## Emic conceptualisations of (im)politeness and face in Japanese: implications for the discursive negotiation of second language learner identities

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#### **Abstract:**

Learners of languages often face various dilemmas in relation to their identities in that language. In this paper, it is argued that if learners of Japanese are to learn how to successfully manage these various dilemmas in managing their identities, they need to acquire a more emically-grounding understanding of the various dimensions that can be influenced by their second language identities. Two phenomena that have received only mention in passing in relation to the discursive negotiation of identities thus far are '(im)politeness' and 'face'. An emic analysis reveals the pivotal role occupied by *place* in the interactional achievement of '(im)politeness' and 'face' in Japanese. It is thus proposed that the discursive accomplishment of identities is reflexively indexed through 'place' to the interactional achievement of '(im)politeness' and 'face'. This approach is forwarded in an attempt to offer greater clarity in explicating the manner in which discursive dispute over the respective 'places' of interactants can impact upon the negotiation of identities in intercultural conversation. In this way, learners of Japanese may become more empowered in their attempts to manage their second language identities.

#### **Keywords:**

Politeness, face, identity, emic, interactional achievement, Japanese, second language learner

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It is now widely accepted that the learning of second languages involves more than simply learning the grammar and vocabulary of the language in question. Acquiring a working knowledge of pragmatic aspects of the second language, whether or not the learner ultimately chooses to use it, is now seen as an important facet of the second language learning process. Research on the acquisition of pragmatic dimensions of second languages has indicated, however, that learners tend to vary in their realization of pragmatic aspects of communication. Learners may sometimes echo certain pragmatic aspects of the second language, but at other times they may resist certain pragmatic strategies or routines, particularly in situations where underlying values formed through first language experiences are perceived to be inconsistent with values underlying language use in the second language (Hinkel, 1996; Ishihara, 2005, 2006; LoCastro, 2001; Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2000; Siegal, 1996). Learners may also be unaware at times that pragmatic differences exist between their first and second language. Pragmatic choices in a second language are thus influenced by both awareness of pragmatic dimensions of the second language, and the identities the learner wishes to enact through interaction with others in that language, among other things. This means pragmatic choices can give rise to various dilemmas for learners in regards to their identities.

Two phenomena that have received only mention in passing in relation to these dilemmas in the literature thus far, at least in relation to Japanese, are '(im)politeness' and 'face' (Ishihara, 2005, 2006; Cook, 2001, 2006; Siegal, 1995, 1996; Wade, 2003). In this paper, it is proposed that an approach which conceptualises 'face'. '(im)politeness' and identity as emergent phenomenon that are both enacted in, and constitutive of, communication can help us to better understand the dilemmas facing second language learners in negotiating their identities. This approach is consistent with the view of both the communication theory of identity (Hecht, 1993; Hecht, Warren, Jung and Kreiger, 2005; Jung and Hecht, 2004), and the broader social constructionist programme (Cook, 2006; Ochs, 1993; Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 1991), that these social phenomena do not exist a priori or independently of interaction, but rather are interactionally achieved and negotiated through social interaction. It is suggested that discursive dispute between the interconnected layers that constitute identities in the interactional achievement of '(im)politeness' and 'face' in communication are the cause of at least some of the dilemmas facing second language learners

One such dilemma confronting learners is the personal conflicts they can experience when managing their identities in a sociocultural milieu with different social expectations and norms (Armour, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004; Chapman and Hartley, 2000; Hashimoto, 2003; Nagata and Sullivan, 2005; Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000; Siegal, 1995, 1996). These personal conflicts often arise due to gaps between the personal identities learners attempt to interactively claim, and those which are enacted by others through communication. Learners of Japanese may struggle with aspects of their identity relating, for example, to the level of 'politeness' they perceive to be expected of them by others (Ishihara, 2005; Siegal, 1996). But as Ishihara (2005) notes, if learners choose to express themselves in a way that enacts a particular identity, they must be aware of the possible '(im)politeness' implications of such behaviour. There is thus a clear need for an approach that enables learners to make more informed pragmatic choices.

A further dilemma faced by learners of Japanese is they are often only exposed to "model identities" in textbooks and other teaching materials, which do not consider the multitude of competing identities that exist in Japanese society (Dobson, 2002;

Kinoshita-Thomson and Otsuji, 2003; Matsumoto and Okamoto, 2003; Nagata, 1992; Nagata and Sullivan, 2005; Siegal and Okamoto, 1996; Wade, 2003). Learners of Japanese thus face significant challenges in learning how to manage their identities when presented with such highly normative or stereotypical views. In this paper, it is argued that if these learners are to learn how to successfully deal with these various dilemmas in managing their identities, they need to have a deeper understanding of the various dimensions that are both enacted through and constitutive of their second language identities, in particular the interactional achievement of 'place' which underlies '(im)politeness' and 'face' in Japanese.

As becomes apparent from the discussion that follows, the notions of '(im)politeness' and 'face' are conceptually complex, and this poses a significant challenge for learners of Japanese wishing to make more informed pragmatic choices in their second language. However, it is argued that despite this complexity, learners need to acquire an emic or "insider" understanding of these phenomena so as to "promote [their] understanding of the *reasoning* behind the culture and how the linguistic system works within the sociocultural context" (Ishihara, 2005: 27, original emphasis) in order to successfully manage their second language identities.

This paper, therefore, begins by first considering the conceptualisation of '(im)politeness' and 'face' in Japanese, from which the notion of notion of 'place' emerges as being pivotal to the interactional achievement of these phenomena. The complex inter-relationships between '(im)politeness', 'face' and identity are then considered. This leads into an analysis of how the interactional achievement of '(im)politeness' and 'face' in Japanese is reflexively indexed through place in the discursive negotiation of identities by learners of Japanese, followed by a brief discussion of some of the implications of this approach for research in applied pragmatics, as well as theoretical developments in '(im)politeness' and 'face' research.

# 1. 'Place' and the emic conceptualisations of '(im)politeness' and 'face' in Japanese $^{2}$

In order to analyse how '(im)politeness' and 'face' emerge through communication in Japanese, it is important to first consider how they are conceptualised from an emic or participant-relevant perspective. An emic perspective is defined here as one which explicates concepts "in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories regarded as meaningful and appropriate by native members of the culture whose beliefs and behaviours are being studied" (Lett 1990: 130), in order to provide analytical insight into how meanings arise "in the local context of talk-in-interaction" (Markee and Kasper 2004: 493). In other words, an emic approach focuses on uncovering the underlying expectations that Japanese speakers bring with them into interactions. Building upon previous studies, the researcher's own ethnographic field notes, interviews with native-speaker informants, as well as analyses of conversational data, it is argued in this section that the notion of 'place' is pivotal to acquiring an emic understanding of how '(im)politeness' and 'face' are interactionally achieved in Japanese.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.1. The notion of place in Japanese

The notion of 'place' (basho) has long occupied an important position in theorizing about language and society in Japan (Nakane, 1967, 1970; Nishida, 1949; Lebra, 1976, 2004; Maynard, 2002). The notion of place is also crucial to folk explanations of

politeness phenomena in Japanese according to Wetzel's (2001, 2004) analysis of lay books about politeness or etiquette in Japanese, in which she found that most of the vocabulary essential to these folk explanations were related in some way to the notion of place (Haugh, 2005a: 46). Moreover, discussions of Japanese honorifics and 'politeness' in the literature (for example, Fukushima, 2000: 49; Ide, 1989: 230; Kabaya, Kawaguchi and Sakamoto, 1998: 15; Kikuchi, 1997: 36-42; Lebra, 1976: 67; Matsumoto, 1988: 405; Minami, 1987: 8; Obana, 2000: 188-197; Yabuuchi, 2006) and 'face' (Morisaki and Gudykunst, 1994: 76; Tanaka and Kekidze, 2005: 110) have often made recourse, either implicitly or explicitly, to the notion of place. It is thus argued in this section that the notion of place is central to acquiring an emic understanding of both '(im)politeness' and 'face' in Japanese.

