

## Unveiling cultural intelligence: A comparative study of Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions

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### ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the realm of cultural intelligence inherent in Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions. In the context of intercultural communication, Indonesian speakers utilize diverse cultural intelligence frameworks to express various facets of Japanese culture, with language serving as a prominent component. While a plethora of studies have examined idioms from semantic and semiotic perspectives, a notable gap exists in the literature regarding the exploration of cultural intelligence within idiomatic expressions in both languages, encompassing both structural and semantic analyses. Filling this research void, the present study aims to elucidate the concept of cultural intelligence, specifically focusing on the comprehension of Japanese and Indonesian idioms, particularly those related to the notion of "face". Employing a descriptive research approach, data comprising 16 Japanese idioms and 13 Indonesian idioms were meticulously examined to unveil the cultural significance within each group. The idioms were sourced from various dictionaries and specifically focused on expressions related to body parts, especially the face, which are commonly employed in everyday life. These idiomatic expressions were systematically classified into three categories and subjected to comprehensive analysis. The findings reveal that the majority of the idioms convey emotions, personal characteristics, and concepts of honor, thereby reflecting both cultural similarities and differences between Indonesian and Japanese cultures through idiomatic expressions. This study sheds further light on the intersection between cultural intelligence and idiomatic language, enhancing our understanding of how culture influences language use and interpretation.

**Keywords:** Comparative study; cultural intelligence; idiomatic expressions; Indonesian language; Japanese language

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### INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized era, contacts between people of culturally diverse societies are inevitable (Sharma & Hussain, 2016). However, the potential benefits of multicultural interactions notwithstanding, its

undesirable impacts are pertinent. Underlined by Ang et al. (2011) is that a kind of cultural conflict could happen due to the diversity of cultures. In response to such a situation, it is essential to make use of cultural intelligence (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008;

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Ang, et al., 2015) as a means for maintaining harmonious interactions in multicultural environments. Cultural intelligence allows a person to recognize, control, and cope with the emotions of others in response to cultural diversity. As a subset of interpersonal intelligence that comprises four components including knowledge, strategy, motivation, and action (Early & Ang, 2003), cultural intelligence serves as a guide in comprehending the cultural norms and practices (Sharm & Hussain, 2016). With possession of cultural intelligence, people can understand and respect the values of each other's cultures. Therefore, they can interact with their culturally new environments more effectively (MacNab et al., 2012). Endorsed by many as a way of solving the intricate realities of multicultural interactions, cultural intelligence helps people accept and adapt when coming into contact with others of different cultural backgrounds.

Myriad studies have currently addressed the cultivation of cultural intelligence in varied settings such as military operations (Yalçinkaya & Özer, 2017), hospitality industries (Gosling, 2023; Lee, Weber, & Rivera, 2018; Rafiq, et al., 2020), health sectors (Erçelik et al., 2022; Luquis, 2021; Segev et al., 2022), and international business education (Liou, et. al., 2021; Ramsey et al., 2014; Robledo-Ardila et al., 2016). For instance, a study by Yalçinkaya and Özer (2017) scrutinized how cultural intelligence could help smoothen the soft-approach peace operations in the zones of conflict in Afghanistan. Employing a case study involving 45 experts in the related field, the findings concluded that winning people's hearts via cultural intelligence was necessary as a soft power in peaceful military operations. In the context of hospitality business operations, a study by Lee et al. (2018) probed into how cultural intelligence correlated with the expatriation willingness of undergraduate students of hospitality or tourism management programs. Using structural equation modelling (SEM) involving 370 American students, the study found that the students possessing international/intercultural experiences were more likely to be willing to work outside their home country. Suggestions were made on how cultural intelligence could be used as a basis for selecting appropriate candidates for international employment. Another study on cultural intelligence has also been investigated in the context of education. A study by Robledo-Ardila et al. (2016) delved into the educational factors that could hone the students' cultural intelligence. Involving 557 Columbian undergraduate students of international business (IB), the quantitative analyses of T-tests and ANOVA discovered several factors that played a role in promoting the students' cultural intelligence including L2 proficiency, membership in multicultural teams, and curricular and extracurricular involvement. Meanwhile, in the

healthcare sector, a recent descriptive and cross-sectional study by Erçelik et al. (2022) involving 252 Turkish nurses revealed that cultural intelligence was positively correlated with intercultural communication apprehension.

