

Teaching Politeness in Lower Secondary Schools in Japan

~ Text Analysis of Politeness ~

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Abstract

In the first chapter of *the New Courses of the Study* (2003) for lower secondary schools, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) sets up “Overall Objectives”: *to develop students’ basic practical communication abilities such as listening and speaking, deepening the understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages.* What the “basic practical communication abilities” mean is not clear. But *the New Courses of the Study* shows the specific situation and function, which has a lot of items requiring the concept “politeness”: *in conducting language activities, the following language-use situations and functions of language should be mainly taken up.*

[Examples of Language-use Situations]

- a. Situations where fixed expressions are often used
 - Greetings • Self-introductions • Phone calls • Shopping
 - Giving directions • Traveling • Eating etc.
- b. Situations relevant to students' lives
 - Home life • Learning and activities at school • Regional events etc.

[Examples of Functions of Language]

- a. Deepening thinking and transmitting information
 - Giving opinions • Explaining • Reporting • Presenting • Describing etc.
- b. Instigating action and expressing volition
 - Asking questions • Requesting • Inviting • Offering • Confirming
 - Promising • Agreeing/disagreeing • Accepting/refusing etc.
- c. Transmitting feelings
 - Expressing gratitude • Complaining • Praising • Apologizing etc.

(the New Courses of the Study for Foreign Languages (2003) ii-2-(2)-(c))

Under the current circumstances of English language teaching and learning in Japan, what roles does the concept “politeness” play? I investigate the treatment of the concept in some English textbooks for Japanese lower secondary school students, and suggest its some improvement.

1. Introduction

This research is about teaching the concept “Politeness” in English classes in lower secondary schools in Japan. To know what roles “Politeness” plays under current circumstances of English language teaching and learning in Japan, I investigated the treatment of the concept in some English textbooks for Japanese lower secondary school students. And if there are any problems, I would like to suggest some improvements.

1.1. Method

In *the New Courses of the Study* (2003) for lower secondary schools, which is the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (文部科学省), called MEXT (文科省) for short, *the language-use situations and functions of language* are mentioned.

[Examples of Language-use Situations]

- c. Situations where fixed expressions are often used
 - Greetings • Self-introductions • Phone calls • Shopping
 - Giving directions • Traveling • Eating, etc.
- d. Situations relevant to students' lives
 - Home life • Learning and activities at school • Regional events, etc.

[Examples of Functions of Language]

- b. Deepening thinking and transmitting information
 - Giving opinions • Explaining • Reporting • Presenting • Describing, etc.
- c. Instigating action and expressing volition
 - Asking questions • Requesting • Inviting • Offering • Confirming
 - Promising • Agreeing/disagreeing • Accepting/refusing, etc.
- c. Transmitting feelings
 - Expressing gratitude • Complaining • Praising • Apologizing, etc.

(the New Courses of the Study for Foreign Languages (2003) -2-(2)-(c))

“The Examples of Functions of Language” has a lot of items such as *requesting, inviting, offering, or apologizing*, which need the concept “Politeness”. This means that *a way appropriate to the specific situation and condition*, which is the words in *the New Courses of the Study* (2003), needs “Politeness” more or less. And the concept is also needed when we express someone regard or disdain, friendliness or unfriendliness, kindness or unkindness, seriousness or jokes, and so on. But the main function is smoothing human relations. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), the concept of “Politeness” is classified into five categories like in Figure.1.

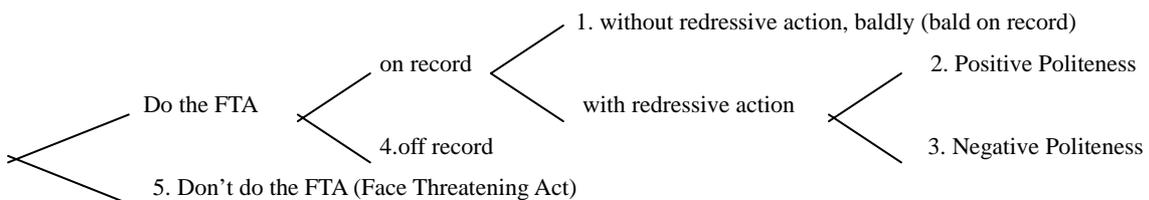


Figure.1 Possible strategies for doing FTAs (Brown and Levinson, p.69)

“2. Positive Politeness” has 15 sub-categories, “3. Negative Politeness” has 10 and “4. Off record” has 15.

