

2013年度

博士学位申請論文

(要約)

指導教員 Richard Evanoff 教授

論文題目

Constructing Models of Japanese Conversational Indirectness on  
the Basis of Empathy and Nonverbal Social Skills

共感及び非言語的社会スキルに基づく日本人の会話の  
間接性のモデル構築

青山学院大学大学院

国際政治経済学研究科

国際コミュニケーション専攻

原 和也

## Chapter 1: Introduction

In the field of intercultural communication studies, indirect communication styles practiced by Japanese people have gained attention among scholars both inside and outside of Japan. Cross-cultural studies have indicated that Japanese people use indirectness to maintain harmony with others and have a negative attitude toward direct communication. The reason has been mainly associated with their communication apprehension (e.g., Klopff, 1984).

Indirectness by Japanese people, however, is not necessarily caused by communication apprehension and a lack of assertive communication skills. Rather, not stating messages clearly or directly is an indicator of having sensitivity for others (Kim, 2002), is regarded as a sign of strength as a mature human, and indicates social competence in Japanese society (Miyahara, 2004). Therefore, it is meaningful to examine Japanese indirectness based on empathy (*omoiyari*; e.g., Travis, 1988) as an influential factor, while also taking the influence of nonverbal elements into consideration. More specifically, the influence of nonverbal elements should be considered in dynamically analyzing the process of Japanese indirect communication.

Given the problems mentioned above, this study attempted to clarify how Japanese people's empathy (*omoiyari*) has an influence on indirectness in relation to nonverbal skills through structural equation modeling analysis. Further, gender differences were examined by multigroup analysis based on the establishment of measurement invariance of each measurement scale.

## Chapter 2: Overview of the Japanese Indirect Communication Style from the Perspectives of *Enryo* (Reserve) and *Sasshi* (Sharp Guess-Work)

Other-orientation has been an influential factor in the Japanese tendency to use verbal indirectness. Japanese people are attentive to another person's age or social status, and trying to save the other person's face. Moreover, Japanese people tend to avoid verbal conflict and employ an indirect or ambiguous interaction style. Such restrained communication exemplifies *omoiyari* (empathy) toward others. Although an indirect communication style is not necessarily effective for mutual understanding, Japanese people tend to continue to exchange messages until they reach a satisfactory agreement. Ishii's (1996) *enryo-sasshi* communication model describes the process of exchanging indirect messages on the part of the Japanese. In this model, a sender's consciousness of *enryo* produces ambiguous or indirect messages, and a receiver attempts to sensitively interpret those messages using *sasshi*. In this way, Ishii's (1996) model helps to describe the process of Japanese *omoiyari*-based conversational

indirectness. Before applying the fundamental ideas of Ishii's model to a study of Japanese indirectness, this chapter has clarified, first, that the motivational factor behind *enryo-sasshi* has the possibility of being either self- or other-oriented. Second, there is the possibility that external feedback will occur not only in the *enryo* stage but also in the *sasshi* stage. Finally, the constructs of both other-directed *enryo* and *sasshi* are considered to be forms of Japanese *omoiyari* directed to others. On the basis of these considerations, Ishii's model were incorporated with modifications into the author's own hypothetical models proposed in Chapter 6.

### **Chapter 3: Japanese *Omoiyari* and Empathy**

Generally, Japanese *omoiyari* is defined as an intuitive understanding of the feelings of others, with which individuals may consider what to do and what not to do for the sake of others. A concept related to *omoiyari* is hypocrisy, and there are also times when one-sided *omoiyari* is perceived as *osekkai* (meddlesomeness) by the receiver. In a psychological sense, *omoiyari* is based on mutual interdependence with others and is not reward-expecting. *Omoiyari*-based behavior is voluntary and involves self-sacrifice.