The studies above have highlighted the importance of cultural intelligence in several aspects of life. Cultural intelligence has been considered beneficial in the field of military, healthcare, hospitality industry, and international business. However, despite the wealth of studies on cultural intelligence in a variety of contexts, the discussion seems to be addressing mainly how cultural understanding plays a pivotal role in mediating effective multicultural interactions. The concept of cultural intelligence is still adapted in a general way, as it is merely implemented in different contexts. The discussion on cultural intelligence that addresses another more specific aspect is relatively scanty. In this regard, as language and culture (Kramsch, 1998; Kreiner, 2019; Yule, 2020) are the two disciplines that intertwine inextricably, further scrutiny of cultural intelligence that sheds light on the specific aspects of linguistics is necessary. Since idiomaticity is intriguingly germane to the discussion of intercultural interactions (see Pitzl, 2022), how cultural intelligence is manifested in idiomatic expressions is worthy of further investigation.

Studies on idioms/idiomatic expressions are well represented in the current literature, whether from the lens of linguistics (e.g., Eerdman & Di Candia, 2007; Holsinger, 2013; Kamanga & Banda, 2017; Kyriacou et al., 2020; Muhammad et al., 2016) or language teaching (Cucchiari et al., 2022; Oakhill et al., 2016; Park & Chon, 2019; Wang & Luo, 2021), and even psychology (e.g., Cacciari et al., 2018; Fogliata et al., 2007; Hubers et al., 2022). In the field of language teaching, a recent study by Cucchiari et al. (2022) investigated how the intensity of practice and the reading modality impacted the students' learning of L2 idioms. Employing a CALL-based study that involved 42 German L1 learners of Dutch L2, the study found that the students' learning success depended on how much they practiced the L2 idioms. For mastering the L2 idioms, less practice was required for idioms resemble to their L1, whereas more practice was necessary for opaque idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, a study by Wang and Luo (2019) sought to cast light on the use of idioms in the teaching of Chinese as a second language (TCSL). Systematically scrutinizing a total of 392 idioms, the findings revealed that there were many idioms with more than one meaning. It was found that most of the idioms possessed multiple grammatical functions. The study was supposed to contribute to the development of textbooks, as well as the teaching of idioms in the TCSL settings. From the linguistic lens, a study by Kyriacou et al. (2020)

scrutinized the retention of figurative meaning in passivized idioms. Employing the eye-tracking study that engaged 60 English native speakers, the phrasal and lexical analysis via linear mixed effect model concluded that the passivization of idioms did not lead to the loss of their figurative meaning. Meanwhile, in the domain of psychology, intriguing findings were garnered from a study by Saban-Bezalel et al. (2017). The study investigated the comparison between people with schizophrenia (SZ) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in their hemispheric processing of idioms. Using the divided visual field paradigm involving a total of 35 Hebrew speakers in two groups (17 adults with SZ and 18 adults with ASD), the study discovered the dissimilar hemispheric lateralization in idiom processing in the SZ group and the ASD group.

As shown in the above studies, there has been ample discussion on idiomatic expressions especially in the arena of linguistics and language teaching. Idiomatic expressions have been well investigated both in terms of their linguistic properties and implementations in teaching. Even more idiomatic expressions have been cultivated to deep dive into the aspects related to neuropsychology. However, there are still few studies exploring the interplays between idiomatic expressions and culture (e.g., Nkhasho & Rammala, 2021; Qassem & Vijayasarithi, 2015; Sew, 2015; Wu, 2023). For instance, a study by Qassem and Vijayasarithi (2015) probed into the problems of Arabic speakers who translated cultural idiomatic expressions from English into Arabic. A total of 40 Yemeni students participated and attended the translation test. They translated authentic culture-based texts that contained cultural idiomatic expressions and proverbs. The findings showed that the students still found it difficult to translate cultural idiomatic expressions as a result of their inadequate knowledge and training. In addition, a recent study on idiomatic expressions in relation to culture was administered by Nkhasho and Rammala (2021). The study investigated the use of idiomatic expressions in the African traditional system (court) of dispute resolution called 'lekgotla.' On the basis of culture, lekgotla, and idiomatic expressions were engaged as a resolution of conflict. Idiomatic expressions were uttered during a series of processes of lekgotla. Using a qualitative study that involved 15 village leaders/traditional council members, the study discovered the idiomatic expressions used in the process of traditional dispute resolution that included negotiation, confession, forgiveness, compensation, healing, and ceremonial proceedings. Meanwhile, the most recent study on idioms and culture was also conducted by Wu (2023) who sought to explore the linguistic features of culturally unique idioms of eating and drinking in Mongolian.