1.2. Strategies for the analysis

It is quite difficult to think that all the strategies that Brown and Levinson have suggested are used in English textbooks for Japanese lower secondary school students, which was actually true when I investigated. So, considering the extent of grammar and vocabulary that should be learned in lower secondary schools (generally about 500 to 2100 words, although 100 words in the New Courses of the Study), and the difficulty to set up the typical sentences, I chose some strategies that Japanese lower secondary school students may be able to learn comparatively easily. And I set up such strategies as those on the handout p.1 to p.2 for my investigation.

1. Bald on record:

(1) Help! (Brown and Levinson, p.96)

2. Notice, attend to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods) :

(2) You must be hungry. It's a long time since breakfast.
How about some lunch? (op. cit., p.103)

3. Use in-group identity markers :

(3) Come here, honey. (op. cit., p.108)

4. Seek agreement :

(4) A: John went to London this weekend!
B: *To London!* (op. cit., p.113)

5. Include both S and H in the activity :

(5) Let's have a cookie, then. (i.e.. *me*) (op. cit., p.127)

6. Give (or ask for) reasons :

(6) Why not lend me your cottage for the weekend? (op. cit., p.128)

7. Be conventionally indirect :

(7) Can you please pass the salt? (op. cit., pp.133-4)

8. Question, hedge :

(8) *I mean, you know*, it's long way. (op. cit., p.167)

9. Be pessimistic :

(9) $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Could} \\ \text{Would} \\ \text{Might} \end{array} \right\} \text{you do } \sim ?$ (op. cit., p.173)

10. Minimize the imposition :

(10) I *just* want to ask you if I can borrow a single sheet of paper. (op. cit., p.177)

11. Apologize :

(11) Excuse me, but ... (op. cit., p.189)

12. Give hints :

(12) What a hot day! (c.i. How about a drink?) (op. cit., p.215)

However, when we consider the validity of Brown and Levinson's scale, it may be necessary to invent a new scale for English learners whose L1 is Japanese language. In doing so, we need to inspect the validity of English translation of Japanese honorific, and adopt some phonetic approaches such as intonations or stress patterns. But that is not the main theme of this investigation, so I intend to challenge these problems next time.

Only seeing the number of politeness strategies actually used in textbooks is not enough to decide how "Politeness" is treated in English textbooks for Japanese lower secondary school students. What is important is whether these strategies are treated as a topic – a main theme – of the lesson or not. If it is a topic of the lesson, teachers may or must instruct it very carefully; otherwise "Politeness" might be treated as simple words, phrases or sentences, not as "Politeness". That is to say, some meanings of "Politeness", external or internal, may be excluded from words, phrases or sentences while they should be included. Therefore, we should keep an eye on that point.

2. Analyses

The object for analysis is just a part of texts in each textbook. The excises or small questions such as blank-fillings or multiple choices are not for analysis at all. This is because the answers to those questions differ from students to students, not always contain politeness strategies and especially they are not always correct.

The level for analysis is the second year of lower secondary school, which is equivalent to 8th grade, because it is the first year when developmental instruction begins on the basis of the fundamental grammar and vocabulary of English language that they have learned in the first year.

2.1. Text Analysis 1 - Textbooks in Japan

2.1.1 Authorized Textbooks

We see them in the textbooks authorized by MEXT at first. As all the seven authorized textbooks were examined, sentences as these were found.

