7   Politeness in Japan

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7.1   Introduction

While the study of honorifics in Japan has a long history reaching back hundreds of years, research about politeness in Japanese has only recently emerged over the past thirty years. Much of the work on politeness in Japanese to date has thus inherited a predisposition to explicating politeness primarily in relation to honorifics. There has, however, been increasing attention paid to other forms of politeness as researchers have recognised that a full explanation of (in-)appropriate behaviour in Japanese cannot be limited to the study of honorifics. Work on politeness in Japanese can be traced back largely to the seminal work of Sachiko Ide (1982, 1989, 2005, 2006), who has argued that Japanese politeness is not well served by universal theories of politeness, such as Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) face-saving model of politeness, but instead is better explicated with reference to the *emic* notion of *wakimae* 弁え 'discernment'. This debate between culture-specific and universal perspectives on politeness has since come to dominate politeness research on Japanese, and indeed debates about the theorising of politeness in East Asian languages more generally (Haugh and Bargiela-Chiappini, 2010; see also Pan, this volume).

The discursive approach, however, offers an alternative to choosing between such seemingly irreconcilable positions in proposing that the aim of politeness (and impoliteness) research should be for analysts to "focus on the lay interpretation of politeness, by exploring the hearer's evaluation (along with that of the speaker) in longer fragments of discourse, and reach theoretical second-order conclusions by means of analysis of data" (Kádár and Mills, Chapter 1, p. 8). In other words, it is argued that the analysis of politeness should first of all encompass the evaluations of the participants themselves, a first-order perspective which is rooted in, or at least informed by, *emic* understandings of politeness. However, the aim is not to reify those understandings, but rather to generate theoretical conclusions that are rooted in a second-order, theoretical perspective, namely, that of the analyst. In this way, both culture-specific (*emic*) and culture-general (*etic*) perspectives can be respected by politeness researchers.

A second key proposal made by discursive theorists that can help move us beyond such debates is the claim that we need to theorise and analyse politeness not only at the level of interactions between individuals, but also at the level of society (Mills, 2009; Mills and Kádár, this volume). Mills and Kádár argue that previous approaches to politeness, no matter whether they have taken an *emic* or *etic* perspective, have often suffered "slippage" between the analysis of politeness arising in individual interactions and "making generalisations about politeness and impoliteness" across whole societies or cultures (Mills and Kádár, this volume, p. 23). A more layered and nuanced understanding of the debate between those advocating a culture-specific approach to Japanese politeness, and those arguing that universal theories such as Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework are applicable to the analysis of politeness in Japanese, can emerge, however, if we accept that the evidence postulated for each of these positions needs to be more properly located at the individual or social levels of politeness before its relative merits can be assessed.

In this chapter, after giving a brief overview of some of the key findings in research on politeness in Japan to date (Section 7.2), we focus on explicating the role of one particular key concept, namely, *tachiba* 立場 (lit. 'the place where one stands'), at the both the social and individual (or what we prefer to call the interactional) levels of politeness (Section 7.3).[1] We argue that *tachiba* can account for a broad range of normative politeness behaviours, not only in more formal situations where it is expected that honorifics will be used, but also in instances where the use of honorifics is not generally expected, such as in interactions between family or close friends of a similar age. The ways in which *tachiba* can be strategically exploited in interaction to give rise to both solidarity and impoliteness effects is then investigated through analyses of a select number of longer authentic interactions (Section 7.4). This is followed by a brief discussion of how we might integrate an approach to analysing politeness in Japanese that is informed by an *emic* perspective, namely, that of *tachiba*, into a more culture-general, theoretical framework (Section 7.5).

It is worth noting at this point, however, that while *tachiba* may seem at first glance to be a culturally laden notion, and thus that we are implicitly advocating a culture-specific explication of politeness in Japanese, we are arguing here that *tachiba* is in fact a sociocultural instantiation of a more culture-general notion, namely, that of (social) role discussed in Role Theory (Mead, 1934; Biddle, 1979, 1986). In alluding to Role Theory though, we are not meaning to claim that interactants have pre-determined roles that they are obliged to follow (cf. Ide, 1989). Instead, in line with the general commitments of an interactional (Arundale, 2006, 2010a; Haugh, 2007c) or discursive approach (Eelen, 2001; Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003; Kádár and Mills, this volume) to explicating the evaluations of politeness made by participants as they arise in discourse, we are arguing that politeness researchers need to take into account

in their analyses the contextually contingent and discursively enacted social roles and positions of participants (that is, their *tachiba*) (Haugh, 2007b: 660). In this way, we may develop a theoretical understanding of the dynamics of politeness in Japanese that respects first-order *emic* or participant understandings of politeness, yet is not unduly constrained by them.

7.2   Overview of the field: Critical discussion of findings to date

The appropriate use of language in interacting with others has been the subject of study in Japan for hundreds of years. Most of the 'proto-scientific' work on appropriate behaviour in Japan was focused on honorifics, which are termed *keigo* 敬語 lit. 'respect language' in both popular and academic discourse, or less commonly *taigū hyōgen* 待遇表現 (lit. 'treatment expressions'), the latter term being largely restricted to academic circles. This rich body of work has had a vast influence on research about appropriate ways of behaving and interacting in more recent times in Japan, with the study of honorifics continuing to dominate academic discourse, particularly in the *kokugogaku* 国語学 'study of national language' tradition (Pizziconi, 2004; Wetzel, 2004). The focus in this tradition has been on classifying honorifics and their respective functions (or *taigū hyōgen* more broadly), including the questions of how these expressions should be interpreted, and whether the study of 'bad language' should be incorporated within such frameworks (Ōishi, 1986 [1975]; Minami, 1987; Ide, 1990; Kikuchi, 1997; Kabaya et al., 1998; see Pizziconi, this volume, for a more detailed discussion of such issues).

With the exception of work by Ide (1982, 1989, 2005, 2006) and Pizziconi (2003, 2004, this volume), however, there has been little consideration in this tradition of how honorifics relate to the study of politeness. Indeed, honorifics have been cited for the most part as evidence that etic theories of politeness – generally with reference to Brown and Levinson's framework – are not suitable for studying expressions of respect and deference in Japan. One key debate in the study of honorifics, which echoes that in politeness research more broadly, however, is that between the traditional view of honorifics as expressions of deference which one is obliged to use in particular contexts according to pre-determined rules, on the one hand, and the indexical view of honorifics, where such expressions are said to index both the roles people occupy in the current talk, and the source and target of deference, on the other (see Cook, 2006; Pizziconi, this volume). While the latter view is arguably more consistent with the approach to politeness advocated by discursive politeness theorists, it is worth noting that since the former view encompasses first-order views of politeness in Japanese (Haugh, 2010b), it nevertheless remains a legitimate object of study. However, such

work on the metapragmatics of politeness more properly belongs at the social level of theorising politeness rather than at the interactional level, as we will argue in the following section. It is also worth pointing out that numerous scholars have argued that honorifics do not necessarily index respect for the social status of others (thereby giving rise to politeness), but may also be used to show empathy, locate something as background information, or to index the speaker's self-presentational stance among other things (Okamoto, 1997, 1999; Pizziconi, 2003; Yoshida and Sakurai, 2005; Cook, 2006). The relationship between politeness and honorifics is thus much more complex than is often assumed in the literature.

The conflation of honorifics and politeness is reflected in the close relationship that has been found to exist between politeness folk terms and those relating to honorifics in Japanese. A number of studies have investigated native lexemes for politeness in Japanese, in particular, *reigi tadashii* 礼儀正しい and *teinei* 丁寧, drawing from various sources, including dictionaries, native-speaker informants and popular discourse on appropriate behaviour (Ide *et al.*, 1992; Obana and Tomoda, 1994; Haugh, 2004; Pizziconi, 2007). While *teinei* can be glossed as being warm-hearted (*teatsuku* 手厚く) and attentive (*chuui-bukaku* 注意深く), and *reigi tadashii* as showing upward-looking respect (*kei'i* 敬意) towards others (Shinmura, 1998: 1818, 2827), both terms inevitably invoke associations with discerning (*wakimaeru* 弁える) the role or place of oneself and others in interactions through the appropriate use of honorifics (*keigo*) (Haugh, 2007b: 661). This seemingly natural connection between politeness and honorifics for speakers of Japanese (Obana, 2000: 206) makes it difficult for politeness researchers to tease out the two, and thus the question of how to frame the relationship between the study of honorifics and the study of politeness in Japan remains a key one for the field (for a discussion of similar issues experienced by Korean speakers see Kim, this volume).

