

# Sentence-Final Particles in Japanese : Interrelation Meanings of *Ka*, *Yone*, *Yo* and *Ne*

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## 1. Introduction

This study is an analysis of sentence-final particles in Japanese, mainly focused on *Yone* that is one of linguistic forms whose meaning and function is difficult to describe. My claims in this paper are the following two points. One is about a framework that how we should examine sentence-final particles and the other one is about the meanings of sentence-final particles.

Sentence-final particles are generally considered to be arbitrary in their usage, largely dependent upon pragmatics. However, findings in error analyses show that some sentence-final particles are not arbitrary at all. So, functions of sentence-final particles should be regarded as results of interplays of semantics, syntax and pragmatics. It is important to have a perspective not only in defining ‘descrete meanings’ but also defining ‘interrelation meanings’ for describing sentence-final particles.

The sentences with *Yone* affixation at the end are indeterminate in its use. *Yone* shares some features with *Ka*, while, in other cases, *Yone* shares features with *Yo* and *Ne* in meaning and function, and in still other cases, *Yone* seems to share some other features with *Ne* and *Yo*. *Yone* is traditionally decomposed into *Yo* and *Ne*.<sup>1</sup> However, *Yone* should be considered not as a compound form or derivation from *Yo* or *Ne*, but a primitive type of *Yo* and *Ne*. We may say that *Yone* is situated at the interface of *Yo*, *Ne* and *Ka*.

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<sup>1</sup> Shirakawa (1992, pp. 37-38) criticizes it. The tendency does not seem to change even if the paradigm of the research has shifted its direction.

## 2. Error Analysis

In Japanese linguistics, the sentence-final particles have been considered to be markers for the propositional attitude or communicative attitude of the speaker. For example, *Ka*, *Yone*, *Yo* and *Ne*, that are typical sentence-final particles in Japanese, are typically explained in Japanese descriptive grammar in the following manner.

*Ka* : It is a question marker.

*Yone* : It shows that the information directed to the hearer as a cognition of the speaker that might be accepted or agreed by the hearer to have known.

*Yo* : It shows that the information directed to the hearer as something that hearer should know.

*Ne* : It shows that the information directed to the hearer as a cognition of the speaker while he is confirming in his mind.

(According to Nihongo kijutsu bunpou kenkyuukai (2003, pp. 20-51, 239-268))

As a result, *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* are regarded as non-truth conditional and as largely dependent on modal attitude of the speaker or pragmatic attitude and context. It is not quite exactly right. In example (1), there is *Ne* in A's line and there is not *Ne* in B's line, but the exchanges are pragmatically felicitous.<sup>2</sup> It is possible to assume that the use of *Ne* is decided dependent on modal attitude of speaker or pragmatic attitude in example (1).

(1) 1 A: こんにちは 久しぶりですね。

**konnichiwa hisashiburi desu ne**

**hello after a long time BE-PRES SFP**

**Hello. I haven't seen you for a long time.**

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<sup>2</sup> Examples were collected from role playing video which was recorded during the conversation lesson by the speaker. Learner's level is from a intermediate to advanced rank. A part alone that doesn't influence consideration is simplified to the example. Also there are some examples that were collected from Japanese native speakers.

2 B: 久しぶりです。

*hisashiburi desu*

*after a long time BE-PRES*

*I haven't seen you for a long time.*

In Example (2), complete absence of sentence-final particle makes the exchanges pragmatically infelicitous. This shows that sentence-final particles are not arbitrary in some cases.

(2) 1 A: お国の方も雪降っていますか。

*okuni no hoo mo yuki hutte imasu ka*

*your country also snow have-PROG Q*

*Is it also snowing in your country?*

2 B: 全然降っていません。

*zenzen hutte imasen*

*at all have-PROG-NEG*

*It is not snowing at all.*

3 A: 日本へ来てよかったですね, 雪が見られて。

*nihon e kite yokatta desu ne, yuki ga mirarete*

*Japan LOC come good-PAST BE-PRES SFP, snow S can see*

*You may come to Japan because the snow had been seen.*

4 B: ?? はいそうです。

*hai soo desu*

*yes so BE-PRES*

*Yes, I think so.*

In Example (2), “*nihon e kite yokatta desu ne, yuki ga mirarete*” is not a Yes-No question, thus B’s “*hai soo desu*” should not be a “Yes, it is” but be a “I agree with you. I also think so.”. To show its meaning to the hearer clearly, B had better use *Ne*. From this

observation, for Japanese language learner, it is not only a problem of pragmatics but also a problem of syntax because they have to affix *Ne* depending on sentence types.

