo? Sayang bana kalau hilang baitu sajo." Kato Andi lunak.*	"Then... why not teach it in school? Or make a special museum, right? It's a pity if it disappears just like that." Andi said softly.
9a	Accidental	顔もマスクで隠すので、着替えたらまったく別人になってしまうのだ。 *Kao mo masuku de kakusu node, kigaetara mattaku betsujin ni natte shimau noda.*	*Karano mukonyo juo disuruakkan dek masker, sasudah baganti baju lah jadi urang lain se jadinyo.*	'Because my face was also hidden by a mask, after changing clothes I became someone else'.
9b	Accidental	1983 年頃、私がまだ小学校 3 年生だった頃、私の生活はとても質素でしたが、決して忘れられない思い出がたくさん詰まっていました。 *1983 nen goro, watashi ga mada shōgakkō 3 nen sei datta koro, watashi no seikatsu wa totemo shisso deshita ga, keshite wasurerarenai omoide ga takusan tsumatte imashita.*	*Kiro-kiro taun 1983, katiko ambo masih duduak di bangku kelas 3 SD, hiduik ambo sangaiklah sederhana, tapi panuah jo carito nan indak ka talupo.*	'Around 1983, when I was still in the third grade of elementary school, my life was very simple, but full of stories that will never be forgotten."

No	Action Category	Japanese (L1)	Minangkabau (L2)	Translation (English)
10a	Causative	2013 年には、[タマネギが人を泣かせる生化学的なプロセスは、科学者が考えていたより複雑であることを明らかにした]との理由で、イグ・ノーベル賞の科学賞を受賞している。 *2013 nen ni wa, "Tamanegi ga hito o nakaseru seikagakuteki na purosesu wa, kagakusha ga kangaete ita yori fukuzatsu de aru koto o akiraka ni shita" to no riyū de, Igu Nōberu shō no kagakushō o jushō shite iru.*	*Pado taun 2013, inyo mandapek Hadiah Nobel Ig dalam Sains untuak "Mangungkapkan baso proses biokimia di mano bawang mambuek urang manangih labiah kompleks daripado nan dipikiakan ilmuwan sabalunnyo".*	'In 2013, he received the Ig Nobel Prize in Science for [revealing that the biochemical process by which onions make people cry is more complex than scientists had previously thought'.
10b	Causative	バデンダンは、演者と観客の活発な交流によって、活気のある雰囲気を作り出す。 *Badendang wa ensha to kankyaku no kappatsu na kōryū ni yotte, kakki no aru funiki o tsukuri dasu.*	*Badendang mampaliekan kaadaan nan iduik suasananyo karano aktifnyo antaro pamain Dendang jo panontonnyo.*	Badendang creates a lively atmosphere due to the active interaction between the performer and the audience.

Table 9. Contrastive Analysis (Connecting–Comparing Technique): Syntax and Semantics of Japanese (L1) and Minangkabau (L2).

No	Action Category	Syntax	Semantics
1	Transitive	Japanese: follows an Object - Verb (O - V) pattern, with the object marked by the particle *o* (を). Minangkabau: follows a Verb - Object (V - O) pattern, without any particle; the transitive relationship is determined by the position of the verb.	Japanese: *te ni motte*→"to hold in the hand as a condition of polite eating"; and *motte haitte kita*→"entered while carrying" with an emphasis on the process of bringing the object. Minangkabau: *mamacik mangkuak* → a deliberate physical action (volitional); and *masuak sambia membao*→"entered while carrying," with an emphasis on the action itself.
2	Progressive	Japanese: progressive aspect expressed with the form *-te iru* (*nete iru*, *nemutte ita*). Minangkabau: progressive aspect expressed with the word *sadang* + verb (*sadang lalok*, *sadang tapaso*).	Japanese: emphasises the state of being in process (such as sleeping, working). Minangkabau: emphasises the activity as taking place at that very moment.
3	Perfect Tense	Japanese: result/event form with *-koto ni natta*, *hajimeta*. Minangkabau: aspect marker *alah* + verb (*alah mulai karajo*).	Japanese: emphasises the outcome of a decision or the initiation of an activity. Minangkabau: emphasises that the event has already occurred or is in progress.

