Positive Politeness Strategies
in Oral Communication I Textbooks
—Focusing on Terms of Address—

Akutsu Yuka

Abstract

Japanese has been categorized as "negative politeness language", and the speakers do not often use positive politeness strategies in their talks unless the interlocutors are psychologically very close. On the other hand, in English speaking society, especially in the U.S., previous studies have pointed out that positive politeness plays an important role when forming good interpersonal relationships.

This difference may cause difficulties for the Japanese learners to establish and maintain preferable relationships with native English speakers because each party may feel that the other is not "polite enough." It is, therefore, essential for the learners of English to know the difference and to acquire the skills to use positive politeness strategies when necessary.

This paper will provide a description and analysis of address terms in Oral Communication I textbooks, which are high school English textbooks approved by Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Spots, Science and Technology. The focus of the paper is on how many and what kind of address terms are presented, which is one of the important positive politeness strategies. The ways of presentation will also be examined seeing if they are suitable for the learners in the light of the findings of previous studies on teaching of pragmatic skills.

1. Introduction and previous studies

1.1. Face, politeness and politeness strategies

The politeness theory by Brown and Levinson is widely accepted and utilized as the basis for research by the researchers in the field of not only sociolinguistics but of psychology, business, and so on. They define "face" as "the public self image that every member wants to claim for himself", and claim that "people cooperate (and assume each others' cooperation) in maintaining face in

interaction" (1987:61).　They then divided the "face" into two; "negative face", the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction, and "positive face," the positive consistent of self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants (1987:61).　When people interact, they use politeness strategies to soften the threat to each other's face.

　Two different types of politeness are used in interaction; "negative politeness" and "positive politeness".　Brown and Levinson defined negative politeness as "a redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded (1987:129), and state that negative politeness is "the most elaborate and the most conventionalized set of linguistic strategies" (1987:130).　Typical examples of negative politeness strategies are conventionally indirect ways to request or to use honorifics.　Positive politeness is defined as "redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/acquisitions/values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable" (1987:101).　Positive politeness strategies include somewhat exaggerated elements or 'element of insincerity', and that separates a positive politeness strategy from ordinary daily conversation.　Some of the typical examples of positive politeness strategies are complimenting, joking, responding emphatically, and using nicknames.

1.2. Politeness strategies in English and Japanese

　The strategies used to ease threat to face vary depending on the degree of the threat and the culture of interlocutors.　Japanese has intricate honorifics in the system, and Brown and Levinson (1987) and several other researchers (e.g. Shigemitsu, Murata, and Otsuka (2006), Ide (2006)) consider Japanese with the intricate honorifics belongs to negative politeness culture.　The culture in the United States, in contrast, is described as "the general level of Wx tends to remain low; impositions are thought of as small, social distance as no insuperable boundary to easy-going interaction, and relative power as never very great" by Brown and Levinson (1987, pp.245), and it is considered as a positive politeness culture.　This difference in the strategies between the cultures may cause communication failure when the interlocutors use politeness strategies which are appropriate in his/her native culture but inappropriate in the other interlocutors' native culture.

　Some previous studies further pointed out the concept of politeness was different between American English and Japanese.　Ide (2006) claims that in English, 'politeness' and 'friendliness' are two concepts in the same level, but in Japanese, they are totally different from each other as the Japanese honorifics is a system to express only politeness, and not friendliness.　In a study by Ide, Hill, Carnes, Ogino, and Kawasaki (1992), American college students and Japanese college students

evaluate six speech acts using ten adjectives. In the form of a questionnaire, 211 American college students and 282 Japanese college students evaluate six speech act situations（rejection, request, acceptance, objection, invitation, and apology）using the following ten adjectives in English or Japanese: 'polite', 'respectful', 'considerate', 'friendly', 'pleasant', 'casual', 'appropriate', 'offensive', 'conceited', and 'rude' for English, and,「丁寧な」,「敬意のある」,「思いやりのある」,「親しげな」,「感じのよい」,「気取らない」,「適切な」,「感情を傷つける」,「うぬぼれている」, and「無礼な」for Japanese. The researchers use multiple classification analysis to analyze the data, and find some differences in the two cultures' concepts of politeness. One of the most interesting findings is that 'friendly' and 'polite' are pretty close concepts for the American people（friendly: 1, polite: 0.9103）, but 「親しげな」and 「丁寧な」are completely different and instead, rather opposite concepts for Japanese people（「親しげな」: 1,「丁寧な」: -0.3213）. This result means that being 'friendly' can be being 'polite' in English language activity while they cannot in Japanese. We can assume then that Japanese learners of English may have difficulty in utilizing positive politeness strategies to be polite.

