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In search of another understanding of politeness: From the perspective of attentiveness

Abstract: While politeness has been researched mainly from the perspectives of face and identity, this conceptual paper explores another understanding of politeness through the consideration of attentiveness, namely, a demonstrator’s pre-emptive responses to a recipient’s verbal or non-verbal cues or situations surrounding a recipient and a demonstrator, which takes the form of offering. In this paper, it is suggested that politeness can be construed in relation to the heart; and that behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness, an understudied area in the field, should be taken into account in politeness research. With the development of interpersonal pragmatics, there has been a growing need to investigate interpersonal relationships, and great importance is placed on evaluation in the discursive approach. As attentiveness is an interpersonal notion, which involves evaluation, the consideration of attentiveness meets these demands. In the present paper, the concept of attentiveness is clarified and it is shown how attentiveness works by presenting the process of demonstration and evaluation of attentiveness.

Keywords: politeness, attentiveness, evaluation, heart

1 Introduction

The development of politeness research can be briefly summarized as first- and second-wave approaches to politeness.1 The former includes the studies by La-

1 The latter has been variously called the discursive approach; the post-2000 politeness research (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 36); or the post-modern approach (Mills 2011: 27). See also Eelen (2001: 2–29); Holmes (2006); Pizziconi (2006); and Leech (2014: 32–43) for an overview of politeness theories.

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koff (1973, 1977), Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), and Leech (1983), and the latter those by Eelen (2001), Mills (2003), Watts (2003), Locher and Watts (2005), Kádár and Mills (2011) and the Linguistic Politeness Research Group (2011) among many others. Brown and Levinson’s work (1987) has been the most influential in the first-wave approaches (e.g., Kádár and Haugh 2013: 15). Their theory has received extensive support and there are numerous works based on it. It has, however, received much criticism as well (e.g., Matsumoto 1988, 1989; Ide 1989; Gu 1990; Nwoye 1992; Mao 1994). Brown and Levinson (1987) postulate a Model Person, who is endowed with the properties of rationality and face. The former was defined as “the application of a specific mode of reasoning ... which guarantees inferences from ends or goals to means that will satisfy those ends” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 64), and the latter as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61). They have claimed that both of these are universal. They have proposed two kinds of face: negative face (the desire to be unimpeded in one’s actions) and positive face (the desire to be approved of) (Brown and Levinson 1987: 13). Brown and Levinson (1987: 91–227) have suggested five strategies to mitigate the face-threats, as they have claimed that most speech acts inherently threaten the hearer’s or the speaker’s face-wants: bald-on-record; positive politeness; negative politeness; off-record; and don’t do the FTA. The focus in first-wave approaches was on speaker’s utterances, which was criticized by Eelen (2001) among many others.

Politeness theory made a turn into a discursive or postmodern approach with Eelen’s (2001) book, and it is widely accepted that the discursive approach is the mainstream of recent politeness research (Mills 2011). While first-wave approaches have been based on rules, maxims or strategies, second-wave approaches are discourse oriented and this is the common denominator of all second-wave research. Thus, politeness is understood as situated. In other words, research in second-wave approaches is focused not only on the speaker as in first-wave approaches, but both the speaker’s and the hearer’s productions are taken into account. Thus, the focus is on the interaction and the relationship between them which receives its due attention. This can be epitomized in “one important development in post-2000 politeness research has been the increasing focus on interpersonal relationships, or what has been broadly termed the relational shift in politeness research” (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 50); see, for example, Watts (2003) and Locher and Watts (2005). In relation to this, evaluation, which is made by the hearer, plays an important role

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2 It is noteworthy that some of these criticisms were counterargued (e.g., Fukushima 2000; Pizziconi 2003; Fukada and Asato 2004).
Another understanding of politeness

in second-wave approaches (see, for example, Eelen 2001: 109). For example, Haugh (2007: 302) argues that the postmodern turn in politeness research advocates a greater focus on the evaluations made by participants through interaction. Similarly, one of the basic tenets which discursive or postmodern researchers share is that they aim to put focus not only on the speaker’s production of certain utterances but also on the hearer’s evaluation of them (Kádár and Mills 2011: 7). Thus, it is now widely accepted that politeness does not reside in particular linguistic forms or behaviors, but rather in evaluations of those forms and behaviors (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 251).

Thompson and Hunston (2000: 5) define evaluation as “the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about. That attitude may relate to certainty or obligation or desirability or any of a number of other sets of values”. Evaluation is the pronouncement of an opinion upon a certain object or person under discussion, according to Xie (2008: 160). It is interesting to note Haugh’s (2013: 56) view of evaluation: “A further key insight from discursive psychology in relation to conceptualizing (im)politeness as social practice is that evaluations are not always consistent across individuals from the same ‘social group’ (as defined by traditional sociolinguistic variables), or even within the same individual over time. Variability in interpersonal evaluations is to be expected and should be theorized as such”.

Along the lines of the development of post-2000 politeness research, interpersonal pragmatics (see Haugh et al. 2013 and Locher and Graham 2010, for instance) has been paid attention. Haugh et al. (2013: 2) propose interpersonal pragmatics be conceptualized as “offering a pragmatics perspective on interpersonal aspects of communication and interaction” (emphasis in the original). Attentiveness is an interpersonal notion. A demonstrator of attentiveness is concerned with the well-being of the other party and a recipient evaluates the attentiveness demonstrated (see Section 3). In other words, attentiveness involves interpersonal aspects of interaction. Thus, attentiveness can be considered to be in the realm of interpersonal pragmatics.

