On a Japanese speech act *Enryo*":
an analysis of an X-sociative and X-regulative speech act

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to identify a Japanese speech act "*enryo*" in Japanese communication. "*Enryo*" is a typical Japanese speech act performed in the context of communication where "to assess and acknowledge one's place in relation to the other person" is highly respected as one of the social norms. "*Enryo*" is a social as well as regulatory act performed to maintain the expected social and emotional equilibrium between interlocutors. It is generally acknowledged that "*enryo*" is performed for the sake of the encoder, thus may be regarded as a dissociative and unidirectional regulative act from the encoder to the decoder, because the encoder is believed to observe Leech (1980)'s Politeness Maxim whenever s/he performs the speech act. In this paper, I will ask if this common knowledge is adequate. I will examine cases from the viewpoints of encoder/ decoder's positive/ negative face, Politeness Maxims, encoder/ decoder's sociation, and encoder/ decoder's regulation. As the result of observation and analyses of cases, three different typologies of "*enryo*" speech acts are obtained. They are typology of illocutionary points, x-sociation, and x-regulation of the act. Consequently, the answers to the questions above are given as listed below and the inadequacy of the common knowledge is proved. (i) In "*enryo*" speech acts, the encoder concerns not only the decoder's face but also his/ her own face and his/ her *uchimono's* (=insider's) face. (ii) "*Enryo*" speech acts are not *dissociative*, but either *associative* or *maintenative*. (iii) "*Enryo*" speech acts are not always unidirectional but there are cases of bi-directional regulation. (iv) In performing "*enryo*", the encoder does not perform the act to threaten his/ her own face. (v) "*Enryo*" is not intentionally performed as a dissociative act. (vi) In performing an "enryo", the unidirectional regulation from the decoder to the encoder is not performed.

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to identify a typical Japanese speech act "*enryo*" in Japanese communication, and to enrich the framework of Current Speech Act Theory incorporating Brown & Levinson's *Face theory*, Leech's *Politeness Maxims*, and my *x-sociation* and *x-regulation theory* cultivated recently in Kubo (2002). "*Enryo*" is a *typical Japanese speech act* performed in the context of communication where "*to assess and acknowledge one's place in relation to the other person*" is highly respected as one of the social norms.[1] "Enryo" written in Chinese character is the combination of two characters "*en*" and "*ryo*" that respectively signify "far distance" and "consideration" as you see in (1).

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[1] Scholars in Cross-cultural pragmatics and socio-linguistics support this observation. For instance, Matsumoto (1988: 405) claims that "a Japanese generally must understand where s/he stands in relation to other members of the group or society, and must acknowledge his/her dependence on the other." Ide and Yoshida(1999, 2002: 445) also claims that " in Japanese society, all speakers are expected to assess and acknowledge their sense of place in relation to both the situational context and social context."

(1)   [en ryo]

          [en]   [ryo]

        Distance   Consideration
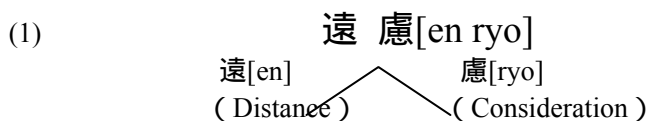
Thus, in total, *"enryo"* literally means "consideration of the distance" and is used to mean non-literally "consideration of the social distance between interlocutors". *In this sense, "enryo" is a social* as well as *regulatory speech act to maintain the expected social and emotional equilibrium between interlocutors.* But, we have to ask from whom a Japanese must keep appropriate distance in performing "enryo", and how s/he takes such distance between interlocutors into consideration.

In Kagawa (1997:99), *"Enryo"* is translated into English as "to hesitate," "to act or express oneself modestly," "to be careful not to impose on others," and "to restrain oneself." Similar translation is given in Japanese-English Dictionaries, as well. In performing the speech acts such as "hesitation", "expressing modesty" or "reserving", the encoder generally observes the Leech's Polite Maxims such as *Tact, Modesty* and *Generosity* for *the sake of the decode*. This implies the encoder keeps a necessary distance from the decoder in an *"enryo"* speech act. Then, as we'll see later, by definition, "enryo" seems to be a *dissociative* act.

Then, we have to ask two further questions.

(i) Then, by definition, it is a *dissociative act*. But, is "enryo" always dissociative?