1. Bald on record:

(13) Wait! (NEW HORIZON, p.57)

2. Notice, attend to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods) :

(14) Well, it's getting dark. May I use the telephone? (NEW CROWN, p.40)

3. Use in-group identity markers :

(15) Don't be foolish, my son! (ONE WORLD, p.60)

4. Seek agreement :

(16) A: Some of them are sick, and some ate things like plastic bags.
B: *Plastic bags?* (ONE WORLD, p.66)

5. Include both S and H in the activity :

- (17) Shall we have a speech contest next week? (we = *you*) (active.comm, p.39)
- 6. Give (or ask for) reasons :**
- (18) Why don't you come to the dinner? (NEW CROWN, p.58)
- 7. Be conventionally indirect :**
- (19) Can I speak to Aki, please? (ONE WORLD, p.14)
- 8. Question, hedge :**
- (20) Well, remember. (NEW CROWN, p.16)
- 9. Be pessimistic :**
- (21) Would you please take him with you? (Sunshine, p.76)
- 10. Minimize the imposition :**
- (22) Wait a minute. (COLUMBUS 21, p.16)
- 11. Apologize :**
- (23) Excuse me, what can I write here? (TOTAL ENGLISH, p.33)
- 12. Give hints :**
- (24) Is there a dictionary on the desk? (TOTAL ENGLISH, p.23)

And Table.1 is the result of analysis for authorized textbooks. The upper numbers in each cell show how many times the strategy is used, and the lower the proportion of them to the total number of sentences. And "str-1" means "strategy-1.

Textbook	words	sentences	str-1	str-2	str-3	str-4	str-5
Text-1	2505	469	13 0.02772	0 0	5 0.01066	2 0.00426	9 0.01919
Text-2	1645	298	12 0.04027	0 0	4 0.01342	0 0	1 0.00336
Text-3	1911	334	6 0.01796	1 0.00299	0 0	2 0.00599	1 0.00299
Text-4	3009	515	12 0.02330	0 0	6 0.01165	0 0	2 0.00388
Text-5	2946	561	14 0.02496	0 0	2 0.00357	0 0	1 0.00178
Text-6	2334	418	21 0.05024	0 0	0 0	1 0.00239	7 0.01675
Text-7	2426	399	14 0.03743	0 0	1 0.00267	2 0.00535	3 0.00802
total	16776	2994	92 0.22188	1 0.00299	18 0.04197	7 0.01799	24 0.00560
average	2396.6	427.7143	13.1429 0.03170	0.14286 0.00043	2.57143 0.00600	1 0.00257	3.42857 0.00800

Textbook	str-6	str-7	str-8	str-9	str-10	str-11	str-12
Text-1	1 0.00213	8 0.01706	1 0.00213	3 0.00640	0 0	2 0.00426	0 0
Text-2	0 0	7 0.02349	0 0	4 0.01342	0 0	1 0.00336	2 0.00671
Text-3	1 0.00300	3 0.00898	2 0.00599	0 0	0 0	1 0.00299	0 0
Text-4	1 0.00194	8 0.01553	2 0.00388	2 0.00388	2 0.00388	9 0.01748	4 0.00777
Text-5	0 0	7 0.01248	2 0.00357	2 0.00357	0 0	2 0.00357	0 0
Text-6	1 0.00239	4 0.00957	0 0	0 0	2 0.00479	1 0.00239	1 0.00240
Text-7	0 0	11 0.02757	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 0.00267	0 0
total	4 0.00946	48 0.11468	7 0.01557	11 0.02727	4 0.00867	17 0.03672	7 0.01687
average	0.57143 0.00136	6.85714 0.01638	1 0.00222	1.57143 0.00390	0.57143 0.00124	2.42857 0.00525	1 0.00241