This conceptual paper takes up these two key aspects of the recent politeness research, namely, evaluation and interpersonal aspects through the consideration of attentiveness. Attentiveness can be considered as one way of conceptualizing politeness. This is shown from the following result: 30% of the Japanese university students ($N = 100$) in Fukushima and Sifianou (in preparation) have listed attentiveness, when they were asked to explain how they

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3 Locher and Graham (2010: 1) define interpersonal pragmatics as the study of the ways in which “social actors use language to shape and form relationships in situ”.
would conceptualize politeness. As, to my knowledge, not many studies have examined an interpersonal notion, such as attentiveness, which is an aspect of politeness, this paper may contribute to another understanding of politeness. Attentiveness is manifested not only linguistically but also behaviorally (non-linguistically). Thus, a consideration of attentiveness also sheds light on behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness (see Section 2), an understudied area in the field.

In the next Section, behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness is considered. Attentiveness, the main theme of this paper, is presented as one way of understanding behavioral (non-linguistic) as well as linguistic politeness in Section 3.

2 Behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness

Behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness is considered in relation to linguistic politeness in 2.1. In 2.2, theoretical concepts such as face, identity and heart are considered and alternative theoretical concepts other than Brown and Levinson’s (1987) face are explored to better understand behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness. Omoiyari (see Section 2.2.5), which is closely related to the heart, is also considered, especially with respect to the demonstration of attentiveness.

2.1 Linguistic vs. behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness

(Im)politeness has been mainly investigated from a linguistic perspective. Indeed, the term “linguistic politeness” has been often mentioned in the field. For example, Lakoff and Ide (2005: 3) argue that “politeness is largely, but by no means exclusively, linguistic behavior”. Lakoff and Ide (2005: 3) further state that “there is linguistic (language-based) politeness, and extra-linguistic politeness” (emphasis in the original) but they focus on the former. I acknowledge the importance of linguistic (im)politeness and the fact that as linguists we are interested in the linguistic aspect of communication (see, for example, Kádár and Haugh 2013: 104; Watts 2003: xi). However, I would argue that (im)politeness should also be considered from a non-linguistic perspective, as I believe that (im)politeness arises both linguistically and non-linguistically. Eelen (2001: iv) also points out that politeness is not confined to language, but can also include non-verbal, non-linguistic behavior. Eelen (2001: iv) advocates that the scope of politeness stretches well beyond purely verbal choices, and includes the whole spectrum of behavior. However, most of the theoretical
claims to date have focused on the linguistic aspect and the non-linguistic aspect of politeness has been rather neglected.

Trying to fill the above gap, “behavioral politeness”\(^4\) was suggested in Fukushima (2004). Some recent research lends support to the importance of behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness.\(^5\) For example, the main concern of KJ in Thai politeness proposed by Intachakra (2012) (see Section 2.2.4) is not to do/say something, attending to the other party’s feelings. This is entirely the non-linguistic aspect of politeness. Ogiermann’s and Suszczynska’s (2011) study, which examines culture-specific conceptualizations of Polish and Hungarian (im)politeness, accommodates behavioral (non-linguistic) aspects of politeness too. That is, Ogiermann’s and Suszczynska’s (2011: 211) data illustrate that for Polish people politeness seems to be closely linked with an interest in the other, in particular with willingness to help. Ogiermann’s and Suszczynska’s (2011: 212) Hungarian data reveal that the Hungarian definitions of politeness center on the concept of respect, defined in terms of etiquette and deference as well as attentiveness and friendliness.\(^6\) Ruhi and Isik-Guler (2007: 708) argue that “the display of genuine concern for others and the display of sensitivity towards other’s feelings conceptualized in Turkish through the metaphorization of gönül hark back to Strecker’s study on emic face in Hamar, where he noted that attention to the well-being of others is the central conceptualization of politeness in the culture” (emphasis added). Sensitivity towards other’s feelings and attention to the well-being of others (which partly correspond to attentiveness) (see Section 3) are also non-linguistic aspects of politeness.

I admit that behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness cannot be totally separated from linguistic politeness in a strict sense, as some behaviors involve both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. What I advocate here is that more attention should be paid to the non-linguistic aspect when considering politeness, although I acknowledge the importance of linguistic politeness as well.

\(^4\) Behavioral politeness refers to politeness manifested through behaviors (Fukushima 2004: 367). Behaviors here mean non-linguistic, non-verbal behaviors, although behaviors sometimes include linguistic behaviors. In other words, behavioral politeness means politeness manifested non-linguistically.

\(^5\) Although I argue that paying attention to behavioral politeness is important, I am not proposing that attentiveness is manifested only behaviorally. Attentiveness is manifested linguistically, behaviorally or both linguistically and behaviorally (see further discussion in Section 3).

\(^6\) These concepts can be in the realm of behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness, as some behaviors (e.g., helping the others, showing deference or demonstrating attentiveness) are considered to be polite in their cultures. These behaviors may include linguistic manifestations, such as offering help linguistically, however, the main interest is not on how these concepts are linguistically manifested, but on the behaviors themselves.
2.2 Theoretical concepts

2.2.1 Face

In understanding politeness, face has been discussed extensively (e.g., Brown and Levinson 1987)\(^7\) as a core concept. As noted in Section 1, Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory received extensive criticism, including their understanding of face. Recently, the concept of face has been taken up by some scholars, who account for face within the discursive approach. For example, Watts (2003: 130) suggests that facework is broader than politeness. O’Driscoll (2011: 25) points out a problem with face, saying that without the restriction on the potential relevance of face, it becomes difficult to separate the concept of face from that of self-image (i.e., the set of ideas which a person has about him/herself and would like other people to have), or reputation (i.e., the image that other people have of this person when they happen to call him/her to mind) or identity (i.e., images that other people have when calling this type of person to mind). Hinze (2012: 11), exploring data from Chinese business contexts, argues that “the concepts of ‘face’ in Chinese, mianzi and lian, do not necessarily underpin Chinese politeness”. Arundale (2013) argues that face is a metaphor and questions whether face is the best metaphor to use in representing the broad range of social practices for relating to others in using language that are evident across cultural groups. Moreover, in post-2000 politeness research, calls for the separation of face and politeness research are increasing (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 51). Indeed, the continued conflation of politeness with face is fueling endless controversies, and the time has come for face to be theorized on its own terms (Haugh and Bargiela-Chiappini 2010: 2073).