(ii) Is "enryo" always performed for the sake of the decoder? If, yes. Does it imply that an "enryo" is *uni-directional from the encoder to the decoder?*

Let me define a few terms to be used in this paper that consists of the necessary components of the conditions of success in the theory of current speech act theory. First, *uchimono* (insider)/ *yososama* (acquaintance)/ *yosomono* (outsider) relation: In Japanese communication, the relation between interlocutors is tri-chotomous *uchimono-yososama-yosomono-relation*.[2] They are technically defined as follows.

Definition 1   *Uchimono/yososama/yosomono-relation*

The speakers are in *uchimono*-relation if and only if they are members of the *intersection* of their sets.

> *uchimono-relation* (*intersection*)
> $\{w, x\} \in D1$, $\{y, z\} \in D2$,   *then* $\{x, y\} \in D1 \cap D2$

Similarly, the speakers are in *yososama*-relation if and only if they are members of the *symmetric difference* of those sets. They are *accessible* each other.[3]

> *yososama-relation* (symmetric difference)
> D1 D2= (D1 D2) (D1∩D2)
> {w, x}∈*D1,* {y, z} ∈*D2*, {x, y}∈ *D1∩D,*
> *then* { , z}∈ D1 D2

In contrast, the speakers are in *yosomono*-relation if and only if they are members of the sets that are *disjoint*. Thus, they are *inaccessible* each other.

> *yosomono-relation* (disjoint)
> {w, x}∈*D1,* {y, z} ∈*D2, then D1 D2*

It is a common knowledge among Japanese that *"enryo" must be performed among the interlocutors in yososama (or acquaintance)-relation*. In contrast, the speakers in "*uchimono (=insider)*" relation or those in "*yosmono (=stranger/ outcast)*" relation *need not perform* each other.

Definition 2 Associative/ dissociative

In my regulation theoretic speech act theory, a speech act is *x-sociative* with respect to the relation between the speakers. It is either *associative* or *dissociative* if and only if the encoder intends either to have or not to have closer relationship with the decoder in a given context of communication, respectively. Else, it is *maintenative*.

Definition 3 Directions of regulation:

In my regulation theoretic speech act theory, the direction of regulation of <u>each speech act</u> is either *from the decoder to the encoder* or *from the encoder to the decoder (basic regulation types)*. It is *from the decoder to the encoder* if and only if the decoder does not have *the option of refusal*. Else, it is *from the encoder to the decoder*. Here, the option refusal means the option of acceptance or non-acceptance of the preceding utterance by other party.[4] In <u>consecutive speech acts or a dialogue</u>, if both parties accept the option of refusal of the other party, then the direction of regulation of those speech acts is called *bi-directional mutual regulation*. In contrast, if both parties do not accept it, its direction is bi-directionally *empty (derived regulation types)*.

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accessible to each member of intersection of *D1and D2 ,*and each members of the intersection of D*1 and D2* is accessible to z, then w is accessible to z.
   Accessiblilty in hiuman relation ∀w,x,y,z [[{w, x}∈*D1* ∧ {y, z} ∈*D2* ∧ {x, y}∈ D1 *D2*]→[[w ≅ x ∨ y]
∧[x ∨ y ≅ z]]→[w ≅ z]]]. (where, ≅: denotes accessibility.)
[4] In the process of the construction of the theory of "regulation," I am influenced by Forgel's notion of "co-regulation" (see, Forgel, 1993: 6).

2. Research Questions and Analysis

Let's observe how "*Enryo*" is performed and find out answers to the following *research questions*.

(1) What are *illocutionary points* of "*Enryo*"?

(2) Whose *face* is *protected* or *disgraced*?

(3) Is it an *associative* or a *dissociative* act?

(4) Who is supposed to *regulate* himself/ herself to the other party?

As for the concept of "face", following Spencer-Oatey (2000), the encoder's face as well as the decoder's face is considered according to whether they are positive or negative. Consequently, we have four different types of illocutionary acts as shown below.

In what follows, I will use data extracted from a famous Japanese comic strip "*Sazae-san*" that represents post-war 25 years (namely, from 1949 till 1974) Japanese culture and life including language uses like "*enryo*" where some properties of "*enryo*" seem far salient in comparison with present day Japan. Data from "*Sazae-san*" are not natural or authentic data, however, more than enough to extract properties of "*enryo*" for the description of *a theory of type like speech act theory*.

2.1 Case 1

Let us examine the first case. In this example, a <u>*mutual-yielding act*</u> is observed.

(2)

Host: *Douzo achira-e.*

     (Please sit down over there.)

Guest: *Maa anna o-takai tokoro-e.*

     (That's far too good for me!)

     Ie kochira-ni itadaki-masu.

     (No, let me sit over here!)

Host: *Doozeo koko-ni.*

     (No, please sit here!)

