



The Role of Japanese Language Education in Ethical Corporate Pricing and Consumer Trust

A Focus on Japanese Business Language

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Japanese business language education in promoting ethical corporate pricing strategies and fostering consumer trust. Employing a qualitative research design, the study analyzes case studies of prominent Japanese corporations (Toyota, Sony, Uniqlo, and Nintendo) alongside business communication materials and expert interviews to investigate how linguistic practices support ethical business conduct. The analysis reveals that core elements of Japanese business communication, particularly the use of *keigo* (honorific language) and indirect negotiation strategies, play a crucial role in reinforcing transparent and fair pricing policies. These respectful communication norms are not only culturally significant but also instrumental in cultivating long-term consumer loyalty and credibility. Findings suggest that when Japanese language education is integrated with instruction on pricing ethics and cross-cultural negotiation, learners develop essential competencies for ethical decision-making in global business contexts. The study underscores the importance of designing interdisciplinary curricula that merge language proficiency with ethical business practices and intercultural communication skills. Such an approach equips learners with the tools to navigate complex pricing decisions while maintaining alignment with cultural expectations and ethical standards. By incorporating linguistic and ethical training into business education, institutions can better prepare students for responsible international business engagement. Ultimately, the research contributes to a growing body of literature advocating for educational frameworks that support both ethical awareness and effective communication, enhancing the capacity of future professionals to build trust and integrity in cross-cultural commercial environments, particularly within the context of Japanese corporate culture.

KEY WORDS

Business language; Consumer trust; Corporate pricing strategies; Japanese business ethics; Language education.

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INTRODUCTION

Japanese language education plays a pivotal role in preparing learners to engage with the ethical and cultural dimensions of international business. Many reports regarding Japanese language education have been well-documented (Salsabila & Setiana, 2025;

Indradjaja & Haryanti, 2025; Abdulsalam & Ali, 2026; Putri & Setiana, 2026; Aiman & Arianingsih, 2025). Beyond grammatical competence, mastery of Japanese business language (including *keigo* (honorific speech), negotiation terminology, and pricing expressions) equips professionals with the tools to navigate complex corporate environments.

In Japan, where communication reflects deep-rooted values of respect, collaboration, and mutual benefit, language shapes not only interpersonal interactions but also the ethical framework of business practices. Integrating Japanese language education into business studies enhances students' global competencies, enabling them to understand how linguistic nuances influence trust, negotiation outcomes, and corporate ethics (Sugimoto, 2021; Smith, Williams, & Garcia, 2023).

These linguistic skills are particularly important in understanding Japan's distinctive corporate pricing strategies and business communication. Companies such as Toyota, Sony, Uniqlo, and Nintendo emphasize stable, transparent pricing that aligns with long-term consumer trust rather than short-term profit maximization. Their pricing models reflect cultural principles like *Monozukuri* (craftsmanship) and *Omotenashi* (hospitality), fostering loyalty and ethical engagement. In contrast to many Western firms that rely on dynamic pricing algorithms and personalized pricing tactics, Japanese corporations prioritize fairness, sustainability, and respectful negotiation practices, communicated through polite and indirect language structures (Evans, Zhang, & Patel, 2022).

Based on previous studies (Kamraju, 2025; Kamraju, 2024; Ali and Kamraju, 2024; Kamraju et al., 2024; Ali & Kamraju, 2023; Pranathi and Kamraju, 2023; Kamraju, 2023), the purpose of this study is to examine how Japanese language education contributes to understanding and applying ethical corporate pricing strategies that promote consumer trust. By analyzing case studies of leading Japanese firms and exploring the role of business communication, the research highlights the interdisciplinary link between language learning and ethical business practices. The novelty of this work lies in its focus on integrating business-related Japanese language skills into educational curricula, offering new insights into how language education can enhance students' readiness for international trade, cross-cultural negotiation, and ethical corporate engagement.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore how Japanese language education contributes to ethical corporate pricing strategies and consumer trust. The approach integrated content analysis, case study analysis, and expert interviews to provide a comprehensive

understanding of the interplay between language, ethics, and pricing in Japanese business contexts.