However, although the aforementioned studies have unraveled idiomatic expressions in its interplay

with culture, a more specific discussion concerning cultural intelligence has rarely been touched upon. There is one study carried out by Sew (2015) that addresses cultural intelligence in idiomatic expressions of cultural scripts. The study looked into how cultural intelligence was incorporated into the idiomatic expressions of Chinese and Malay. The serialization patterns of 14 Chinese and 14 Malay idiomatic expressions were analyzed. The study suggested that communication can run more effectively if the speakers do not only possess a sufficient understanding of explicit grammar rules but also formulaic speech patterns associated with culture. As a pedagogical implication, cultural grammar should be incorporated in the curriculum of foreign-language education.

Sew's (2015) study has showcased a portrayal of cultural intelligence in the idiomatic expressions of two distinct languages, Chinese and Malay languages. To further enrich the literature, a comparative investigation of cultural intelligence in the other languages is necessary. Therefore, this study tried to redress this lacuna by investigating comparatively the cultural intelligence in idiomatic expressions of two languages, Japanese and Indonesian languages. As known, Japan and Indonesia have not only a long-standing diplomatic relationship (see JICA, 2018; Seniwati, et al., 2021) but also historical attachment in the past. For the past generation of Indonesians experiencing the Japanese colonialism (see Post & Touwen-Bouwisma, 1996; Sato, 2006), Japanese is not an unfamiliar language. And until today, the mutual relationship between the two countries still persists, such as in the sector of education, trade, agriculture, technology, and so forth. Comparative studies on varied fields and topics have also been carried out to capture and then compare various phenomena happened in both countries (e.g., Arfani & Nakaya, 2019; Murti, 2020; Rahayu, et al., 2011). In addition, both Japan and Indonesia possess a distinctively unique culture. Japanese culture is a unique blend of the traditional and modern values. Representing the grandiose of ancient times and the modernized society, Japanese culture is formed of religious traditions such as Shinto and Buddhism, language, art, literature, and music (Varley, 2000). The Japanese language (see Gottlieb, 2005) reflects a culture that emphasizes a sense of beauty, meticulousness, civility, and respect for others. Meanwhile, Indonesian culture has been shaped by superdiverse traditions including indigenous cultures, as well as Indian, Chinese, Dutch, and other foreign influences. Originated from Malay language (Pauw, 2009), the Indonesian language serves as a language of national unity (Moeliono, 1986; Sneddon, 2003). Mindful of such background, this comparative study tried to explore the cultural intelligence in idiomatic expressions of Japanese and Indonesian languages. Therefore, such effort

can lead to a deeper understanding of how Japanese and Indonesian people intelligently use indirect and symbolic expressions to convey meaning, with regard to their behaviour, thought, social situation, and culture.

The exact definition of idioms/idiomatic expressions might vary. But in essence, it can be traditionally defined as “multiword expressions whose meanings are “non-compositional,” indicating that the meaning of an idiomatic expression differs from what might be expected based on the meanings of the words that make up the expression” (Feeney, 2023, p. 1). It has a figurative meaning different from the literal meaning of the words in the phrase so that its meaning cannot be predicted solely through the grammatical or semantics rules. Idiomatic expressions are used in everyday language to convey certain meanings or emotions in greater detail or clarity than the literal words. Since idiomatic expressions are composed of figurative rather than literal language, the understanding of it must be supported by cultural intelligence (Wright, 2002). It is because, in its creation, idioms contain elements of culture originated from human thought (Haiyan et al., 2016). The heavy influences of the native speakers’ thinking and experiences make it difficult to elucidate the idiomatic meanings by solely looking at each constituent element.