The notion of place in Japanese is defined in this paper as encompassing one's contextually-contingent and discursively enacted social role and position (cf. Haugh, 2005a). This social role and position consists of two opposing dimensions that form a dynamic dialectic through interaction: the 'place one belongs' (*uchi*) and the 'place one stands' (*tachiba*). This dialectical view of place means that the interactional achievement of '(im)politeness' and 'face' is not simply a matter of reaching an equilibrium between one's own and others' *uchi* and *tachiba* (or more broadly 'connectedness' and 'separateness'), since they are reflexively interlinked in a manner whereby "each state involves and defines the other" (Arundale, 2006: 204). This view also implies that one's place in Japanese does not exist prior to or independently of interaction, but rather is established, maintained or challenged discursively through interaction.

The place one belongs (*uchi*) involves the interactional achievement of group-based relationships of belonging, and the obligations (*gimu*) and dependencies (*amae*) accompanying such belonging, which are metaphorical extensions of the family household (*ie*) (Haugh, 2005a: 49; Obana, 2000: 194-195). The place one stands (*tachiba*), on the other hand, involves 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, 2005a: 53-54; Tanaka and Kekidze, 2005: 110). In the following two sections, it is argued that the interactional achievement of place is what underlies the emic conceptualisation of both '(im)politeness' and 'face' in Japanese.

## 1.2. Conceptualising '(im)politeness' in Japanese

The emic notion of 'politeness' in Japanese can be approached, in the first instance, from the perspective of two key lexemes, namely *teinei* and *reigi* (*tadashii*) (cf. Haugh, 2004: 90-95). An initial analysis of these two lexemes using the *Kōjien* dictionary indicates that *teinei* involves being warm-hearted (*teatsuku*) and attentive (*chūi-bukaku*) (Shinmura, 1998: 1818), while *reigi tadashii* involves showing upward-looking respect (*kei'i*) towards others (*ibid*.: 2827).<sup>5</sup>

This initial gloss of 'politeness' is consistent with the results of studies investigating the views of ordinary speakers of Japanese about the notions of *teinei* and *reigi* tadashii. <sup>6</sup> Ide, Hill, Carnes, Ogino and Kawasaki (1992), for example, found that teinei was closely associated with 'upward' respect (kei'i), consideration and kindness (omoiyari), appropriateness (tekisetsu), and positive feelings (kanji no yoi), while Obana (1994) reported her respondents associated 'politeness' with knowing where one stands in social interactions (wakimae or 'discernment'), showing upward respect (kei'i) towards others and modesty about oneself, as well as horizontal distance.

Interesting additions to the notions of 'politeness' that emerge from ordinary speakers of Japanese, which are not encompassed by dictionary definitions, include showing kind consideration towards others as well as relational distance, and modesty towards oneself. 'Politeness' thus involves not only showing what one thinks of others, but also what one thinks of oneself (Chen, 2001; Haugh and Hinze, 2003; Ruhi, 2006). Perceived changes in Japanese society, particularly the decreasing emphasis on the expression of 'upward' respect, and the concurrent rise in the expression of 'mutual' respect have been reflected in recent attempts at redefining 'politeness' in Japanese by the National Language Council using the newly coined term *kei'i hyōgen*:

"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 that 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).

This more recent conceptualisation of 'politeness' in Japanese shifts the focus away from a concern for social position (mibun) or status (chi'i) to potentially less hierarchical dimensions, such as the dignity/character of others (jinkaku) and the place one stands (tachiba). Nevertheless, the use of the term kei'i ensures that more traditional aspects of 'politeness' in Japanese, including 'upward' respect, modesty, social position and rank are still retained. The conceptualisation of oneself or others in Japanese may, of course, go beyond the individual to encompass groups to which one belongs (uchi). Central to the emic notion of 'politeness' in Japanese, then, is the concept of 'place', which encompasses both one's dignity as a person (jinkaku) and the place one stands (tachiba), as well as the place one belongs (uchi). The emic conceptualistion of 'impoliteness' (or rudeness), on the other hand, involves the two key lexemes *shitsurei* and *burei*. These are defined as lacking in or not correctly discerning according to reigi, lacking in manners/etiquette (busahō), or showing ill-breeding (bushitsuke), and are thus characterised in opposition to reigi tadashii (Shinmura, 1998: 1197, 2374). Lacking in or not correctly discerning according to reigi implies not showing respect or consideration to the dignity/character and place of others, or *not* showing modesty about one's own place. It appears, then, that the concept of place is also central to emic conceptualisations of 'impoliteness' in Japanese.

In summary, it appears that an emic understanding of '(im)politeness' in Japanese turns on the notion of place, which can pose challenges for English-speaking learners of Japanese more familiar with autonomy/approval-driven expectations about '(im)politeness' (Haugh, 2005a). This emphasis on the importance of place does not endorse, however, the view that Japanese '(im)politeness' is governed by sociopragmatic rules, or what Ide (1989) terms *wakimae* (discernment). As illustrated by the interactional analyses that follow in section two, place does not exist prior to or independently of interaction, but rather is achieved through social interaction.

# 1.3. Conceptualising 'face' in Japanese

In discussions of 'face' in Japanese thus far, the focus has been primarily on how Japanese 'face' differs in nature from that proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), but little has been said about the actual constituents of 'face' in Japanese. The lack of explanation about the nature of Japanese 'face' is due in part to the lack of clarity as to the status of folk or emic notions of 'face'.

The emic notion of 'face' in Japanese is represented through a number of related lexemes, including *kao, menboku* and *taimen* (cf. Haugh, 2005b: 219-224). The term *kao* has the widest semantic field encompassing 'face' as representative of a person, both literally as an individual (e.g., *kao o dasu*, 'to attend') and figuratively as one's 'social image' (e.g., *kao o tsubusu*, 'to crush someone's face'), the latter of which may involve the social image of either individuals or groups. *Kao* also encompasses 'face' as representing power, both in terms of one's degree of influence in a group (e.g., *kao ga kiku*, lit. 'one's face is effective' meaning someone is influential), and the degree to which one either represents a group or is well-known as an individual (e.g., *kao ga hiroi*, lit. 'one's face is broad' meaning someone is famous). The third broad sense of *kao* relevant to interpersonal interaction is 'face' as representing emotion (e.g., *kao ga kumoru*, lit. 'one's face is cloudy' meaning to look worried) (cf. Ruhi and Işık's discussion of *yüz*, this issue). The notions of *menboku* and *taimen* are related to the first sense of *kao* as representative of a person, in particular, one's 'social image'.

For example, in the final scene of an episode from *Urusei Yatsura* (a long-running manga and animated series in Japan), the characters are battling with an octopus. <sup>10</sup> It squirts ink into Sakura's face, who responds *Kono ue, mada watashi no kao ni doro o nurō to iu no desu ka?* ('On top of everything else, you still throw mud in my face?'). This line has both a literal meaning where *kao* refers to a part of Sakura's physical self, and a more figurative meaning where it refers to Sakura losing her dignity in front of the others.