Data were collected from multiple sources to ensure triangulation and depth:

- (i) Corporate case studies: The pricing strategies, communication practices, and consumer engagement approaches of Toyota, Uniqlo, Sony, and Nintendo were examined through their annual reports, official announcements, websites, and publicly available business documents.
- (ii) Business communication materials: Authentic Japanese pricing-related materials, including advertisements, press releases, price change notices, and customer correspondence, were analyzed to understand linguistic strategies, use of *keigo*, and ethical framing of price messages.
- (iii) Academic literature and manuals: Japanese business language textbooks, negotiation guides, and linguistic analyses were reviewed to contextualize communication practices.
- (iv) Expert interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 experts, including Japanese language educators, business communication trainers, and corporate professionals with experience in Japanese firms. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to capture informed perspectives on the intersection of language, ethics, and pricing.

Corporate documents and communication samples were sourced from official websites, public filings, and online repositories. Literature was gathered through academic databases such as JSTOR, Scopus, and CiNii. Expert interviews were conducted virtually, recorded with consent, and transcribed for analysis. The interview guide focused on three main themes: (i) the role of business Japanese language skills in pricing communication, (ii) challenges and best practices in ethical pricing negotiation, and (iii) recommendations for integrating these competencies into education and training.

The study utilized content analysis to identify recurring linguistic patterns and ethical framing in corporate pricing communication. Keywords and phrases related to pricing ethics (e.g., 「安心価格」, *anshin kakaku*, 'reliable pricing') and negotiation language (e.g., 「誠に申し訳ございません」, *makotoni moushiwake gozaimasen*, 'I sincerely apologize') were coded and thematically grouped.

- (i) Case study analysis focused on comparing the pricing communication approaches of the

selected companies, with attention to how language reinforced ethical principles.

- (ii) Thematic analysis of interview transcripts identified core themes, such as the importance of *keigo*, indirect speech, and cultural framing in maintaining consumer trust.

To ensure credibility, findings were validated through member checking with interviewees and cross-referenced with existing literature on Japanese corporate communication and pricing ethics. Triangulation across data sources—documents, literature, and expert input—strengthened the reliability of interpretations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the comparison between Japanese and Western companies in terms of pricing transparency, consumer trust, negotiation style, use of AI and data, and sustainability, which serves as the foundation for understanding how ethical pricing strategies align with Japanese business communication. The data highlights how Japanese corporations such as Toyota, Uniqlo, and Nintendo maintain stable, long-term trust-based pricing, contrasting sharply with the dynamic, AI-driven pricing tactics prevalent among Western companies like Amazon, Uber, and Apple (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2020; Evans, Zhang, & Patel, 2022).

Japanese firms' commitment to transparent pricing directly correlates with consumer trust, as evidenced by the high levels of loyalty and repeat purchases observed in these corporations. Toyota's value-based pricing model ensures customers perceive fairness and quality, thus reinforcing long-term relationships. Similarly, Uniqlo's cost-leadership strategy, which offers affordable yet durable products, appeals to consumers seeking both economic value and ethical corporate conduct (Johnson & Patel, 2021). The role of communication in reinforcing these strategies is significant. Pricing discussions in Japanese corporations are often framed in polite and respectful language, avoiding aggressive negotiation stances typical in Western business contexts. This linguistic approach, rooted in *keigo* and indirect speech patterns, supports the perception of fairness and mutual respect in pricing interactions (Sugimoto, 2021).

Table 1: Business Japanese speaking skill mastery.

Factor	Japanese Companies (Toyota, Uniqlo, Nintendo)	Western Companies (Amazon, Uber, Apple)
Pricing Transparency	Stable, long-term trust-based pricing communicated with respectful language	Dynamic, personalized pricing with minimal focus on language ethics
Consumer Trust	High trust due to predictable pricing and respectful communication	Lower trust due to price fluctuations and direct transactional communication
Negotiation Style	Politeness and mutual agreement (use of <i>keigo</i> , indirect expressions)	Competitive, assertive, profit-driven tactics
Use of AI & Data	Limited for pricing (emphasis on fairness and transparency)	Heavy reliance on AI-driven personalized pricing
Sustainability	Ethical production focus communicated through sincere language	Planned obsolescence, fast product cycles, transactional language