Despite reservations about Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) treatment of honorifics as a politeness strategy that redresses threats to so-called 'negative face' (the desire that one's actions be unimpeded by others), numerous scholars have nonetheless applied their framework to the analysis of politeness in Japanese. Many of these studies have focused on how particular speech acts are performed politely, often in the context of cross-cultural comparisons with English, including requests (Fukushima, 1996, 2000, 2004; Hill *et al.*, 1986; Sukle, 1994; Hiraga and Turner, 1996; Rinnert and Kobayashi, 1999), refusals (Kinjo, 1987; Ito, 1989; Yokoyama, 1993), disagreements (Beebe and Takahashi, 1989), and apologies and thanks (Kumatoridani, 1999; Okumura and Wei, 2000). The Brown and Levinson framework has also motivated research into other politeness phenomena, including mood particles (Usami, 1997), indirectness (Tsuda, 1994, 1999; Miwa, 2000), speech level shifts

(Ikuta, 1983; Usami, 2002), backchannels (Usami, 1993) and topic management (Usami, 1993, 2002; Usami and Mineda, 1995). It is worth noting, however, that those who have mounted defences of their application of Brown and Levinson's framework to analysing politeness in Japanese have inevitably based their arguments on the efficacy of calculating the weight of face-threatening acts according to the PDR (power, distance, ranking of imposition) variables (Fukushima, 2000; Usami, 2002; Pizziconi, 2003; Fukada and Asato, 2004; Ishiyama, 2009). As face, in particular the distinction between positive and negative face, is neglected in such analyses, however, it is not clear what motivates the 'calculation' of these face-threatening acts in the first place (Matsumoto, 2003: 1519; Haugh, 2005: 44).

While such debates continue unabated, it is instructive to note that in most cases analyses of speech acts and other politeness phenomena in Japanese, whether based on Brown and Levinson's framework or not, inevitably make some kind of reference to the social position, distance, power and role of the participants rather than their face (wants). Pizziconi (2003), for instance, while rejecting a culture-specific interpretation of the formulaic expression *yoroshiku onegaishimasu* よろしくお願いします as a "polite imposition" (Matsumoto, 1988), argues that it involves "a highly conventionalised and ritualistic negotiation of the *role* of benefactor/patron/superior etc. in a given situation" (p. 1485, emphasis added). Fukada and Asato (2004) in rejecting Ide's (1989) discernment account in favour of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model, nevertheless argue that honorifics are used in apparently non face-threatening situations (see Matsumoto, 1988) because "when a person of higher status is involved, *distance* and *power* are given markedly higher values" (p. 1997, emphasis added). And recent work on the use of apology–gratitude expressions in Japanese, such as *sumimasen* すみません, suggests that their usage is "role-bound" (R. Ide, 1998; Kumatoridani, 1999; Ohashi, 2008; Long, 2010). Long (2010) for instance, defends Brown and Levinson's model, yet at the same time argues that the use of apology expressions in gratitude situations "marks an act as falling outside the boundaries of interlocutor *role*-relations" (p. 1060, emphasis added). Time and time again, then, it is the participants' relationship, and their respective roles and statuses that emerge as crucial in explications of politeness in Japanese, despite researchers claiming that it is the notion of face wants that underpins their analyses.

This equivocality about Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of face on the part of those using or defending their framework is perhaps not surprising as it is face that has received the most criticism from scholars who favour *emically* motivated accounts of politeness in Japanese over Brown and Levinson's approach. Seminal papers by Matsumoto (1988) and Ide (1989) critiquing Brown and Levinson's (1987) overly individualistic model of politeness-using data from Japanese, for instance, have both had an enormous influence on

politeness research more generally. *Emic* notions such as *uchi* 内 'group-orientation', *amae* 甘え 'dependency' and *wakimae* 'discernment' are claimed by Ide and Matsumoto to provide more satisfactory accounts of politeness in Japanese than that postulated by Brown and Levinson. Yet despite their criticisms, neither Ide (1989) nor Matsumoto (1988) reject Brown and Levinson's model outright. Ide (1989) proposes that the strategic/volitional perspective on politeness that Brown and Levinson's approach represents needs to be complemented by a discernment perspective, arguing that the latter predominates in Japanese. Matsumoto (1988, 2003), on the other hand, takes the position that while a face-based account of politeness in Japanese is plausible, there needs to be greater attention paid to "cultural variability in the constituents of face" (1988: 403; 2003: 1516; cf. Pizziconi, 2003: 1473). She goes on to suggest that acknowledgement of relationships among interlocutors is a key underlying constituent of face in Japanese (Matsumoto, 1988: 1518). In other words, while Ide (1989) can be said to favour a more culture-specific, *emic* account of politeness in Japanese, and Matsumoto (1988, 2003), in contrast, advocates a universal framework that encompasses cultural variability, both scholars emphasise the importance that acknowledging relationships, roles and status plays in giving rise to evaluations of politeness in Japanese.

While this debate between universal and culture-specific approaches remains unresolved, the field has witnessed in recent times a move towards accounts of politeness in Japanese that are informed by *emic* notions, but remain fundamentally etic in their theoretical orientation. The approach of choice has largely been a broadly discursive one, although the particular analytical methodologies employed differ, ranging from linguistic pragmatics (R. Ide, 1998; Okamoto, 1999; Ohashi, 2003, 2008; Pizziconi, 2003; Haugh, 2005; Takekuro, 2005; Obana, 2009, 2010), to approaches drawing directly from methods in conversation analysis and discursive psychology (Cook, 2006; Geyer, 2007, 2010), through to approaches that draw from both, that is, interactional pragmatics, which is informed by research in conversation analysis, but remains committed to the use of evidence beyond the local interactional context (Haugh, 2007b, 2007c, 2010a; Arundale, 2010a).

From this brief survey, then, it is apparent that there is a diverse range of approaches to studying politeness in Japanese. While the various merits of each approach might be debated further, such a discussion lies beyond the scope of the chapter. However, a common thread underlying all these different approaches can be discerned, namely, the consistent reference that is made to the relationships, roles, place and social status of the participants across many if not most of these analyses of politeness. It is to this underlying theme of 'place' (*tachiba*) that we now turn to evaluate its importance for better understanding politeness in Japanese, at both the social and interactional levels.

7.3   Japanese politeness in theory: Key concepts, norms and philosophies

7.3.1   Echoes of Confucius: Social politeness in modern Japan

It has often been observed by historians and sociologists that (neo-)Confucianism has had a strong influence on Japanese society.[2] Confucianism has progressively become a part of the very fabric of Japanese society since it was first introduced to the royal court of the Japanese emperor in the latter part of the Kofun period (AD 250–600). Its initial influence was limited to the aristocratic classes where it served to reinforce the system of absolute honorifics developing in the context of court life during the Heian period (AD 794–1185) (Toyama, 1977). However, the ideology underlying this early 'politeness' system in Japanese began to have a much greater influence on wider Japanese society during the Edo period (AD 1603–1887) when Neo-Confucianism became the official philosophy of the Japanese State (Eisenstadt, 1996; Smith, 1973). Hane (1991), for instance, argues that the rigid division of four main classes (samurai, peasants, artisans and merchants) was justified by the ruling classes in terms of Confucian concepts: "Knowing one's proper *place* in society was one of the points emphasized by the Confucian scholars, particularly the Chu Hsi school, which eventually became the official philosophy of the regime" (Hane, 1991: 142, emphasis added).

This viewpoint can be seen promoted, for example, in the writings of Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), an early Tokugawa Chu Hsi philosopher (Hane, 1991: 142), and Yamazaki Ansai (1618–82), who was pivotal in the adoption of Chu Hsi Confucianism as the official philosophy of the ruling classes during the Edo period (Hane, 1991: 161). Japanese Chu Hsi scholars placed special emphasis on *taigi meibun* 大義名分 'doing one's duty in accordance with one's place in society', and the maintenance of the five basic relationships (Hane, 1991: 160).[3] As Liu (2004) notes, "the individual is always considered as a person-in-society in Confucianism, existing in a network of relations" (p. 363). In other words, the self in Confucian thought inevitably carries with it particular roles and is always seen as being interrelated with others. Thus, as Liu (2004) goes on to argue:

> the rules of conduct in the name of *li* [propriety] are set up to make the relationships stable and the emphasis is placed on the duty and obligation demanded of the parties concerned in each relationship ... If every person can abide by the rules of conduct (*li*) and carry out the obligations corresponding to his status, there will be peace in society. (Liu, 2004: 364)

In this way, the legitimacy of the ruling classes during the Edo period and beyond was realised through invoking the Confucian view of self as place-bound.