Table. 1 Analysis for Authorized Textbooks

“str-1 (Bald on record)” was used most often of all, having 92 examples (13.14 on the average) all told. The second was “str-7 (Be conventionally indirect)”, having 48 (6.86), and the third was “str-5 (Include both S and H in the activity)”, having 24 (3.43). The least frequent one was “str-2 (Notice, attend to H)”, having only one example (0.14 on the average). “str-5 (Include both S and H in the activity)”, “str-7 (Be conventionally indirect)”, and “str-9 (Be pessimistic)” were treated as grammatical and expressional topics that second-year students should learn, so their frequency seems to be increased. These strategies include the expression such as “Let’s ... / Shall we ...?”, “Can you please ...?” or “Could you ...? / Would you ...?”. These are comparatively easy for students to memorize as colloquial expressions. Such factors also helped these strategies increase. Not only as to these strategies but also as to “str-6 (Give (or ask for) reasons)” and “str-11 (Apologize)”, strategies that have colloquial expressions or idioms like “Why don’t you ...?”,

“Excuse me, but ...” and so on were found a lot. Especially, “please” is used a lot of times (counted as “str-7 (Be conventionally indirect)”).

On the other hand, it is found that a certain textbook introduces “str-4 (Seek agreement)” as one of communication techniques. The number is very small, but it is necessary to increase such textbooks or sections teaching “Politeness” as a communication technique. None of these authorized textbooks treated “str-12 (Give hints)” as a topic, and the same was true of the other off-record strategies. This may have occurred because of the reason: it is very difficult to topicalize them because of having no colloquial expressions or idioms, and it is also difficult for lower secondary school students to understand. So, these points seem to have room to improve for attainment of “Overall Objectives” of *the New Course of the Study* (2003).

2.1.2. Commercial Textbooks

And the next is the commercial textbooks, I mean non-authorized ones. I inspected the April to the March issues of *Shin-kisoeigo 2*, New Basic English 2 (2003, NHK Publishing), which is targeting Japanese second-year students or people equal to the level and has a lot of circulation and users in Japan. The August issue is a review of the April to the July issues, so it was not investigated. The result is below.

1. Bald on record:

(25) Remember, seal your lips. (Shin-kisoeigo2 (10), p.26)

3. Use in-group identity markers :

(26) Look on the bright side, Fujio. (Shin-kisoeigo2 (5), p.26)

4. Seek agreement :

(27) A: I usually wake up at ten.
B: *Ten?* (Shin-kisoeigo2 (4), p.40)

5. Include both S and H in the activity :

(28) Can we have those pastries for breakfast? (we = I)
(Shin-kisoeigo2 (10), p.10)

6. Give (or ask for) reasons :

(29) Why don't we meet up for lunch with Sakura some time soon?
(Shin-kisoeigo2 (4), p.32)

7. Be conventionally indirect :

(30) Can you do me a favor? (Shin-kisoeigo2 (7), p.18)

8. Question, hedge :

(31) Well, first, put the detergent in, and then push this button.
(Shin-kisoeigo2 (6), p.14)

9. Be pessimistic :

(32) Would you do me a favor? (Shin-kisoeigo2 (12), p.22)

10. Minimize the imposition :

(33) Can you wait a second? (Shin-kisoeigo2 (12), p.26)

11. Apologize :

(34) Excuse me. Where is the photo shop? (Shin-kisoeigo2 (4), p.28)

12. Give hints :

(35) Dad, I can't stand you complaining like this. (Shin-kisoeigo2 (11), p.46)

And Table.2 below is the result of analysis for commercial textbooks. Like the authorized textbooks, the strategy used most frequently was “str-1 (Bald on record)”, having 33 examples (3.00 on the average). The second was “str-7 (Be conventionally indirect)” with 30 (2.73) and the last was “str-2 (Notice, attend to H)” with 0.

With the first appearance of auxiliary verb for the second-year students, the phrases like “Can you please ...? (str-7 (Be conventionally indirect))”, “Could you ...? / Would you ...? (str-9 (Be pessimistic))” and so on are found many times. This is also the same as the authorized textbooks. But the commercial textbooks give a more particular explanation than the authorized ones. This may help learners deepen their understanding. And “str-5 (Include both S and H in the activity)” did not appear as a topic at all, but it has 14 examples, which is very notable.