2.2.2 Identity

There have been arguments that some interactive behavior is better explained by other means (O’Driscoll 2011: 28) than face. For example, Spencer-Oatey (2009) offers examples of other interactional goals being pursued regardless (even in spite of) face. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2009), who investigates news interviews broadcast in the USA, uses the notion of identity instead of face. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2009: 273–274) argues that identity theory could con-

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\(^7\) Yet while it was Goffman (1955) who first introduced the notion, it has been Brown and Levinson’s (1987) application of face in the context of politeness theory that has dominated much of the debate thus far (Haugh and Bargiela-Chiappini 2010: 2073).
stitute one of the alternatives to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model, as identity theory also focuses on the presentation of self. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich et al. (2013) examine the interconnections between identity co-construction and (im)politeness in a talent show. Face and (im)politeness are examined from the perspective of identity (Spencer-Oatey and Ruhi 2007; Spencer-Oatey 2007). Indeed, the conceptualization of face has been shifted towards a more general concern for identity, according to Haugh (2009: 3). Haugh (2009: 3), however, points out that this move towards conceptualizing face as concern for identity raises the question of how such research on face can be distinguished in a meaningful way from broader work on identity.

2.2.3 Heart: Gönül

Ruhi and Işik-Güler (2007) distinguish yüz ‘face’ from gönül ‘heart/mind/desire’ in Turkish in the conceptualization of face and the self in interaction for understanding relational work at the emic and etic levels. According to them (2007: 704), the investigation on yüz and gönül indicates that relational work in Turkish is conceptualized as arenas where interlocutors attend not only to face but also to inner, true selves. Relational work in the Turkish context thus involves actions toward achieving one’s interactional goals and attending to the feelings and expectations of interlocutors with respect to their essential selves (Ruhi and Işik-Güler 2007: 704–705). Ruhi and Işik-Güler (2007: 708) further argue that the foreground concern in relational work in the Turkish context is the attention given to the well-being and the expectations of interlocutors. This shows that face is not the only perspective that one can construe relational work or politeness. Heart can be an alternative theoretical concept to better theorize behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness, such as attending to the feelings and expectations of interlocutors.

2.2.4 Heart: KKJ

In construing (im)politeness, Intachakra (2012) highlights the importance of heart in Thai politeness (KKJ), which he (2012: 624) defines as “a thought, a concern or an anxiety a speaker has for another person to the extent that, for the interest or benefit of that person, the speaker is prepared not to do/say

8 There are four categories in KKJ: non-communication; epistemic displacement; explicit self-effacement; and hedged intentionality (Intachakra 2012: 625–631).
something that he/she considers to be beneficial to him/herself”. Intachakra (2012: 621) states that “if it is true that we have to attend to the other party’s feelings when showing him/her politeness, then we also have to make sure that his/her heart/mind is not at stake when interacting with him/her”. Not saying something and attending to the other party’s feelings are non-linguistic aspects of politeness. KKJ shows that behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness is explained from the heart metaphor.

2.2.5 Heart: Omoiyari

Another culture-specific concept, which is related to the heart, is omoiyari (an attitudinal stance encompassing concern for the feelings of others [Fukushima and Haugh 2014: 168]) in Japanese culture. Although it seems that “empathy” is widely used as the translation of omoiyari (e.g., Lebra 1976; Travis 1998; Burdelski 2013; Takada 2013), omoiyari is used as it is without any translation in this paper, in order to avoid any possible misunderstandings and to suggest that there is a subtle difference in the nuance between them.9

Lebra (1976: 38) defines omoiyari as “the ability and willingness to feel what others are feeling, to vicariously experience the pleasure or pain that they are undergoing, and to help them satisfy their wishes”. According to Yuuki (1991: 162), the original meaning of omoiyari is to make kokoro (heart) work towards something from far. Hara (2006: 27) defines it as “an intuitive understanding of others’ feelings that will occasionally lead us to conceive what to do or what not to do to others” and claims that “omoiyari literally means sending one’s altruistic feelings to others”. Hara (2006: 29) summarizes that omoiyari consists of both affective aspects (altruism, sympathy, empathy) and behavioral ones (prosocial behavior). Prosocial behaviors are those intended to help other people (Hara 2014b). In my view, omoiyari is to think of others from

9 Empathy in English is generally defined as “resonating” the feelings of others by “demonstrating an understanding of another person’s situation and/or feelings and communicating that understanding back to the person so that they feel understood” (Pudlinski 2005: 267). Gladkova (2010: 273) argues that “the essence of empathy is knowing and understanding the emotional state of another person”. Similarly, Kupetz (2014: 4) states that “‘empathy’ refers to the display of understanding of the other person’s emotional situation”. Thus, empathy in English places greater emphasis on understanding another person’s feelings or emotional state. Omoiyari includes such meaning (‘kokoro (heart) to understand others’ tachiba [the “place one stands”, according to Haugh [2005: 47]] or ‘feelings’ as defined in Shinmura (2008: 428), but it also includes ‘to think of others vicariously’ (Shinmura 2008: 428) as found in the definition of Lebra (1976: 38).
the bottom of one’s heart, and one who has *omoiyari* is sincerely concerned with the other party. In other words, *omoiyari* is other-oriented and it is closely related to interpersonal relationships. *Omoiyari* is an affective aspect of human beings. As the core of affective aspect may be the heart, it can be said that *omoiyari* is closely related to the heart.