Due to the influences of each culture, idiomatic expressions of Japanese and Indonesian languages have their own uniquely distinctive characteristics. McCaskey (1994) briefly explained that Japanese idioms possess several characteristics that can be classified into the following four groups: (1) an elliptical phrase in which the constituent elements do not represent the full meaning; (2) an abstract phrase in which the partial constituent elements are abstract; (3) a metaphorical phrase in which the partial constituent elements are metaphorical; and (4) phrases that express a simple action literally, but can have a broader sense of meaning. In Japanese idiomatic expressions, the structure can change dynamically. For instance, “*kaoga aru* (transitive verb)” becomes “*ka o miau* (intransitive verb)”; or “*ka o miau* (intransitive verb)” becomes “*ka o miau* (nominative verb)”. Such changes are caused by a lack of correspondence between the idiomatic and lexical meanings of each constituent element. Cultural intelligence is thus required to understand Japanese idiomatic expressions. For example, the idiom “mud on the face” combined with “face” becomes “shame on the face.” However, for certain idiomatic expressions, it is still possible to predict the relationship between their meaning and the symbol used, both historically and etymologically. It is because there is still a connection between the overall meaning of the idioms and the lexical meaning of the constituent elements that make up the idioms.

Through this comparative study, the Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions were compared within the frame of cultural intelligence. This study sought to focus on the three aspects of comparison including (1) idioms with similar expressions and similar meanings, (2) idioms with different meanings but similar expressions, and (3) idioms with similar meanings but different expressions. This study can hopefully enrich the literature on the study of idiomatic expressions in their interplay with cultural intelligence, especially in the Japanese and Indonesian languages.

## **METHOD**

Employing a descriptive research approach, comparative linguistics (see Xu, 2002) was used as a basis for looking into the comparison between Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions. As the Japanese idiomatic expressions frequently made use of parts of the human body vocabulary words in their composition (Herath, 2015), this study involved a random selection of 16 Japanese and 13 Indonesian idiomatic expressions that contained the word “face” as a specific element constituent. The idioms containing the word “face” were also selected since they were extensively used in everyday life (Suryadimulya, 2002). Thus, in this study, the idiomatic expressions of Japanese and Indonesian languages composed of the word “face” as the essential human body part were compared (see Leksono & Jantem, 2020).

Scrutiny of idiomatic expressions was done to select multiword expressions with the word “face” from multiple dictionaries. The data on the Japanese idiomatic expressions were obtained from *Nihonkokugo Daijiten* (Concise Dictionary of Japanese National Language), *Kojien* (CD-ROM) (Concise Dictionary of Japanese Language), *Kokugo Kanyoku Jiten* (Dictionary of Japanese National Language Idioms), and *Kotowaza-Kanyoku Jiten* (Dictionary of Japanese Idioms and Proverbs). Meanwhile, the data on Indonesian idiomatic expressions were gathered from *Kamus Idiom Bahasa Indonesia* (Dictionary of Indonesian Language Idioms), *Kamus Ungkapan Bahasa Indonesia* (Dictionary of Indonesian Language Idioms), *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (the Great Indonesian Dictionary), and *Kamus Ungkapan dan Peribahasa Indonesia* (Dictionary of Indonesian Idioms and Proverbs).

The Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions were then identified and categorized into the following groups: idioms with similar expressions and similar meanings, idioms with different meanings but similar expressions, and idioms with similar meanings but different expressions. In this study, the focus of attention was the cultural intelligence incorporated in those idiomatic expressions. To unveil the parallels and

contrasts (see Lado, 1957) of idiomatic expressions between the two languages, the descriptive comparative-contrastive analysis method was employed in this study. It was used to describe the idiomatic expressions of the two languages separately, then to compare their similarities and differences in terms of the semantics and syntactic composition.

**FINDINGS**

The following is a selection of 16 Japanese and 13 Indonesian idiomatic expressions that use the vocabulary word of the human body part "face":

**Idioms with similar expressions and similar meanings**

There are several idioms that use the word "face" in Indonesian and Japanese languages that have similar expressions and similar meanings, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
Selected Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic data