Table.3 is the number of textbooks with topicalized strategies. The number of each cell means how many textbooks treated the strategy as a topic. The authorized textbooks and the commercial ones have very similar tendency. In “str-5 (Include both S and H in the activity)”, “str-6 (Give (or ask for) reasons)”, “str-7 (Be conventionally indirect)”, “str-9 (Be pessimistic)” and “str-11 (Apologize)”, the colloquial expressions or idioms such as “Let's ... / Shall we ...?”, “Why don't you ...?”, “Can you please ...?”, “Could you ...? / Would you ...?” “Excuse me.” and so on were found. And the heavy use of “please” in “str-7 (Be conventionally indirect)” has also the same tendency.

And Table.4 is the result of t-test for comparison between the two kinds of Japanese textbooks. The result showed that the both kind of textbooks have no significant difference at the .05 level. Therefore, they have almost similar content from, at least, the viewpoint of “politeness” (though they are different in the number of words and sentences).

Textbook	words	sentences	str-1	str-2	str-3	str-4	str-5
April	700	138	2 0.01449	0 0	3 0.02174	1 0.00725	3 0.02174
May	746	121	3 0.02479	0 0	1 0.00826	0 0	1 0.00826
June	809	135	3 0.02222	0 0	1 0.00741	0 0	1 0.00741
July	733	139	4 0.02878	0 0	3 0.02158	0 0	1 0.00719
September	872	118	1 0.00848	0 0	1 0.00848	0 0	1 0.00848
October	971	148	8 0.05405	0 0	1 0.00676	0 0	2 0.01351
November	695	100	0 0	0 0	1 0.01000	0 0	0 0
December	719	102	4 0.03922	0 0	1 0.00980	0 0	1 0.00980
January	692	102	1 0.00980	0 0	1 0.00980	0 0	2 0.001961
February	734	106	6 0.05660	0 0	2 0.01887	0 0	2 0.01887
March	376	47	1 0.02128	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0
total	8047	1404	33 0.27971	0 0	15 0.12270	1 0.00725	14 0.11487
average	731.55	114.1818	3 0.02543	0 0	1.36364 0.01116	0.09091 0.00066	1.27273 0.01044

Textbook	str-6	str-7	str-8	str-9	str-10	str-11	str-12
April	1 0.00725	1 0.00725	0 0	0 0	0 0	2 0.01449	0 0
May	0 0	1 0.00826	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0
June	1 0.00741	1 0.00741	1 0.00741	0 0	1 0.00741	0 0	1 0.00741
July	0 0	10 0.07194	0 0	4 0.02878	1 0.00719	0 0	0 0
September	0 0	3 0.02542	0 0	1 0.00848	0 0	0 0	0 0
October	0 0	6 0.04054	0 0	1 0.00676	1 0.00676	0 0	0 0
November	0 0	1 0.01	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 0.0100
December	0 0	2 0.01961	0 0	3 0.02941	3 0.02941	0 0	0 0
January	0 0	3 0.02941	0 0	1 0.00980	0 0	0 0	0 0
February	0 0	1 0.00943	0 0	2 0.01887	1 0.00943	0 0	0 0
March	0 0	1 0.02128	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0
total	2 0.01466	30 0.25056	1 0.00741	12 0.10209	7 0.06020	2 0.01449	2 0.01741
average	0.18182 0.00133	2.72727 0.02278	0.09091 0.00067	1.09091 0.00928	0.63636 0.00547	0.18182 0.00132	0.18182 0.00158

Table.2 Analysis for Commercial Textbooks (Shin-kisoeigo2 (2003))

	str-1	str-2	str-3	str-4	str-5	str-6
Authorized	0	0	0	1	3	1
Commercial	1	0	0	0	0	1

	str-7	str-8	str-9	str-10	str-11	str-12
Authorized	2	0	4	0	1	0
Commercial	1	0	1	0	1	1