The concept of 'face' in Japanese as a kind of 'positive social image' representative of a person as an individual or a group to which the person belongs can be analysed in terms of the notions of menboku and taimen. According to the Köjien dictionary, menboku primarily involves external evaluations within a particular community of practice or wider society of one's meiyo (lit. 'honour'), or one's own dignity/character' (jinkaku) (Shinmura, 1998: 2631), or that of one's salient in-group (uchi). 11 Menboku is thus closely related to the dignity/character of a person (jinkaku) that can arise from his/her conduct or the conduct of others towards that person. The interactional achievement of *menboku* is related, then, to receiving praise of one's performance or abilities, or acknowledgement of one's status and influence within a particular group (and thus is closely related to the second sense of kao as representative of power) (Haugh, 2005b: 222; Yabuuchi, 2004: 268). It can also involve showing social conformity to the tacit rules of a certain community of practice (Yabuuchi, 2004: 282), or what Morisaki and Gudykunst (1994: 76, citing Lebra 1976: 67) describe as maintaining harmony through conduct appropriate to one's bun ('portion' within a larger group).

The notion of *taimen*, in contrast, is defined in the *Kōjien* dictionary as an individual's or group's appearance in public (Shinmura, 1998: 1618)<sup>12</sup>, a view reiterated in both Morisaki and Gudykunst's (1994: 48) and Yabuuchi's (2004: 246) characterisation of *taimen*. The notion of *taimen* thus primarily involves external evaluations within a particular community of practice or wider society of *teisai* (lit. 'appearance'), or one's manner or form as seen by others. The interactional achievement of *taimen* is related to expressing publicly-acceptable views (*tatemae*) rather than one's true feelings (*honne*), showing competence in social manners (for example, proficiency in the use of honorifics) to express consideration towards others, and maintaining a tidy appearance through high quality clothing and grooming (Haugh, 2005b: 223; Morisaki and Gudykunst, 1994: 77). It can also involve protecting one's reputation

from insult or avoidance of admitting to one's (professional) failure (Yabuuchi, 2004: 269-269).

Yet while the notions of *menboku* and *taimen* initially appear to encompass different aspects of 'face', they are arguably both related to the core notion of place, both in the sense of the place one belongs (*uchi*) and the place one stands (*tachiba*) (cf. Tanaka and Kekidze, 2005: 110). For example, 'loss of face' (*kao o tsubusu*) may arise in situations where harmony within the place one belongs (*uchi*) is not maintained, while one can 'give face' (*kao o tateru*) by allowing others to look good in the place they stand (*tachiba*) (Cole, 1989, cited in Morisaki and Gudykunst, 1994: 56) The difference between them appears to lie in the way they vary in their orientation to place. *Menboku* foregrounds the internal state of mind that underlies external manifestations of *meiyo* ('honour'), while *taimen* foregrounds one's external state or *teisai* ('appearances'). However, both are closely related to one's place, in the sense that *menboku* and *taimen* represent foregrounding of internal and external aspects of one's place respectively.

The notion of place underlying 'face' in Japanese is also closely related to external evaluations by particular "imagined communities" (*seken*) that are perceived as constantly having the potential to judge one's actions as (in)appropriate (Abe, 1995; Hasada, 2006: 191-192; Inoue, 1977; Shiba, 1999: 52). In other words, the perceived evaluation of one's place by a particular 'imagined community' (*seken*) has much to do with the loss, gain or maintenance of one's own face, or that of one's group. The kind of 'face' that arises through interactions is thus dependent on what one thinks others in a wider 'imagined community' (*seken*) show or can show they think of one's conduct relative to the place one stands or belongs.

One consequence of the close relationship between place and 'face' in Japanese is that the professional, social or moral conduct expected of others and oneself as a person or as representative of the group to which one belongs is not necessarily the same for each person. In fact, while one's 'face' is reflected in the dignity/character of a person and the concomitant behaviour one is expected to manifest in interactions with others, expectations about conduct are related to one's place. In other words, *kao*, *menboku* and *taimen* are interactionally achieved through evaluations by others of one's conduct (or the conduct of others towards oneself) in relation to the place one stands or the place one belongs.<sup>14</sup>

For example, one would not expect a CEO of a company in Japan to make tea for his guests at a business meeting, as that would not be conduct appropriate to the place he stands. Thus, if the CEO were to make tea at a business meeting, he could 'lose face' as a consequence of his conduct relative to the place he stands being inconsistent with their expectations. On the other hand, if the guests were to praise a CEO for some recent business decisions, she could 'gain face' as her conduct may be perceived as matching or possibly exceedingly expectations related to the place she stands. In other words, her performance as an embodiment of the place she stands is evaluated by others who represent the wider *seken* (namely the business community) as being exemplary, and thus she 'gains face'.

External evaluations of one's conduct in relation to the place one belongs can also lead to changes in the state of one's 'face'. For example, one informant reported that if it becomes widely known that a particular family's son or daughter is being bullied at school, it may cause the family to 'lose face' in the eyes of others. In this situation, the place to which the student who is bullied belongs, namely his or her family (*uchi*), is evaluated negatively by others, as it is seen by some as a sign of failure on the part of the child to 'fit in' with others (and thus avoid being bullied), and a failure of the

family to keep these troubles, which are often blamed on the victim of bullying rather than the bullies themselves, out of the public gaze. In other words, evaluations of one's conduct as an embodiment of the place one belongs can also lead to changes in the interactional achievement of 'face'.

It appears, then, that place, both in the sense of the place one belongs (*uchi*) as well the place one stands (*tachiba*) constitutes an important link between the emic notions of '(im)politeness' and 'face' in Japanese. In the following section, the way in which the interactional achievement of 'face' and '(im)politeness' is related to the discursive negotiation of identities through interaction is considered.

## 2. '(Im)politeness', 'face' and learner identities

The interactional achievement of 'face' and '(im)politeness' is related to the discursive negotiation of identities through the fact that all three phenonema involve, to a lesser or greater extent, external evaluations of oneself, or the group to which one belongs. In this section, it is suggested that in Japanese '(im)politeness', 'face' and identity are reflexively indexed through the discursive accomplishment of the places of interactants in communication.

The interactional achievement of '(im)politeness' and 'face' is further related to identities in that all three phenomena are both enacted in and constitutive of communication. Since Japanese speakers carry expectations about the appropriate or desired place of themselves or others into interactions, in this sense, identities, '(im)politeness' or 'face' which can emerge through interactions from these expected places can be regarded as constitutive of communication. However, these expectations can also be qualified, challenged or re-negotiated through the enactment of place in interactions. Discursive dispute over the expectations of interactants in relation to their own place and the place of others can thus serve as a site of social struggle, which is of particular poignancy to second language learners. In the following sections, then, the way in which the interactional achievement of '(im)politeness' and 'face' can be involved in discursive negotiation of the identities of learners of Japanese is discussed in more detail, to illustrate the kinds of pragmatic choices and dilemmas faced by learners. However, the way in which identity itself is conceptualised in this paper as being both enacted in and constitutive of communication is briefly considered before undertaking this analysis.