At the same time, several studies（Boxer（1993）, Mizutani（1985））have reported that Japanese speakers of English fail to give good impressions to the native speakers of English because of the lack of positive politeness strategies. Mizutani（1985）compares English and Japanese use of address terms in conversation, and points out that English speakers add address terms in their conversation to show respect or affection. Japanese speakers of English, however, do not add enough address terms and consequently give frozen impression to the native English speakers. This failure occurred probably because of the lack of knowledge about the difference in politeness strategies between the two language cultures, and about the roles of address terms.

Also in my personal experiences as a teacher, very few students seem to know or can use any kind of positive politeness strategies in conversation sessions during classes. As with other pragmatic aspects, it seems that they have not had any chances to learn about positive politeness in English education in Japan.

2. Purpose of the study

Only a few studies have been done on positive politeness strategies provided in English language education. Murata（2006）examines 6 textbooks（two each of Oral Communication A, B, and C）regarding address terms, emphatic responses, and jokes, comparing them with the ones appeared in an internationally published textbook. She concludes that positive politeness strategies are included only limitedly in the textbooks, and infers that the reason is that textbooks writers "are

unconsciously influenced by Japanese" as five out of the six textbooks do not have any native speakers of English as the writers. Although the study has an important implication about English language textbooks in Japan for high school students, the number of textbooks researched seems to be too small. Also, the subject Oral Communication A, B, and C were changed into Oral Communication I and II in 2001 as the Course of Study was revised, and at the same time, most of the textbooks now include at least one native English speaker as one of the writers, and so the basic conditions of the study have been changed now.

Kamiya (2005) used six Japanese movie scripts and six American ones to compare their use of address terms. Kamiya analyzed the number and the roles of address terms which appear when there are no need to get the interlocutors' attention, and concluded that the address terms have the following functions; expression of intimacy/friendship at the scene of greeting, polite request, accentuation of request, polite rejection, expression of dominating position, accentuation of question, softener for treading the hearer's privacy, accentuation of apology, and accentuation of thanking. He also looked at the Oral Communication I textbooks for the address terms, and found that textbooks had address terms in the following situations; greeting, request, question, apology suggestion, report, thanking, and statement. However, he did not give any numbers or examples of each situation, or elaborate the situations or sentences.

This paper focuses on address terms appear in high school English textbooks, Oral Communication I, approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. Thirteen of the sixteen approved Oral Communication I textbooks which have body texts in the student's textbooks are investigated. The main research question is if the textbooks provide sufficient information regarding the functions and variety of address terms for the learners to acquire. First, we will see what, and how many address terms are used in the textbooks. In particular, we will analyze the role each address term plays in each situation, and check if they are introduced widely enough. Second, we will discuss the way of presentation. According to the studies on teaching pragmatic aspects of languages (Kasper 1997, 2002), explicit teaching has advantage over implicit teaching. The textbooks are examined to see how explicitly (or implicitly) they introduce the strategies. Finally, each sentence with an address term will be investigated to see it has information about the interlocutors, which is one of the important factors for the learners to notice, understand and acquire pragmatic skills.

3. Data & Analysis

3.1. Address Terms

Leech (1983) listed three roles of address terms as vocatives. The first is that of getting attention, the second is that of identifying addressees, and the third is to establish or maintain a social relationship between the speaker and the addressee(s). The third one is considered to work as a positive politeness. To distinguish the address terms used as positive politeness strategies, the following criteria are set up and only the ones fit in them were counted.

1. The address terms at the beginning of the sentence are not counted. However, if the address terms appear after the first turn of the conversation and unless there are more than two speakers, they will be counted.

2. The address terms in the middle of sentences are counted as positive politeness strategies unless there are more than two speakers.

3. The address terms at the end of the sentence are counted as positive politeness strategies unless there are more than two speakers.

As mentioned above, address terms as positive politeness strategies fulfill many functions. In this paper, the researcher sorted the address terms as follows. First, they are categorized and counted according to the situation in which they are used. Second, the situations are divided into two: ones with imposition to the hearer, and ones without imposition. The categorization is made to separate the functions of address terms more clearly. If an address term is used in a situation without any imposition to the hearer, the term is used to express or accentuate intimacy/ friendship, and if used in a situation with imposition, it is used as a softener for the imposition. Greeting, thanking, praising, apology, congratulating, intimacy, and obedience belong to the first category, "without imposition". Question request, suggestion, rejection, chastisement, and disagreement are put in the second category, "with imposition".