Table 3. The Number of Textbooks with Topicalized Strategies

	str-1	str-2	str-3	str-4	str-5	str-6
t	0.811	1	-1.666	1.668	-0.700	0.016
p	0.429	0.356	0.115	0.115	0.496	0.988

	str-7	str-8	str-9	str-10	str-11	str-12
t	-0.990	1.404	-1.374	-1.525	1.695	0.487
p	0.339	0.179	0.189	0.153	0.109	0.633

Table 4. The Result of T-test for comparison between the two kinds of Japanese Textbooks

2.2. Text Analysis 2 - Textbooks in UK and US

Is this tendency the same as overseas textbooks? To compare with Japanese ones, I investigated some textbooks used in UK and US. “*Oxford Reading Tree* (ORT series)” were chosen as the representative UK textbooks and “*Reading*” as the US counterpart, both of which are at the similar level with those for Japanese second-year students from the viewpoint of the grammar and vocabulary. These two are written for purpose of reading mainly, while Japanese textbooks are written for not only reading but also writing, speaking and listening. This is because students do not depend on the capability of speaking or listening when they study their own language from textbooks.

And the textbooks for writing in UK and US have so many exercises that they are not appropriate as the target of this investigation for the reason that I have mentioned above. So maybe I should have investigated some textbooks used in other ESL countries (I want to challenge these next time).

2.2.1. UK Textbooks

The four UK textbooks included sentences like;

1. Bald on record:

(36) Look at this big pencil. (ORT: The Magic Key, p.12)

3 Use in-group identity markers :

(37) Look at me, Mum!
p.3 (ORT: The Lost Key,

- 5 Include both S and H in the activity :**
 (38) Let's go inside and play with Nadim's computer. (us = *me*)
 (ORT: Red Plane, p.5)
- 9 Be pessimistic :**
 (39) ...could we have the key? (ORT: The Lost Key, p.15)
- 10 Minimize the imposition :**
 (40) Just you come back here. (ORT: The Lost Key, p.11)
- 11 Apologize :**
 (41) We are sorry about the broken glass, but... (ORT: The Lost Key, p.15)
- 12 Give hints :**
 (42) That car is too fast. (ORT: The Great Race, p.4)

These UK textbooks just have some utterances in narrative style and no conversational style or dialogues. This is very different from Japanese ones. Therefore, the number of sample sentences was very small. Please look at Table.5 below. Some strategies such as “str-2 (Notice attend to H)” or “str-4 (Seek agreement)” were not found in the least. Especially, it is very different from Japanese textbooks that there was no example of “str-7 (Be conventionally indirect)” in these four UK textbooks. On the other hand, it is similar that there was some bias in “str-1 (Bald on record)” and “str-3 (Use in-group identity markers)”. And these four textbooks introduced nothing as politeness strategies.

2.2.2. US Textbook

And the US textbook has these sentences.

- 1. Bald on record:**
 (43) Come downstairs and see. (Reading: Grade 2, p.4)
- 3. Use in-group identity markers :**
 (44) Come on, Blue! (op. cit., p.56)
- 4 Seek agreement :**
 (45) A: That's because cows have four stomachs.
 B: *Four Stomachs!* (op. cit., p.94)
- 5 Include both S and H in the activity :**
 (46) Let's hang that up here in the kitchen. (us = *me*) (op. cit., p.120)
- 7 Be conventionally indirect :**
 (47) Please pass the potatoes. (op. cit., p.102)
- 9 Be pessimistic :**
 (48) Maybe you could help. (op. cit., p.74)
- 10 Minimize the imposition :**
 (49) Just stay on the paths here in the farmyard. (op. cit., p.118)

Just as UK textbooks, some utterances are interspersed in narrative style in this US textbook, too. Therefore, many strategies cannot be found for its number of sentences. Nevertheless, a unique characteristic was found. In this US textbook, “str-3 (Use in-group identity markers)” (48) exceeded “str-1 (Bald on record)” (28). Such peculiarity was not found in the other textbooks.