1.	Japanese idiomatic expressions	Indonesian idiomatic expressions	Meanings
	顔を合 <small>あ</small> わす 顔を合 <small>あ</small> わせる 顔が合 <small>あ</small> う 厚 <small>あ</small> 顔 Sentence Examples (1) <u>Japanese idiomatic expressions</u> くじ引きの結果、一回戦から優勝候補同士が顔を合 <small>あ</small> わせることになった。 <i>Kujibiki no kekka, ikkaisen karayuushou kouho doushi ga kao o awaseru koto ni natta.</i> According to the draw results, the champion candidates will <b>face</b> each other in the first round. 顔を合 <small>あ</small> わすたびに、ふつふつと怒りが込み上げてきます。 <i>Kao o awasu tabi ni, futsufutsu ikari ga komiagete kimasu.</i> Anger erupted every time they came <b>face to face</b> . Note: The idiom "face" that has a character meaning is expressed by the idiom "kogan" in Japanese and "thick face" in Indonesian as in the following sentence: 彼は厚顔にも昇給を要求した。 <i>Kare wa kōgan ni mo shōkyū o yōkyū shita.</i> <i>Tanpa rasa malu dia menuntut kenaikan gaji</i> Without <b>shame</b> he demanded a raise <u>Indonesian idiomatic expressions</u> <i>Bertemu muka dan bertukar pikiran dengan golongan tua telah diadakannya.</i> He has held <b>face-to-face</b> meetings and exchange ideas with the older group.	temu muka (face to face) tebal muka (thick face)	meet no shame
2.	Japanese idiomatic expressions	Indonesian idiomatic expressions	Meanings
	顔が赤 <small>あか</small> くなる 顔を赤 <small>あか</small> くする 甘い顔 <small>あま</small> をする Sentence Examples (2) <u>Japanese idiomatic expressions</u> 彼は甘い顔 <small>あま</small> をしているからよく頼まれる。 <i>Kare wa amai kao o shite iru kara yoku tanomareru.</i> Because she always has a <b>sweet face</b> , she is often asked for help. <u>Indonesian idiomatic expressions</u> <i>Dengan bermuka manis pasti apa yang kauminta akan dikabulkannya.</i> With a <b>sweet face</b> , surely what you ask will be granted	muka merah (face turns red) muka manis (sweet face)	feel embarrassed generous show a gentle demeanor

The Japanese idiomatic expressions (1) 顔を合あわす *kao o awasu* 顔を合あわせる *kao o awaseru*, and 顔が合あう *kao ga au* have the same meaning as the Indonesian idiomatic expressions *bertemu muka* [face to face]. However, grammatically, Japanese idiomatic expressions can use the two types of verbs, namely intransitive (顔を合あわす *kao o awasu* 顔を合あわせる *kao o awaseru*) and transitive (顔が合あう *kao ga au*). Meanwhile, the similar

idiomatic expressions in Indonesian language can only use intransitive verbs (*bertemu muka*) and no idioms with intransitive verbs (*menemukan muka* – [finding face]) are found. Such idiomatic expressions are generally easy to recall for Japanese and Indonesian learners since they have the same meaning in both languages. However, it is important to note that the Japanese idiomatic expressions *kao o awasu* and *kao o awaseru* can be used as

intransitive verbs, transitive verbs, and nouns. However, in Indonesian language, only intransitive verbs (face-to-face) and noun are used.

The Japanese idiomatic expression (2) 甘い顔をする *amai kao o suru* [sweet face] means "to endure everything and adopt a tolerant attitude." In Indonesian language, it means "to be nice and display excellent manners". The idiomatic expressions in the sentences above (2) have the same meaning. However, the sense of both idioms is different. In the Japanese version, the sweet face allows someone to be taken advantage of by others. In the Indonesian language, the sweet face is an expression used for taking advantage of others. In terms of structure, the Japanese idiomatic expression 甘い顔をしている *amai kao o suru*, which has the lexical meaning 'sweet face,' always comes in a transitive verb form. It is similar to the Indonesian

idiomatic expression *bermuka manis*. Both of which are transitive verbs with distinct meanings, namely "generous" and "displaying a compassionate attitude." A person's "face" conveys his or her character, honor, and reputation. The popularity of a person is also related to their face. There are also some fascinating emotional expressions. Table 1 shows that "face" indicates "meeting" and "one's honor." Therefore, "muka" in Indonesian idiomatic expression and "kao" in Japanese idiomatic expression has the same meaning.