3.2. Number and distribution of address terms

Figure 1 and 2 show the total number and the variety of the address terms. 'Greeting' situation included the address terms most, 78 address terms out of all 197, which is 39.6% of the total number. (1) is a typical example of the address term used in 'Greeting' situation.

(1) Good morning, Peter. How are you?

Fine, thanks. And you? *(On Air)*

Figure 1. Numbers and Variety of Address Terms

text	INTENSIFIER								SOFETENER							total
	greeting	thanking	intimacy	obedience	congratulating	praising	apology	subtotal	question	request	suggestion	chastisement	rejection	disagreement	subtotal	
1	3					1		4	2	2			1		5	9
2	1	1				1		3	2		1				3	6
3	7			1				8	2	1					3	11
4	6	1	1					8	8	1					9	17
5	4							4	2						2	6
6	19	6	2	2				29	13	1	1	2	1		18	47
7	5	1	1	2				9	1	3	1	1		1	7	16
8	8	4	1	2			1	16	7	1	1		1		10	26
9	5	2	2		1			10	2	2					4	14
10	7	1	1					9	5						5	14
11	5		2		1			8		1					1	9
12	6	2						8	8						8	16
13	2	1						3	2	1					3	6
total	78	19	10	7	2	2	1	119	54	13	4	3	3	1	78	197
%	39.6	9.6	5.1	3.6	1.0	1.0	0.5	60.4	27.4	6.6	2.0	1.5	1.5	0.5	39.6	100

The second is in the situation of ⑵ 'questioning' (54=27.4%), followed by ⑶ 'thanking' (19=9.6%), ⑷ 'request' (13=6.6%), and expression of ⑸ 'intimacy' or friendship (10=5.1%).

⑵ Where are you from, <u>Bob</u>?

　I'm from Lexington. *(Hello, there!)*

⑶ Yes, that's all. Thank you, <u>Meg</u>.

　You're welcome. *(On Air)*

⑷ Could you please pass me the milk please, <u>Mariko</u>? *(On Air)*

⑸ This is our treat, <u>Mayumi</u>.

　Oh, thank you. *(Voice)*

These top five situations make up 87.8% of the total address terms appeared in the textbooks. The rest (12.2%) consists of the other eight situations; ⑹ 'obedience', including honorific expressions (7=3.6%), ⑺ 'suggestion' (4=2%), ⑻ 'rejection' (3=1.5%), ⑼ 'chastisement' (3=1.5%), ⑽ 'praising' (2=1%), ⑾ 'congratulating' (2=1%), ⑿ 'apology' (1=0.5%), and ⒀ 'disagreement' (1=0.5%).

⑹ Oh, I have another complaint.

Yes, <u>ma'am</u>, what is it? *(Step)*

⑺ Would you like to go to the shrine with us, <u>Susie</u>? *(Daily Communications)*

⑻ May I taste one?

Wait until we're ready, <u>Kazuo</u>. *(Hello there!)*

⑼ I'm sorry. I missed my bus.

You should leave home earlier, <u>Hiroshi</u>. *(Voice)*

⑽ Well, I want to join the television club.

That's great, <u>Sue</u>. *(Select)*

⑾ Happy birthday, <u>Sue</u>. *(Empathy)*

⑿ Waiter, this is not what I ordered. I asked for a hamburger.

Sorry, <u>ma'am</u>. I will bring that right away. *(Step)*

⒀ Dad, my teacher doesn't know what a caw is.