The Portuguese missionary/linguist João Rodriguez (1561–1633) was one of the first to note the connection between honorifics (*keigo*) and Confucian teachings in his work *Arte da lingoa de Japam* (1608, Nagaski; cited in Miwa, 2000: 96):

・ロドリグスも中国語の文体が尊敬や卑下と無縁であると、日本語ではそれに かかわらず孔子の言葉を「のたまうく」と敬語をいれて読んでいることを早 くに注意している。

'Rodriguez also noticed early that despite the fact Chinese speech levels are not related to respect for superiors and humility or self-depreciation of subordinates, in Japanese they have read the work of Confucius integrating the phrases he said with *keigo* attached.' (Miwa, 2000: 96; citing Rodriguez, our translation)

At this point, there was also a gradual shift from the use of absolute honorifics amongst the ruling classes to the wider use of relative honorifics in Japanese society, where the context (*bamen* 場面) and status (*mibun* 身分) of the referent and addressee became more important in the speaker's choice of honorifics (Toyama, 1977: 138).

While the role of Neo-Confucianism in Japanese intellectual life waned in the wake of the Meiji Restoration, the fundamental principles of Confucianism, and some dimensions of Confucian thought, in particular, the notions of *rei* 礼 'propriety' (*li* 禮 in Modern Standard Chinese) and *tachiba* 'place', had already become embedded in the politeness practices of upper-class Japanese, and subsequently middle-class Japanese, as the modern ideology of *keigo* was promulgated through the Japanese education system and official language policies (Wetzel, 2004). Confucian ethics remained influential into the twentieth century, for instance, through ethics textbooks issued by the Ministry of Education between 1904 and 1945, in which the five cardinal Confucian social relationships were introduced and related to particular virtues (Yamashita, 1996). Thus, whilst the influence of Confucian thought has subsequently ebbed in the post-war years, echoes of its influence can still be discerned in modern Japan, particularly in metapragmatic discourse about politeness, in other words, at the social level of politeness in Japan.

Wetzel (2004), for instance, has found in a recent survey of books about politeness or etiquette in Japanese that most of the terms used to describe politeness or honorifics are related in some way to the notion of *tachiba* 'place'. Key metapragmatic lexemes identified by Wetzel include those associated with in-groups, such as *uchi* 'insiders, friends relatives' and *nakama* 仲間 'insiders, friends', those associated with rank or status, such as *meue* 目上 'higher-ranking, superior', *meshita* 目下 'lower-ranking, subordinate', *senpai* 先輩 'senior', and those invoking the inherently social embeddedness of self, namely, *shakaijin* 社会人 'a mature social adult'.

The notion of *tachiba* has also been invoked in recent attempts in Japan by the National Language Council to redefine the modern sense of 'politeness' using the newly coined term *kei'i hyōgen* 敬意表現:

敬意表現とは、コミュニケーションにおいて、相互尊重の精神に基づき、相 手や立場に配慮して使い分けている言葉遣いを意味する。それらは話し手が 相手の人格や立場を尊重し、敬語や敬語以外の様々な表現から適切なものを 自己表現として選択するものである。

'*Kei'i hyōgen* means to consider [*hairyo*] the interlocutor and their position and use linguistic expressions appropriately based on a feeling of mutual respect [*sonchō*] in communication. It involves respecting the interlocutor's dignity/character [*jinkaku*] and position relative to others [*tachiba*], and choosing appropriate expressions from a range of honorifics [*keigo*] and a variety of other expressions.' (Ide, 2001: 5–6, our translation)

This definition attempts to encompass both traditional aspects of politeness in Japanese, such as upward respect, modesty, social rank and the emerging importance placed on the dignity/character of others in modern Japan (Haugh, 2004, 2007b). The notion of *tachiba* is thus arguably central to metapragmatic discourse about politeness in Japan, appearing in folk discourse, etiquette manuals and even in official government policy. At the social level, then, *tachiba* appears to be a key cultural concept underlying the dominant ideology of politeness in Japan.

The close connection between the notions of *tachiba* and politeness-related terms can also be seen, for instance, in Gagné's (2010) recent analysis of the metapragmatics of request in Japanese, where she claims that a *shakaijin* 社会人 is someone who can "independently recognise the importance and conditions of one's social embeddedness, and act according to it" (Gagné, 2010: 129). In other words, a *shakaijin* is conceptualised as an adult who knows his or her place relative to others, and thus acknowledges "the relational and reciprocal forces that permeate social relations" (Gagné, 2010: 133).

An analysis of the norms of apology depicted in Japanese etiquette or conduct manuals also reveals a preoccupation with considering the social relationship between the apologiser and apologisee (Sugimoto, 1998). The normative view of apologies which emerges from Sugimoto's analysis is that

Japanese often tailor their messages to the types of *relationships* between the speaker and the audience (e.g. best friends, boss–subordinate) rather than the personal qualities of individual audience. This, however, should not be taken to indicate that Japanese are impersonal message producers. It is just a different method of personalization. The Japanese version of "personalization" is based on codification of relationships, or *what kinds of people they are in relation to each other*. (Sugimoto, 1998: 270, emphasis added)

In other words, the normative view of apologies promoted through metapragmatic discourse is that the speaker must consider his or her relationship with

the person concerned in making an apology. While metapragmatic discourse should not be interpreted as straightforwardly reflecting how apologies are actually achieved in interaction (Sugimoto, 1998: 252), it is interesting to note from recent empirical studies of the production and interpretation of apologies in interactional discourse that the respective roles of participants emerge as a key factor in such analyses (R. Ide, 1998; Kumatoridani, 1999; Long, 2010), as was noted in the previous section. Invoking "interlocutor role-relations" (Long, 2010: 1060) in the analysis of apologies is arguably consonant with placing an emphasis on "what kinds of people they are in relation to each other" (Sugimoto, 1998: 270). This indicates that while it is not necessarily a straightforward relationship, connections can be drawn between hegemonic ideologies of politeness at the social level and normative politeness practices at the interactional level in Japan.

Thus, whilst applying conclusions from the analysis of politeness at the social level (in this case, metapragmatic discourse about politeness in Japanese) to the analysis of politeness at the individual or interactional level is potentially fraught with various traps, such as cultural essentialism or unwittingly promoting hegemonic ideologies of politeness (Okamoto, 1999, 2004), generalisations can arguably still be made about "dominant modes of politeness usage in particular languages and about the variety of politeness norms available within a particular culture", as Kádár and Mills suggest in this volume (p. 8) In the following section, then, we propose that acknowledging and negotiating the respective place-role of participants is one of the dominant modes by which politeness is achieved in Japanese. Consistent with the discursive approach, however, we argue that the respective *tachiba* of interlocutors are not pre-determined *a priori* to interaction, but rather emerge through interaction as contextually contingent and discursively enacted social roles and positions (cf. Ide's (1989) more prescriptive notion of *wakimae*). Thus, while for the sake of exposition we concentrate on normative enactions of *tachiba* in the section that follows (Section 7.3.2), it is important to note that this exposition is just that, a representation of perceived dominant politeness norms. As we will later see from an examination of politeness in longer authentic excerpts of discourse in Section 7.4, such norms are not necessarily always realised by participants in interaction in giving rise to evaluations of politeness, but may also be exploited in various ways to generate impoliteness effects, or indeed may even be resisted or challenged.

7.3.2 Norms of Japanese 'polite' interactional behaviour

Tachiba (立場)
The literal meaning of the term, *tachiba*, is 'the place where one stands'. It is a term used in everyday discourse, appearing in various social situations to represent folk understandings of polite interactions. It is defined in the *Daijirin*

Dictionary as "one's social rank/position or circumstances" or "one's viewpoint or standpoint when considering a certain phenomenon" (our translation). The definition of *tachiba* employed in this chapter is closer to the former notion. In this section, the origin of *tachiba* from a broadly social perspective is further discussed, and then its relevance to Japanese politeness at the interactional level is further clarified.

Tachiba essentially refers to one's roles in social interaction, or 'social selves'. People change their behaviour according to where they are situated, who they are interacting with, and how they perceive themselves in a given situation. It is as if one has multiple social selves or identities, and one presents different selves in different situations. The same person behaves, for example, as mother, teacher, customer, friend and stranger, depending upon where she is, who she is with, and even how she perceives herself in a given context (for example, she may behave as a good friend towards her child when playing together). In social psychology, social identities have been discussed as part of Role Theory.