**Idioms with different meanings but similar expressions**

There are several idioms that use the word "face" in Indonesian and Japanese languages that have different meanings but similar expressions, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Selected Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic data*

Japanese idiomatic expressions		Meanings	Indonesian idiomatic expressions	Meanings
(3)	顔を隠す <i>kao o kakusu</i>	disappear	<i>menutup muka</i> (cover the face)	feign ignorance, do not care
(4)	顔を赤くする <i>kao o akaku suru</i>	embarrassed	<i>muka merah</i> (red face)	angry
(5)	顔を売る <i>kao o uru</i>	do something	<i>menjual muka</i> (sell the face)	doing things to make his name known by others
(6)	顔合わせ <i>kao awase</i>	visit	<i>temu muka</i> (face to face)	gather

Sentence Examples (6)  
Japanese idiomatic expression  
 来週、新しい委員の顔合わせをする予定です。  
*Raishuu, atarashii kaiin no kaoawase wo suru yotei desu.*  
 We are planning to **meet** the new committee members next week.  
Indonesian idiomatic expression  
*Ketika kita menyelenggarakan temu muka, saya sangat terkesan dengan presentasinya.*  
 When we conduct a face-to-face meeting, I was very impressed in his explanation

The Japanese idiomatic expression (3) 顔を隠す *kao o kakusu* and the Indonesian idiomatic expression *menutup muka* [cover your face] have different meanings. But both expressions are still related to someone's "honor". Meanwhile, the Japanese idiomatic expression (4) *kao o kakaku suru* means "shame." It is related to a form of human emotion, namely "feeling embarrassed." Meanwhile, with the similar expression, Indonesian idiomatic expression *muka merah* also has a meaning related to the human emotion, but in a negative connotation. The difference in structure can be seen in the expression (4) *kao o akaku suru*. It is an idiom formed from the intransitive verb form 顔が赤くなる *kao ga akaku naru* into a transitive verb.

The Japanese idiomatic expression (5) 顔を売る *kao o uru* has the lexical meaning "selling face", with the idiomatic meaning "doing something". In the Indonesian version, it also has the similar

idiomatic expression *mencari muka* that literally means "selling face". However, its idiomatic meaning is "doing things so that his name is known to many people", different to that of the Japanese version. Both of the idiomatic expressions always appear with transitive verb forms. But in the Japanese language, intransitive and transitive verb idioms are used, namely. 顔を売る *kao o uru* and. 顔が売れる *kao ga ureru*. Meanwhile, another meaning of the idiomatic expression (6) 顔合わせ *kao awase* in Japanese is "visiting" (a noun). In the Indonesian version, the idiomatic expression *temu muka* [face to face] is included in the noun category, with the idiomatic meaning "gathering and meeting."

**Idioms with similar meanings but different expressions**

There are several idioms that use the word “face” in Indonesian and Japanese languages that have similar

meanings but different expressions, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Selected Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic data*

	<b>Japanese idiomatic expressions</b>	<b>Indonesian idiomatic expressions</b>	<b>Meanings</b>
7.	顔に泥を塗る( <i>kao ni doro o nuru</i> ) put mud on your face	<i>arang di muka</i> (smudge charcoal in face)	shame
Sentence Examples (7)			
<u>Japanese idiomatic expression</u>			
さんざん好き放題をして親の顔に泥を塗った。 <i>Sanzan suki hodai o shite oya no kao ni doro o nutta</i> By doing whatever he pleased, he had left <b>mud</b> on his parents' face. Figurative meaning: By doing as he pleases, he has brought <b>disgrace</b> to his parents.			
<u>Indonesian idiomatic expression</u>			
Perbuatanmu telah <b>mencoreng arang</b> di muka keluargamu, sebaiknya kau pindah dari kampung ini Your actions have <b>tarnished the face</b> of your family, you should move from this village Figurative meaning: Your actions <b>have disgraced</b> your family, you should move from this village			
8.	顔が広い ( <i>kao ga hiroi</i> ) having a broad face	<i>punya muka</i> (have face)	known to many people
9.	顔を潰す( <i>kao o tsubusu</i> ) ruin one's face	<i>kehilangan muka</i> (lose face)	make a disgrace to tarnish the good name
10.	顔を膨らます ( <i>kao o fukuramasu</i> ) inflating one's face	<i>bermuka asam</i> (sour face) <i>mukanya jatuh ke tanah</i> (face fell to the ground)	angry, disappointed, dissatisfied
11.	顔から火が出る ( <i>kao kara hi ga deru</i> ) fire comes out of the mouth	<i>muka merah</i> (red face)	embarrassed
12.	顔に紅葉を散らす ( <i>kao ni kouyou o chirasu</i> ) sprinkle red autumn leaves to face		
13.	顔向けができない ( <i>kao muke ga dekinai</i> ) unable to face		
14.	合わせる顔がない ( <i>awaseru kao ga nai</i> ) have no face to meet		