Impossible, <u>my dear</u>. *(Daily Communications)*

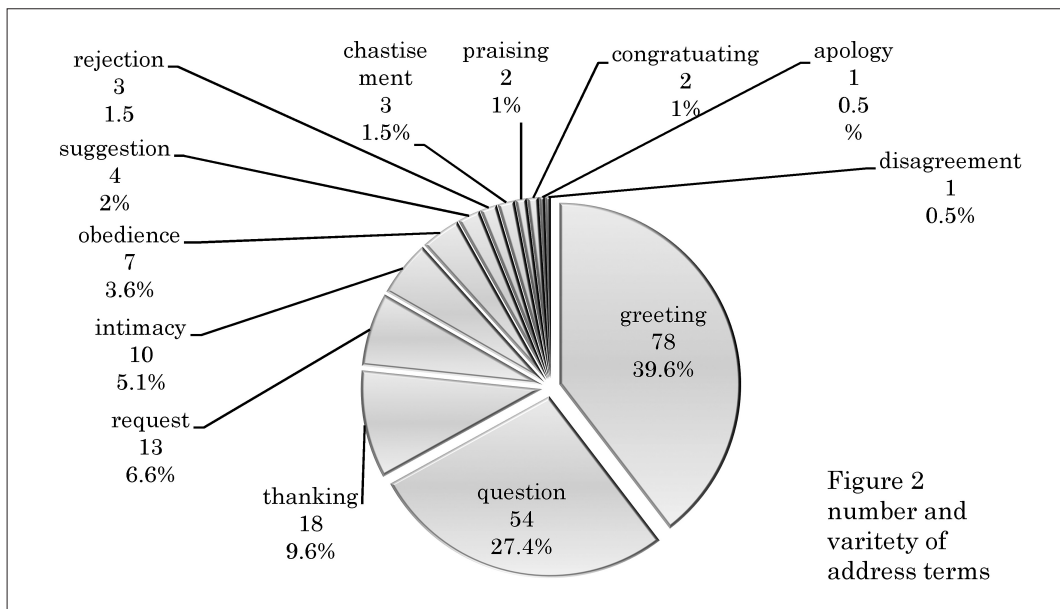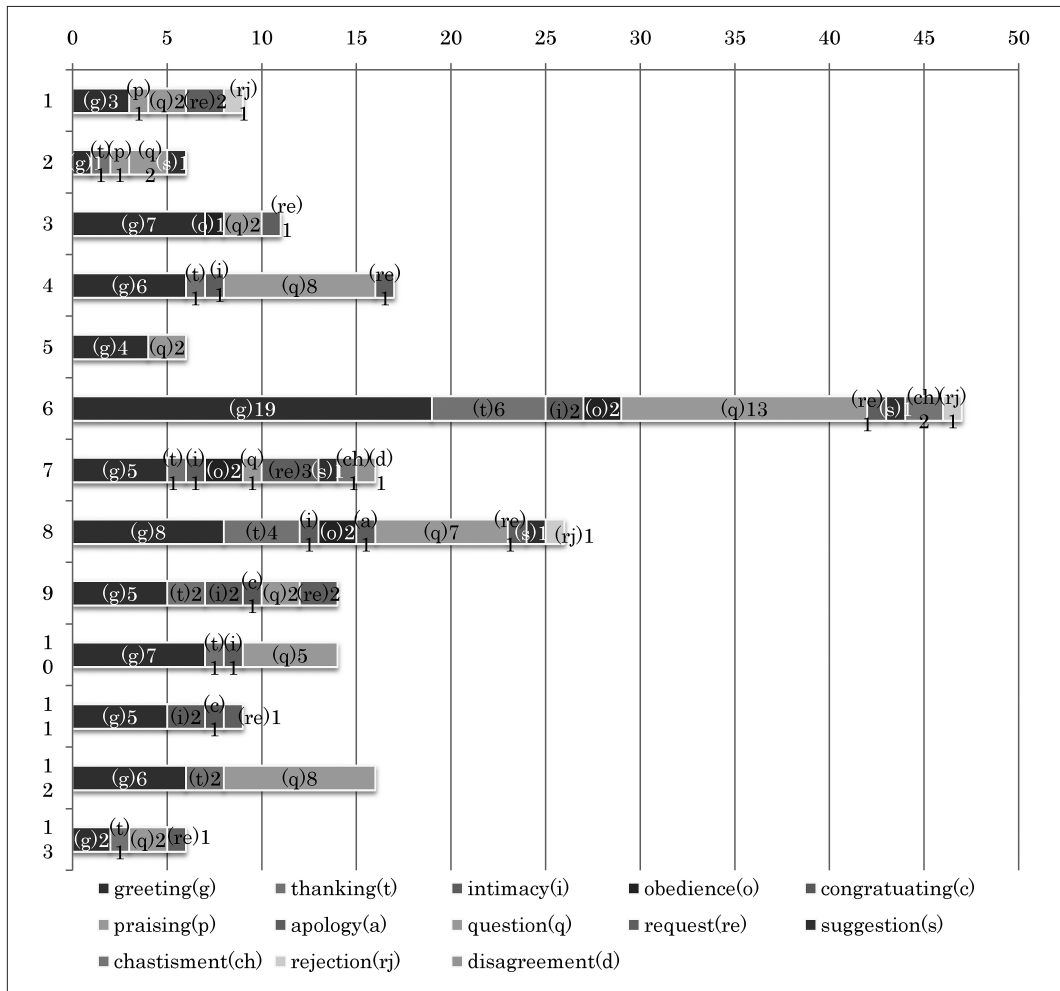Figure 2. number and varitety of address terms