Role Theory first emerged in the work of the symbolic interactionist George Mead (1934), with its central concern being how humans perceive themselves in social relationships and behave in different environments. One's social roles are often referred to as one's identities in society. The term identity may refer to 'Who am I?' in a general sense; however, identity in a sociological sense is limited to the means by which one takes a certain position in social relationships. Goffman (1959) astutely explains such roles and social identities in terms of his dramaturgical metaphor, in which actors play different roles for different audiences. In a sense, then, we play different roles on different stages in society.

Biddle (1979: 4–7) outlines four key concepts in Role Theory: social position, expectation, context and function (effect). First, social positions are often associated with social statuses. These include positions such as teacher, doctor, nurse and engineer, as well as family positions and organisational titles such as mother, daughter, chairperson and committee member. In many ways what rights and responsibilities/duties are invoked by a social position are quite self-explanatory; for example, what a doctor does in her or his profession. A second key concept in Role Theory, 'expectation', is something we learn through our experiences (cf. 'habitus'), and is used to predict what a certain social position offers and how it is (or should be) presented to the public. For example, police officers are identified as such because of their uniform, and they are expected to behave in certain ways. Expectations may be "a guide to action" (Biddle, 1979: 5), but at the same time our experiences and (social) expectations can also reflexively influence our behaviours. Roles are also induced in specific contexts, with most role behaviours being "contextually bound' (Biddle, 1979: 6). One's role expectation can only be fulfilled in an

appropriate context. For example, a doctor behaves as expected only when she or he is situated in a medical environment, such as in a hospital. The last key concept which establishes roles is the notion of 'functions', which essentially represents the consequences of role behaviour. Playing certain roles inevitably invites particular effects or perceptions of a person (or group) within society. Teachers are expected to behave in a certain way, which is accepted by their students through them concurrently playing their roles as learners. Police officers wearing uniform exercise an effect on people in the street so that they can readily approach them as 'police officers'. Thus, while the four key concepts which underpin roles are all intertwined, the ultimate basis of role determination is the activities or interactions individuals participate in, through which they co-construct multiple social identities.

Tachiba in Japanese largely overlaps with the concept of role outlined in Role Theory. In this sense, we are attempting to appeal to a well-established social psychological concept in explicating dominant politeness norms in Japan. However, the notion of *tachiba* relevant to politeness refers to a much narrower range of social identities. It is thus important to differentiate between how this term is used in Japanese in general before pinpointing what areas of *tachiba*-roles are particularly relevant to politeness strategies.

While the core meaning of *tachiba* is 'the place where one stands', as previously noted, there are at least six interrelated senses in which it can be used.

1 *Chi'i* 地位: 'social status' as realised in the 'honorific world' (i.e., in situations where the use of honorifics is normatively expected). These include the social status associated with positions such as being a teacher (vs. student), an employer (vs. employee), or the president of a company (vs. subordinates).
2 *Kyōgū, gawa* 境遇、側: 'position, situation'. This is sometimes related to *chi'i*, but is more specific in that it involves taking a fixed position or side associated with one's social position. Usually this category and its opposite are contrasted. For example, *isha no tachiba* 医者の立場, 'doctor's side' (vs. *kanja* 患者, 'patient'), *kyōshi no tachiba* 教師の立場, 'teacher's side' (vs. *seito* 生徒, 'students'), *ataeru tachiba* 与える立場, 'givers' (vs. *ataerareru tachiba* 与えられる立場, 'receivers'), *kyōja no tachiba* 強者, 'the strong in society' (vs. *jakusha no tachiba* 弱者の立場, 'the weak in society').
3 *Kanten* 観点, *shiten* 視点, *kangaekata* 考え方: 'viewpoint, perspective'. This is an academic or intellectual standpoint from which a certain phenomenon is observed. For example, *Nihongo kyōiku no tachiba* 日本語教育の立場, 'from the viewpoint of Japanese language teaching', *taitōna tachiba* 対等の立場, 'on an equal footing', *shakai gengogaku no tachiba* 社会言語学の立場, 'from the viewpoint of sociolinguistics'.

4 *Yakuwari* 役割: 'role, responsibility, task'. This is a temporarily established role one is expected to pursue, or tasks which automatically accompany one's social position. For example, *gichō no tachiba* 議長の立場, 'the chairperson's role', *ryokō no riidā* 旅行のリーダー, 'the coordinator of a tour'.
5 Racial, gender and age groups: social division into which everybody is born (or socially constructed as belonging to), such as men vs. women, ethnic groups, the young vs. the old. For example, *josei no tachiba* 女性の立場, 'women's standpoint'.
6 Manners and ways: how one approaches a certain event, phenomenon or situation. For example, *ryōshinteki na tachiba* 良心的な立場, 'a conscientious attitude'.

In the following section, we claim that the senses of *tachiba* most relevant to explicating linguistic politeness in Japanese are senses 1 (*chi'i*, 'social status') and 4 (*yakuwari*, 'role, responsibility, task'). In other words, *tachiba*, encompasses "the interactional achievement of one's public persona or social standing as distinct from others, including one's position or role (*ichi, yakuwari*), status (*mibun, chi'i*) and current state or circumstances (*jōkyō*)" (Haugh, 2007b: 660).

Tachiba and linguistic politeness in Japanese

In this section we discuss various examples to justify our claim that it is through the interactional achievement of *tachiba* that evaluations of particular linguistic forms and strategies as polite arise in Japanese. The concept of *tachiba* mitigates against the approach to analysing politeness represented in Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory in two key ways. Firstly, when the participants' *tachiba* is foregrounded, evaluations of the degree of face-threat of a particular action do not necessarily figure in determining an appropriate strategy. Secondly, Brown and Levinson's notion of positive face wants is not always congruous with the realisation of *tachiba*. In other words, no matter how desirable the addressee's wants are perceived to be, the speaker's *tachiba* places constraints on their linguistic realisation.

This means that recognition of the participants' *tachiba* takes priority over the pragmatic force of utterances. As will be discussed below, compliments towards seniors in professional situations are considered to be so condescending as to be evaluated as impolite because a juniors' *tachiba* does not encompass the right to judge their seniors' professional performance, even if making such positive evaluations would satisfy their seniors' positive face. And burden-requests can be directly uttered to seniors as long as the tasks requested lie within the domain (i.e. *tachiba*) of the seniors' responsibilities, no matter what the imposition on their seniors' negative face wants might be.

The *tachiba* of participants is invoked systematically in both the honorific and non-honorific worlds. In the honorific world we can see how *tachiba* affords the speaker strategic rights as well as constraints. But *tachiba* is also important in the non-honorific world where interactants are either family (and extended family) members, or friends (*tomodachi* 友達) and colleagues acting on an equal footing.[4]

Tachiba *in the honorific world*

Takei (1985) notes a common error which Japanese make when making requests in English. She claims that Japanese tend to think that saying 'please' is simply polite, giving an example from a meeting which was held between various nationalities in Japan, where the chairperson, who was Japanese, needed to announce a lunch break: "the chairperson said to the audience in English, 'Please come back here by one o'clock. Be punctual, please.' Neither the chairperson nor the other Japanese seemed to notice any rudeness in what was said, even though the chairperson and the other Japanese were rather fluent in English" (Takei, 1985: 3). Takei proposes that a different strategy "I'm afraid we must come back here by one o'clock. Let's all try to be punctual", would be more appropriate in this context. However, her analysis does not go deeper than giving a reason for the use of 'we' rather than 'you'. She simply says that because the people in the meeting are not necessarily very close friends, they cannot be ordered around. However, this does not explain why the Japanese chairperson potentially erred in the first place, or why simply appending 'please' is not necessarily appropriate in English when making such a request.

Now, let's suppose the chairperson made the same announcement in Japanese:

(1) 休みの後会議を続行いたしますので、皆様一時までにお戻り下さい。
break of after meeting ACC continue-HON-POL so everyone(HON) one-o'clock
by HON-return-please
'[We] will resume the meeting after a break, everyone, so please come back by one o'clock.'

It can be inferred from this kind of standard request form in Japanese that the Japanese chairperson may have directly translated this request from Japanese into English. This is not because the chairperson was not aware of her or his social relationship with the audience, or because she or he intended to make a command. This transfer occurred because the chairperson correctly followed her or his *tachiba* but implemented it in the wrong language.