Empathy has been studied in relation to *omoiyari*. Kakuta (1994) points out that empathy should be measured by taking into consideration a person's experiences of empathic feelings and also of that person's individuality apart from others. However, Japanese empathy connotes sympathetic feelings for others, and is performed on the basis of mutual interdependence between oneself and others. Thus, in developing the hypothetical models presented in Chapter 6 of this thesis, the author adopted Kakuta's (1994) *Empathic Experience Scale* by using only those items related to the *sharing experience (SE) of empathy*, which includes empathetic experiences for understanding others' feelings. Empathy in the author's hypothetical models was regarded as a motivational factor that leads a person to communicate indirectly.

### **Chapter 4: Conversational Indirectness**

In indirect speech acts, people have an underlying message which is not literally expressed in direct messages. The tendency to produce and interpret indirect meanings in messages is termed *conversational indirectness* by Holtgraves (1997). Holtgraves (1997) proposes that indirectness consists of two dimensions: production and interpretation. The production dimension refers to the extent to which a person expresses his or her thoughts indirectly. The interpretation dimension is the ability to comprehend indirect messages by understanding the implied meaning in another's

indirect messages. Holtgraves (1998) presumes that indirectness is motivated, in many cases, by interpersonal considerations involving mutual sensitivity to the thoughts and feelings of others. Hence, it is reasonable for the author of this study to regard empathy as a motivational factor which leads to indirectness. Overall, the production dimension of conversational indirectness noted by Holtgraves (1997) corresponds with the encoding dimension of *enryo* in Ishii's (1996) *enryo-sasshi* communication model, while the interpretation dimension by Holtgraves (1997) corresponds with the decoding dimension of *sasshi* in Ishii's (1996) *enryo-sasshi* communication model. The author incorporated the production dimension and the interpretation dimension separately in the hypothetical models presented in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

### **Chapter 5: Emotional (Nonverbal) Social Skills**

When communicating indirectly on the basis of *omoiyari* (empathy), Japanese culture emphasizes the abilities to control one's own emotional displays when speaking and to exhibit sensitivity toward another person's feelings when trying to understand their indirect messages. Riggio (1996) developed a framework of social skills, which includes both nonverbal and verbal dimensions. Riggio lists emotional (nonverbal) expressivity, emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity, and emotional (nonverbal) control skills, as well as social (verbal) expressivity, social (verbal) sensitivity, and social (verbal) control. In Japan, Wada (1992) developed his own measurement scale for social skills. As for nonverbal social skills, Wada listed nonverbal expressiveness, sensitivity, and control. Wada also added four social (relational) skills: the maintenance of intimate relationships with others, the initiation of new relationships, conflict management, and the rejection of unacceptable offers from others. On the basis of the two frameworks provided by Riggio (1986) and Wada (1992), it can be seen that emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity serves to maintain human relationships and avoid conflicts, while emotional (nonverbal) control functions to suppress one's emotions. Hence, in this study, the former is considered to function as internal self-feedback with *sasshi*, and the latter to function as external self-feedback with *enryo* in Japanese indirect communication.

In conclusion, both the production and interpretation dimensions of conversational indirectness seem to accompany emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity and emotional (nonverbal) control so that turn-taking can proceed effectively. In this thesis, the author views emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity correlated with empathy as the starting point of indirect message processing (Clancy, 1985; Ishiguro, 2006; Okabe, 1983), and emotional (nonverbal) control as a regulator in indirect message

processing. These views were incorporated into the hypothetical models presented in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

### **Chapter 6: Proposing an Integrated Framework for Empathy-Based Indirectness Communication Models**

Based on the fundamental ideas of Ishii's (1996) *enryo-sasshi* model, the author proposed his own hypothetical models of Japanese indirect communication, using the variables of empathy, conversational indirectness, emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity, and emotional (nonverbal) control. Taking possible flows of message processing into consideration, two types of hypothetical models were proposed, one for the production dimension and one for the interpretation dimension of indirect communication. The first type was termed *considered indirectness*. In the interpretation dimension, a person sensitively reads another person's emotions, controls his or her emotional displays, and then interprets the other person's indirect messages. Likewise, in the production dimension, a person sensitively reads another person's emotions, controls his or her emotional displays, and then produces his or her own indirect messages. The second type was termed *spontaneous indirectness*. In the interpretation dimension, a person sensitively reads another person's emotions, interprets another person's indirect messages, controls his or her emotional displays, and then interprets the another person's indirect messages. Likewise, in the production dimension, a person sensitively reads another person's emotions, produces his or her own indirect messages, and then controls his or her emotional displays.