#### 2.1. A communicative approach to identity

To better understand the complex issues learners face in making pragmatic choices it is important to examine more closely what is encompassed by the notion of identity. While approaches to identity abound in the literature, Spencer-Oatey (this issue) argues that it can be broadly defined as a placeholder for the social psychological processes underlying self-definition or self-interpretation, drawing on the work of Simon (2004). This socio-cognitive conceptualisation of identity is traditionally divided into two main types, namely individual (or personal) identity, which focuses on one's self-definition as a unique individual, and collective (or social) identity, which refers to one's self-definition as an individual belonging to a particular social group. Simon (2004) goes on to argue that individual and collective identities are not, however, based on mutually exclusive attributes:

"the same self-aspect (e.g. German) can provide the basis for a collective identity at one time ('We, the Germans'), whereas at another time it may be construed as a

constituent or element of one's individual identity ('I am a psychologist, male, German, have brown eyes and so forth'). In the first case the particular self-aspect defines a social category of which oneself is one member among others, whereas in the other case it is one feature among several other features of oneself, the ensemble of which constitutes one's individual identity" (p.54)

Thus, while it is often assumed that the individual and collective identity distinction is dualistic in the literature, in the sense they are presumed to be quite distinct or even opposite classes, closer examination of the various dimensions that constitute these different aspects of identity indicates they are in a dialectical relationship where individual and collective identity are in "continual, dynamic dialogue" and thus interdependent (Simon, 2004: 56). In other words, when one aspect of identity becomes explicit as the figure, the other remains implicit as the ground and vice versa (*ibid*: 56).

However, Spencer-Oatey (this issue) cautions the traditional approach to identity should not lead one to assume that one's identity is an entirely cognitive phenomenon, as identity can also be relationally and socially enacted through interaction. Complementing Spencer-Oatey's approach, then, is the communication theory of identity (Hecht, 1993; Hecht, Warren, Jung and Kreiger, 2005; Jung and Hecht, 2004), which offers another more nuanced alternative to the traditional dualistic approach. It characterises identity as the interactional achievement of four interpenetrating layers: personal (identity as an individual's self-concepts or self-images), enacted (identity as performed or expressed in communication), relational (identity as a jointly negotiated through communication, including identifying oneself through one's relationships with others), and communal (identities that emerge from groups and networks) (Hecht et al, 2005: 263-264; Jung and Hecht 2004: 266-267).

For example, when the present author was a postgraduate student at a university in Japan, he vacillated between the interactional achievement of an identity as a learner of Japanese and as a user of Japanese. In certain situations, he discursively accomplished an identity as a learner of Japanese by asking for clarification about the meaning of a particular word when conversing with other students who were native speakers of Japanese (enacted identity), thereby positioning the other Japanese interactants as 'experts' and the author as a 'non-expert' dependent on those students' expertise (relational identity). On the other hand, the author sometimes preferred to claim an identity as a user of Japanese (personal identity), and attempted to discursively accomplish this by avoiding self-correction of errors and using various strategies to mask communication breakdowns (enacted identity). While some Japanese students supported the author's attempts to express an identity as a user of Japanese by assisting in masking communication breakdowns and avoiding any correction of errors, others would not, leading to discursive dispute about their respective places (relational identity). In conversations with Japanese students, the author also sometimes collectively identified with 'we' New Zealanders (communal identity) when other international students who were from New Zealand joined those conversations (enacted identity). He could also position himself as being somehow 'closer' to others in the group who also positioned themselves as New Zealanders rather than those who identified themselves as Japanese (relational identity). These four dialectically-interpenetrating loci of identity are thus formed, maintained and modified through communicative interactions. In this approach, identity is conceptualised as "available for use: [it is] something that people do which is embedded in some other social activity, and not something they 'are'" (Widdicombe, 1998: 191), and thus it is consistent with an emic or participant-relevant perspective

that "take[s] identities for analysis only when they seem to have some visible effect on how the interaction pans out" (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 5). The following analysis attempts to show how a communicative approach to identity can offer a more nuanced view of the discursive negotiation of learner identities, particularly in relation to the interactional achievement of '(im)politeness' and 'face'.

## 2.2. Learner identities and '(im)politeness'

In this section, the way in which the discursive negotiation of learner identities can impact upon perceptions of '(im)politeness' in interactions is discussed. From the previous analysis it has emerged that the degree of '(im)politeness' in an interaction arises from what one shows one thinks of the place of others and oneself through various linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour in Japanese. Since the way in which learners position themselves through interaction in their attempts to discursively accomplish particular personal, enacted, relational or communal identities may have implications for the interactional achievement of the place of others or themselves, the discursive negotiation of identities can also impact upon the generation of '(im)politeness'. In other words, identities are both enacted through and constitutive of the interactional achievement of place, which also underlies '(im)politeness' in Japanese.

In the example below, an older student implies in a conversation on the phone that she would like to borrow some handouts from a class she missed from another younger student. 'Politeness' arises in this example from the various speech levels used and the manner in which the request is implied, reflecting the efforts of the interactants to show respect towards each other's place. While the speech levels of utterances in Japanese can be determined by the presence or absence of addressee honorifics as well as referent honorifics, together with the level of formality of vocabulary (Ikuta, 1983; Usami, 2002), in the following interaction the key determiner of speech level is the presence or absence of addressee honorifics. The following symbols, adapted from Mimaki (1989: 39-40), are thus used to represent the respective speech levels: += addressee honorific; \*= unmarked; 0 = plain addressee.

(1) (Sayuri, an older student, and Kumiko are discussing a handout from a class Sayuri missed)<sup>15</sup>

```
Sayuri: Kumiko-chan, Konoaida no jugyō no purinto mot-te-ru?
                                                                           [0]
1
2
           Kumiko-Dim recent
                                   of class of handout have-Te-Prog
3
           (Kumiko, do you have the handout from the last class?)
4
    Kumiko: E, dono jugyō desu
                                    ka?
                                               [+]
5
            um which class Cop(Pol) Q
6
            (Um, which class?)
7
    Sayuri: Ano ne, getsuyō sangen,
                                                      [*]
                                       ano jugyō.
8
           um M Monday third period that class
9
           (Um, the class third period on Monday)
    Kumiko: Getsuyō sangen-tte
                                      yū to, watashi wa, are-desu ne,
10
                                                                           [+]
11
             Monday third period-Quot say if
                                                    Top that-Pol M
                                                I
12
            ano eigo
                        desu
                                 ne.
                                               [+]
13
            that English Cop(Pol) M
           (Monday third period huh...I...um...that English [class] huh)
14
15
    Sayuri: Konoaida yasun-jat-te
                                       saa
                                                      [*]
           recently absent-completely-Te M
16
           (I missed the class recently,)
17
```

```
Kumiko: Aa.
                          [*]
18
19
             (Oh)
20
    Sayuri: Purinto, morat-ta
                                                      kedo...
                                                                      [0]
                                mitai na-n-da
21
           handout receive-Past seems Cop-Nomi-Cop but
22
           (and it seems you got a handout but...)
23
    Kumiko: A, ii-desu vo. Kopī shimasu ka?
                                                        [+]
24
             oh good-Pol M copy do(Pol) Q
           (Oh, that's fine. Will you make a copy?) (Xie, 2000: R45)<sup>16</sup>
25
```

From the different speech levels used by Kumiko (who uses primarily addressee honorifics) and Sayuri (who uses either plain addressee or non-marked forms) it appears that Kumiko and Sayuri are jointly enacting a relationship where the place Kumiko stands is of lower status than Sayuri (their relational identity). Since Kumiko shows respect towards the place Sayuri stands as a senior student or senpai by using addressee honorifics, politeness also arises. <sup>17</sup> This does not mean to say that Kumiko and Sayuri must use these different forms to enact this particular relationship. As Cook (1997, 1998, 2006) and Maynard (1991, 1993) argue, a shift from so-called addressee honorifies to plain addressee forms may also be used to represent the other interactant's voice through co-constructed utterances, to background certain information, or to show one's conviction in speaking to oneself. In this example, however, they are exploited to interactionally achieve a junior-senior relationship. The enactment of a senior-junior relational identity is also reflected in the way in which Kumiko pre-empts Savuri's request in line 23 by conjointly co-constituting an implicature from the preceding 'pre-requests' (in lines 1, 7, 15 through to 20). This pre-emptive acceptance also demonstrates 'attentiveness' (Fukushima, 2004), thereby giving rise to 'politeness'. In other words, Kumiko shows respect towards the place Sayuri stands as a senior student by understanding what Sayuri needs without her having to go 'on-record' as asking for something.