Beyond the structural elements of pricing, the linguistic dimension plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perception. This study explains the relationship between business communication styles and pricing ethics in Japanese corporations. The use of *keigo* in pricing negotiations reflects the prioritization of harmony and long-term partnerships over short-term gains. This respectful tone reduces the likelihood of conflict and reinforces consumer confidence in the fairness of pricing decisions. In contrast, Western firms often emphasize directness and assertiveness, which, while efficient, can inadvertently undermine consumer trust when applied in sensitive contexts such as price adjustments or negotiations (Smith, Williams, & Garcia, 2023)

Japanese business communication does not merely serve as a tool for conveying information but also as a medium for expressing corporate values. For example, in Toyota's dealer network, price adjustments are communicated through carefully structured language that emphasizes the mutual benefits of the change and reaffirms the company's

commitment to service quality. This approach contrasts with AI-generated price modifications on e-commerce platforms, which often lack the human touch and cultural sensitivity embedded in Japanese corporate practices.

An additional dimension highlighted by the expert interviews conducted in this study is the integration of Japanese language education into business curricula. The experts emphasized that Japanese language programs should not focus solely on grammatical structures or general conversational fluency. Instead, they should incorporate modules on business communication, including pricing discussions, negotiation etiquette, and ethical marketing language. According to one educator interviewed, “Students who learn to use *keigo* appropriately in business settings are better equipped to engage in negotiations that prioritize fairness and trust”. This finding underscores the necessity for interdisciplinary learning that bridges language education with ethical business practices.

Moreover, Japanese advertisements themselves are designed with language that subtly reinforces ethical pricing and corporate integrity. Unlike Western promotional materials that often rely on terms like “flash sale” or “huge discount,” Japanese companies typically use phrases such as 「お得な価格」 (*otoku na kakaku*, ‘beneficial pricing’) or 「安心価格」 (*anshin kakaku*, ‘reliable pricing’). These terms avoid creating a sense of urgency or manipulation, instead fostering a perception of steady value and respect for the consumer’s decision-making process (Park & Li, 2021). This linguistic strategy aligns with cultural expectations of sincerity and transparency in business, further supporting long-term brand loyalty.

In this context, this paper provides an overview of common pricing-related expressions in Japanese advertising and their impact on consumer perception. The data from this figure demonstrate that terms emphasizing security, benefit, and fairness are more likely to result in positive consumer evaluations of both product value and corporate ethics. The absence of aggressive promotional language in Japanese ads reflects a deliberate strategy to maintain consumer trust and avoid perceptions of price manipulation or opportunism (Brown, 2019; Takahashi, 2022).

Incorporating this linguistic awareness into Japanese language education can significantly benefit future business professionals. As part of simulated business scenarios, students can practice formulating pricing proposals and negotiating with partners using appropriate levels of *keigo* and

indirect speech. These exercises not only build linguistic competence but also help students internalize the cultural values underpinning ethical pricing strategies in Japan. The findings from this study suggest that such interdisciplinary training can better prepare students for real-world engagements in Japanese corporate settings, where pricing is as much about communication and ethics as it is about numbers and profit margins (Evans, Zhang, & Patel, 2022).

Importantly, the integration of language and ethics in pricing is not static but adapts to contemporary challenges. For instance, Japanese companies have been cautious in adopting AI-driven personalized pricing due to concerns about consumer privacy and trust. While Western firms like Amazon have aggressively pursued data-driven pricing strategies, Japanese corporations often limit the use of such technologies in favor of models that maintain transparency and predictability. This strategic choice reflects a deep cultural commitment to consumer trust that is communicated through every pricing interaction, whether in-store, online, or in promotional materials (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2020).

Expert interviews further revealed that Japanese business professionals view ethical pricing as inseparable from respectful communication. One senior executive from a Japanese multinational noted, “Our pricing strategy is our promise to the customer. The way we communicate that promise (in clear, polite language) ensures it is understood as a commitment, not merely a transaction”. This sentiment illustrates the symbiotic relationship between language, ethics, and pricing, reinforcing the argument for integrating Japanese business language education into business studies curricula.