*Omoiyari* is used in the same sense of attentiveness by some scholars, although the term “attentiveness” is not employed. According to Travis (1998: 55), *omoiyari* essentially represents a kind of “intuitive” understanding of the unexpressed feelings, desires and thoughts of others, and *doing something for them on the basis of this understanding*. In Hara’s (2006) view above, attentiveness is included in the part of prosocial behavior. Indeed, Hara (2006: 27) claims that “the difference among *omoiyari*, empathy, and sympathy is that *omoiyari* implies intuitive understanding and includes behaving in that way”. “Behaving in that way” may correspond to attentiveness. Wierzbicka (1997: 275) characterizes *omoiyari* as “an ability to ‘read other people’s minds’ and a willingness to respond to other people’s unspoken feelings, wants, and needs”. This consists of anticipatory inference and attentiveness.

Uchida and Kitayama (2001: 275–276) argue that *omoiyari* includes the following three components: 1. motivation to prosocial behavior; 2. “empathy ability”, that is, one judges the other party’s feelings appropriately and feels how the other party feels; and 3. intuitive understanding of the other party, that is, *sasashi*. The first component coincides with my view, suggesting that *omoiyari* motivates attentiveness, as attentiveness can be considered as one kind of prosocial behavior, both being concerned with the other party’s well-being and benefits. The second component is related to Lebra’s (1976: 38) definition of *omoiyari*. The third component is the same as anticipatory inference, which is needed in order to demonstrate attentiveness (see further discussion in Sections 3.2 and 3.3).

I take the standpoint that *omoiyari* itself does not include a demonstration of attentiveness. *Omoiyari* is in the inner part of people. In a way, a demonstration of attentiveness is a concrete action, embodying the abstract *omoiyari*. *Omoiyari* motivates one of the conditions (i.e., willingness) (see Section 3.2) to demonstrate attentiveness. In other words, attentiveness is not demonstrated without *omoiyari* (except for the case of reflexive attentiveness) (see further discussion in Section 3.1).

### 2.2.6 Heart

Some alternative theoretical concepts other than face were explored to better theorize behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness. Heart could be another aspect
underlying politeness.\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Gönül} in Turkish, KKJ in Thai and \textit{omoiyari} in Japanese cultures flow from the heart.\textsuperscript{11} All these concepts entail some behavioral (non-linguistic) aspects (e.g., attending to the feelings and expectations of the other party, not saying something and thinking of others) of politeness.

\textit{Gönül}, KKJ and \textit{omoiyari} do not necessarily have concrete manifestations, which are relevant to evaluations of (im)politeness. Evaluations are important in the current politeness research. Attentiveness has concrete manifestations, which involves evaluations. Attentiveness is related to the heart and entails both linguistic and behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness. Thus, attentiveness is taken up in the next Section.

3 Attentiveness

In this Section, the concept of attentiveness is clarified. Attentiveness is focused on in this paper because of the following perspectives: behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness, the theoretical concept of the heart, interpersonal relationships and evaluations. Attentiveness, which includes the non-linguistic aspect of politeness, could provide a conceptual basis for explaining behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness. As noted in the previous Section, the heart could be another theoretical concept to construe politeness. Attentiveness can be better explained from the heart rather than the face,\textsuperscript{12} as it is motivated by \textit{omoiyari}, which is related to the heart. Attentiveness is concerned with the other party, which means it is related to interpersonal relationships. Attentiveness with manifestations (i.e., with pre-emptive responses) is relevant to evaluations of (im)politeness. Consideration of the whole interaction, focusing not only on the speaker (or the demonstrator in the case of attentiveness), but also including the hearer (or the recipient in the case of attentiveness), and evaluations are of the main streams of the current politeness research. Attentiveness is a good example to show that the hearer (or the recipient), who makes an evaluation, plays an important role; and that politeness resides in evaluation of behaviors.

\textsuperscript{10} This does not mean that I deny the importance of face and identity in politeness research.
\textsuperscript{11} The heart is important in interpersonal relationships and interpersonal communication in Polish culture too. Wierzbicka (2014: 96) argues that in Polish there is no equivalent word to politeness and the word most closely related to it is \textit{serdecznosc} (“good feelings toward someone” [Wierzbicka 2014: 96]), which is derived from the heart.
\textsuperscript{12} Işik-Güler (2008: 118) argues that attentiveness relates primarily to “the inner core” (\textit{gönül}) and not just to face.
In Section 3.1, what I mean by attentiveness is explained. The conditions for attentiveness to arise and the processes of attentiveness are presented to elucidate further the concept of attentiveness in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 respectively. Section 3.4 discusses the kind of relationships in which attentiveness is demonstrated.

3.1 What is attentiveness?

In my view, attentiveness means paying attention to the others by the work of ki, that is, reading the atmosphere in a situation and anticipating or inferring the other party’s feelings, needs and wants through a potential recipient’s verbal and non-verbal cues. A pre-emptive response, which can take the form of offering, may consequently arise. Through a pre-emptive response, attentiveness is manifested. There are, however, cases in which a pre-emptive response is withheld, considering the situation or the state of the other party (type 1 of non-demonstrable manifestation of attentiveness) (see Section 3.3). In such a case, no demonstrable manifestation of attentiveness can be observed. In this paper, however, the term “attentiveness” is used primarily to include pre-emptive responses, as only attentiveness which is manifested is visible and evaluated by a recipient.

Attentiveness entails both behavioral and cognitive aspects, and both linguistic and behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness. Manifestation of attentiveness with pre-emptive responses, namely, doing something for the other party without or before being asked, is behavioral, while the processes (see Section 3.3) before the demonstration of attentiveness are cognitive. Evaluation of attentiveness is also cognitive. To think of the well-being of the other party, observing the situation, etc. (see Section 3.3) is non-linguistic; and manifestations of attentiveness include both linguistic and behavioral (non-linguistic) aspects. That is, attentiveness can be demonstrated linguistically (e.g., offering help linguistically, giving advice), non-linguistically (e.g., doing something for the other party), or both linguistically and non-linguistically.