While Sayuri does not use addressee honorifics, she nevertheless also shows respect towards the place Kumiko stands in enacting a further relational identity as fellow students. 'Politeness' arises from Sayuri implying she would like to borrow the handouts from the class she missed (in lines 1, 7, 15 through to 20), which shows her reluctance to directly make the request (what is termed a 'politeness implicature' by Haugh, 2007). This reluctance to ask directly, even though they have enacted Sayuri's relational identity as being senior to Kumiko, indicates Sayuri respects the place Kumiko stands as a fellow student (as it is not part of Kumiko's role as a student to provide handouts for others and so Sayuri cannot expect Kumiko to provide a handout as a matter of course). The trailing off *kedo* ('but') phrase in line 20 also gives rise to a kind of hedging effect because it makes the request sound less demanding by ostensibly leaving options open to Kumiko as to how she can respond. 'Politeness' thus arises as Sayuri shows respect towards the place Kumiko stands as a fellow student.

In this example, then, the interactional achievement of their respective places enacts particular relational identities, as *senpai-kōhai* (senior-junior) and as fellow students, whilst also giving rise to 'politeness'. Although a multitude of other identities could also have arisen, for example, their personal identities as females, or their communal identities as members of particular 'clubs' and so on, what is most salient in this instance is the interactional achievement of senior-junior and fellow student relational identities. However, these relational identities are not simply enacted through 'politeness' in this interaction. The expectations underlying the generation of 'politeness', namely, that Sayuri and Kumiko show respect towards each other's

places are closely related to their relational identity, and thus in this sense their relational identity is both enacted in and constitutive of the interaction. An understanding of how 'impoliteness' may arise in interaction is also important so that learners can make more informed choices about their identities. In the next example, the manner in which 'impoliteness' can arise from what one shows one thinks of others is illustrated when Kobo-chan's father indirectly criticises his mother's cooking.

```
(2) (Kobo-chan's father, mother and grandmother are eating dinner together)
    Father: Gochisō-sama.
2
              feast-Hon
3
              (Thanks for dinner)
4
    Grandmother: Ara, mō tabe-nai no? [0]
5
                  oh longer eat-Neg M
6
                 (Oh, you're not eating any more?)
7
                 abura-kkoi ryōri wa su-kan.
    F: Koo-iu
8
      this kind of oil-thick food Cont like-Neg
9
       (I don't like this kind of oily food)
    G: (taking the dish away) Ara sō
10
                                        desu
                                                 ka. Suimasen-deshi-ta.
                                                                             [+]
                             oh that way Cop(Pol) Q excuse me-Pol-Past
11
12
                            (Oh, is that right? [Well] sorry [then])
13
    F: (watching his mother wash the dishes noisily)
       Okot-ta?
14
                          [0]
15
       angry-Past
      (Are you angry?)
16
17
    G: Betsuni
                      okocchai-ma-sen yo.
                                                       [+]
18
      not particularly angry-Pol-Neg M
19
      (I'm not particularly angry) (Ueda, 1998: 117)
```

In this example, Kobo-chan's father starts by positioning himself as in debt to Kobochan's grandmother by expressing gratitude for the meal (line 1). However, this relational identity is discursively challenged when the father comments the meal was too oily (in line 7), which the grandmother takes as a criticism, as evident in her sarcastic apology in line 10 and the way she next starts noisily doing the dishes. The marked up-shift to addressee honorifics, in a relationship where plain addressee forms are the unmarked norm, implies that the grandmother thinks Kobo-chan's father has taken an inappropriate place relative to her in making this criticism. The father's confusion is evident from him next asking whether she is angry (in line 14), which indicates that the father may not have intended to be critical of the grandmother's cooking. The father thus initially seemed to be attempting to enact an identity where he feels free to give his opinions (personal identity), but the grandmother understood his comments as an attempt to enact an identity where he feels free to criticize her cooking (relational identity). The grandmother also appears at first glance to be enacting a relational identity where she has a lower status and so "accepts" the criticism, but the anger she expresses at the same time indicates her unhappiness with such an identity. This discursive dispute in regards to their respective places also gives rise to 'impoliteness' in both the way the grandmother interprets the father's comment as a criticism, and her hyper-polite responses in lines 10 and 17, which imply heavy sarcasm. In this situation, then, a particular relational identity is not interactively achieved, but rather differences between the identities they attempt to attribute to the other and the identities they attempt to claim for themselves become apparent. This discursive dispute as to their respective places also gives rise to

'impoliteness' and seems to cause the grandmother to become angry with Kobochan's father.

In managing their identities, then, learners of Japanese need to be aware of how the interactional achievement of place can give rise to 'impoliteness' in some instances. However, this is not to say that learners always have to be 'polite', as in some instances they may even choose (either consciously or unconsciously) to generate potential 'impoliteness' through interactions with others in an attempt to enact a particular identity.

In the next example, a learner of Japanese does not use the addressee honorific form of the copula, but instead uses other casual forms when disputing his teacher's attempt to correct his misuse of the word 'accident' (jiko) in place of the word for 'population' ( $jink\bar{o}$ ), thereby enacting a relational identity of greater equality with his teacher. <sup>18</sup>

```
(3) (Rob is attempting to answer a question from the teacher)
    Rob: Hh, uh, jiko
                          o hanbun korosu beki deshō.
                                                              [0]
2
         hh uh accident Acc half
                                     kill
                                            should probably(Pol)
3
        Sore shi-tara, [nokot-te-iru.
                                                [*]
        that do-if remain-Te-Prog
4
5
    (Hh, uh, we should probably kill half the accident. If we did, <the remaining>)
6
    Teacher:
                      [Jinkō
                                                [*]
7
                      population Acc
8
                     (<The population.>)
9
    Rob: Jiko, jiko.
                                 [0]
10
         (Accident, accident.)
11
    Teacher: Jiko?
                                 [0]
12
            (Accident?)
13
    Rob: N.
                hitotachi.
                                 [0]
14
        uh-huh people
        Hanbun koroshi...korosu beki deshō.
15
                                                       [+]
16
                          kill should probably
        half
17
        Sore shitara, nokot-te-iru hanban wa, denki
18
        that do-if remain-Te-Prog half Top electricity Nom enough
19
             omoi-masu.
        to
20
        Quot think-Pol
21
        (Uh huh, people. We should probably kil-, kill half. If we did, [for] the
        remaining half, I think the power would suffice) (Wade, 2003: 95-96)
```

In conversations between teachers and learners in the classroom it is often assumed that learners should use addressee honorifics to show respect towards the place the teacher stands. According to canonical usage, then, Rob's use of plain addressee forms in lines 9 and 13 is potentially 'impolite'. However, as Cook (2006) points out, this assumption is not always borne out in actual interactions. In fact, while Rob does not use addressee honorific forms of the copula at two points in this interaction, it does not necessarily give rise to 'impoliteness'.