In example (3), B's utterances are contrastive. B's first reply "ii desu yo" that affixed with *Yo* the end is completely acceptable. On the other hand, second sentence "takusan tomodachi sasottemo ii desu" that not affixed with *Yo* sounds inadequate because it sounds too much a literal answer.

(3) 1 A: 友達誘ってもいいですか。

*tomodachi sasottemo ii desu ka*

*friends invite-CONC good BE-PRES Q*

*May I invite the friend?*

2 B: いいですよ。?? たくさん友達誘ってもいいです。

*ii desu yo. takusan tomodachi sasottemo ii desu*

*good BE-PRES SFP, many friends invite-CONC good BE-PRES*

*It is good. You may invite a lot of friends.*

It communicates enough information for A's Yes-No question, but it is not enough for indicating communicative attitude to A and consequently it is judged inadequate. There is actually not a grammatical error in the sentence but it is inadequate in this context. The reason why is that it is not used sentence-final particles in end of the sentence.

In Japanese, "ii desu" has two meanings, one is "yes or OK" and the other one is "no thank you". So conventionally, when we say "ii desu" as "yes, of course" or "sure, go ahead", we often affix sentence-final particles. Consequently, in example (3), *Yo* in B's first reply "ii desu yo" is syntactically required and in B's second sentence, affixation of *Yo* or *Ne* is pragmatically strongly recommended. That is, It is also not only a problem of pragmatics but also a problem of syntax because they have to affix sentence-final particles depending on sentence types.

Example (4) is an example of error where sentence-final particle that underlined is used improperly in meaning and the affixation of *Ka* is properly. It shows that there is also a

problem of semantics for Japanese language learners on sentence-final particles.

- (4) 1 A: 何か予定がありますか。

nani ka yotei ga arimasu ka

what Q plan S BE-PRES Q

Do you have any plan?

- 2 B: 決めている予定はないですね。

kimete iru yotei wa nai desu ne

decide-PRG plan T BE-NEG SFP

I don't have any plan already decided.

- 3 A: ?? そうですね。

soo desu ne

so BE-PRES SFP

It is so.

In Example (5), it is considered that absence of sentence-final particle is the best choice but the use of *Ne* is also acceptable. To use *Yo* and *Yone* are grammatical but sounds infelicitous in this context.

- (5) 1 A: (あなたのアパートは) 三条町ですか。

(anata no apartment wa) Sanjoo-machi desu ka

(your apartment T) Sanjoo-machi BE-PRES Q

Is your apartment in Sanjo-machi?

- 2 B: ?? そうですね, そうです, はい。

soo desu yone, soo desu hai

so BE-PRES SFP, so BE-PRES, yes

That's right. It is so, Yes.

The reason is that since A's "(anata no apartment wa) Sanjoo-machi desu ka" is just a Yes-No question, B should answer just yes or no as a reply. B, however, affixed *Yone*.

Therefore, the presence of *Yone* in this context communicates some nuances additionally to A. It suggests that this is a comprehensive problem of semantics, syntax and the pragmatics for learners.

Why did these errors occur? As is well-known, learners of Japanese do not acquire the details of shades of meaning and functions of sentence-final particles. These examples suggest that sentence-final particles are at the interface between semantics, syntax and the pragmatics and are particularly difficult for JFL learners. To delineate these problems, it is important to have a perspective not only for defining discrete meanings but also defining ‘interrelation meanings’. It is worthwhile to contrast the uses and interrelations of *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo*, thereby revealing subtle differences in shades of meaning.

### 3. Discussions 1

#### 3.1. Indeterminacy

Since *Ka* is a sentence-final particle mainly used in a rather broad domain ranging from the interrogative to expression of replying or understanding, fundamentally, the *Ka* affixed sentence has varied strength of indeterminacy in its feature.