In Table 3 above, the idiomatic expressions have the similar meanings but use different expressions. For instance, the meaning ‘shame’ (7) in the Indonesian language was expressed by the word *arang* [charcoal]. Meanwhile, Japanese people express the same meaning with the word “mud”. It shows that there are differences in perceptions about the concepts of the two words. For Indonesians, there is a tendency that the concept of charcoal is something dirty. Meanwhile for the Japanese, the word “mud” is considered to have a negative connotation. It is possible that there are differences in the concept of geographical location that results in the emergence of different concepts between “mud” and “charcoal”. The Japanese idiomatic expression 顔に泥を塗る *kao ni doro o nuru* “put mud on your face” has the same idiomatic meaning with the Indonesian version *arang di muka* [smear charcoal on the face] that means “to make a

disgrace”. The difference in the use of the words that make up such idiomatic expression is anthropologically a form of internalization of the differences in the agrarian culture between the Indonesian and Japanese societies.

The Japanese expression (8) 顔が広い *kao ga hiroi* literally means “having a broad face.” It has the idiomatic meaning “known to many people,” similar to its Indonesian version. But in the Indonesian language, the idiomatic expression *punya muka* literally means “have a face.” As explained by Malinda (2015), the word “broad face” is used to depict a social person who has many acquaintances in a broad social environment. The face is a part of the human body used to depict the whole person. Then, the Japanese expression (9) 顔を潰す *kao o tsubusu* has the lexical meaning “to ruin one's face”. In the Indonesian version, it is expressed with the idiomatic expression *kehilangan*

*muka* [lose face]. Both the Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions have the same idiomatic meaning “to make a disgrace” or “to tarnish one’s good name”. Meanwhile, the Japanese expression (10) 顔を膨らます *kao o fukuramasu* literally means “inflating one’s face.” The idiomatic meaning of the expression is “being angry.” “feeling dissatisfied”, or “disappointed.” In its Indonesian version, it is expressed in different idiomatic expression *bermuka asam* [a sour face] or *mukanya jatuh ke tanah* [having your face fall to the ground]. Although the two versions are expressed differently, the idiomatic meaning is similar. In addition, the Japanese idiomatic expression (11) 顔から火が出る (*kao kara hi ga deru*) literally means “fire comes out of the mouth”. Kuramochi (2000) expressed the meaning of this idiom as 面目を失って、人に顔を合わせる事ができないほど恥じ入る様子 or *Menboku o ushinatte, hito ni kao o awaseru koto ga dekinai hodo haji iru yousu* or the situation when a person is so embarrassed that he cannot meet people because he loses self-esteem (face). In the Indonesian version, it is expressed by the idiom *muka merah* [red face]. Both the Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions have the similar idiomatic meaning “feeling embarrassed.”

## DISCUSSION

Idiomatic expressions have been an emerging topic in the current linguistic enterprise (Espinal & Mateu, 2019). In this study, Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions are evaluated using semantic and syntactic investigations, as well as the analysis of the cultural similarities and contrasts. It is significant because idiomatic expressions involve a lot of cultural influences (see Haiyan et al., 2016; Qassem & Vijayasarithi, 2015; Sew 2015; van der Merwe, 2001). In addition, idiomatic expressions differ depending on the ecology geographical situation. Therefore, it is critical to delve into the context in which the expressions are used. In the making of idiomatic expressions, the words representing human body parts (e.g., Abbas, 2009; Adelina & Suprayogi, 2020; Hirose & Suryadimulya, 2006; Leksono & Jantem, 2020) are used widely in different cultures. The idiomatic expressions composed of the human body vocabulary thus abound in many languages, with a variety of compositions in terms of its element constituents, grammatical functions, and lexical and figurative meanings.

The findings of this study indicate that the Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions have a variety of syntactical and semantical compositions. The parallels and contrasts in the composition of the constituent words are generated by the different cultural backgrounds (see Leksono & Jantem, 2020) between the two languages. From the patterns elucidated, it can generally be deduced that both

similarities and differences revolve around three central aspects including the words that compose the larger expression, the literal readings of the expression, and the figurative meanings of the expression. Thus, the Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions can be classified into three categories. First, there are idiomatic expressions that have similar constituent words, and similar meanings both literally and figuratively. Second, there are idiomatic expressions that have similar constituent words, and similarly related literal meanings, but different figurative meanings. In contrast, the third, there are idiomatic expressions that have different constituent words, and different literal meanings, but similar figurative meanings.