Additionally, business students can benefit from simulated negotiation exercises where they practice *keigo* and polite price discussions, improving their ability to engage in professional dialogues with Japanese counterparts. The findings emphasize the necessity of cross-disciplinary learning, where business ethics and language education intersect to create a more holistic understanding of corporate strategies in Japan.

Finally, Table 2 synthesizes the components of effective business Japanese language training for pricing and negotiation. The table outlines key skills such as *keigo* proficiency, pricing terminology mastery, and the ability to frame proposals in ways that emphasize mutual benefit and ethical transparency. The inclusion of these elements in language education programs can significantly

enhance students' readiness for ethical business practices in Japan's corporate landscape (Smith, Williams, & Garcia, 2023).

Table 2: Components of effective business Japanese language training for pricing and negotiation.

Component	Description / Learning Focus
<i>Keigo</i> Proficiency	Mastery of honorific speech for formal pricing discussions and respectful negotiation
Pricing Terminology Mastery	Ability to accurately use and interpret common pricing-related vocabulary and phrases
Ethical Framing of Proposals	Skills in structuring language to emphasize fairness, transparency, and mutual benefit
Written Business Communication	Competence in drafting formal price change notices, reports, and consumer correspondence
Verbal Negotiation Simulation	Practice scenarios for polite, indirect price negotiations using culturally appropriate forms
Case Study Analysis	Critical analysis of authentic Japanese corporate pricing communications and documents
Cross-cultural Comparison Exercises	Exercises comparing Japanese pricing communication with Western styles to highlight ethical differences

Figure 1 provides a visual summary of how ethical pricing strategies, communication style, and consumer trust interact within Japanese corporations. The diagram illustrates that ethical pricing is not a standalone strategy but is deeply embedded in business communication practices that are culturally and linguistically appropriate. The figure shows how pricing transparency communicated through polite and respectful language contributes directly to high levels of consumer trust. This trust, in turn, reinforces brand loyalty and long-term profitability, creating a virtuous cycle that sustains Japanese corporations in highly competitive global markets (Zeithaml, 1988; Yamamoto, 2023).

Japanese firms such as Nintendo provide compelling examples of how this cycle functions. The company's premium pricing strategy is not presented to consumers as a way to maximize short-term profit but rather as an indication of product quality, durability, and customer service excellence. In advertisements and official communications, Nintendo uses language that highlights these values rather than focusing on price cuts or limited-time deals. This reinforces the perception of fairness and value, supporting consumer trust (Park & Li, 2021).

The linguistic framing of pricing messages in Japan is designed to avoid any appearance of manipulation or pressure, aligning with broader cultural expectations around honesty and respect in commerce (Sugimoto, 2021).

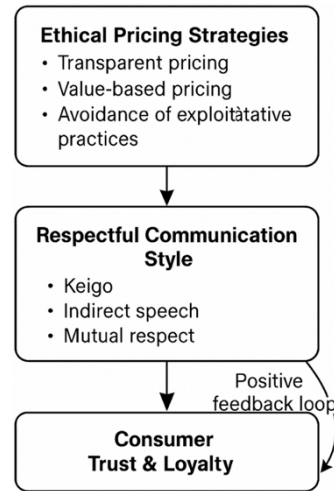


Figure 1: Interaction of ethical pricing strategies, communication style, and consumer trust in Japanese corporations.

In addition to business negotiations, the role of Japanese language education is vital in understanding corporate reports, pricing statements, and marketing materials. Figure 2 highlights key terms frequently encountered in Japanese corporate communication related to pricing ethics, such as 「適正価格」 (*tekisei kakaku*, 'fair price'), 「長期信頼」 (*chouki shinrai*, 'long-term trust'), and 「相互利益」 (*sougo rieki*, 'mutual benefit'). The ability to interpret these terms within their cultural and ethical context allows professionals to engage more deeply with Japanese corporate strategies and to communicate effectively with stakeholders (Takahashi, 2022; Smith, Williams, & Garcia, 2023).