The chairperson's *tachiba* refers to the roles which a chairperson is expected to fulfil, such as conducting and controlling meetings, making announcements and providing relevant information. These responsibilities are normally taken for granted and remain as tacit knowledge between the chairperson and her or his associates in a meeting. When the chairperson requests something, as seen in example (1), the use of the imperative form (with honorifics) in the request indexes the chairperson as fulfilling her or his role, and so it can be evaluated as polite. If the chairperson were to use an indirect form in framing this request, it might sound as if she or he were not confident in the role, and so could give rise to perceptions of her being unprofessional. In making requests in Japanese, then, the degree of (in)directness and its relationship to evaluations of politeness is based on how the participants perceive their respective *tachiba* in a given situation.

It should be noted that we are dealing with how linguistic politeness arises here, not how society is run. We are not denying that English speakers take into account the social position or role each member of the community has. The concept of *tachiba* itself is thus not unique to Japanese society. Holmes and Stubbe (2003), for instance, provide examples in English in which a junior member of staff negotiating with her or his boss uses hedging and attenuation devices. They go on to claim this shows that "another important resource for participants in handling confrontational interactions which threaten their face needs, is to emphasise their own status and competence" (Holmes and Stubbe, 2003: 146). What we are concerned with here is, however, how *tachiba* is implemented in linguistic terms. What we are claiming is that if the *tachiba* of the interlocutors is recognised, it can entitle the speaker to request directly without causing any threats to the face of the addressee. Face threats do arise, of course, in Japanese society, especially when one ignores or goes beyond one's *tachiba*.

The importance of *tachiba* in evaluations of politeness can be illustrated through other examples of requests in the imperative form that regularly occur in Japanese:

(2) 参拝の方はここで靴を脱いであがって下さい。
worshipping of person(HON) TOP here shoe ACC take off-and enter-*te*[5]-
please
'If you worship in the shrine, please take off your shoes here and enter.'

This is an announcement commonly made by a shrine caretaker to visitors, where the caretaker instructs visitors to take off their shoes if they want to worship inside the shrine. 〜て下さい *-te kudasai* is an imperative form of request, although it is framed with honorific forms. This imperative form is afforded through the caretaker's *tachiba*, which entitles her or him to make requests directly, and also recognised by the visitors and appreciated as the caretaker fulfilling her or his role.

This kind of direct request even appears in interactions with others who are properly located *soto* 外 (in the 'out-group') relative to the speaker, which according to the discernment view (Ide, 1989), one would expect would be treated very deferentially.

(3)   田中はすぐ参りますので、そちらの部屋でお待ち下さい。
Tanaka TOP soon come(HON)-POL so that(HON) of room in HON-wait-please
'Tanaka will be here in a minute, so please wait in that room.'

This kind of utterance may be used by a secretary to a company visitor. While the secretary uses humble forms about Tanaka who is her or his boss, there is no title attached to Tanaka, and Tanaka's action is marked in the humble, *mairi-* 参り ('come'). The use of the humble form in this context indexically locates the secretary and Tanaka as belonging to the same company, with the secretary extending her or his social identity to the boss, treating the boss in the same way as her- or himself, resulting in thereby a stance of deference towards the visitor. *O-machi* お待ち 'to wait' is also a deferential form, elevating the visitor's action. In spite of the appearance of all these honorific expressions, however, *-kudasai* 下さい is an imperative form, almost demanding (in the English sense) the visitor to do a specific action (that is, wait). In this sense, the secretary pursues her or his role as a professional where it is her or his responsibility to take care of the visitor until the boss arrives. Given such a situation, the secretary's *tachiba* affords the use of this direct request.

The use of direct requests that employ imperative forms is thus appropriate (and thus interpretable as polite) in Japanese, as long as *tachiba* is mutually recognised between the participants. If the content of the request lies within the domain of the speaker's *tachiba*-role, the speaker is entitled to make a request directly. According to this interpretation, then, the notion of imposition largely does not figure. Such a conclusion is consonant with Gagné's (2010) recent analysis of the applicability of the notion of imposition/negative face wants to *emic* understandings of requests in Japanese. She argues that

The fact that Japanese respondents recognize negative self-face want as an ontological idea but not as something that naturally arises in particular situations such as requests implies that certain notions, seemingly applicable to any context, are not necessarily universally applicable in *practice* to other discourse contexts in the same speech community. (Gagné, 2010: 129)

In other words, while Japanese recognise imposition as an independent idea, it does not carry much weight in the local phenomenology of politeness, at least in the case of requests that lie within the *tachiba* of the speaker. As a matter of course though, if a request goes beyond the domain of the speaker's *tachiba*, it may be treated as creating a burden for the addressee and thus perceived as creating a sense of indebtedness, or may even be considered face-threatening. In such cases, a more tentative or indirect approach might be employed.

The use of the routine formula, *yoroshiku onegaishimasu* よろしくお願いします lit. 'I wish you will do well' following requests is also, we argue,

related to indexing the *tachiba* of the speaker, or in this case, the sender of an e-mail (cf. Matsumoto, 1988, 2003; Pizziconi, 2003).

(4)   委員会の議題をあすまでに送って下さい。
committee of agenda ACC tomorrow by send-*te*-please
よろしくお願いします。
'Please send me the agenda for the Committee meeting by tomorrow. *Yorushiku onegaishimasu.*'

Example (4) is from an e-mail from one member of a university committee to another. In this message, the sender expects that the receiver of the mail will send the agenda, as both the sender and receiver of the e-mail know that the e-mail receiver is in charge of setting the agenda. The use of the *yoroshiku onegaishimasu* formula after this direct request confirms that the sender has the right to make the request, and indicates that she or he expects that the receiver will undertake the task, even though the sender is using honorific forms in formulating the request. E-mail requests are commonly completed with such formulaic phrases, and the one used in this case, not only indicates the closing of the message, but at the same time confirms that a request that lies within the addressee's *tachiba* to undertake is being made (Obana, 2010). As Matsumoto (2003) argues, through this formulaic expression the interactants "acknowledge their understanding of the relationships among one another in the speech context" (p. 1518). This is not to say that this role-relationship is socially predetermined (although it may be institutionally mandated). Ultimately the choice of this formulaic expression is "based on the speaker's [or sender's] assessment of the social context" (Matsumoto, 2003: 1518) and, one might add, on the addressee's assessment of the social context as well.

In Japanese politeness, then, what often guides the choice between direct and indirect request strategies is not the potential degree of face-threat, but rather whether the request lies within the scope of the speaker's and addressee's *tachiba*. If it does lie within the interlocutor's *tachiba*, direct and declarative forms can be employed and this is interpretable as polite. The relative degree of imposition is thus not considered. Requests here are not a matter of potential threat to negative face, but are a projection of what interlocutors expect. In such a social interaction, then, *tachiba* has priority over types of request or degrees of imposition.

The importance of *tachiba* can also be seen when considering the occurrence of praise or compliments in Japanese. Praise and compliments are interpreted in Brown and Levinson's (1987) model as the speaker showing attentiveness to the positive face wants of the hearer (that is, the want for approval by others). However, in the world of honorifics, the respective *tachiba* of interlocutors constrains the ways in which praise can be achieved. In particular, the *tachiba* of so-called juniors does not allow them to directly praise the professional

performance of their seniors in work contexts. Although praising others seems to be appreciated without reserve in many cultures, behind this action in fact lies an evaluation of another person's performance. Though unconsciously done, praising is the result of one weighing the other's performance on a scale, placing oneself as a third party judge of a given situation, and concluding that the other deserves a certain degree of appreciation.

In a work context, seniors "are expected to teach, advise and look after juniors, who receive these cares, then repay seniors with honorifics" (Obana, 2009: 43). The *tachiba* of junior colleagues encompasses expectations that they will follow their seniors' guidance, and will be readily agreeable with their seniors. In this social relationship, the *tachiba* of the juniors, just as in many other cultures, involves expectations that they will be reserved and modest when negotiating with, making suggestions to, or advising their seniors. However, *tachiba* in work contexts in Japan adds yet another area to this 'modesty' list. That is, judgemental statements by juniors about their seniors' professional performance are avoided altogether irrespective of their content or any feeling of goodwill on the part of the junior colleague.[6] Thus, 'praising the work of seniors', 'showing appreciation of the efforts of seniors', or 'making enquiries about a senior's ability' requires extra care because it can sound condescending and thus potentially impolite. If a junior colleague praises her or his senior colleague, this can be interpreted as the junior colleague evaluating the senior's professional performance by her or his own yardstick. A face-to-face evaluation of a senior's performance by a junior colleague is not socially acceptable because it interferes with the senior's *tachiba*, and because it does not lie within the scope of the junior's *tachiba* to make evaluations about the work of seniors.