In example (6), B has just accepted the fact that A had a party with friends in Tokyo. Accordingly, it is possible to think that B felt a kind of indeterminacy about the fact, i.e. B understands the intent of A’s message, but accepts it tentatively, since B has not experienced the event directly. That is why *Ka* can be used in expressions of replying or understanding.<sup>3</sup>

(6) 1 A: ぼくは東京で友達と一緒にパーティした。

**boku wa Tokyo de tomodachi to issho ni party o  
shi ta**

**I T Tokyo LOC friends COM together party ACC  
do-PAST**

**I did the party with the friend in Tokyo.**

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<sup>3</sup> Moriyama (1992, pp. 38–41) points out that *Ka* is used not only in a question sentence but also in a sentence that is uttered in a cognitive process to perceive a new information.

2 B: そうですか。

*soo desu ka*

*so BE-PRES SFP*

*Really?*

*Yo* affixed and *Ne* affixed sentences, in contrast, do not have such indeterminacy in their features. So, in example (7), the sentences with sentence-final particles affixed do not have such indeterminacy because B's "oboete imasu" is a representation of B's thought that had been fixed and exists in B's mind when B speaks. Then, affixation of *Ka* and *Yone* are inadequate in this context.

(7) 1 A: 私のこと覚えてますか。

*watashi no koto oboete imasu ka*

*me remember-PROG Q*

*Do you rember me?*

2 B: 覚えています [#か／＃よね／よ／ね]。

*oboete imasu [#ka/#yone/yo/ne]*

*remember-PROG [#SFP/#SFP/SFP/SFP]*

*I remember you.*

*Yone* seems to share a feature with *Ka*. In example (8), the *Yone* affixed sentence has a kind of indeterminacy because A did not know that B could speak Chinese or not when A asked B.

(8) [Bがシンガポール出身と聞いて]

*[B ga Singapole shussin to kiite]*

*[heard that B came from Singapore]*

1 A: そうすると中国語は ...

*soo suru to Chuugokugo wa ...*

*then Chinese T ...*

*Then, Can you speak Chinese?*

2 B: ええ, 中国語もできます。

*ee Chuugokugo mo dekimasu*

*yes Chinese also can do*

*Yes, I can speak Chinese, too.*

3 A: そうです [か／よね／\*ね／\*よ]。

*soodeu [ka/yone/\*ne/\*yo]*

*so BE-PRES [SFP/SFP/\*SFP/\*SFP]*

*Really? / That's right.*

Judging from the results of the observation mentioned above, we can safely assume that *Ka* and *Yone* are used in the perception process of new information presented by the counterpart. Consequently, it is also possible to assume that they are a kind of markers that show that the speaker is in a cognitive process of the new information. Considering from this feature, *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* should be divided into two groups, that is, *Ka*, *Yone* and *Ne*, *Yo*.

However, as example (9) shows, *Ka* and *Yone* cannot be necessarily interchanged with each other, which suggests that there is a difference between *Ka* and *Yone*.

(9) 1 A: 雨が降っている。

*ame ga hutte iru*

*rain S rain-PROG*

*It is raining.*

2 B: そうです [か／\*よね]。

*soo desu [ka/\*yone]*

*so BE-PRES [SFP/\*SEP]*

*really?*

We have to reveal the indeterminacy that *Yone* has in more details. It means that it is necessary to examine *Ka* and *Yone* from different point of view.

### 3.2. Given (Old) information

Let us turn our eyes to example (10), where *Ka* and *Yone* cannot be necessarily interchanged with each other just like (9). In example (10), the *Ka* and *Yone* affixed sentence is thought not to be new information, but given (Old) information for A, because B has already communicated it to A before A's utterance. In addition, it should be noted that in example (10), *Ka* is unacceptable but *Yone* is completely acceptable. This again suggests that there is a difference between *Ka* and *Yone*.

(10) 「具合が悪い」と B が言った。しばらく体調の話をした後で]

[*guai ga warui to B ga itta. shibaraku taichou no hanashi o shita ato de*]

[*B said "It is unwell" and they talked about it for a while*]

1 A: 具合がわるいんです [*#か／よね*]。いい薬ありますよ。

*guai ga warui n desu [#ka/yone].*

*ii kusuri arimasu yo*

*condition S bad NOM BE-PRES [#SFP/SFP].*

*good medicine BE-PRES SFP*

*Is the condition bad? / The condition is bad.*

*There is a good medicine.*

Example (8), shown in section 3.1, should be explained in the same way as the explanation of example (10). It is that because hearing B came from Singapore, A has had assumed or inferred that B can speak Chinese. So, the answer B can speak Chinese is new information as well as given information for A. From this observation, it is understood that *Ka* should be considered usable in the perception process of new information and *Yone* here should be considered usable in the perception process of new information that is also given information presented by the counterpart. It enables us to explain why *Ka* and *Yone* are acceptable but they do not mean the same thing in example (8).