The results are in accordance with the findings of two contrastive studies that compare the idiomatic expressions of human body parts (Adelina & Suprayogi, 2020; Leksono & Jantem 2020). A study by Adelina and Suprayogi (2020) compared 30 English and Indonesian idiomatic expressions of human body parts. The study found that there were three categorizations of idiomatic expressions of the human body in English and Indonesian languages: idioms with similar meanings and similar forms of expressions, idioms with different meanings but similar forms of expressions, and idioms with similar meanings but different forms of expressions. In the same vein, a study by Leksono and Jantem (2020) compared the idioms of human body parts in Indonesian and Thai languages. Employing descriptive analysis, the study found that a variation of Indonesian and Thai idiomatic expressions abounded, with the three following categories: same literal and actual meaning, different literal meaning but same actual meaning, and same literal meaning but different actual meaning. The conclusion was that Thai and Indonesian idiomatic expressions were used to depict human action, character, and thinking. It reinforces the findings of our study that idiomatic meanings in Indonesian and Japanese languages, particularly those utilizing the term “face”, are used to describe one’s reputation, self-esteem, emotions, and arrival at a meeting. But it should be carefully noted that idiomatic expressions are not only composed of human body parts but also animals (Liu, 2019; Wilkosz, 2015), plants (Nhung, 2011), natural objects, and so forth. The most important is that whatever the element constituents that compose the idiomatic expressions, the strong influences of culture and human thoughts are apparent.

Therefore, possession of cultural intelligence is important for understanding the non-compositional meanings of idiomatic expressions. It is in line with a statement by Bernardo and Presbitero (2018) who claim that cultural intelligence relates to the individual abilities in dealing with intercultural situations involving people of varied cultural backgrounds. With cultural intelligence, people can



integrate other cultural standards into their thinking and instantly modify their thoughts and conduct (Livermore, 2011). Furthermore, in essence, the concept of cultural intelligence is directly tied to the way speakers of that language express themselves. The Japanese people are famed for their good manners and proclivity. The Japanese language reflects the behavior pattern of the Japanese people, who tend to use indirect and profoundly meaningful phrases. In the Japanese language, idioms are frequently employed as a technique to express meaning in an oblique manner. Thus, a person's capacity to learn culturally relevant knowledge (Thomas, 2006) can be honed through the mastery of idiomatic expressions. When a person recognizes an idiomatic expression as a multiword composition whose meaning differs from the words that make up the expression, his or her cultural intelligence is cultivated. It can thus generate such a mutual effect between the understanding of idiomatic expressions and the possession of cultural intelligence. As idiomatic expressions are shaped by cultural values, the understanding of idioms can be aided by cultural understanding. On the other side, by knowing idiomatic expressions of the culture, people can develop their cultural intelligence. By having a higher level of cultural intelligence, they can properly communicate and connect interpersonally with individuals of diverse cultural origins (Thomas, 2006). The more they possess cultural intelligence, the easier and more successful they will establish and enjoy multicultural interactions.

## CONCLUSION

This comparative study delved into how cultural intelligence is manifested in the Japanese and Indonesian idiomatic expressions. What is clearly indicated in the study is that variations of the multiword expressions occur due to divergence in the constituent words, literal readings, and figurative meanings. Three comparison categories thus emerge as a result of those variations. In this regard, a cultural touch plays as an essential role in influencing the composition and meaning of idiomatic expressions. Then, to amplify our understanding of idioms, a possession of cultural intelligence is of central importance. Knowing the culture of the intended language can aid in wider recognition of idiomatic expressions. Meanwhile, at the same time, the learning it can enhance our appreciation of culture. In sum, this study delineates how cultural intelligence is manifested in the idiomatic expressions of the Japanese and Indonesian languages. Therefore, as a pedagogical implication, inserting the teaching of idioms of the two languages in the school curriculum is beneficial for strengthening the students' cultural quotient, especially in language subjects. In regard to future research, further scrutiny to explore the impact of

idioms learning on the students' cultural awareness is necessary. In addition, there should be many more explorations, especially on the idiomatic expressions of indigenous languages. Such efforts can lead to the enrichment of our knowledge about the wisdoms of indigenous communities.

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