Obana (2009) gives the following examples where English learners of Japanese often err in such acts.

(5)   *社長の今日のスピーチは立派でした。
        president of today of speech TOP splendid COP(POL)-PAST
        [to the company president] 'Madam, your speech today was excellent.'

Rippana 'splendid' in example (5) normally indicates open praise, for example, *rippana hito* 'an outstanding person', or *rippana seiseki* 'one's excellent school record', when one is talking about a third person. However, when talking to her or his senior, a junior colleague cannot use this adjective, especially when intending to praise the senior's professional performance. In fact, the example here would not remain a simple error but could yield some sarcasm on the part of the senior colleague.

One solution is to replace the adjective *rippana* with *subarashii* (wonderful), which does not have any condescending connotations. Another possibility

is for the junior colleague to imply that she or he is a recipient of the senior's performance, as part of her or his *tachiba*, and has benefited from the senior's performance as shown in example (6):

(6)   社長今日のスピーチですが、感動しました。
        president today of speech COP(POL) so be moved-POL-PAST
        [to the company president] 'Madam, I was impressed by your speech today.'

We can see another instance of praise that falls outside the *tachiba* of a junior colleague in example (7) below:

(7)   *部長はよくお働きになります。
        division manager TOP well HON-work(HON)-POL
        [to the division manager] 'Sir, you work very hard.'

The praise in example (7) is not acceptable if it is uttered in front of the division manager (although it is plausible if the speaker is talking to a third person). While the (non-native) speaker may intend to show appreciation of her or his senior's hard work, this utterance could sound as if the junior colleague were appraising the division manager from a higher position than her or his *tachiba* warrants. Instead, an indirect approach to praising, such as represented in example (8), is more likely to be evaluated as polite:

(8)   部長遅くまでお仕事のようですが、大変ですね。
        division manager late-until HON-work of look COP(POL) but
        hard work-COP(POL) M
        '[to the division manager] Sir, it seems that the work is keeping [you] late.
        That's pretty hard [on you].'

The praise arising from this utterance arises in two ways. First, the junior colleague says that the senior has been working late, but in using the hearsay term *yō*, avoids disclosure of (the speaker's knowledge of) how hard the senior has been working, and also does not elaborate on *who* is working hard. The other strategy is that by saying *taihen desu ne* 大変ですね 'That's a hardship and I feel for you', the speaker shows concern for the senior's well-being (rather than directly appraising her or his hard work), which further mitigates the speaker's judgement if there happens to be any judgements perceived to be arising through the preceding utterance.

We have discussed in this section how requests and praise or compliments in the context of the honorific world are both afforded and constrained by the respective *tachiba* of the interlocutors. However, the *tachiba* of interactants can impinge on many other pragmatic acts. Seniors often use direct strategies when advising, suggesting and instructing their junior colleagues. This is not because they are authoritarian or necessarily exercising power over their

juniors (although some people may of course take advantage of their status), but because they are expected to provide their juniors with useful tips and help in professional situations. Their *tachiba* entitles them to be direct towards juniors, and this direct advice, suggestion or instruction is readily accepted by their juniors. On the other hand, if a senior requests a junior colleague to do something that lies beyond the scope of her or his *tachiba* (for example, asking the junior to buy some cigarettes), the senior inevitably uses indirect strategies. Juniors, on the other hand, may avoid directly inquiring about the desires/wants of their seniors (Suzuki, 1989: 60–1), or presupposing their emotions or feelings (Suzuki, 1989: 61–2). Such epistemic knowledge is regarded as lying outside the *tachiba* of juniors, and thus it is expected it will be raised tentatively, if at all, in interactions.

Tachiba *in the non-honorific world*

The non-honorific world refers to members of families, extended families (close relatives), close friends in the same age group, and colleagues/associates on an equal footing. These members normally do not use honorifics unless they are situated in formal settings, such as meetings or ceremonies, because they are not as influenced by status differences or psychological distance. It does not mean, however, that they can directly approach each other in every situation. As in the honorific world, the respective *tachiba* of interlocutors is drawn upon in differentiating between direct and indirect approaches.

The *tachiba* of children in relation to their parents, for instance, enables them to make direct requests when they fall into certain categories. Since parents are supposed to raise, nurture and look after their children, requests from children which lie within the parents' responsibilities can be directly uttered. For example, *are katte* あれ買って 'Buy me that', *kēki mō hitotsu chōdai* ケーキもうひとつちょうだい 'Give me another piece of cake', *okawari!* おかわり 'Refill [the rice bowl]!', *shukudai tetsudatte!* 宿題手伝って'Help me with my homework!' These examples are direct requests, sounding almost like commands when translated into English.

Some scholars such as Makino (1996) claim that this phenomenon is due to the distinction made between *uchi* 'inside' and *soto* 'outside', where *uchi* members, such as those belonging to the same family, do not have to be so reserved to each other as they are expected to be towards *soto* people. However, this does not explain why children make direct requests in some situations, but not in others. For example, when children want to borrow some money from their parents, they tend to use indirect request forms such as *okane, kashite-kurenai?* お金貸してくれない？ 'I wonder if you could lend me money?', in which the negation of the verb, and the marking of gratitude through the receiving morpheme, *-kure* 'to receive' are used to make the utterance sound quite tentative. Another example is that when children need to get

permission from their parents, for example to join a new activity or to go out with their friends at night, they use indirect requests such as *ittemo ii?* 行ってもいい？ 'Can I go?', *kyanpu ni sankashitai-n-dakedo ...* キャンプに参加したいんだけど 'I want to join the camp but ...'

The difference between the use of direct and indirect requests by children lies in their recognition of *tachiba*. Directness is afforded when the requests can be considered to lie within the scope of what parents are expected to do in raising their children. Indirect requests, on the other hand, occur when the parents' right (*tachiba*) to control their children's activities is recognised. Although such expectations may vary between individuals, and families may have different house rules, which can result in the narrowing or expanding of these *tachiba*, as a general rule, when the children's *tachiba* affords them privileges, direct request forms are allowable, but when the parents *tachiba* constrains the children's actions, such situations are more likely to occasion indirect requests by their children. In other words, when children perceive it as their right to ask for something, that is, as lying within their *tachiba*, they make direct requests. When they discern that something they want is under their parents' control (*tachiba*) they employ an indirect approach.

In contrast to institutional roles (*tachiba*) in organisations, friendships offer much less scope for clear-cut recognition of *tachiba*, and there are far fewer expectations for friends to fulfil. Thus, in such interactions, invitations, offers and suggestions are standardly framed more indirectly. For example, even if an offer is beneficial for the hearer, indirect strategies such as *Kore, hitotsu ikaga?* これひとついかが？ 'How about one of these?' or *Kore, moratte-kurenai?* これもらってくれない？ 'Won't you kindly have this?' are quite common between close friends. Suggestions which are beneficial for the addressee also follow suit. For example, *Kotchi no fuku no hō ga, niau to omou kedo naa* こっちの服のほうが似合うと思うけどなあ 'These clothes would suit you better, I suppose', *Eiga miru hō ga yoku-nai?* 映画見るほうが良くない？ 'Isn't it good to watch a film [rather than something you suggested]?', in which *omou* 思う 'think', *kedo* けど 'I wonder', *-naa* ～なあ 'I'm saying to myself', and *yoku-nai* 良くない 'not-good' are all recognisable forms of hedging.

However, as a relationship between friends develops over the course of a number of interactions, a certain *tachiba* may arise temporarily as the addressee indicates her or his readiness to accept advice or suggestions directly. In other words, *tachiba* in friendships is more psychological rather than being based on socially constructed expectations. Nonetheless, the choice between direct and indirect strategies in friendships in making offers or invitations relates to how astutely the interactants recognise their *tachiba* in a given situation, not to the perceived degree of imposition by the speaker on the addressee.

We can compare, for instance, invitations made in examples (9) and (10). Note that these examples can occur between the same friends but are likely to arise in different contexts.

(9)   今度の日曜日甲山に行かない？
next of Sunday Mt Kabuto to go-not
'Next Sunday, wouldn't [you] go to Mt Kabuto [with me]?'

(10)   この間、ドタキャンしたからね、今度は行きなさいよ。
the other day cancel at the last minute so M this time TOP go-IMP M
'Last time you cancelled [it] at the very last minute, so, this time [you] must go.'