In addition, gender differences were discussed for considered indirectness and spontaneous indirectness. According to the results of previous studies, except for those paths related to emotional (nonverbal) control, women were expected to be higher in other paths than men in the paths related to conversational indirectness and emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity.

### **Chapter 7: Methodology**

This study attempted to examine the effect of emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity correlated with empathy on conversational indirectness in relation to emotional (nonverbal) control among Japanese people, with gender comparisons also being made. From three private universities in the Kanto area of Japan, a total of 609 Japanese undergraduate students who were enrolled in courses on communication studies participated in this study. There were 364 women (59.8%) and 245 men (40.2%). The mean age was 19.80 ( $SD = 2.01$ ) (women = 19.75/ $SD = 2.36$ ; men = 19.89/ $SD =$

1.33).

Then, this chapter provided an overview of the procedures for statistical analyses employed in this study. In order to perform structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis for each of the set of the author's initial, hypothetical models (those hypothetical models of considered indirectness interpretation, spontaneous indirectness interpretation, considered indirectness production, and spontaneous indirectness production), and to advance simultaneous multigroup comparisons based on the results of SEM, a series of preliminary analyses were performed for each measurement scale. First, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to clarify the structure of the factors and uncover the underlying structure of a relatively large set of variables. Subsequently, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to refine the items of each measurement scale, while the factor structure was confirmed by CFA. Second, in order to examine the measurement invariance of each scale, the existence of differential item functioning across genders was examined by multigroup mean and covariance structure (MG-MACS) analysis. By conducting hierarchical tests, the configural, metric, and scalar invariance was tested. Third, the set of the author's initial, hypothetical models were examined by SEM analysis in order to clarify indirect message processing common across genders. Fourth, based on the establishment of measurement invariance, a simultaneous multigroup analysis was conducted on the models that resulted from the final SEM analysis in order to identify gender-specific effects in each final multigroup model.

## **Chapter 8: Results**

First, as preliminary analyses for each measurement scale, the factor structures extracted by EFA could be confirmed by CFA. Then, based on the results of the CFA, by conducting MG-MACS analysis to examine measurement invariance across genders, full scalar invariance was established for the scales of conversational indirectness and emotional (nonverbal) control. Also, partial scalar invariance could be established for the scales of empathic experience and emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity.

Second, the results of the SEM analyses of the set of the author's initial, hypothetical models of Japanese indirect communication (those hypothetical models of considered indirectness interpretation, spontaneous indirectness interpretation, considered indirectness production, and spontaneous indirectness production) indicated that the main paths focused on were statistically significant in both considered indirectness and spontaneous indirectness.

Third, on the basis of the results of the final SEM analyses, a simultaneous

multigroup analysis was conducted. A chi-square difference test of the structural weights of each path and the covariance in each model indicated invariance across genders. However, for the interpretation dimension, statistically significant results were not found on the path from emotional (nonverbal) control to conversational indirectness interpretation among the women's group in the model of considered indirectness interpretation, nor on the path from conversational indirectness to emotional (nonverbal) control among the women's group in the model of spontaneous indirectness interpretation. Likewise, for the production dimension, statistically significant results were not found on the path from emotional (nonverbal) control to conversational indirectness production among the women's group in the model of considered indirectness production, nor on the path from conversational indirectness production to emotional (nonverbal) control among the women's group in the model of spontaneous indirectness production.

## **Chapter 9: Overall Discussion**

On the basis of the summary of the results of the tests toward those hypothetical models, first, the results of the SEM analysis of the hypothetical models were discussed. Then, there was a discussion of the results of the gender comparison, with a focus on the paths which showed remarkable differences in each model. Finally, the limitations of this study and directions for future research were considered.