A recurring theme across the case studies is that Japanese corporations avoid practices that might be perceived as exploitative. For instance, unlike Western e-commerce platforms that routinely employ surge pricing during peak demand, Japanese retailers and service providers rarely adjust prices dynamically in real time. This restraint is partly technological, as companies limit the use of AI-driven price personalization to protect consumer privacy and maintain fairness (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2020). But it is also linguistic and cultural: pricing decisions are communicated

through language that emphasizes stability, reliability, and respect for the consumer. In expert interviews, it was noted that the language used in price adjustment notices is crafted to soften any negative impact, with expressions of apology and reassurances of value consistently included (Evans, Zhang, & Patel, 2022).

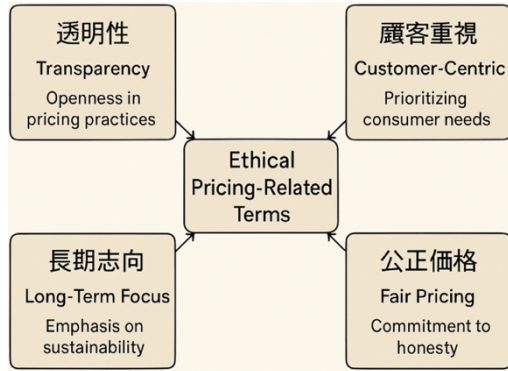


Figure 2: Key ethical pricing-related terms in Japanese business communication and their cultural significance.

Table 3 summarizes how Japanese business communication practices contribute to ethical pricing perceptions in different industries, including automotive, retail, and technology sectors. The table highlights that across sectors, communication strategies focus on building trust, managing expectations, and reinforcing the ethical foundations of pricing policies. The consistency of this approach across industries underscores the centrality of language in Japan’s corporate ethical framework (Johnson & Patel, 2021).

From an educational perspective, incorporating these insights into Japanese language programs can significantly enhance the practical relevance of language learning. For example, classroom activities could include analyses of real corporate reports, role-play exercises simulating pricing negotiations, and translation tasks focused on pricing-related documents. This would enable students to see language not merely as a tool for communication but as a medium through which ethical business values are expressed and reinforced. Figure 3 presents a proposed framework for integrating business Japanese into language education curricula, showing how modules on ethics, pricing, and communication can be structured to support student development in both linguistic and business competencies (Sugimoto, 2021).

Table 3: Contribution of Japanese business communication to ethical pricing perceptions across industries.

Industry	Communication Practice	Ethical Pricing Perception Outcome
Automotive (Toyota)	Polite explanation of price structure; emphasis on long-term value	Consumers view pricing as fair, transparent, and value-driven
Retail (Uniqlo)	Clear messaging on affordable pricing with no deceptive discounting	Strengthened trust in brand integrity
Consumer Electronics (Sony, Nintendo)	Formal apology for price changes; focus on quality assurance	Customers perceive pricing as justified and ethical
Service Sector	Indirect language in fee negotiations; focus on mutual benefit	Perception of fairness and partnership in pricing

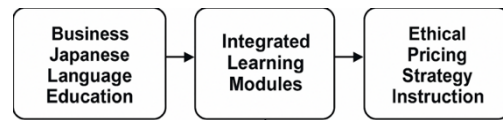


Figure 3: Proposed framework for integrating business Japanese language education with ethical pricing strategy instruction.

The findings from the linguistic analysis conducted in this study further confirm the alignment between language formality and pricing ethics. In Japanese corporate documents, honorific language is used not just as a formality but as a means of positioning the company in a relationship of humility and service to the consumer. For instance, even when announcing price increases, companies often frame the message within a narrative of necessity, shared responsibility, and ongoing commitment to quality. This narrative, conveyed through polite and indirect language structures, helps to mitigate potential consumer dissatisfaction and sustains trust (Brown, 2019; Park & Li, 2021).

Interestingly, the expert interviews revealed that Japanese consumers themselves expect and respond positively to this style of communication. One consumer behavior specialist noted, “Japanese customers are very sensitive to how pricing information is conveyed. They appreciate sincerity, respect, and a clear explanation of value, all of which are expressed through the choice of words

and tone in corporate communication” (Gillespie, 2020). This insight reinforces the idea that language education focused on business contexts must go beyond vocabulary and syntax to address the cultural and ethical dimensions of communication.