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13 A “response” here includes both linguistic (verbal) and non-linguistic (non-verbal) reactions. Implicatures can arise through a pre-emptive response that attributes an incipient agenda to a prior speaker (Haugh 2014: 257).

14 Evaluation entails both linguistic and behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness. When a recipient evaluates attentiveness, it is non-linguistic. When the evaluation is articulated, it becomes linguistic. When the evaluation is presented only through behaviors (e.g., smiles or frowns), it is behavioral (non-linguistic).

15 The following is an example of attentiveness manifested as a suggestion (i.e., offering help in line 2) (attentiveness manifested linguistically) and an action (i.e. to move a refrigerator
Manifestation of attentiveness involves offering both material things (such as lending a pen) and non-material things\textsuperscript{16} including actions, such as opening the window when it is hot, helping someone who is in trouble, making suggestions or giving advice, before or without being asked, taking verbal/non-verbal cues and the situation into account.

There are two main orientations of attentiveness: genuine attentiveness and reflexive attentiveness (Fukushima 2011: 550). The former is displaying concern for the well-being of a recipient (or for helping the other party), and the latter is for the benefit of a demonstrator. The benefit can be material or non-material. For example, one may receive some kind of gift in return (material benefits), or s/he gains credit or enhances her/his reputation (non-material benefits) as someone who is “attentive” (\textit{kigakiku}) (Fukushima 2011: 550), or as a ploy to receive attentiveness from others in the future. Although one can receive these benefits, even when genuine attentiveness is demonstrated, the difference between genuine and reflexive attentiveness lies in that a potential demonstrator of reflexive attentiveness demonstrates attentiveness, trying to get these benefits, that is, for the sake of her/himself. Of course, these benefits can be obtained, only when a recipient evaluates the attentiveness positively. Reflexive attentiveness does not necessarily have negative connotations. Even when reflexive attentiveness is demonstrated for the benefit of a demonstrator, it may also help a recipient (Fukushima 2011: 550). Reflexive attentiveness is also related to the concept of reciprocity, which means that we do something for others and they help us or give us something in return.

Attentiveness has been taken up in some other previous studies, although there are not many. Riley (2007: 217) lists attentiveness as one of the communicative virtues. Marui et al. (1996) investigate concepts of the communicative virtues (CCV) (Hermanns 1993: 83), “which are historically developed and continually transformed in ongoing social interactions, concepts to which social

\begin{quote}
\textit{\textbf{A short version of the conversation adapted from Fukushima 2011: 551}}
\end{quote}

1 S: My office is in chaos, too. The refrigerator has moved.
2 H: Can I help you put it back? I am strong.
3 S: That would be very helpful.

(\textit{A short version of the conversation adapted from Fukushima 2011: 551})

\textsuperscript{16} Among the non-material things, there are both tangible (e.g., opening the window) and intangible (e.g., making suggestions) actions. In Fukushima (2000: 92), making suggestions and giving advice were categorized into an alternative means other than doing something him/herself, i.e., demonstrating attentiveness. However, they can be broadly included in attentiveness if they were pre-empted.
members refer in evaluating the social behavior of others as well as of themselves” (Marui et al. 1996: 385). Marui et al. treat attentiveness (they use the term *kizukai*) as one of the Japanese concepts of communicative virtues and they (1996: 395) translate *kizukai* as “reading others’ needs”. Lebra (2004: 44) argues that “courtesy works on other’s “face” – that is, honor or pride – calling on an etiquette or subtleties aimed at avoiding offense or embarrassment.” Lebra (2004: 44) calls such courteous sensitivities *kizukai* (or *kikubari*), meaning “alertness and caring attention to other’s needs or feelings”.

As some of the above previous studies show, attentiveness is closely related to *kikubari* (lit. allocation of *ki*) or *kizukai* (lit. to make *ki* work) in Japanese, although I am not proposing that it is unique to Japanese culture or Japanese language. The concept of attentiveness can be found also in other cultures, for example, in Greek, as shown in Sifianou (1993, 1997) and Sifianou and Tzanne (2010), even though there is no single term (such as “attentiveness”) to describe such actions in Greek. Ogiermann’s and Suszczyńska’s (2011) study also shows that attentiveness is found in Hungarian culture, as noted in Section 2.1. According to Grainger (2014), Zimbabweans judge it impolite to put requests on record in certain situations since this could imply that the addressee has not anticipated their needs. It is presumed that they infer the other party’s needs, and pre-empt offers, which can be regarded as attentiveness. And most probably some lexical forms of attentiveness can be found in other languages, too. For instance, *Aufmerksamkeit* in German may be equivalent to attentiveness.

*Kizukai* consists of *ki* (spirit) and the noun form of *tsukau* (which means “kokoro o hatarakaseru”, ‘to make heart work’, [Shinmura 2008: 1857]). *Ki* and *kokoro* (‘heart’) are often used interchangeably, according to Lebra (1993: 64).

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17 *Ki* can be translated as spirit, mind, or attention. See Fukushima and Haugh (2014: 167) for a more detailed explanation of *ki*.

18 This may be related to the different ways of making requests, i.e., making direct and indirect requests (including off-record requests in Brown and Levinson’s [1987] terms, or hinting). Indeed, attentiveness was treated as a response to off-record requests in Fukushima (2000), although the term “solicitousness” was employed in the same sense as attentiveness. Sifianou (1993) also mentioned an understanding similar to attentiveness in response to off-record requests, although the term “attentiveness” was not used.