Both examples involve an invitation by the speaker to a friend to go somewhere with him or her. However, in example (9) the speaker employs an indirect strategy by using the negative verb form (i.e. -*nai*), while in example (10) the speaker uses -*nasai*, which is a command form and the mood marker *yo* which marks confirmation of the action, in this case to go somewhere, which further connotes that this is a directive. Depending on what *tachiba* interactants have established at that time between themselves, either of the forms of invitation in example (9) or (10) can be selected.

The invitation in example (9) is a standard initial invitation. Although it is natural for friends to join activities, it is up to the other person one has invited as to whether she or he will accept the invitation. Where there is no specific preceding context, then the invitation usually takes an indirect approach such as seen in example (9), since friends are not obliged to accept invitations. In this situation, there is no clearly recognised *tachiba* that affords a direct invitation.

Example (10), on the other hand, presupposes that the addressee has cancelled a previous invitation from the speaker at the last minute, which triggers the speaker's almost commanding attitude in this subsequent invitation. This prior cancellation provides the speaker with a certain *tachiba* (in this case, more or less the speaker's right), allowing the speaker to directly invite the other. At the same time, this almost commanding invitation is quite acceptable from the addressee's perspective because the hearer disappointed the speaker some time ago, and so is likely to feel more obliged to accept the next invitation. In this case, the *tachiba* is psychologically created, both the speaker's entitlement to make a direct invitation, and the addressee's feeling that she or he is obliged to accept that direct invitation.

The examples we have discussed in this section have been given to outline the way in which the *tachiba* of interactants can both afford and constrain linguistic behaviour, and thus guide evaluations of politeness in Japanese. In explicating a dominant politeness norm, we have, of course, been generalising about expectations that are commonly held about ways in which speech acts should be achieved in Japanese. In other words, we have been discussing the moral norms that underlie politeness practices in Japanese. As Eelen (2001) argues, however, the role of discursive politeness theorists is not only to explicate moral norms, but also to explicate empirical norms, in other words, the ways in which moral norms are ratified, strategically exploited or challenged in actual discourse. In the following section, then, we consider a select number of excerpts from authentic texts where evaluations of politeness and impoliteness arise.

7.4   Japanese im/politeness in practice: Examples from authentic texts

7.4.1   *Acknowledging* tachiba *in interaction*

As discussed in the preceding section, one key way in which evaluations of politeness arise in Japanese is through interactants displaying acknowledgement of their respective *tachiba*. In the following interaction, for instance, an attendant at a museum in Tokyo implies to a visitor that she is not allowed to eat anything in the museum, but does so in such a way as to display recognition of the respective *tachiba*, thereby opening up her utterances to being evaluated as polite.

(11)   1 Attendant: 申し訳ございません … 申し訳ございません …
excuse(POL)-have-POL-NEG excuse(POL)-have-POL-NEG
'I am very sorry … I am very sorry.'

2 Visitor: あ、いけない？
oh acceptable-NEG
'Oh, is this not allowed?'

3 Attendant: 申し訳ございません…
excuse(POL)-have-POL-NEG
'I am very sorry.'

(adapted from Haugh, 2007a: 86)

In this example, observed by Haugh, a woman who was visiting the Edo-Tokyo museum sat down and began to unwrap some food to eat. An attendant at the museum who saw this began to walk towards her and started saying *mōshiwake gozaimasen* 申し訳ございません (an honorific form of apology; Turn 1). The visitor was evidently able to infer from this apology, and perhaps general knowledge about appropriate behaviour in public places in Japan,[7] that the attendant was implying that she was not allowed to eat in the museum (Turn 2). This inference was confirmed by the attendant with another subsequent apology (Turn 3).

This censure of the visitor's behaviour is nevertheless arguably interpretable as polite because the use of a formal apology indexes the directive as lying outside the *tachiba* of the attendant. As previously discussed, an apology can be used to mark a directive as falling outside the boundaries of the role-relations of those interlocutors (R. Ide, 1998: 525; Kumatoridani, 1999: 637; Long, 2010: 1060). In implying the directive rather than saying it, and thereby making it sound more tentative, its illocutionary force is decreased (Haugh, 2007a) and, in this way, the attendant also acknowledges that the direct issuing of this kind of censure falls outside her *tachiba*. The acknowledgement of their respective *tachiba* by the attendant is thus interpretable as polite, since she shows respect to the *tachiba* of the visitor to the museum through displaying recognition of the boundaries of her own *tachiba*. In this example, the evaluation of politeness that can be occasioned by the apology and implied censure is also compensatory in nature (Haugh and Hinze, 2003: 1600–1), because the attendant shows that in spite of making this directive, she does not think badly of the visitor, both through the apology and through only implying this directive, thereby acknowledging their respective *tachiba*.

7.4.2 Tachiba *and solidarity in interaction*

While the *tachiba* of interactants that is co-constructed through interaction may afford and constrain linguistic behaviour, thereby giving rise to evaluations of politeness, there are also instances where interlocutors may also invoke *tachiba* that are temporarily the same, or at least similar, thereby giving rise to perceptions of greater solidarity between the interlocutors. In the following example, which is an excerpt from a longer conversation where Katō and Nakane have been getting acquainted, they are discussing what it is like to be going out into the workforce for the first time.

(12)   1 Katō: 社会人が一年目っていうのはかなり厳しいもんが
                        ありませんでした？
                        working person NOM first year QUOT say NOMI TOP
                        pretty strict thing NOM have-NEG-PAST(POL)
                        'Wasn't it pretty tough in your first year in the workforce?'

        2 Nakane: 社会人 … そうですね。うん、何年目も
                        厳しかったけど … ((笑い))
                        working person that way COP(POL) M
                        yeah whatever year strict-PAST but [laugh]
                        'Working person … yes, well …
                        whatever year I was in, it was tough … [laughter]'

        3 Katō: あれはそうですか。
                        that TOP that way COP(POL) Q
                        'Is that right?'

        4 Nakane: いつまで経ってもなんか慣れなかった、私とかは。
                        when until pass-*te*-even somehow get used to-NEG-PAST
                        I others TOP
                        'I just haven't got used to it, no matter how much time passes.'

        5 Katō: うん … なんか、朝決まった時間に起きて …
                        yeah somehow morning set-PAST time at get up-*te*
                        'Yeah, you have to get up at a set time every morning …'

        6 Nakane: そうですよね。
                        that way COP(POL) M M
                        'That's right huh?' (Haugh 2005: 50-51)

Up until this point in the conversation, Katō and Nakane have been using addressee honorifics at the end of almost all their utterances. Through the consistent use of addressee honorifics, they have been indexing their relationship (*tachiba*) as one of getting acquainted, namely, where the use of addressee honorifics is treated as unmarked (that is, expected; Usami, 2002). In such a context, a downshift to plain speech can be used to index a greater level of intimacy between interlocutors (Ikuta, 1983; Okamoto, 1997; Yoshida and Sakurai, 2005; Cook, 2006). In this excerpt, a speech level downshift by Nakane can be observed in Turns 2 and 4, before she returns to using addressee honorifics (Turn 6) when she agrees with what Katō has said about being in the workforce in Turn 5. In addition, Nakane's speech level downshift in Turn 2 is combined with an attempt to occasion laughter, indexing the utterance as being non-serious, which is also interpretable in this context as indexing a greater level of intimacy between interlocutors (Haugh, 2010b). Katō, on the other hand, continues using addressee honorifics throughout this excerpt, apart from one utterance which is unmarked, concluding with a trailing-off sentence-final conjunctive particle (Turn 5), which is used to imply that more could be said on the matter (Haugh, 2008b). Katō's response to Nakane's attempt to index solidarity is thus somewhat equivocal, as neither does she reject it, nor does she explicitly ratify it.

While indexing a greater degree of solidarity between interactants may fall outside the scope of *emic* conceptualisations of politeness in Japan (Haugh, 2004), it is arguably nevertheless interpretable as polite in this case, since it involves interlocutors interactionally achieving mutual recognition of their *tachiba*, in this case a shared viewpoint (*kanten* 視点) about entering the workforce. This expression of solidarity, which arises from sharing a viewpoint, is achieved only temporarily (what Obana, 2000: 195 terms temporary psychological *uchi*), however, as Nakane and Katō switch back to the unmarked use of addressee

honorifics, thereby indexing their relationship as one of getting acquainted once again in the conversation that follows (data not shown).

7.4.3 Tachiba *and impoliteness in interaction*

While the primary focus in this chapter has been on analysing politeness in Japan from the perspective of *tachiba*, there are instances where interactants may strategically employ *tachiba* in such a way as to give rise to evaluations of impoliteness. In the following excerpt, for instance, evaluations of impoliteness arise when Kobo-chan's father indirectly criticises his mother's cooking, which in turn occasions a sarcastic response on her part.