Figure 2
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address terms

Although the distribution is not balanced, and some of the situations appear only a few times, the variety itself is rather wide, which is a little surprising considering the level and the nature of the textbooks. Comparing the variety with the ones Kamiya (2005) found in the American movie scripts, they seem to match. We can say that the textbooks as a whole contain sufficient and somewhat authentic variety of address terms.

Figure 3. number and variety of address terms in each textbook

However, as a student usually uses only one of the textbooks, we should examine the contents of each textbook. As in Figure 3 and 4, there is a big difference in the number and variety of situations among the textbooks. The average number of address terms is 15.15 in each textbook. The textbook 6 has 47 address terms, which is by far the most in the 13 textbooks. The textbook 2, 5, and 13 have only 6, which is the least. The average number of situations in each textbook is 5.1 out of 13 found in all of the textbooks. All have 'greetings' and 12 of the thirteen have 'question', nine have 'request' and 'thanking', and seven have 'intimacy'. The other eight situations are included in less than 5 textbooks. The textbook 6, 7, and 8 have nine situations, and the textbook 5 has only two types of situations, 'greeting' and 'question'. Considering the fact that the textbooks are all Ministry-approved and are supposed to include all the information decided by the Ministry, these differences may show that not much attention is given to this aspect in the first place.

Figure 4. number of situations in each textbook
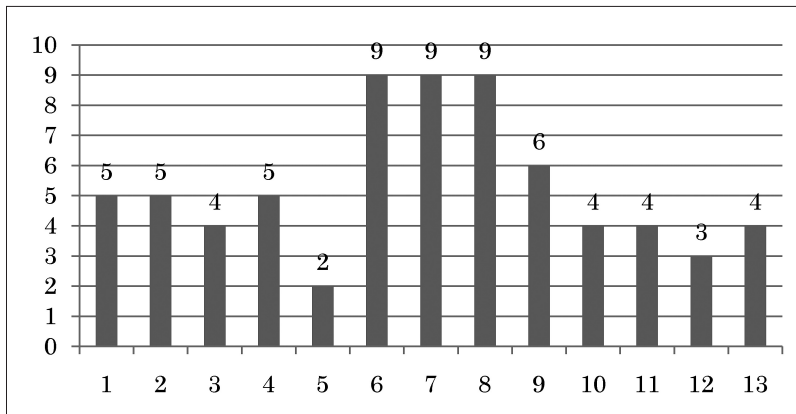
3.3 Presentation of address terms

According to some previous studies (e.g., Kasper 1997, 2002, Takahashi 2001) on teaching of pragmatic aspects, explicit teaching is more effective than implicit teaching. Because address terms in English have different functions from Japanese ones, telling the meaning or role of address terms, or teaching about the difference during class must be effective and important. It is more so in Japan where students rarely have chances to listen or use English in daily lives except classroom.

However, only one textbook has an explanation about the role of address terms. It says, Including the hearer's name in conversation shows friendliness" (*Interact*. Translation is mine). Since Japanese students do not know the function of the address terms, this information will be beneficial to them. Unfortunately, there is no elaboration about when or how to do that. Another textbook says "Let's use his/her first name if you are close to the person" in the section called "Basic manner for communication". However, it does not say why and how it is good for communications in English.

The only explicit information about functions of address terms is the above explanation about "name and friendliness". As mentioned earlier, the textbooks include many types of address terms, but we did not find any explicit explanation about the other types of address terms. It is unlikely that the students understand and acquire the functions of address terms without explicit information even if many types of address terms appear repeatedly in the textbooks. We can imagine that it is more so if what they see are just "names", not unfamiliar set of words that stand out. On the other hand, if the students are given the information about the importance or roles of address terms, utilizing it seems easy as all they have to do is adding names. Information about the functions as intensifiers of friendliness and intimacy and FTA softeners should be explicitly presented.