Guest: *Iie sore-dewa annmari.*

     (No, really! Here!)   [Hasegawa 1, 155]

Here, the host is expected to salute the guest and behave ceremoniously. She *humbly* proposes the guest to sit on the cushion placed at the seat of honor in front of the Japanese alcove or *tokonoma observing the social norm to be respected in this kind of ritual context.* The guest, on the other hand, is perplexed with the offer, since she believes that the proposed seat is *too high for her to take* and refrains from taking it. Thus, she in return performs an illocutionary act of "*enryo*" saying "that's far too good for her" and implying "she cannot accept her proposal, then tries to move the cushion at the

seat of honor to the lower seat where she believes it to be the appropriate place for her to sit, asking the host to let her sit on the cushion at this lower seat. In performing the act, the guest does not have any intention to disgrace the host's positive face, but simply express her hesitance to seat herself at the seat of honor. Subsequently, both parties do not yield to each other and continue to struggle for the cushion for a while. Here, since neither side accepts the option of refusal of the other party, there is no regulation between them. Thus, they are in the relation of <u>empty direction of regulation</u>. Consequently, the guest's reply to the host's proposal, namely, "*Maa anna o-takai tokoro-e* (That's far too good for me!)" is rephrased as follows: "I'm perplexed. I understand that accepting your kind offer means an infringement of the social norm in the seat-offer context. So, I can't accept it." In this case, the guest behaves *as if she minimizes benefit to herself [Generosity Maxim] and minimizes praise of herself [Modesty Maxim] to save her own negative face. Therefore, <u>her "enryo" is performed relatively for her own sake, and threatens the host's positive face</u>* irrespective of her initial *intention. Thus, her act is dissociative. (Don't overestimate me!)*

2.2 Case 2

Let's go to the second case. In this context, <u>the guest's consideration to the host's negative face</u> is observed.

(3)

Host: *Tomatte-irasshai !*(Stay the night!)

Guest: *Tondemonai!! Oitoma-simsu.*

　　(No, I couldn't.　We'll be going.)

Wife: *Natsuyasumi jya arimasen ka.*

　　(But it's summer vacation, isn't it?)

Host: *So ossharazuni!*

　　(Don't say no!)　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　[Hasegawa 5: 13]

　　Here, the guest is proposed to stay the night at the host's house. Actually, the proposal is what the guest expected, however, he believes it is inappropriate to accept it on the spot, because staying a night at someone's place imposes a lot of burdens on the host. Consequently, he politely refuses the proposal saying, "it's thankful but I couldn't". He repeatedly reserves with the same words. In this particular comic strip, the hosts are glad to offer one night stay. In general, It is very difficult to say whether a host is really glad to offer a night-stay or not. It is quite often the case that a host says, "you are welcome," even if he might feel nuisance to have a guest at home, let alone offering of one-night stay. A host may propose an offer to the guest expecting a declination from him. This is

another ritual expected to be performed between interlocutors in the context of receiving visitors.[5] Therefore, the visitor's reply to the host's proposal, "*Tondemonai!! Oitoma-simsu* (No, I couldn't. We'll be going)" can be rephrased as follows: "Impossible. I understand that accepting your kind offer means an infringement of the social norm in the one-night stay offer context. I also understand that our staying at your home imposes lots of burdens on you. I wonder if it may threaten your negative face. So, I am hesitant to accept it." In this case, the guest behaves *as if he minimizes cost to the host [Tact Maxim] to save the host's negative face, suppressing his honest desire. In other words, the guest tries to adjust himself to the host's mind. Then, his act is associative, but not dissociative.*

2.3 Case 3

Let's look at the third case. In this example, an <u>act of pretense</u> is observed.

(4)
Woman: *Nee. O-agannasai   yo!*
            (Please go ahead and eat!)
Boy: *Iidesu yo.*
        (No, thank you.)
W: *Nee. Jya. Motte- o-kaennasai yo.*
      (Then take it home with you.)
Boy & Girl: *Iidesu.*
                (You really shouldn't bother.)   [Hasegawa 3: 122]

Here, a brother and a sister visit a woman to do a little errand for their parents. They are offered cushions by the host, which implies that they are treated formally. They sit straight and behave quite ceremoniously as if they were representing their family. They believe that they are expected to behave as such, since they are advised it at home. The woman tries to treat them to sweets. However, they restrain themselves from accepting the offer on their parents. In this case, they are forcing themselves to behave well against their own will in order either to show off. They intend to show how well he has been brought up at home. In general, <u>*children of good family are advised to show their best manners at others' home in those days.*</u> Therefore, the boy's reply to the woman's proposal, namely, "*Iidesu yo* (No, thank you)" can be rephrased as follows: "Since I understand that accepting your kind offer means an infringement of the social norm in a serving-to-guests context. I also understand that if I behave well observing the norm as I told by my