No	Action Category	Syntax	Semantics
4	Volitive	Japanese: an expression of desire with *-tai* (*shitai*), request with *onegaishimasu*. Minangkabau: an expression of desire with *maulah*/*ingin*, request with *tolong*.	Japanese: expresses personal volition and polite requests. Minangkabau: expresses direct volition and requests through lexical means.
5	Potential	Japanese: expression of ability with *dekiru*/*dekinai.* Minangkabau: expression of ability with *bisa*/*indak bisa.*	Japanese: divides groups according to language ability. Minangkabau: emphasises practical limitations or abilities.
6	Imperative	Japanese: polite command form with *kudasai*, direct form with *isoide!* Minangkabau: command forms with *silakan*, or a direct form conveyed through intonation.	Japanese: commands with both formal and informal nuances. Minangkabau: commands with direct nuances, sometimes emotional.
7	Prohibition	Japanese: prohibition expressed with *suruna yo* and *shinai yōni.* Minangkabau: prohibition expressed with *jan* + verb.	Japanese: prohibition with the nuance of advice or admonition. Minangkabau: a prohibition with the nuance of custom or ancestral counsel.
8	Passive	Japanese: passive form with *-saremashita.* Minangkabau: passive form with *ditangkok, dicurigai.*	Japanese: emphasises passive actions in a formal register (e.g. *ditangkap* "was arrested"). Minangkabau: emphasises the outcome of passive actions within narrative discourse.
9	Accidental	Japanese: inadvertent form with *-te shimau (natte shimau).* Minangkabau: inadvertent form with *lah jadi.*	Japanese: emphasises unexpected change. Minangkabau: emphasises spontaneous consequences of a situation.
10	Causative	Japanese: causative form with *nakaseru* ("to make [someone] cry"). Minangkabau: the causative form with *mampaliekkan* ("to enliven the atmosphere").	Japanese: emphasises scientific causative processes (e.g. onions cause crying). Minangkabau: emphasises social causative processes (e.g. interaction enlivens the atmosphere).

Discussion

This study demonstrate that Japanese and Minangkabau action verb phrases differ substantially at the syntactic, morphological, and pragmatic levels, while still maintaining semantic equivalence in expressing core action-related meanings. The most salient result is the typological opposition between Japanese as a predominantly head-final and agglutinative language and Minangkabau as a head-initial and more analytic language. Japanese action verb phrases tend to place the verbal nucleus at the end of the construction, with grammatical relations frequently marked through particles and verbal morphology. In contrast, Minangkabau places the verb before the object or complement and relies more heavily on lexical markers, aspectual particles, and contextual interpretation. Across the ten categories examined transitive, progressive, perfective, volitive,

potential, imperative, prohibitive, passive, accidental, and causative the data show that similar communicative functions are realised through structurally different mechanisms. Thus, the contribution of this study lies not only in identifying formal differences, but also in explaining how two typologically distinct languages encode action, agency, temporality, control, and social relations through different grammatical strategies.

This finding is consistent with recent global studies on crosslinguistic influence, which emphasise that differences in word order, morphosyntax, and linguistic distance can shape the way learners process and acquire a second or additional language. McManus (2021) argues that prior language knowledge influences second-language development not only through overt transfer, but also through learners' expectations about how meaning should be grammatically encoded. Similarly, Lago et al. (2021) show that crosslinguistic influence can operate differently across lexical and syntactic processing, suggesting that language transfer is not a single uniform mechanism. In relation to the present findings, Minangkabau-speaking learners of Japanese may not simply transfer individual words or vocabulary patterns; they may also transfer deeper assumptions about verb-object sequencing and the use of independent lexical markers for aspect and modality. This is also aligned with van Dijk et al. (2022), who demonstrate that crosslinguistic influence becomes especially visible when languages display partial structural overlap. However, the Japanese–Minangkabau comparison presents a more complex case because the two languages show semantic overlap but structural divergence. This means that learners may understand the intended meaning of a Japanese construction, yet still misorganise its syntactic and morphological form.