Taking US and UK textbooks as a whole, we could not find any of strategies: “str-2 (Notice, attend to H)”, “str-6 (Give (or ask for) reasons)” and “str-8 (Question, hedge)”. On the other hand, “str-1 (Bald on record)” and “str-3 (Use in-group identity markers)” have the same and highest frequency (54). Compared at a proportion of the total number of sentences, the former is found to be overwhelmingly high. And the second highest was “str-5 (Include both S and H in the activity)” (22), followed by “str-7 (Be pessimistic)” (11).

Textbook	words	sentences	str-1	str-2	str-3	str-4	str-5
ORT-1	273	51	6 0.11765	0 0	1 0.01961	0 0	0 0
ORT-2	325	68	5 0.07353	0 0	1 0.01471	0 0	0 0
ORT-3	896	129	9 0.06977	0 0	1 0.00775	0 0	2 0.01550
ORT-4	1051	123	6 0.04878	0 0	3 0.02439	0 0	3 0.02439
Reading2	12289	1469	28 0.01906	0 0	48 0.03268	3 0.00204	17 0.01157
total	14834	1840	54 0.328785	0 0	54 0.09913	3 0.00204	22 0.05147
average	2966.8	368	10.8 0.06576	0 0	10.8 0.01983	0.6 0.00041	2.2 0.01029

Textbook	str-6	str-7	str-8	str-9	str-10	str-11	str-12
ORT-1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 0.01961
ORT-2	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0
ORT-3	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0
ORT-4	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 0.00813	1 0.00813	1 0.00813	0 0
Reading2	0 0	5 0.00340	0 0	10 0.00681	1 0.00068	0 0	0 0
total	0 0	5 0.00340	0 0	11 0.01494	2 0.00881	1 0.00813	1 0.01961
average	0 0	1 0.00068	0 0	2.2 0.00299	0.4 0.00176	0.2 0.00163	0.2 0.00392

Table. 5 Analysis for UK and US textbooks

2.3. Text Analysis 3 - Comparison, Japan vs. UK and US

Taking both the authorized textbooks and the commercial textbooks in Japan as one population (18 in total) and the textbooks in UK and US another (5 in total), I carried out t-test against each value of the proportion to the number of total sentences. The result was on Table.6 on handout p.8: In only three strategies, “str-6 (Give (or ask for) reasons)”, “str-7 (Be conventionally indirect)” and “str-8 (Question, hedge)”, there was a significant difference at the .05 level. This means that the

textbooks in Japan have higher frequency in those three strategies and that there is no significant difference in the other strategies, (though str-1 and str-3 have significant tendencies).

	str-1	str-2	str-3	str-4	str-5	str-6
t	-2.282	1	-2.882	0.864	-0.201	2.366
p	0.085	0.331	0.064	0.398	0.843	0.030

	str-7	str-8	str-9	str-10	str-11	str-12
t	5.159	2.306	0.937	0.613	0.501	-0.504
p	0.0000670	0.034	0.359	0.546	0.622	0.641

Table. 6 The Result of T-test for comparison between Japan and UK & US

This result, however, does not accord with every topicalized strategy in Table 3. The MEXT sets up “Overall Objectives”: *to develop students’ basic practical communication abilities such as listening and speaking, deepening the understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages.* If, to achieve this, more than one authorized textbook fixed “str-5 (Include both S and H in the activity)”, “str-7 (Be conventionally indirect)” and “str-9 (Be pessimistic)” as their topics, there should be a significant difference in these three strategies (although one of these is attained), for the difference of attitude between Americans and Japanese toward “politeness” is reported.