Rob appears at first glance to be attempting to position himself in a place of greater equality with his teacher (that is, where corrections can be disputed), and thereby enact a particular relational identity. This can also be seen in his resistance to the teacher's correction of his choice of vocabulary in line 9, and the use of plain addressee forms in lines 9 and 13. The choice of plain addressee forms towards the teacher by Rob does not appear to be due to a lack of control over these speech styles or a lack of awareness about what is regarded as appropriate in interacting with

teachers, as Rob claims in later interviews that "I'm comfortable switching between plain forms and *desu/masu* forms. That's, not a problem, I understand when to each use of those" (Wade, 2003: 96). <sup>19</sup> It thus appears that while Rob is aware of expected usage, he prefers a more forceful and casual style at times in interacting with his teacher. This claimed relational identity may be indicative of his unwillingness to take on the more traditional place of the learner in Japanese undergraduate education, where learners passively accept corrections from their teachers. It may thus also be a reflection of his claim to a personal identity as an 'active' student (consistent with North American ideologies of educational practices).

Yet, from the teacher's perspective, it could also represent a challenge to her personal identity (as an 'expert' who corrects the learner's errors), since Rob is disputing her correction and using plain addressee forms, which gives rise to discursive dispute as to their respective places. The teacher in this interaction later explicitly states her expectation that student's should use addressee honorifics towards their teacher: "If you go by the Japanese relationship, the teacher...uses causal style and the students use polite" (Wade, 2003: 109). Neverthless, the teacher did not appear to negatively evaluate the plain addressee forms used by Rob or his dispute of the correction, which reflects a gap between her explicitly stated expectations about their respective places and 'politeness', and what was actually interactionally achieved through this particular incident. The discursive negotiation of Rob's identity in this interaction thus indicates that while learners may face dilemmas in regards to the kind of identities they wish to have in the classroom, there is still some room for the interactional achievement of places that do not necessarily reflect the traditional hierarchical teacher-student relational identity, yet are nevertheless not 'impolite'. In another example, 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. While Mary reported wanting to develop a personal identity that reflected her perceived status as a professional in her interactions with the professor, the apparent discomfort shown by the professor during this interaction indicates she was less than successful (an asterix here indicates inappropriate choice of vocabulary).

(4) (Mary and her academic supervisor are chatting in his office)

```
Mary: Kono, anō, kono...umm, nani, um...institution anō shit-te-imasu, ne.
2
                 um this
                            umm what um institution um
                                                             do-Te-Prog M
           this
3
           anō omoshiroi anō international, a, anō kyōgi,
                                                             anō mō sugu,
4
           um interesting um international oh um conference um soon
5
           anō, um nari-masu.
6
           um um become-Pol
7
           (Um, you know it, right? Um, there will be an interesting international
8
            conference there soon.)
9
    Professor: A, sō
                          desu
10
             oh that way Cop(Pol) Q
11
             (Oh, is that so.)
    Mary: Hai, anō, ju, jo, ichi, jūichi gatsu
12
                                              no, su ju ichigatsu
13
           yes um elev' eleve' eleventh month of elev' eleventh month of
14
           anō hajime ni.
           um begin at
15
           (Yes, um, Nov, November, in the beginning of November.)
16
17
    Professor: A'
18
             (Oh)
19 Mary: Tsuitachi, sō
                            desu.
                                     Tsutachi kara, a'
```

```
20
            first
                    that way Cop(Pol) first
                                               from uh
21
            (The first, yes, from the first, uh.)
22
    Professor: Shit-te-imasu, shit-te-imasu.
23
              know-Te-Prog know-Te-Prog
24
             (I know about it. I know about it.)
25
    Mary: A sō
                               ka. Ja,
                                           anō pre-conference workshop no
                      desu
26
          Oh that way Cop(Pol) Q well then um pre- conference workshop of
27
          hōhō*
                    ga, um, kono, kono, zasshi* ni.
28
          directions Nom um this this magazine in
29
          (Oh. Well, um, the pre-conference workshop directions* are in this
30
          magazine*.)
31
    Professor: Kore desu.
32
              this Cop(Pol)
33
              (In this.)
34
    Mary: Hai, s\bar{o},
                                  dōzo. And hai omoshiro deshō.
                        ja,
           yes that way well then please and yes interesting probably
35
36
          (Yes, well, go ahead. Please [look at it]. And...yes, it's interesting
37
           isn't it.)
38 Professor: [Silence] (adapted from Siegal, 1996: 370-371)
```

Mary appears to be attempting to enact a relational identity where she and the

professor have a more equal professional relationship by introducing news of a conference to the professor, thereby establishing their mutual research interests. This arose from her explicitly stated wish to enact a personal identity as a professional researcher, complimenting her identity as a learner of Japanese, in interactions with her academic advisor. However, in so doing she is potentially 'impolite' since knowing about forthcoming conference is an expected part of the professor's role as a researcher. <sup>20</sup> In other words, in attempting to take the place of an equal, Mary could be perceived by the professor as not paying sufficient respect to his place and thereby generating 'impoliteness'. This is suggested by the professor's response in line 22 where he impatiently repeats that he is in fact aware of the conference (*shitte imasu*, *shitte imasu*, 'I know about it, I know about it').

She also attempts to establish that they have a mutual interest in the conference near the end of the interaction in line 34 (*hai omoshiro deshō*, 'Yes, it's interesting isn't it'). This is also potentially 'impolite' since she is presuming what the professor might think about the conference which goes beyond the place of a more junior colleague. In other words, while Mary appears to be trying to enact a personal identity as a professional researcher, and a relational identity where she is on equal footing with the professor (at least in relation to research matters), her suggestions about the conference go beyond the place she stands as an research student from his perspective, since he is her advisor, not simply a colleague. The professor's discomfort with her attempts to enact such a place and thereby claim such an identity are suggested by his lack of verbal response in line 38 after Mary assumes they have a shared interest in the conference. While Mary may have indeed wanted to establish a professional identity with the professor, the potential 'impolite' implications arising in this interaction indicate that she was not able to successfully do so.

A recent analysis of interactions between graduate students and advisors in Japanese universities by Cook (2006) has also shown that it is indeed possible to discursively negotiate a more equal relationship in these kinds of institutionally hierarchical relationships, which is consistent with analysis of example (3). However, the less successful discursive negotiation of identities by Mary in example (4) illustrates that it

is necessary to understand how '(im)politeness' implications arise through the strategic placement of honorific forms in the sequence of talk (*ibid*.: 288), or more generally, through the respective places enacted by interactants. An understanding of '(im)politeness' and its relationship to the interactional achievement of place is thus of fundamental importance to learners of Japanese in managing their identities. Even armed with such an understanding, learners may of course resist the enactment of certain 'places' because it conflicts with their claimed personal identities. Yet while these choices ultimately lie with the individual learner, it is argued that an understanding of the importance of place, and the possible '(im)politeness' implications of attempting to enact certain identities, may be helpful to learners of Japanese in making those decisions.

#### 2.3. Learner identities and 'face'

The interactional achievement of 'face' can also be impacted upon through choices made by learners in relation to their identities. As evaluations of the place of interactants by 'imagined communities' (*seken*) are made either implicitly or explicitly through interactions, the way in which learners position themselves through interaction in their attempts to discursively negotiate particular personal, enacted, relational or communal identities may have implications for the interactional achievement of the place of others or themselves, and thus for 'face'. In other words, identities are both enacted through and constitutive of the interactional achievement of place, which also underlies 'face' in Japanese.

There are three main ways in which a person's 'face' might be influenced in Japanese: 'gaining face', 'losing face', and 'saving face'. For example, the notion of 'saving face' may be explicitly appealed to in interactions, as seen in the following example taken from a Japanese drama set in a television channel company (*Bijo ka yajū* 'Beauty and the Beast', 2003). In this interaction, a businessman is trying to convince a younger colleague to meet someone he has already arranged for her to meet (a kind of 'blind date'). However, she is reluctant to meet this person, so the businessman appeals to the need to save his 'face' (*kao o tateru*) from the possible loss that could occur if she refuses to go through with the meeting.