19 According to Hara (2014a), *kokoro* is closer to “mind” rather than “heart,” although no detailed explanation is given. In this paper, *kokoro* is translated as “heart” which is in line with other studies referred to here. Further support for this interpretation is offered in the following definitions: Whereas heart is “the place where emotions are felt”, mind is “used to describe the ways a person thinks or the intelligence of a person” (www.merriam-webster.com). *Kokoro* here is used in the sense of emotions and feelings, rather than intelligence, although *kokoro* sometimes entails intelligence. Haugh (2014: 252) translates *kokoro* as “heart-minds” and argues that in some cases an orientation to their respective “heart-minds” (*kokoro*) underpins evaluations of politeness in Japanese.
Hamano (1987: 110) also argues that *ki* is interchangeable with *kokoro*. There is also a term, *kokorokubari* (lit. allocation or distribution of *kokoro*). Actually, *kokorokubari* is listed as a meaning of *kikubari* in Shinmura (2008: 668). It can be, therefore, said that *kikubari* entails “heart,” and that attentiveness can be construed in relation to the heart, as noted in Section 2. In the definition of *kikubari*, there are two orientations: to be alert so that there will be no inconveniences or failures, and to be attentive toward the other party (Shinmura 2008: 668). The former is self-oriented and the latter other-oriented, which is closely related to attentiveness in this paper.

Attentiveness can be regarded as one of social competences\(^\text{20}\) or a sign of maturity (Hara 2014b). Miyahara (2004: 284) argues that a person, who is able to observe subtle, social norms associated with these attributes, i.e., four characteristics of Japanese communication by Tsujimura (1987): *ishindenshin* (communication without language); taciturnity or passivity; indirect communication; and respect for reverberation, and sensitivity toward *kuuki* (the constraint of mood), is regarded as mature and competent. The last attribute, in particular, is related to attentiveness. Thus, those who can demonstrate attentiveness as expected are evaluated positively, being called *kigakiku* ‘attentive’ (Fukushima 2011: 550). Those who are regarded as *kigakiku* can gain reputation, as *kigakiku* is an ability, that is, “one can make a quick judgement, according to the situation” (Shinmura 2008: 653), and can thus act accordingly. One of the Japanese students in Fukushima and Haugh (2014) stated: ‘We like people who can demonstrate attentiveness and I feel great when I see my seniors demonstrate attentiveness’ (the original data in Japanese not shown). This can be regarded as a positive evaluation of someone who is attentive (*kigakiku*). In relation to the personality perspective, Hamano (1987: 106) contends that our personality is evaluated according to the way we pay attention to the others. Žegarac and Spencer-Oatey (2013: 441) argue that one could be considered self-oriented because of the lack of alertness to the needs of others and will most likely fail to cooperate with them effectively in negotiating meaning and conveying messages. The lack of alertness to the needs of others may be equal to the opposite of being attentive (*kigakiku*). Thus, it can be said that being attentive is important for one’s personality as well as for successful communication.


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20 Horike (1991: 151–152) defines social skill as knowledge, ability or communication skills, which help interpersonal relationships move smoothly.

21 According to some of the audience of Fukushima (2014), people sometimes demonstrate attentiveness not for the well-being of others. For instance, people, especially those who are in service business, demonstrate attentiveness. In such cases, they demonstrate attentiveness
attentiveness. In this sense, the demonstration of attentiveness is an orientation to politeness, or in other words, it indexes a polite stance. This politeness concern is derived from a demonstrator’s side. Politeness can arise also from a recipient’s side, as it is the recipient who evaluates attentiveness. A positive evaluation of attentiveness by a recipient could occasion politeness. It can be said, therefore, that politeness is located both in a demonstrator and a recipient of attentiveness. The whole process (i.e., demonstration and evaluation) of attentiveness involves both a demonstrator and a recipient, and linguistic as well as behavioral (non-linguistic) manifestations can be included in the interaction. This means that consideration of attentiveness involves not only a speaker’s linguistic utterance as in the first-wave approaches to politeness, but it is concerned with both sides (a demonstrator and a recipient) and it includes the evaluation, which is important in the second-wave approaches, as noted in Section 1.

There are some cross-generational as well as cross-cultural differences on the demonstration and evaluation of attentiveness (see Fukushima 2004, 2009, 2011, 2013b, Fukushima and Haugh 2014). The following contributions by members of the audience of Fukushima (2014) further show how the evaluation of attentiveness varies cross-culturally. A Japanese lady cited an example of attentiveness she had received in a Japanese airplane (All Nippon Airways). Immediately after sneezing, a Japanese cabin attendant brought her a mask, which she greatly appreciated. However, a Chinese lady, who has lived in the U.S. for more than twenty years, stated that that would be an offense to her, because it would suggest that she was spreading germs around.

As mentioned earlier, it is the demonstrator who shows attentiveness. However, there are cases in which a potential recipient of attentiveness solicits attentiveness. In other words, there are cases in which a potential recipient of attentiveness has an intention of receiving attentiveness; and there are cases in which a potential recipient does not intend to receive it (Fukushima 2011: 551). In the former case, a potential recipient is likely to solicit attentiveness, although the difference between the former and the latter is difficult to observe. Attentiveness will not arise, when a potential demonstrator does not recognize that the other party has solicited attentiveness; or when more than one condition of demonstrating attentiveness (see Section 3.2) is lacking.

to fulfill their duties. I term such attentiveness “business-oriented attentiveness”, which can be explored in future research.
3.2 What are the conditions for attentiveness to arise?