The results also correspond with White's (2026) argument that linguistic distance should not be treated merely as external typological difference, but as a factor that interacts with internalised grammatical knowledge. In this study, the distance between Japanese and Minangkabau is evident not only in the SOV–SVO contrast, but also in the way aspect, causation, accidentality, and politeness are encoded. Japanese integrates meanings such as progressivity, causation, and unintended consequence into verbal constructions such as *-te iru*, *-(s)aseru*, and *-te shimau*. Minangkabau, by contrast, tends to express equivalent meanings through separate lexical items such as *sadang*, *alah*, *jan*, *bisa*, and other independent elements. This contrast indicates that learners must acquire not only new vocabulary but also a new grammatical logic. Therefore, the major learning challenge lies in shifting from an analytic sequencing system to an agglutinative encoding system, where grammatical meanings are attached to or embedded within the verb phrase itself.

In the Indonesian and local research context, these findings strengthen previous contrastive studies involving Japanese, Indonesian, and regional languages. Lianna et al. (2020) found that Indonesian and Japanese inversion sentences can be partly aligned, although certain interrogative patterns cannot be directly paired with Japanese structures. This partially supports the present study, which also shows that semantic equivalence does not always guarantee structural equivalence. Suherman (2023), in his analysis of Indonesian and Japanese intentional modality, similarly reports that expressions of desire, request, and obligation differ significantly across the two languages and may create difficulties for learners. The present study extends this discussion by showing that volitive and imperative meanings in Japanese are not merely lexical choices but are also tied to politeness, morphology, and sentence-final patterns. In addition, Sutedi et al. (2025) show that Japanese and Indonesian potential expressions share certain semantic functions, particularly in expressing ability, but differ in their grammatical construction. This is directly relevant to the current

finding that Japanese uses *dekiru/dekinai*, whereas Minangkabau uses *bisa/indak bisa* through a more analytic pattern.

Studies on Japanese and regional languages in Indonesia further confirm the importance of local linguistic background in Japanese language learning. Lidra and Haristiani (2024) reveal that Japanese and Minangkabau vocatives share some kinship-based similarities, but their pragmatic usage is shaped by different cultural norms. This resonates with the current analysis of imperative and prohibitive constructions, where Japanese tends to encode politeness through grammaticalised honourific forms such as *o-hairi kudasai*, while Minangkabau relies more on lexical politeness markers such as *silakan* and emphatic particles such as *lah*. Likewise, Djafri and Wahidati (2020) note that Indonesian learners' motivation to study Japanese is closely connected to communicative aspirations and cultural interest. The present study adds a linguistic dimension to that finding: high motivation alone may not be sufficient if instructional materials do not explicitly address structural interference from learners' first or regional languages. Therefore, Japanese language pedagogy in Indonesia needs to move beyond generalised Indonesian-based explanations and begin incorporating regional language-sensitive contrastive materials.

Theoretically, this study supports contrastive analysis and crosslinguistic influence theory by demonstrating that linguistic transfer occurs at multiple levels: syntactic ordering, morphological encoding, semantic mapping, and pragmatic politeness. It extends traditional contrastive analysis by showing that differences between Japanese and Minangkabau are not merely surface-level grammatical contrasts but reflect deeper typological orientations in the organisation of action. From a Fillmorean perspective, the findings also indicate that action verb phrases carry not only propositional content but also modality, agency, control, and social positioning. The study therefore refines the theoretical understanding of action verb phrases by showing that semantic equivalence can coexist with syntactic and morphological asymmetry. This is important because it challenges the assumption that similar meanings across languages are easily transferable in second-language learning. Instead, the findings suggest that learners must reconstruct how action meanings are grammatically packaged in the target language.