(5) Businessman: *Boku no kao o tateru to omot-te,*my of face Acc stand Quot think-Te
au dake demo o-negai-deki-nai ka ne.
meet only even Hon-request-can-Neg Q M

(Can I not ask you to just think of it as saving my 'face' and meet him?) In this example, the 'face' to which the businessman is making an appeal involves external evaluations of his competence as a 'match-maker'. It is generally accepted that as part of the place a matchmaker stands, he or she will ensure that both parties will go to any meetings that are arranged. However, in this situation, the businessman has arranged a meeting that one of the parties, his female colleague, is unwilling to attend. If she does not wish to go through with the meeting, however, this will reflect poorly on his ability to arrange suitable meetings, and consequently he may lose 'face' in the eyes of his colleagues and friends. It is this potential loss of 'face' that he alludes to in trying to persuade his colleague to go through with the meeting. This explicit appeal to 'face' also represents an attempt by the businessman to interactively enact competence as a matchmaker as part of his personal identity. What distinguishes 'face' from this dimension of personal identity in this instance is the former involves perceptions of potential evaluations by a salient 'imagined community' (seken), while

the latter involves an attempt by the businessman to interactively claim a particular identity.

What one says may be an attempt to attribute positive identities, but it can also cause people to gain 'face'. In the example below, reported by a native speaker informant, the speaker gives 'face' to Suzuki by admiring her business sense at an office party.

(6) Suzuki-san wa hontōni senken-no-mei ga ari-masu ne. Suzuki-Hon Top really foresight Nom have-Pol M (Ms Suzuki, you really have foresight huh?)

In this example, the speaker shows he admires the ability of Suzuki to make good business decisions, and thus indicates others can also admire Suzuki's good business sense. In other words, through this compliment, the speaker shows he thinks well of Suzuki's conduct as part of the place she stands as a businesswoman, thereby 'giving face' (*menboku o tateru*) to Suzuki. The speaker also attributes a positive relational identity to Suzuki, as he positions Suzuki as being more insightful in business than himself. Once again, what distinguishes gaining 'face' from the attribution of a positive relational identity is only the former involves perceptions of the potential evaluation of Suzuki by a wider 'imagined community' (*seken*), namely, the business community.

What one says can also have a negative impact on the identities of others and thus cause them to lose 'face', as seen in the next example, also reported by a native speaker informant, where a senior colleague points out to his younger colleague that something is wrong with his shoes.

(7) Tanaka, nanka kutsu chotto kitanai desu yo. Tanaka somehow shoes a little dirty Cop(Pol) M (Tanaka, your shoes are not clean)

In this example, Tanaka's senior colleague points out that his shoes are not polished properly as they are entering a meeting with another business group. This indicates that he thinks Tanaka's appearance is not up to standard, and believes others would agree. In other words, through this admonishment, the speaker shows he does not think well of Tanaka's conduct as part of the place he belongs (namely, their company), thereby causing Tanaka to 'lose face' (*taimen o tsubusu*). <sup>21</sup> This also impacts negatively on Tanaka's communal identity, as his senior colleague implies Tanaka is not meeting the standard expected of members of that in-group. It is thus important for learners to be aware of the import of 'face' and how it is reflexively enacted together with the identities of interactants through communication. In the following example, the 'face' of a Taiwanese learner of Japanese is threatened when she appears to not understand a particular word in a discussion about Japanese food.

(8) (Lin, a learner of Japanese, is chatting with her teacher) Lin: Hōmusuteii, Nihon no, (un) Nihon-ryōri ga suki desu kara, 2 homestay Japan of (mm) Japanese cuisine Nom like Cop(Pol) so daitai, un, Nihon no tabemono ga (un) zenbu heiki 3 4 (mm, mm) basically yeah Japan of food Nom (mm) all okay 5 da to [omoi-masu. 6 Cop Ouot think-Pol 7 (Homestay, Japanese, [mm] I like Japanese cuisine so [mm, mm] basically 8 I think all Japanese food is okay [for me].) 9 Kimura: [A, hontōni? Sok-ka sok-ka, yoku kiku no wa ne. oh really that way-Q that way-Q often hear Nomi Top M 10 yo, watashi. chotto shoppai tte kiku n desu 11

```
12
           a little salty Quot hear Nomi Cop(Pol) M I
13
           (Oh really? Okay, okay. I often hear it, I often hear that it is a bit salty.)
14 Lin: Shoppai...
15
        (Salty...)
16 Kimura: Daijōbu?
17
           ([Is that] okay?)
18 Lin: Iya, daijōbu desu.
19
        no okay Cop(Pol)
        (No, that's okay.)
20
21 Kimura: A, hontō ne, sok-ka
                                   sok-ka.
22
            ah really M that way-Q that way-Q
           (Ah, yeah, mm, mm.) (Usami, 2005)
23
```

After Lin responds to Kimura's question about Japanese food, Kimura goes on to comment that Japanese food is often said to be quite salty in line 11. However, Lin appears to be uncertain as to the meaning of the word *shoppai* ('salty') as she repeats the word trailing off in line 14. Kimura expresses concern as to whether Lin has really understood the word in line 16, and while this might be perceived as kindness and thus could give rise to 'politeness', it is also potentially threatening to Lin's 'face' as a competent speaker of Japanese. Lin's rather curt response to Kimura's expression of concern in line 18 (particularly the use of the casual form of 'no', *iya*) indicates some discomfort that Kimura has apparently brought attention to her uncertainty about the word, and possible loss of 'face'.

A gap thus arises between the personal identity as a user of Japanese that Lin claims for herself in stating that she intends to become a Japanese teacher (enacted identity), and the personal identity as a learner of Japanese attributed through Kimura's expression of concern about Lin's understanding of the meaning of the word in line 16. Kimura, however, quickly tries to smooth over the incident by moving the focus of the conversation back to Lin's statement that she likes Japanese food in a repetition of her response to it in line 21, rather than dwelling on this minor hiccup in the conversation, thereby shifting to a stance where she attributes to Lin an identity as a competent speaker of Japanese.

This kind of 'face-saving' by native speakers of Japanese learners when they display a lack of understanding can also be observed in the following interaction between Japanese and non-Japanese students who were studying at the same North American university.

(9) (The students are chatting in a coffee shop)

```
Toru: Ja nihon no eiga
                           wa mi-ta
                                         koto ari-masu ka?
2
         then Japan of movie Top see-Past thing have-Pol Q
3
         (Then have you seen any Japanese movies?)
4
    David: Nan?
5
          (What?)
    Alan: Eeee.
6
7
         (Uhm)
8
    Toru: Nihon no eiga wa mi-ta koto ga [ari-masu ka.
9
         Japan of movie Top see-past thing Nom have-Pol Q
10
         (Have you seen any Japanese movies?)
    David:
11
                                        [Haaa
12
                                       (Yeh...)
13
           a [hai!
14
           (Oh yes)
```

15 Alan: [Chotto ari-masu.16 a little have-Pol

17 (A little bit) (adapted from Mori, 2003: 154-155)

Toru ask David and Alan whether they have seen any Japanese movies, but David and Alan both respond by indicating they are not sure of the question in lines 4 and 6. Instead of slowing down the pace of his speech or simplifying the question, however, Toru simply repeats his question in line 8. In doing so, he frames David's query in line 4 as a mishearing that could happen to both native and non-native speakers rather than an apparent lack of understanding reflecting David's status as a learner of Japanese. In this way, Toru helps David save 'face', and also interactively enacts David's relational identity as a user of Japanese rather than a learner. The analysis of the emic conceptualisations of 'face' outlined in this paper represents an attempt to enable learners of Japanese to grasp, at least to some extent, this complex notion. In this way, they can be made more aware of the impact of their speech and actions on the 'face' of themselves and others in their second language, particularly when negotiating the often subtle, yet important distinction between an identity as a user as opposed to a learner of Japanese.