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[5] Lip-service of this type is a kind of "restraint of refraining from offering unintended proposal." In a particular district of Kyoto Japan, a woman would propose a bowl of rice and tea to an acquaintance by saying "How about a bowl of rice and tea." (*Maa bubu-zuke demo ippai oagari-yasu.*) However, it was just a common greeting between acquaintances but not a real offer. If the decoder gladly accept the offer replying "Thanks. I will," then he is regarded as "Audacious or Nervy." (*Nanngi-na hito ya-naa.)*

parents, you will think highly of me. Therefore, I do not accept your offer." In this case, the boy behaves *as if he minimizes cost to the host [Tact Maxim] and minimizes material benefit to himself [Generosity Maxim], suppressing his honest desire. However his honest intention is to be praised for his behavior by the host [Violation of Modesty Maxim: Minimize praise of self]*.

2.4 Case 4

Now, let's observe the last case. Here, a boy is visiting an old man to do an errand for his family. He is well treated and proposed to receive a present by the old man. This case is almost the same as example 3 except that the boy mentions his family by saying "*Uchide shikarare-masu kara.* (I'll be scolded at home)."

Old man: *Sukunai ga o-chuugen da.*
    (It's not much but take this mid-year present.)
Boy: *Tondemo-nai. Uchide shikarare- masu-kara.*
  (I can't accept. I'll be scolded at home.)
OM: *Maa Sou-iwazuni totte-oki-tamae.*
  (Don't say that. Please take it.)
Boy: *Dewa tomokaku o-azukari-site.*(All right, I accept.)
  [Hasegawa 7: 157]

This reply to the old man's proposal, "*Tondemo-nai. Uchide shikarare-masu-kara* (I can't accept. I'll be scolded at home)" can be rephrased as follows: "Impossible, because I understand that accepting your kind offer means an infringement of the social norm in a gift-giving context. If I do not observe the norm and dare to accept it, I'll be scolded at home because it is a disgrace to our family." Then, his family's negative face is disgraced. In this case, the boy behaves *as if he minimizes benefit to himself [Generosity Maxim] to save his family's negative face, suppressing his honest desire.*

3. Discussion
Based on the observation and analyses above, we will get three typologies with respect to encoder/decoder's positive/negative face. They are typologies of illocutionary points, x-sociation and x-regulation with which we can answer to the question posed above, namely,
(1) "What are illocutionary points of '*enryo*'?"
(2) "Whose *face* is *protected* or *disgraced*?"
(3) "Is it an *associative* or a *dissociative* act?"
(4) "Who is supposed to *regulate* himself/ herself to the other party?"

145

3.1 Typology of illocutionary points

Typology of illocutionary points can be shown with respect to encoder/decoder's positive/negative face as in figure 1. Figure 1 clearly tells that whenever an encoder performs a speech act of "*enryo*", s/he respects Tact Maxim/ Generosity Maxim/Modesty Maxim. In case 1, case 3 and case 4, the encoder minimizes benefit to him/herself [Generosity Maxim]. In case 2 and case 3, s/he minimizes cost to the decoder [Tact Maxim]. In case 1, the encoder minimizes praise of herself [Modesty Maxim]. Here, these politeness strategies are incorporated to save negative/positive face. In case 1, the encoder performs "*enryo*" to save her own negative face and unintentionally threatens the decoder's positive face in return. In case 2, the encoder saves the host's negative face, suppressing his honest desire. In case 3, the encoder's honest intention is to save his own positive face. Lastly, in case 4, the encoder intends to save his "*uchimono's*" negative face, suppressing his honest desire. Here, it is also shown that the encoder does not perform "*enryo*" to threaten his/her own face. (Possible explanation to this result is to assume "Masochism-avoidance strategy".)

Illocutionary Points	Positive Face	Negative Face
Decoder's Face	Case 1) The encoder minimizes benefit to herself [Generosity Maxim] and minimizes praise of herself [Modesty Maxim] to save her own negative face. Consequently, she threatens the decoder's positive face.	Case 2) The encoder minimizes cost to the decoder [Tact Maxim] to save the decoder's negative face, suppressing his honest desire.
Encoder's Face	Case 3) The encoder minimizes cost to the decoder [Tact Maxim] and minimizes benefit to himself [Generosity Maxim]. His honest intention is to save his own positive face.	Case 4) The encoder minimizes benefit to himself [Generosity Maxim] to save his family's negative face, suppressing his honest desire.