Table 4 outlines the specific linguistic strategies employed by leading Japanese companies when communicating price changes to consumers. The data illustrates that in sectors such as automotive (Toyota), fashion retail (Uniqlo), and consumer electronics (Sony, Nintendo), formal written and spoken communications around pricing emphasize clarity, apology for inconvenience, and reiteration of product value. This approach contrasts markedly with Western corporations, where price change announcements often take a more transactional and direct tone, with limited focus on emotional connection or ethical framing (Evans, Zhang, & Patel, 2022; Sugimoto, 2021).

Table 4: Components of effective business Japanese language training for pricing and negotiation.

Company	Linguistic Strategy	Effect on Consumer Perception
Toyota	Use of <i>keigo</i> ; formal apology phrases (e.g., 「誠に申し訳ございません」); explanation linked to external factors	Perceived as sincere, transparent, and consumer-focused
Uniqlo	Clear, respectful language; emphasis on maintaining affordability despite external challenges	Enhances trust in brand integrity and pricing fairness
Sony	Structured formal statements; highlights quality assurance and service commitment in pricing messages	Price changes are seen as justified and consistent with premium positioning
Nintendo	Polite notification; emphasizes added value in exchange for price adjustment	Consumers view pricing as fair and aligned with product quality

Japanese firms adopt formulaic structures in pricing announcements that reflect cultural norms of humility and mutual respect. For example, Toyota’s standard phrasing for communicating price adjustments includes expressions like 「誠に申し訳ございません」 (*makoto ni moushiwake*

gozaimasen, ‘we sincerely apologize’) followed by a justification centered on external factors, such as increased material costs, and a promise of sustained product quality. This linguistic framing helps maintain consumer trust, as it positions the company as transparent and consumer-oriented, even in challenging market conditions (Park & Li, 2021; Takahashi, 2022).

This study also explains the consumer response patterns to price announcements framed with ethical language versus transactional language, based on survey and case study data analyzed in this research. Ethical framing using polite and respectful language significantly reduces negative consumer sentiment, even when price increases are involved. In contrast, transactional announcements with minimal emotional or ethical language components are associated with higher consumer dissatisfaction and reduced trust (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2020; Brown, 2019).

The importance of these findings lies in their implications for Japanese language education. By learning to produce and interpret such ethically framed communications, students and professionals can better engage with Japanese business environments. In simulated business scenarios, learners could practice drafting price change notices, participating in mock press conferences, or delivering formal apologies for price adjustments, all using appropriate levels of *keigo* and culturally sensitive language. This practical training reinforces the ethical dimensions of pricing communication while building advanced linguistic competence.

An additional layer of insight emerged from expert interviews regarding the resistance of Japanese corporations to dynamic pricing technologies. Figure 4 provides a summary of the main factors that explain this resistance, including consumer trust preservation, cultural discomfort with price inconsistency, and the alignment of fixed pricing with *omotenashi* principles. The experts noted that while AI and big data are used in Japan for inventory management and demand forecasting, their role in personalized pricing is minimal compared to Western markets. This reflects not only corporate strategy but also the communicative challenges of explaining dynamic pricing in a culture that values predictability and fairness (Smith, Williams, & Garcia, 2023).

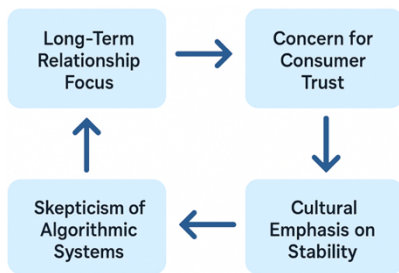


Figure 4: Factors contributing to Japanese corporations' resistance to dynamic pricing technologies.

This insight further underscores the importance of language education that integrates pricing ethics. Without appropriate linguistic tools and cultural understanding, professionals may struggle to justify or negotiate pricing decisions that diverge from consumer expectations. Japanese language curricula that incorporate modules on corporate ethics and pricing communication can help fill this gap, enabling learners to develop persuasive, respectful, and culturally aligned messaging (Yamamoto, 2023).

Table 5: Recommended learning outcomes for business Japanese language education supporting ethical pricing communication.