## 3. Concluding remarks

The emic analysis of '(im)politeness' and 'face' outlined in this paper, which highlights the importance of the interactional achievement of place in Japanese, aims to give learners of Japanese the tools to better manage their identities, and move beyond the model identities that are often implicitly presented to them in language textbooks. In this way, learners may become more empowered in their attempts to manage their identities in Japanese.

This emic approach may also be applied to the analysis of '(im)politeness' and 'face' in other languages, providing learners of other second languages with a greater awareness of the nature of these concepts, which may also help them more successfully negotiate their second language identities. While the field of applied pragmatics has been steadily growing over the past twenty years, much work in applied pragmatics has tended to use pragmatic theories without sufficient consideration of their potential unsuitability for explicating culture-specific aspects of particular pragmatic phenomena. Bou-Franch and Garcus-Conejos (2003), for example, use the notions of positive and negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987) in their approach to teaching politeness, without acknowledging that these notions may be quite unsuitable for highlighting differences in the conceptualisation of 'politeness' across cultures (Haugh, 2006). It is thus argued that the analysis of the emic conceptualisations in this paper must be taken into account not only in second language classrooms, but in any comprehensive theory of '(im)politeness' or 'face' if we are to avoid a situation where theoretical accounts of these phenomena diverge from their actual interactional achievement.

It is not intended, however, that this approach itself represent a theory of '(im)politeness' or 'face'. Instead, it is proposed as a tentative analysis which it is hoped will aid in deconstructing these complex notions to assist not only learners of Japanese, but also to lead to more careful theorizing about '(im)politeness' and 'face', as evident in recently emerging approaches to 'face' and '(im)politeness', such as Face Constituting Theory (Arundale, 1999, 2006) or Rapport Management Theory (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2005, this issue).

Building upon more interactive theories of communication, then, it is suggested that we continue to further our understanding of emic conceptualisations of both '(im)politeness' and 'face', so that not only may we construct theories of '(im)politeness' and 'face' grounded in empirical reality, we may also enable learners of second languages to gain an understanding of these concepts which allows them to better negotiate the kind of identities they wish to have in their second language.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> To further complicate these issues, learners often find that these expectations are not uniform across the social spectrum, as while many Japanese may expect them to conform to particular norms relating to 'politeness,' such as using honorifics appropriately, others may not hold such expectations, believing it unnecessary for non-Japanese to behave in exactly the same manner as Japanese (Haugh, 1998, 2003).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The main focus in this paper is on '(im)politeness' and 'face' in Modern Standard Japanese (in particular the Tōkyō dialect), and thus this analysis should not necessarily be regarded as representative of the conceptualistion of these notions in other dialects of Japanese.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> This is not to say that the notion of place is not salient in other cultures.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The notion of place and its importance in social interaction is also consistent with Hamaguchi's (1983, 1985) construal of Japanese self as being high contextual (*kanjin*) and the "portion which is distributed to him/her, according to the situation he/she is in" (Hamaguchi, 1983: 142, translation by Morisaki and Gudykunst, 1994: 63).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Teinei is defined as Teatsuku reigi tadashii koto and chūi-bukaku kokoro ga yukitodoku koto ('to be warm and correct in one's reigi' and 'to be attentive in what one does') (Shinmura, 1998: 1818), while the main sense of reigi relating to 'politeness' is Shakaiseikatsu no chitsujo o tamotsu tameni hito ga mamoru beki kōdō yōshiki, tokuni kei'i o arawasu sahō ('The behavioural forms and patterns that people ought to preserve in order to protect the order of social life, in particular, manners/etiquette which express 'upward' respect') (Shinmura, 1998: 2827). All translations from Japanese are the author's own unless otherwise noted.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Since interviews or questionnaires only elicit beliefs about language behaviour they do not necessarily reflect how people actually behave in interaction, as noted by Cook (2006: 272). The aim of this section, however, is to uncover the underlying *expectations* of Japanese interactants and so it is argued these studies, in conjunction with the analyses of actual interactional data in section two, provide useful insights into these expectations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Self-politeness in Japanese can also involve showing one's social standing (*shitsuke*, 'good-breeding'), although this is restricted to certain individuals who use "beautification" honorifies to show 'good-breeding', for example (Obana, 2000: 215).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Shitsurei is defined as reigi o kaku koto, reigi o wakimaenai koto, busahōna koto ('Lacking reigi, not discerning according to reigi, to not have manners') as well as specific behaviours that can be considered shitsurei, in particular, making an inquiry, taking one's leave, and other behaviours that require making an apology or excuse (Shinmura, 1998: 1197). In a similar way, burei is defined reigi o wakimaenai koto, shitsurei, bushitsuke ('to not discern according to reigi, shitsurei, ill-breeding/want of manners') (ibid.: 2374).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> There is a fourth lexeme, namely *mentsu*, but this was only recently borrowed into Japanese from Chinese (around the 1920-1930s), and so has a more narrow conceptual field and collocational range than the other lexemes for 'face' in Japanese, which were borrowed from Chinese much earlier, some time during the Heian period (8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century) (Haugh, 2005b: 213-214).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Episode 13, Story 25: 'Hawaiian swimsuit thief'.

The sense of *menboku* relevant to the present analysis is *hito ni awaseru kao, seken ni taisuru meiyo* ('the face with which one meets people, honour in the public world') (Shinmura, 1998: 2631).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Taimen is defined as seken ni taisuru teisai, menboku ('one's appearance towards the public world') (Shinmura, 1998: 1618).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The term 'imagined communities' here does not mean to imply they are "unreal", but rather that these public evaluations do not exist prior to or independently of interaction.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> The 'face' of others thus arises through external evaluations of the conduct of others relative to the place they stand or belong.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> The names given to interactants in all the following examples are pseudonyms to protect their identities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> The abbreviations used in the morphological gloss of Japanese examples in this paper are as follows: Cont = contrastive marker; Cop = copula; Dim = diminuative; Hon = other forms of honorification; Imp = imperative; M = mood marker; Neg = negation; Nom = nominative; Nomi = nominaliser; Past = past tense; Pol = addressee honorific; Prog = progressive; Q = question marker; Quot = quotation; Te = 'te-form'; Top = topic marker; Vol = volitional.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> In Japanese schools and universities, students often enact senior-junior (*senpai-kōhai*) relationships which carry with them certain expectations (such as seniors 'looking after' juniors, or juniors being *otonashii* ('obedient, docile') towards their seniors).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> In the following examples [] represents overlapping speech. A dash is used to represent an interrupted or incomplete word.

 $<sup>^{19}</sup>$  Addressee honorifics are also referred to as 'desu/masu forms', especially in second language classrooms.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Mary also neglects to use appropriate honorifics (for example, when asking whether the professor knows about the conference), which could also be perceived as 'impolite' by the professor.

<sup>21</sup> Tanaka's senior colleague may also lose 'face' since Tanaka's inappropriate dress might reflect

poorly on the senior colleague through their communal identity as members of the same company.