Figure 1 Typology of illocutionary points with respect to encoder/decoder's positive/ negative face

3.2 x-sociation

X-sociation can be shown with respect to encoder/decoder's positive/negative face as in figure2.

146

X-Sociation	Positive Face	Negative Face
Decoder's Face	Case 1) (Mutual Yielding context) Possible shift of sociation takes place from dissociation to association.	Case 2) (The decoder's negative face is under consideration) The encoder's honest intention is to save the decoder's negative face.Associative act
Encoder's Face	Case 3) (Act of pretense context) The encoder's honest intention is to be praised by the decoder [Violation of Modesty Maxim] Maintenative act	Case 4) (Under *uchimono*'s watch context) The encoder's honest intention is to save his family's negative face.Maintenative act

Figure 2 Typology of x-sociation with respect to encoder/decoder's positive/negative face

Figure 2 clearly shows that whenever an encoder performs a speech act of "enryo", s/he intends either to have or not to have closer relationship with the decoder or tries to maintain the present relationship with him/her in a given context of communication. In case 1, both parties are engaging in a mutual-yielding act. Thus, at the beginning, they do not have closer relationship. However, in the meantime they will somehow try to reach a compromise. So, there will be some possible shift of sociation from dissociation to association. In case 2, the illocutionary point of this "enryo" is to save the host's negative face. So, from the start, the visitor's intention is associative. As to Case 3, the encoder employs both Tact Maxim and Generosity Maxim, and keeps the distance from the decoder. However, his honest desire/intention is to be praised by the decoder. Therefore, his act has to be maitenative. In case 4, even if the encoder uses Generosity Maxim to keep the distance from the decoder, his honest intention is to save his *uchimono's* (=family's) negative face. Therefore, his act is regarded as maitenative. Consequently, it can be observed that unlike ordinary expectation, no "enryo" speech act is intentionally performed as a dissociative act.

3.3 x-regulation
X-regulation is shown with respect to encoder/decoder's positive/negative face as in figure 3.

X-Regulation	Positive Face	Negative Face
Decoder's Face	Case 1 Both parties do not accept the option of refusal of the other party Bi-directional Empty Regulation	Case 2 Both parties accept the option of refusal of the other party Bi-directional Mutual Regulation
Encoder's Face	Case 3 The encoder does not have the option of refusal Uni-directional from the guest to the host	Case 4 The encoder does not have the option of refusal Uni-directional from the guest to the host

Figure 3 Typology of x-regulation points with respect to encoder/decoder's positive/ negative face

Figure 3 clearly shows that whenever an encoder performs a speech act of "*enryo*", s/he intends either to regulate him/herself to the other party or not in a given context of communication. In case 1, since both parties do not admit the option of refusal of the other party, the direction of regulation is bi-directionally empty. In case 2, every participant in the dialogue has the option of refusal. Thus, the direction of regulation is bi-directional mutual regulation. As for the case 3 and 4, the encoder is supposed not to accept the offer from the other party. In contrast, the decoders have the option of refusal in these contexts. Therefore, in these cases, the direction of regulation is uni-directional regulation from the guest to the host. However, as you may have noticed, whenever "enryo" is performed, the uni-directional regulation from the decoder to the encoder is not performed.

4. A Tentative Conclusion

In this paper, I have clarified the characteristics of a typical Japanese speech act "*enryo*" from the perspectives of Current Speech Act Theory in corporation with Brown & Levinson's *Face Theory* and Leech's *Politeness Maxim*. I also incorporated my recent theory such as the theory of *Association and Regulation*.

Throughout this paper, I have tried to answer the questions posed above, namely, (i) in "*enryo*" speech acts, the encoder concerns not only the decoder's face but also his/her own face as well as his/her *uchimono's* face, (ii) "*enryo*" speech acts are not dissociative, but usually either associative or maintenative, and (iii) in performing "*enryo*", the case of uni-directional regulation from the encoder to the decoder is limited to the case in which the encoder's face (either positive or negative) is the target of consideration. Thus, "*enryo*" speech acts are not always uni-directional but there are cases of bi-directional regulation.

In addition to these, we have three findings from the present study.

Whenever "*enryo*" is performed, (iv) the encoder does not perform the act to threaten his/her own face, (v) it is not intentionally performed as a dissociative act, and (vi) the uni-directional regulation from the decoder to the encoder is not performed.

Consequently, our study strongly suggests that common knowledge of "*enryo*" needs correction.

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