First, according to the results of SEM of the final, tested, and revised models, in considered indirectness interpretation, the effect of emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity on emotional (nonverbal) control was moderately high, while the effect of emotional (nonverbal) control on indirectness interpretation was not very high. These results suggests that once Japanese people are in a situation in which they have to carefully interpret another person's messages, their attention is given mainly to composing their own feelings rather than to interpreting another person's indirect messages. In spontaneous indirectness interpretation, the results of SEM analysis added a new insight into the Japanese style of *sasshi* processing presented in Ishii's (1996) model by indicating that Japanese people tend to engage in external self-feedback immediately after sensitively understanding another person's indirect messages.

As for the production dimension, in considered indirectness production, especially, the effect of emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity on emotional (nonverbal) control was higher than the effect of emotional (nonverbal) control on conversational indirectness production. This result clarified that Japanese people tend to pay higher attention to how to control emotional displays rather than on how produce indirect messages with

emotional control, which indicates that Japanese people tend to rely on careful self-feedback in order to constrain explicit external feedback. In spontaneous indirectness production, the moderately high effect of emotional (nonverbal) sensitivity on conversational indirectness production confirmed Okabe's (2007) argument that, in Japanese communication, a rhetorically sensitive person is a good mind-reader. In addition, the weak effect of conversational indirectness production on emotional (nonverbal) control suggests that external self-feedback is used in spontaneous indirectness production in order to adjust the flow of the interactions and to maintain the atmosphere of the situation.

Second, in gender comparison, in considered indirectness interpretation, indirectness, it was found that men tend to sensitively read another person's emotions, and then interpret another person's indirect messages, while women tend not to interpret another person's indirect messages after controlling their own emotional displays. One interpretation can be made that women's interest would not be directed primarily toward interpreting another person's hidden messages, but toward masking their own negative emotional displays, while men seem to prefer to make calm judgments of another person's intended indirect messages behind indirectness. In spontaneous indirectness interpretation, it was found that men tend to sensitively read another person's emotions, to interpret another person's indirect messages, and then to control their emotional displays, while women tend not to control their emotional displays after interpreting the indirect messages of others. From these findings, it can be said that men are more cautious in understanding another person's verbal indirect messages, probably because they are inclined to be task- and goal-oriented, while women tend to place a high value on a maintaining a rapport style of interaction, and controlling their emotional displays may be regarded as distancing among them.

As for the production dimension, in considered indirectness production, it was found that men tend to read another person's emotions, to control their emotional displays, and then to produce indirect messages, while women tend not to produce indirect messages after controlling their emotional displays. In explaining the results for women, there seem to be two possibilities. One is that they might choose to simply hold their tongue, and the other is that they may use straightforward messages, although directness is not included in the hypothetical model. On the other hand, it was proven that men need to control their emotional displays in order to use indirectness effectively, because they are more interested in conveying information rather than emotions. In spontaneous indirectness production, it was found that men tend to read another person's emotions, to produce an indirect messages, and then to control their emotional



displays, while women tend not to control their emotional displays after producing an indirect message. One interpretation of this tendency is that women are honest about their emotions and prefer sharing emotions with others, which is a sign of warmth and intimacy among women, men seem to concentrate on conveying what they want to say by controlling their facial expressions directing their attention toward external feedback as a way to justify the choice of using indirect messages.

Finally, although this study clarified how Japanese people process indirect messages and made gender comparisons by testing a series of hypothetical models using structural equation modeling analysis, there were mainly three limitations. The first was that this study used measurement scales of conversational indirectness and emotional (nonverbal) social skills developed in the United States taking the established validity of each scale into consideration. The second was that all of the participants were undergraduate students. The third was that since this study used a trait approach to focus on a single person's tendency to communicate indirectly, the influence of other factors, such as the traits of others whom a person is communicating with and contextual issues, were not taken into consideration.

Future studies on Japanese indirectness could usefully extend the results of this study in three ways. The first is that the influence of various contexts on indirectness should be taken into consideration. The second is that qualitative research, such as disclosure analysis or content analysis, should be performed along with quantitative data. The third is that the misattribution of meaning in indirectness should be examined.