Certain conditions are needed for attentiveness to arise. First, it is necessary for a potential demonstrator to read the other party’s needs, wants and feelings. This anticipatory inference is made through observing the situations or considering the verbal and/or non-verbal cues of the other party, or through reading the atmosphere of a situation. And a potential demonstrator’s ability, availability and her/his willingness to demonstrate attentiveness are needed (see Figure 1). One cannot demonstrate attentiveness, if s/he does not have the ability needed in a situation. For example, if one cannot carry a heavy bag, one cannot demonstrate attentiveness to carry a heavy bag for someone else. If one does not have something that a potential recipient needs, for example, a car, one cannot demonstrate attentiveness to offer a ride. Attentiveness would not be demonstrated without a potential demonstrator’s willingness. For instance, observing a situation, somebody could infer the other party’s wants and has the ability and availability to demonstrate attentiveness, but s/he is not willing to do it for various reasons, such as disliking the other party. Therefore, willingness is absolutely necessary for attentiveness to arise. Willingness may be moti-
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vated by omoiyari (see Section 2.2.5) for a potential recipient. That is, if a potential demonstrator has omoiyari toward a potential recipient, it is likely that s/he would demonstrate attentiveness.22

3.3 How does attentiveness work?

There are several stages leading up to the demonstration of attentiveness (see Figure 2). First, a potential demonstrator observes a situation and reads the atmosphere of the situation, taking a potential recipient’s verbal/non-verbal cues into consideration, if there are any (stage 1). Then, in stage 2, a potential demonstrator anticipates or infers the other party’s needs, wants and sometimes also feelings. The anticipatory inference made at this stage is called sashi in Japanese.

In stage 3, a potential demonstrator may evaluate a possible act of attentiveness before s/he demonstrates it. Evaluation by a potential demonstrator at this stage differs in quality from that in stage 5, which is made by a recipient. A potential demonstrator of attentiveness assesses or considers the likely consequences of a prospective act by him/herself, whereas a recipient in stage 5 evaluates attentiveness which has already been demonstrated by the other, namely, the past action. A potential demonstrator checks the attentiveness which s/he will demonstrate against the moral order, namely, “a set of expectancies through which social actions and meanings are recognizable as such, and consequently are inevitably open to moral evaluation” (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 6), and s/he is likely to think of values (cultural and personal) and behavioral conventions which are culturally bound (Fukushima 2013a: 21). Personal values or preferences are most likely determined by family education or previous experiences. Values or behavioral conventions may influence the kind of attentiveness s/he may demonstrate. A potential demonstrator may consider whether s/he is the right person to demonstrate attentiveness (s/he may think that other people may or should demonstrate attentiveness) (Fukushima 2013a: 22). Other people include those who are present in the situation in most of the cases. A potential demonstrator may also consider the cost in terms of time, money or energy before demonstrating attentiveness. A potential demonstrator her/himself may evaluate the possible outcomes. S/he may consider whether the intended attentiveness would be beneficial for a potential recipient or on

22 According to Batson’s (2008) empathy-altruism hypothesis, the decision of helping or not depends primarily on whether you feel empathy for the person and secondarily on the cost and rewards (social exchange concerns).
the contrary, negatively evaluated as intrusive or meddlesome. S/he may sometimes think of the repercussions such as receiving positive evaluation or s/he may think of the benefits s/he may get in the case of reflexive attentiveness.

Until a potential demonstrator reaches stage 4, s/he makes her/his *ki* (spirit) work. Stages 1–3 can reoccur. There are two possible stages after stage 3. A potential demonstrator demonstrates attentiveness (stage 4a), or s/he does not demonstrate attentiveness (stage 4b). A demonstrator of attentiveness has *omoiyari* toward a recipient in stage 4a, except for the case of reflexive attentiveness. There are cases in which attentiveness is not demonstrated even after a potential demonstrator could infer the other party’s needs or wants (stage 4b).

In stage 4b, there are two different types. One type is that demonstration of attentiveness is withheld, considering the situation or the state of the other party (“type 1” of non-demonstrable manifestation of attentiveness). Another type is that attentiveness is not demonstrated, because a potential demonstrator does not want to demonstrate attentiveness (“type 2” of non-demonstrable manifestation of attentiveness). These two types of non-demonstrable manifestation of attentiveness look ostensibly the same, however, they differ in quality, of course. In type 1, a potential demonstrator decides not to demonstrate attentiveness, only because s/he thinks of the potential recipient. In other words, a potential demonstrator has *omoiyari* toward a potential recipient. A potential demonstrator in type 1 thinks of the negative effects of attentiveness, such as meddling. Some other reasons why a potential demonstrator withholds demonstrating attentiveness may include the following: the attentiveness may be considered intrusive or critical of a recipient (incapability) or the recipient may feel attentiveness as a burden or as an imposing action. Therefore, a potential demonstrator thinks it would be better to leave the other party alone. In other words, “type 1” is a kind of attentiveness in which one steps back but still pays attention to the other party. Indeed, Japanese participants in Fukushima and Haugh (2014) stated: ‘There is attentiveness, in that we do not go into someone’s life too deeply,’ and ‘there is attentiveness, which we watch over from far’ (the original data in Japanese not shown). This view is similar to the original meaning of *omoiyari* by Yuuki (1991: 62), as noted in Section 2, namely, to make kokoro (heart) work towards something from far; and this may be related to *omoiyari* which we do not express (Sato 2007: 86–89).

In “type 2”, it is likely that a potential demonstrator does not have *omoiyari* toward a potential recipient. As a consequence, a potential demonstrator does

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23 These reasons were found among the negative evaluation of attentiveness in Fukushima (2009, 2013b).
not have the willingness, which is one of the conditions to demonstrate attentiveness. While a potential demonstrator in type 1 is concerned with the other party’s well-being, having a “politeness concern,” one does not index a polite stance in type 2, as type 2 is absence of attentiveness derived from “unwillingness,” namely, from lack of omoiyari. Although the difference between type 1 and 2 in stage 4b needs a careful consideration, the demonstration of attentiveness (stage 4a) is the main focus of this paper. This is because the term attentiveness is used primarily to those with pre-emptive responses (see Section 3.1) in this paper.