*Ka* and *Yone* should not be considered to be always interchangeable. As example (11) that

will be shown below, it is impossible to use *Yone* in the perception process of new information presented by the counterpart. In example (11), A's second turn with *Yone* sounds strange because it sounds as if A had known already that B is the president.

## (11) [電話で]

[denwa de]shachoo irasshaimau ka]

1 A: 社長いらっしゃいますか。

[on the telephone] president BE-HON-PRES Q

[on the telephone] Is there a president?

2 B: はい, 私です。

hai watashi desu

yes I BE-PRES

Yes, it is me.

3 A: そうです [か/# よね]。

soo desu [ka/yone]

so BE-PRES [SFP/#SFP]

It is so.

The feature mentioned above can explain it. The use of *Yone* communicates a nuance that the information communicated is considered given information. While it is easily assumed that if A knows B is the president, he will not ask B that he is the president or not. That is why example (11) sounds strange and unacceptable.

On the other hand, *Ne* and *Yone* affix to given information and they do not have such difference that *Ka* and *Yone* have. So, in example (12), it is possible to interchange with each other even though the meaning changes.

## (12) 1 A: 思いつく人いる?

omoitsuku hito iru

hit on person BE-PRES Q

Do you have a person who hits on?

2 B: うん, 考えてみる [よ／ね]。

**un kangaete miru [yo/ne]**

**well think try [SFP/SFP]**

**Yes, I will think.**

From the results of observation above, it is shown that the indeterminacy of *Yone* affixed sentence has two different kinds of features. *Yone* affixed sentence has a feature as presenting given information but it also has a feature that the sentence has indeterminacy. As discussed above, propositions that *Yo* and *Ne* are affixed to do not have such indeterminacy and they are assumed to be given information. On the other hand, proposition that *Ka* is affixed to have indeterminacy and it is assumed to be not given information but new information.

At this point, it becomes clear that *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* should be divided into two groups, *Yone*, *Ne*, *Yo* and *Ka*. *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* have a feature that affixed to given information. *Ka* has a feature that does not affixed to given information. Indeed, already noted in section 3.1, *Ka* and *Yone* have the same feature about indeterminacy but *Yo* and *Ne* does not have such feature. In this interrelation of *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo*, *Yone* is a interface between *Yo*, *Ne* and *Ka*.

In section 3.1, our observation shows commonality between *Ka* and *Yone*. In this section, it became clear the difference between *Ka* and *Yone*. So, in the next section, we will discuss commonalities between *Yone* and *Ne* · *Yo*.

### 3.3. Commonality between *Yone* and *Ne* · *Yo*

Kato (2001, p. 43) claims that *Ne* is a discourse marker which shows that speaker does not have the intention to manage the information exclusively. It can explain clearly *Ne* in example (13). In this situation, speaker intends to say the sentence not only to assert his wish but also to share his wish with hearer for apologizes. So, in order to show his intention to hearer clearly, *Ne* is affixed.

(13) [旅行の誘いを断ったあとで]

**[ryokoo no sasoi o kotowatta ato de]**

*[After turning down the invitation for a travel]*

1 A: またチャンスがあれば一緒にどこか旅行行きたいね。

mata chance ga are ba issho ni doko ka ryokoo  
ikitai ne  
again chance S BE-COND together where SFP trip  
go want SFP  
I want to go on a trip somewhere together if  
there is a chance again.

It is interesting to note that affixation of *Yone* are also acceptable in same situation as examples (13). Confirm it in example (14).

(14) [旅行の誘いを断ったあとで]

[ryokoo no sasoi o kotowatta ato de]

*[After turning down the invitation for a travel]*

1 A: またチャンスがあれば一緒にどこか旅行行きたいよね。

mata chance ga are ba issho ni doko ka ryokoo  
ikitai yone  
again chance S BE-COND together where SFP trip  
go want SFP  
I want to go on a trip somewhere together if  
there is a chance again.