　Another point to mention is how the sentences including address terms are presented, that is, if they appear in conversations of the main texts or in exercises or in the special sections such as 'conversation tips'. This is important because the amount of information conveyed to the readers will be different depending on the presentation. In conversations in the main texts, students can tell the situation; the speakers, the relationship between the speakers, and the situation. These pieces of information are important to acquire pragmatic aspects of a language. In exercises or sections between the lessons, there is usually very little or no information about the speakers or situations. As Akutsu (2006) pointed out, many pragmatic formula were introduced in the exercise sections without any explicit information about the differences, which may cause confusion and possible teaching-induced pragmatic failures.

　As for the address terms, however, as in figure 5, many of the address terms are presented in the main texts, and only 7% is in exercise and 5.2% is in the special section with no description. This is better than the other pragmatic aspects. However, more than half (96＝55.8%) of the conversations are between students, and only 5 sentences (2.9%) in only three books are 'from a student to a teacher'. On the other hand, there are 20 sentences (11.6%) of 'from a teacher to a student', and seven textbooks have them. This may be an influence from Japanese, in which the people in higher status do not always have to be 'polite' in conversations.

Figure 5.　presentation of interlocutors

Figure 5
presentation of
interlocutors
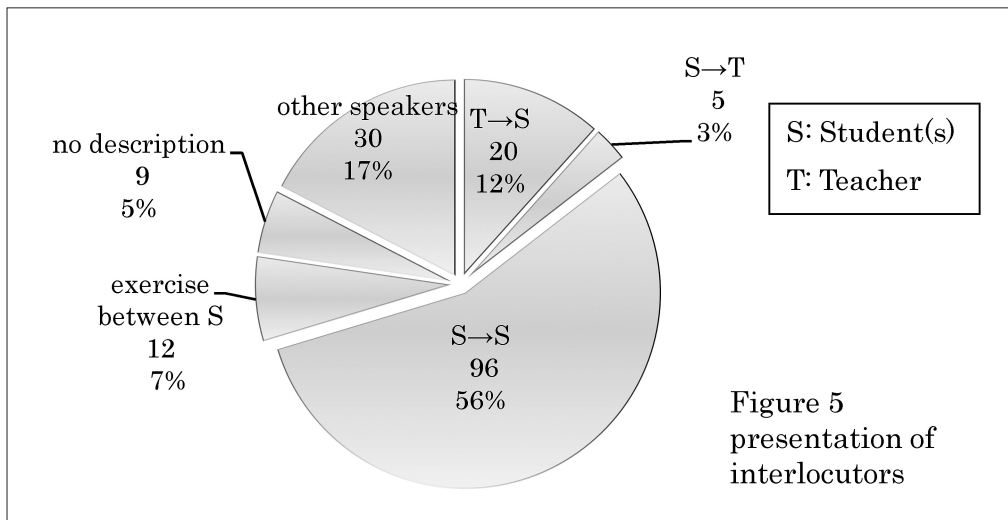
4. Conclusion

Oral Communication I textbooks provide somewhat sufficient variety of address terms as a whole, but as for each textbook, many do not have enough of them. Even the textbooks which have many address terms do not provide sufficient information about the function of address terms explicitly. Only one textbook explain the role of 'showing friendliness' of address terms and there is no explanation about the other functions of address terms in any other textbooks. The information about the interlocutors and the situations is often provided, but there are only several sentences of address terms used 'from a student to a teacher', which may be influenced by the Japanese standard. As Oral Communication I is practically the only oral English subject for high school students in Japan, it is essential to provide information about positive politeness and the strategies in the textbooks in order to achieve one of the main goals of the subject; to foster a positive attitude toward communication.

（Associate professor, The Faculty of Economics, Takasaki City University of Economics）

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水谷信子（1985）『日英比較　話しことばの文法』東京：くろしお出版

文部省検定済教科書

１．*Hello there! Oral Communication I.* 東京：東京書籍

 2．Select Oral communication *I*. 東京：三省堂
 3．*True Colors Oral Communication I*. 東京：数研
 4．*On Air Communication I*. 東京：開拓社
 5．*Birdland Oral Communication I*. 京都：文英堂
 6．*Voice Oral communication I*. 広島：第一学習社
 7．*DAILY Oral Communication I*. 奈良：池田
 8．*Step Oral Communication I*. 東京：旺文社
 9．*Interact Oral communication I*. 東京：桐原書店
10．*Open Door to Oral Communication I*. 京都：文英堂
11．*Empathy Oral Communication I*. 東京：教育出版
12．*Oral communication Expressways I. Standard Edition*. 東京：開隆堂
13．*Departure Oral communication I*. 東京：大修館