According to Ide et.al. (1992), Americans have one axis of judgment for an utterance, “polite or impolite”, while Japanese have another axis, “friendly or unfriendly” at the same time. In other words, for Americans, “polite” and “friendly” fall into the same dimension, while for Japanese, polite (丁寧な teineina) and friendly (親しげな shitashigena) fall into different dimensions. As Ide et.al. have said, Japan has a proverb “shitashiki-naka nimo reigi ari (親しき仲にも礼儀あり)”, which means that even friendly terms need courtesy, and this can be said to support this fact. In addition, there is the word “narenareshii (馴れ馴れしい)” in Japanese language, which can be used only when the situation is friendly and impolite, and obviously carries negative connotation. There are some similar words in English language, “overfamiliar”, “fresh”, “impudent”, and so on, but these can be used not only in such situation but also in other situations.

3. Conclusion

As we have seen, it is clear that authorized textbooks have some problems about “Politeness”. Then what can we do to make the sense of “Politeness” take root in English language teaching in lower secondary school in Japan?

3.1. Conclusion and Suggestion

First, *the New Courses of the Study* of the MEXT should be revised like below. The underlined part and the below are added.

(2) Treatment of the Language Activities

A Items to be considered throughout the three grades (years). In instruction over the three grades (years), consideration should be given to the following points.

(b) In communicative activities, students should be able to perform language activities where they have to think of how to express themselves in a way appropriate to the specific situation and condition. For that purpose, instruction should be subsidiarily given mainly on the following items about “politeness”.

- a. Bald on record:
 - (aa) Wait!
- b. Use in-group identity markers :
 - (aa) Don't be foolish, my son!
- c. Seek agreement :
 - (aa) A: Ken, did you make your bed?
B: *Make my bed?*
- d. Include both Speaker and Hearer in the activity :
 - (aa) Shall we have a speech contest next week? (we = *you*)
- e. Ask for reasons :
 - (aa) Why don't you come to the dinner?
- f. Be conventionally indirect :
 - (aa) Can I speak to Aki, please?
- g. Be pessimistic :
 - (aa) Would you please take him with you?
- h. Apologize :
 - (aa) Excuse me, what can I write here?

These example sentences, which are chosen on the basis of *the New Courses of the Study* and previous investigation of ours, have been already used in current textbooks. Therefore, it is not so difficult to add the *new* interpretation “Politeness” to *the New Courses of the Study*. Besides, it has a strong relation to the treatment of the language activities that *the New Courses of the Study* has mentioned; *in communicative activities, students should be able to perform language activities where they have to think of how to express themselves in a way appropriate to the specific situation and condition.* What is meant by the *appropriate way*? It does not show any evaluation scales or bases in the concrete. In such a situation, “politeness” will not be introduced into the textbooks

which are edited along *the New Courses of the Study*. Therefore, the students who study English with such textbooks cannot acquire “politeness” and, as a result, it is easy to imagine the situation where they can’t express themselves *in a way appropriate to the specific situation and condition*.

Secondly, a training or workshop for teachers is important, for it will take long time to revise *the New Courses of the Study* and authorized textbooks based on it. Instruction in class more largely depends upon teachers than upon textbooks. Therefore, to train them is maybe more important. Then, what kind of training must be done? This is the new challenge imposed on us.

And the last one is also important, or the most important; to introduce “Politeness” to students. The real communication with people is very difficult, because the other strategies as well as the examples above, situations or scenes, feelings (or intonation to express it) and so on are complexly concerned with each other. But, in our own first language, we can do it. Then, why cannot a lot of students express themselves in English? This is because they only store the knowledge of English language and do not have the key to open the door of their storehouse when the chance has come. As we have seen, the MEXT shows some examples of language-use situations and function of language, which contain many “Politeness” factors. However, the MEXT makes no reference to “Politeness”. This causes the tragedy; locking the door of the storehouse. So, “Politeness” can be one of the keys. Of course, other keys are also available: for example, intonation, pronunciation or gesture to express students’ own feelings and writing greetings, letters, e-mails, essays or composition and so on. However, almost all of them need “Politeness”, which may be the most important key of the keys in a sense. Some students have already had one or some keys, and others can make it themselves. But most of the students surely cannot do it. We need to show them the place where the key is.

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