(13)　　[Kobo-chan's father, mother and grandmother are eating dinner together]

1　Father:　　ごちそうさま。
　　　　　　　feast-HON
　　　　　　　'Thanks for dinner.'

2　Grandmother:　あら、もう食べないの？
　　　　　　　oh longer eat-NEG M
　　　　　　　'Oh, you're not eating any more?'

3　Father:　　こういう油っこい料理はすかん。
　　　　　　　this kind of oil-thick food CONT like-NEG
　　　　　　　'I don't like this kind of oily food.'

4　Grandmother:　[taking the dish away]
　　　　　　　あらそうですか。すみませんでした。
　　　　　　　oh that way COP(POL) Q excuse me-POL-PAST
　　　　　　　'Oh, is that right? [Well] sorry [then].'

5　Father:　　[watching his mother wash the dishes noisily]
　　　　　　　怒った？
　　　　　　　angry-PAST
　　　　　　　'Are you angry?'

6　Grandmother:　べつに怒っちゃいませんよ。
　　　　　　　not particularly angry-POL-NEG M
　　　　　　　'I'm not particularly angry.'

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Haugh, 2007b: 668–9)

This excerpt begins with Kobo-chan's father expressing gratitude, and thus indebtedness to his mother, for the meal (Turn 1). When asked for an account by his mother for why he is not eating any more food (Turn 2), however, the father responds that the meal was too oily (Turn 3). This account is evidently interpreted as criticism by his mother, who upshifts to the 'polite' apology form

to *sumimasendeshita* すみませんでした in Turn 4, and also starts noisily doing the dishes. This marked upshift to addressee honorifics, in a relationship where plain addressee forms are the unmarked norm, implies that the grandmother has evaluated Kobo-chan's father's remark as impolite. The father's confusion is evident from him next asking whether she is angry (Turn 5), which indicates that the father may not have intended to be critical of his mother's cooking. Kobo-chan's grandmother denies being angry in the subsequent turn, but in continuing to use addressee honorifics which can be evaluated as 'overpolite' relative to their *tachiba* as family members, the grandmother indexes sarcasm rather than respect (Okamoto, 2002, 2007). In this way, then, we can observe how interactants may strategically exploit normative expectations about *tachiba* to display an evaluation of the other person's behaviour as impolite.

Evaluations of impoliteness may also be occasioned when the *tachiba* of an interlocutor is perceived as being challenged. In the following excerpt, Mary, a high-school teacher on a scholarship to improve her Japanese proficiency, is interacting with her advisor, a professor at the university she is attending (an asterisk here indicates a potentially inappropriate choice of vocabulary).

(14)　　[Mary and her academic supervisor are chatting in his office]

1　Mary:　　この、あのう、この umm 何 um … institution あのう知って
　　　　　　いますね。あのう面白いあのうinternational、あ、あのう
　　　　　　協議、あのうもうすぐ、あのう、um なります。
　　　　　　this um this umm what um institution um do-*te*-PROG M
　　　　　　um interesting um international oh um conference um soon
　　　　　　um um become-POL
　　　　　　'Um, you know it, right? Um, there will be an interesting
　　　　　　international conference there soon.'

2　Professor:　あ、そうですか。
　　　　　　oh that way COP(POL) Q
　　　　　　'Oh, is that so?'

3　Mary:　　はい、あのう、じゅ、じょいち、十一月のす、十一月
　　　　　　の、あのう、初めに。
　　　　　　yes um ele- eleve- eleventh month of elev' eleventh month of
　　　　　　um begin at
　　　　　　'Yes, um, Nov, November, in the beginning of November.'

4　Professor:　あ。
　　　　　　'Oh.'

5　Mary:　　一日、そうです。一日から、あ。
　　　　　　first that way COP(POL) first from uh
　　　　　　'The first, yes, from the first, uh.'

6   Professor: 知っています、知っています。
know-*te*-PROG know-*te*-PROG
'I know [about it]. I know.'

7   Mary: あ、そうですか。じゃ、あのうpre-conference workshop の
ほうほうが、um、この、この雑誌に。
Oh that way COP(POL) Q well then um pre- conference work-
shop of directions NOM um this this magazine in
'Oh. Well, um, the pre-conference workshop directions* are
in this magazine*.'

8   Professor: これです。
this COP(POL)
'In this.'

9   Mary: はい、そう、じゃ、どうぞ。And はい面白いでしょう。
yes that way well then please and yes interesting
probably(POL)
'Yes, well, go ahead. Please [look at it]. And ... yes, it's
interesting isn't it.'

10   Professor: [Silence]
(Haugh, 2007b: 671–2; adapted from Siegal, 1996: 370–1)

Mary appears to be attempting to enact a relationship where she and the pro-
fessor are on a more equal professional footing through introducing news of
a conference to the professor (Turns 1–7), and also trying to establish their
mutual research interests in such an event (Turn 9). However, her suggestions
about the conference may be interpreted as going beyond her *tachiba* as a re-
search student from his perspective, since he is her advisor, not simply a col-
league. Thus, introducing such news to her senior can be evaluated as impolite
since expert knowledge, including being aware of forthcoming conferences,
is an expected part of the professor's *tachiba*.[8] It is also potentially impolite
since presuming what the professor might think about the conference goes be-
yond her *tachiba* as a junior colleague. In other words, in suggesting that the
professor attend this conference, Mary could be perceived by the professor as
going beyond her *tachiba*, which could be evaluated as impolite. That the pro-
fessor may indeed have evaluated Mary as impolite is indicated by his response
in Turn 6 where he repeats that he is in fact aware of the conference, and by his
silence in Turn 10, which is evidence of his possible discomfort, in response to
Mary's assertion that the pre-conference workshop will be interesting (Turn 9).
Thus, while Cook's (2006) analysis of interactions between graduate students
and advisors in Japanese universities has shown that it is indeed possible to
discursively negotiate a more equal relationship in these kinds of institution-
ally hierarchical relationships, such attempts can also be treated as challenging

their respective *tachiba*, and thereby can also occasion evaluations of impolite-
ness, as illustrated in this particular interaction.

Through these four examples from authentic interactions we have illustrated
how the *tachiba* of interlocutors is not prescribed *a priori* to interaction, but rather
is something that emerges in the course of interaction. While normative under-
standings of *tachiba* may constrain the ways in which it can emerge in interaction,
it has been argued that the *tachiba* of a person (or a group of persons) is both
contextually contingent and discursively enacted. Thus, while acknowledging
the respective *tachiba* of interlocutors may occasion evaluations of politeness,
tachiba may also be resisted or challenged, thereby occasioning evaluations of
impoliteness. We have also argued that *tachiba* can be strategically invoked and
give rise to other pragmatic effects, including perceptions of increased solidarity
between interlocutors, or anger and sarcasm on the part of one interlocutor, which
in turn, may give rise to evaluations of politeness or impoliteness respectively.

7.5   Conclusion

In this chapter we have considered politeness at both the social and interac-
tional levels and argued that the notion of *tachiba* provides a useful link be-
tween the two. Whilst we would not claim that all politeness phenomena in
Japanese can be explicated with respect to *tachiba*, it has been proposed here
that not only can it be used to account for a wide range of politeness phenom-
ena in Japanese, but it also does so in a way that is consonant with *emic* or folk
understandings of politeness. In this sense, then, we have advocated a discur-
sive approach to analysing politeness in Japan, namely, one which is informed
by *emic* understandings of politeness in generating theoretical conclusions in
the course of close inspection of participant understandings displayed through
their responses to prior actions in authentic interactions.

In invoking a culture-specific concept like *tachiba* it might appear as if we
are claiming that politeness phenomena should only be explicated with refer-
ence to a Japanese theory of politeness. However, the notion of *tachiba* is argu-
ably a culture-specific variation of the broadly accepted sociological notion of
(social) role in Role Theory. In theorising politeness, then, it is quite plausible
in our view to develop a culture-general, etic framework. One possibility is
to broaden the analysis of *tachiba* to a theory of place (Haugh, 2005, 2007b;
Obana, 2009, 2010), which can be accommodated as a culture-specific instan-
tiation of the culture-general relational dialectic of connection/separateness in
Arundale's (2006, 2010a) Face Constituting Theory. Such theorisation lies be-
yond the scope of the discussion in this chapter, however, since the discursive
approach to politeness in fact encompasses a diverse range of analytical ap-
proaches. Considerable work thus remains for theorists in reconciling culture-
specific and culture-general perspectives on politeness.