Pedagogically, the study implies that Japanese language instruction for Minangkabau-speaking learners should explicitly address verb-final structures, particle use, and verbal inflection through contrastive exercises. Teachers can design learning materials that place Japanese and Minangkabau action verb phrases side by side, asking learners to identify the verbal head, aspect marker, modality marker, and politeness strategy in each construction. Such activities may improve grammatical awareness, reduce negative transfer, and increase learner engagement because students can connect Japanese grammar with their own regional linguistic identity. This approach may also support emotional well-being in the classroom because the learners' local language is treated as a resource rather than as an obstacle. In digitally mediated learning environments, corpus-based materials drawn from Japanese texts and Minangkabau digital sources can also strengthen students' media literacy by training them to evaluate context, register, translation equivalence, and pragmatic appropriateness in authentic language data.

From a policy perspective, the findings suggest the need for more inclusive foreign-language curriculum design in Indonesia, particularly in regions where learners are multilingual and actively use regional languages. Japanese language programmes should not assume that Indonesian is the only relevant linguistic background for learners. Curriculum developers, teacher-training

institutions, and language departments should provide contrastive modules that include Indonesian regional languages, especially when structural differences may influence learner errors. This policy direction is also relevant to the preservation of local languages because Minangkabau is positioned not only as a cultural artefact but also as a pedagogical bridge for learning an international language. The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on Japanese and Minangkabau action verb phrases, a topic that remains underexplored compared with broader Japanese–Indonesian contrastive studies. Methodologically, the study contributes by integrating syntactic, semantic, morphological, and pragmatic interpretation within one contrastive framework, thereby offering a more comprehensive model for regionally responsive Japanese language teaching.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the data were drawn from selected written sources, namely Japanese instructional materials and Minangkabau digital texts, so the findings may not fully represent spoken interaction, dialectal variation, or informal classroom language. Second, the study did not include learner production data, error analysis, or classroom-based intervention, which limits its ability to directly measure how Minangkabau-speaking learners actually acquire Japanese action verb phrases. Third, the qualitative design provides rich interpretive analysis but does not quantify the frequency or distribution of each construction across larger corpora. Future research should therefore expand the dataset by including spoken corpora, learner essays, classroom interaction, and experimental tasks. Comparative studies involving other Indonesian regional languages, such as Sundanese, Javanese, Batak, or Malay varieties, would also help determine whether the patterns identified here are specific to Minangkabau or reflect wider tendencies among Indonesian multilingual learners of Japanese. Subsequent studies may also develop and test contrastive teaching materials to examine their effects on grammatical accuracy, learner motivation, engagement, and identity-affirming language learning.

Conclusion

This study aimed to identify and explain the syntactic and semantic similarities and differences between Japanese and Minangkabau action verb phrases through a contrastive linguistic perspective. The findings demonstrate that the two languages exhibit substantial typological divergence, particularly in their head-directionality and morphological strategies. Japanese action verb phrases predominantly reflect a head-final and agglutinative system, in which grammatical meanings such as progressivity, causation, potentiality, passivity, and accidentality are encoded through particles and verbal inflections. In contrast, Minangkabau tends to employ a head-initial and analytic structure, relying on independent lexical markers, aspectual particles, and contextual interpretation to express comparable semantic functions. Despite these structural contrasts, both languages show functional equivalence in representing action, agency, temporality, volition, prohibition, and social relations. Theoretically, this study contributes to contrastive linguistics by showing that semantic similarity across languages does not necessarily imply syntactic or morphological equivalence. It also extends the understanding of crosslinguistic influence by demonstrating how regional language structures may shape learners' interpretation and production of Japanese verb phrases. Practically, the findings provide a basis for developing more adaptive Japanese language teaching materials for Minangkabau-speaking learners, particularly materials that explicitly address verb-final structures, particle use, verbal inflection, and pragmatic politeness. However, this study is limited by its reliance on selected written data sources and its absence of learner production data, spoken interaction, and classroom-based validation. Future research should therefore expand the corpus, include spoken and

learner-generated data, and examine how contrastive instruction influences grammatical accuracy, learner engagement, and intercultural language awareness. By foregrounding Minangkabau as a meaningful linguistic resource in Japanese language learning, this study offers a regionally responsive contribution to foreign language pedagogy and opens further pathways for integrating local language knowledge into international language education.

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