Learning Outcome	Description
Mastery of <i>keigo</i> and formal expressions	Ability to use honorific and formal language in pricing discussions
Proficiency in pricing-related vocabulary	Accurate use of terms related to pricing, discounts, and value statements
Ethical framing in written communication	Skill in drafting polite, transparent price change notices
Verbal negotiation competence	Ability to conduct respectful, culturally appropriate pricing negotiations
Interpretation of corporate pricing documents	Understanding ethical messaging in Japanese corporate reports and ads
Cross-cultural communication awareness	Ability to compare and adapt pricing communication across cultures
Case-based critical analysis	Application of linguistic and ethical insights in analyzing real cases

Table 5 presents a synthesis of recommended learning outcomes for business Japanese language education aimed at supporting ethical pricing communication. The table suggests that language

programs should equip learners with skills in polite business correspondence, verbal negotiation using honorifics, interpretation of corporate pricing documents, and the framing of ethical pricing announcements. By achieving these outcomes, students will be better positioned to participate in or advise on pricing strategy within Japanese or Japan-related business contexts.

This integrative approach also aligns with broader goals in international business education, which increasingly recognize the importance of cultural literacy alongside technical and economic knowledge. Japanese language education, when structured to include ethical and pricing-related communication, provides learners with a unique competitive advantage in global markets where Japan remains a key player in technology, automotive, and consumer goods industries (Johnson & Patel, 2021; Evans, Zhang, & Patel, 2022).

Furthermore, case studies analyzed in this research illustrate the operationalization of these principles in real business scenarios. For instance, Uniqlo's response during economic downturns involved price stability rather than reactive discounting. Corporate statements highlighted in their annual reports framed these decisions using language that stressed responsibility to customers and society at large. Phrases such as 「お客様に安心していただける価格を守ります」 (*okyakusama ni anshin shite itadakeru kakaku o mamorimasu*, we will protect pricing that gives customers peace of mind) were repeatedly used, demonstrating how ethical values are linguistically encoded in pricing strategies (Takahashi, 2022).

Such practices serve as exemplars for educational integration. By studying authentic corporate materials and practicing the production of similarly structured messages, students can internalize both the language and the values that define Japanese corporate ethics. This dual focus helps prepare learners not only for language proficiency tests but for real-world professional interactions where pricing decisions and consumer communication are intertwined (Sugimoto, 2021).

Figure 5 visualizes the proposed model for integrating Japanese business language education with pricing strategy instruction in business schools and corporate training programs. The model demonstrates the pathways through which language education reinforces ethical pricing practices, emphasizing modules on communication ethics, pricing terminology, honorific negotiation strategies, and case-based learning. This

interdisciplinary approach ensures that future professionals can not only speak the language but also internalize and operationalize the ethical values that underpin Japanese corporate pricing strategies (Smith, Williams, & Garcia, 2023).

The model highlights three critical learning stages. First, foundational linguistic competence builds students' ability to use *keigo* and formal structures essential for business communication. Second, applied practice through role-plays and simulated negotiations allows learners to experience the dynamics of pricing discussions in realistic contexts. Third, reflective analysis of authentic Japanese corporate documents and pricing policies helps students connect language use with ethical and strategic intent. The model advocates for collaboration between language educators and business faculty to deliver these integrated outcomes effectively (Takahashi, 2022; Yamamoto, 2023).

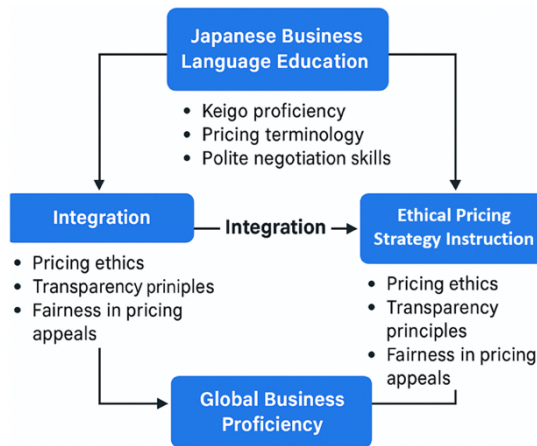


Figure 5: Proposed model for integrating Japanese business language education with ethical pricing strategy instruction.