After attentiveness has been demonstrated (stage 4a), a recipient evaluates the attentiveness (stage 5). Appreciation of attentiveness by a recipient indicates a positive evaluation. A negative evaluation may be made, when attentiveness did not match a recipient’s behavioral expectations. In other words, a recipient evaluates the attentiveness according to their values, including cultural and personal, or moral order (what to expect in particular contexts) (see Kádár and Haugh 2013: 93). If a recipient feels that attentiveness was meddling, or s/he feels that her/his territory is infringed, a negative evaluation may be made (Fukushima 2013a: 22). A positive evaluation can occasion politeness and a negative one impoliteness. Evaluation may be manifested linguistically, non-linguistically or one can sense it (e.g., A recipient does not say anything, but a demonstrator feels something in the air, especially when the evaluation is negative). Evaluation can also be made by bystanders, if there are any. If the bystanders think that the attentiveness was helpful, they would praise the demonstrator. Thus, the demonstrator can gain credit from both the recipient and the bystanders.

And in stage 6, a demonstrator may react to that evaluation, although it is not necessary for a demonstrator to do/say anything; and there are cases in which a demonstrator does not react at all. A demonstrator feels good if s/he has received a positive evaluation or s/he feels bad after having received a negative evaluation (Fukushima 2013a: 22). The former case includes the feelings of accomplishment or self-respect; and the latter would decrease those feelings.

Between stages 4a, 5 and 6, reflexivity occurs. According to Kádár and Haugh (2013: 184), the notion of reflexivity is critical to understanding metapragmatics; and reflexivity arises when one level of interpretation or analysis is interdependently related to another. In the case of politeness, this means that a circular relationship invariably exists between what occasions an evaluation of politeness and the evaluation itself (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 184). In the processes of demonstration and evaluation of attentiveness, demonstration
of attentiveness (stage 4a) occasions evaluation (stage 5), and evaluation in stage 5 occasions reaction by a demonstrator (stage 6). It can be said that this partly shows the relational aspect of attentiveness.

Figure 2: The processes of demonstration and evaluation of attentiveness.
3.4 In what kinds of relationships is attentiveness demonstrated?

Marui et al. (1996: 396) claim that “in the case of kizukai such manifestations can take the form of offering things or services to show friendliness, especially in relationships which are neither too close nor too distant.” According to the results of Fukushima (2011), attentiveness was demonstrated in every degree of familiarity between a demonstrator and a recipient, namely, from very familiar (close friends) to not very familiar at all (strangers). With regard to the relationship of a demonstrator and a recipient of attentiveness, an interesting cross-cultural difference was found in Fukushima and Haugh (2014), which compared Japanese and Taiwanese emic understandings of attentiveness and its related notions. The Taiwanese participants would demonstrate attentiveness only to insiders but not to outsiders such as strangers, although such a distinction was not found among the Japanese participants.

Attentiveness is demonstrated in all kinds of relationships, regardless of status differences. That is to say, it is demonstrated among status equals (e.g., among friends or colleagues), from status inferiors to superiors (e.g., from a student to a professor) and from status superiors to inferiors (e.g., from a professor to a student) (see Fukushima 2004, 2011), although there are differences in terms of frequency of occurrence. With respect to the different frequencies of occurrence of attentiveness according to status, status inferiors may demonstrate attentiveness to their superiors more often than the reverse case. Social relationships between a potential demonstrator and a potential recipient, or tachiba, i.e., the “place one stands” (Haugh 2005: 47) of a potential demonstrator and a potential recipient may influence the decision of a potential demonstrator to demonstrate attentiveness (Fukushima 2013a: 22). For example, a junior may be expected to demonstrate attentiveness to a superior. This is endorsed by Lebra’s (2004: 45) contention, that is, “when vertical distance is involved, the inferior self must be all the more alert, ready to employ kizukai at any instance to make the superior other feel comfortable” (italics added).

4 Concluding remarks

After briefly reviewing the development of politeness research and pointing out some understudied areas in the field, this paper has attempted to suggest one of the directions we need to move forward through the consideration of attentiveness. This paper has shown the significance of an interpersonal notion such
as attentiveness. It is suggested that in construing politeness it is necessary to consider the heart, not only the face. It is also suggested that we need to take behavioral (non-linguistic) politeness into account in politeness research. As interpersonal relationships and evaluation are important issues in politeness scholarship nowadays, it is hoped that consideration of attentiveness will contribute to clarifying these two key issues. A positive evaluation of attentiveness would build, maintain or enhance a good interpersonal relationship, and a negative one could contribute to a bad relationship. The former could occasion politeness and the latter impoliteness. The present paper has also shown the importance of *omoiyari*. It is related to the heart and concerned with interpersonal relationships; and it motivates the willingness to demonstrate attentiveness. Some studies have shown that *omoiyari* is cherished in Japanese culture (e.g., Lebra 1976: 38; Clancy 1986: 232–235; Wierzbicka 1997: 275; Travis 1998: 57; Uchida 2011: 51; Burdelski 2013: 57), although there may be cross-generational differences. If there are cross-cultural or cross-generational differences in valuing *omoiyari*, there may be cross-cultural or cross-generational differences in the demonstration or the evaluation of attentiveness.

As this paper considered attentiveness from a theoretical point of view, empirical studies are needed to investigate on what occasions people demonstrate attentiveness, how they evaluate it, and whether there are any cross-generational and cross-cultural differences (or similarities) in its demonstration and evaluation. And an investigation of attentiveness in interaction will give us some concrete insights into the interpersonal perspective of attentiveness. It is hoped that attentiveness will be further examined in politeness research so that another perspective of politeness can be better appreciated.

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**Bionote**

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