There is another example in which *Ne* and *Yone* seem to be interchangeable with each other in the same context. From these observations, in some cases, we can conclude that *Yone* are similar to *Ne* in its meaning and function.

(15) 1 A: そろそろ授業を受けに行きます。

sorosoro jugyoo o uke ni ikimasu  
soon class ACC attend LOC go-PRES

*I go to attend the class soon.*

2 B: 先生も来ました [ね／よね]。

*sensei mo kimasi ta [ne/yone]*

*teacher also come-PAST [SFP/SFP]*

*The teacher also has come.*

Let's turn our eyes to *Yo*. Kato (2001, p. 43) claims that *Yo* is a discourse marker which shows that speaker has the intention to manage the information exclusively. It can explain clearly *Ne* used in examples (16). In this situation, B intends to utter the sentence not only to describe the fact that she cannot take a holiday but also to let hearer know the fact. So, in order to show her intention clearly to hearer, *Yo* is affixed.

(16) 1 A: ちょっと休んだ方がいいかな。

*chotto yasunda hoo ga ii kana*

*a little have a rest-PAST NOM S better SFP*

*It is better you take a holiday for a few days.*

2 B: でもね、バイト絶対に休めないよ。

*demo ne baito zettaini yasumu koto ga dekinai*

*yo*

*but SFP part-time job never take a rest from*

*can do not SFP*

*I can not take a holiday from the part-time job,*

*however.*

Just like the cases mentioned above, there are also cases where it is possible to replace *Yo* with *Yone* in the same context. Examples below suggest that *Yone* has some affinity with *Yo*. Example (17) is used in the same situation as example (16) and *Yone* is acceptable. Because it is easily assumed that B intends to utter the sentence not only to describe the fact that she cannot take a holiday but also to let hearer know the fact with strong force.

- (17) 1 A: ちょっと休んだ方がいいかな。

chotto yasunda hoo ga ii kana  
*a little have a rest-PAST NOM S better SFP*  
*It is better you take a holiday for a few days.*

- 2 B: でもね, バイト絶対に休めないよね。

demo ne baito zettaini yasumu koto ga dekinai  
yone  
*but SFP part-time job never take a rest from*  
*can do not SFP*  
*I cannot take a holiday from the part-time job,*  
*however.*

Example (18) is a case where A intends to communicate not only it is a lunchtime now but also let hearer know it strongly. These examples show that *Yo* and *Yone* are interchangeable in some cases. *Yone* is similar to *Yo* in its meaning and function as far as these examples are concerned.

- (18) 1 A: ジャ食事に行こうか。

jaa shokuji ni ikoo ka  
*then lunch LOC go-VOL Q*  
*Then, let's go out for lunch.*

- 2 B: 食事?

shokuji?  
*lunch*  
*lunch?*

- 3 A: はい 今昼ご飯です [よ/よね]。

hai ima hirugohan desu [yo/yone]  
*yes now lunch time BE-PRES [SFP/SFP]*  
*Yes, it is lunch time.*

How should it be explained? This paper is based on a framework to consider sentence-final particles as a kind of continuum. *Yo* and *Ne* are traditionally assumed to contradict semantically and pragmatically with each other. Nevertheless, *Yone* is often assumed as a compound form of *Yo* and *Ne*. This state of affairs is rather confusing and troublesome. In view of the above-mentioned observation, it becomes clear that even though *Yo* and *Ne* contradict with each other, *Yone* has both features that *Ne* and *Yo* have. In some cases *Yone* resembles *Ne*, in other cases it resembles *Yo*. What does it mean? If *Yone* is a compound form of *Yo* and *Ne*, how should we describe its meaning?