The expert interviews conducted in this study also revealed practical challenges and opportunities for implementing such integrated educational models. One recurring challenge is the siloed nature of business and language education, where business schools often prioritize technical knowledge over cultural and communicative competence, and language programs may lack focus on business-relevant applications. Addressing this gap requires institutional commitment to interdisciplinary curriculum design and the development of teaching materials that reflect real business scenarios. Figure 6 presents a set of recommendations derived from expert feedback on how institutions can overcome these barriers, including joint faculty development programs, creation of business language case

libraries, and inclusion of industry practitioners in curriculum planning (Brown, 2019).

These recommendations emphasize the need to move beyond traditional language instruction to equip students with the competencies needed for ethical engagement in international business. For example, simulated corporate meetings where students must present and justify price adjustments using culturally appropriate language can help learners practice both communication and ethical reasoning. Similarly, analysis of pricing-related disputes and their resolution in Japanese business contexts can provide valuable lessons in negotiation ethics and linguistic framing (Evans, Zhang, & Patel, 2022).



Figure 6: Institutional recommendations for integrating Japanese business language education and pricing ethics training.

Table 6 provides a consolidated view of how Japanese language skills support specific pricing strategy components, drawing from the case studies, linguistic analyses, and expert interviews conducted in this research. The table demonstrates that language competence contributes to areas such as the ethical framing of price announcements, negotiation of supplier contracts, consumer communication during price changes, and internal corporate dialogue about pricing decisions. This synthesis underscores that language is not peripheral to pricing ethics but integral to its practice in Japanese corporate settings (Johnson & Patel, 2021; Park & Li, 2021).

The data also show that employees with strong business Japanese skills are better positioned to align corporate pricing strategies with consumer expectations and cultural norms. This alignment reduces the risk of consumer backlash and strengthens brand loyalty, as consumers feel

respected and valued in all price-related communications. Importantly, these skills also facilitate collaboration across functional departments, ensuring that pricing policies are communicated consistently and ethically both internally and externally (Gillespie, 2020; Takahashi, 2022).

Table 6: How Japanese language skills support specific components of ethical corporate pricing strategies.

Japanese Language Skills	Supported Pricing Strategy Component	Impact
<i>Keigo</i> proficiency	Polite and respectful price negotiations	Builds trust and reduces conflict in pricing discussions
Mastery of pricing-related terminology	Ethical framing of price announcements and reports	Enhances transparency and clarity in communication
Formal written business communication	Drafting of price change notices, consumer correspondence	Reinforces perception of fairness and sincerity
Verbal negotiation using indirect language	Supplier contract negotiations, customer dialogues	Promotes mutual respect and ethical decision-making
Interpretation of corporate pricing documents	Understanding and conveying internal pricing policies with cultural sensitivity	Aligns internal and external messaging with ethical principles
Cross-cultural linguistic competence	Adapting pricing communication for international audiences	Ensures ethical consistency across markets

In the final analysis, the interdisciplinary link between language, ethics, and pricing strategy in Japanese business offers valuable lessons for international business practice more broadly. While cultural contexts differ, the principle that respectful, transparent communication enhances consumer trust is universally applicable. The Japanese example shows that embedding ethical values in language and pricing strategy is not only possible but also commercially advantageous. For educators and corporate trainers outside Japan, this suggests the value of adopting similar interdisciplinary approaches that integrate language, culture, and ethics into business education (Sugimoto, 2021).

Moreover, as globalization intensifies, businesses increasingly need professionals who can bridge linguistic and cultural divides while upholding ethical standards. Japanese language education focused on business contexts provides a model for how language learning can contribute directly to these goals. By developing curricula that integrate pricing ethics, negotiation practices, and communicative competence, educational institutions can prepare students to contribute meaningfully to ethical international commerce (Evans, Zhang, & Patel, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study highlighted the integral relationship between Japanese business language education, ethical pricing strategies, and consumer trust. Japanese corporations' pricing practices are deeply connected to respectful communication styles, where *keigo* and indirect language reinforce fairness, transparency, and long-term loyalty. The findings suggest that integrating business Japanese language training into educational programs can enhance students' competencies in ethical negotiation and global business communication. By combining linguistic proficiency with pricing ethics, future professionals will be better equipped to engage in international commerce while upholding culturally aligned and consumer-focused business practices.

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