Takiura (2008, pp. 124-154) proposed to give a solution on the assumption that *Yo* has a feature “speaker oriented” and *Ne*, in contrast, has a feature “hearer oriented”. Furthermore, his claims about a function of *Yone* are as follows; first, to show propositional attitude (assertion) by *Yo* and then to show communicative attitude toward to hearer (sharing, confirming, and so on) by *Ne*. He thinks that *Yone* is a compound form *Yo* and *Ne*, but it is possible to avoid the contradiction because they work on different time line; first, mentioning “speaker oriented” and then “hearer oriented”.<sup>4</sup>

Najima (2006, pp. 18-21) tackled this problem from the view point of Relevance theory. He assumed about *Yo*, *Ne* and *Yone* as follows; *Yo* is a marker, which shows that the sentence is relevant at the level of explicature (proposition). On the other hand, *Ne* is a marker, which shows that the sentence is relevant at the level of higher-level explicature which speaker intends to communicate to hearer. So, *Yone* shows that speaker intends to communicate that the utterance are relevant to hearer not only in explicature level but also in higher-level explicature level. Even if *Yone* is a compound form *Yo* and *Ne*, it is possible to avoid the contradiction because they work at different levels.

The two frameworks are not exactly the same but they explain *Yone* along similar line because they assume the construction of *Yone*-affixed sentence as (19).

(19) [ [ [ proposition ] *Yo* ] *Ne* ]

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<sup>4</sup> It is a personal communication on 11 Sep. 2010.

It seems to successfully explain discrete meaning that *Yone* has, however, they still remain a problem. As mentioned above, Takiura (2008, pp. 124-154) assumes *Yo* and *Ne* functions contradict at the same level but do not contradict in function on different time line sequence of utterance<sup>5</sup>, on the other hand, Najima (2006, pp. 18-21) assumes *Yo* and *Ne* function at the different level, thus contradicting with each other on the assumption that *Yone* is a compound form.

While, already observed above, in some case, *Yone* and *Yo/Ne* are interchangeable in the same context. How do we explain the reason why along the line of reasoning in Takiura (2008) or Najima (2006)? It is difficult to explain why *Yone* resembles *Ne* or *Yo* along the lines they take. It seems that they will explain that it is a case *Yo* or *Ne* of *Yone* is pragmatically focused. It is a kind of ad-hoc explanation. In fact, it is difficult to explain why *Yone* is not acceptable in example (20) and acceptable in example (21) by their theories.

(20) 1 A: あ, 財布が落ちた [よ / \* よね]。

a, saifu ga ochimasita [yo/\*yone]

oh wallet S drop-past [SFP/\*SFP]

Oh, You drop your wallet.

(21) 1 A: 君, 去年も財布落とした [よ / よね]

kimi kyonen mo saihu otosita [yo/yone]

you last year also lost wallet [SFP/SFP]

You lost your wallet last year also.

It is also difficult to explain the same problem about the interrelation of *Ne* and *Yone* by Takiura (2008) or Najima (2006). See examples below.

(22) [家の中で雨音を聞いて]

[ie no naka de amaoto o kiite]

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<sup>5</sup> It is a personal communication on 11 Sep. 2010.

[hearing the sounds of raining]

1 A: 雨降っている [ね／よね]

ame hutte iru [ne/yone]

rain rain-PROG[SFP/SFP]

It is raining, isn't it?

(23) [客に値段を聞かれて店員が答える]

[kyaku ni nedan o kikarete ten'in ga kotaeru]

[A customer asked the price to shopper.

Then he answer]

1 A: これ、いくらですか。

kore ikura desu ka

this how much BE-PRE Q

How much is this?

2 B: えーと、千円です [ね／＊よね]

eeto senen desu [ne/\*yone]

well one thousand yen [SFP/\*SFP]

Well, it is one thousand yen.

In this paper I will suggest a different answer from Takiura (2008) or Najima (2006). The basis of reasoning rests on the assumption that as discussed earlier in this paper, *Yone* should be considered to be at the interface between *Yo* and *Ne*. From these features, it is safe to assume that *Yone* is not a compound form of *Yo* and *Ne* or derivation from them, but a primitive form of *Yo* and *Ne*. It is also discussed *Yone* affixed sentence has a feature as an old information but has indeterminacy. This feature explains why there are cases in which *Yo/Ne* and *Yone* are interchangeable or not. Examples (20) and (23), propositions that *Yone* affixed are old information but does not have indeterminacy. In example (20), the speaker already sees the fact that hearer dropped his wallet. In example (23), the speaker checked a price tag before his answer.

On the other hand, example (21) and (22), propositions that *Yone* affixed have

indeterminacy. In example (21), speaker recall from his memory and asked hearer whether it was true. In example (22), the speaker infers that it is raining from sounds of raindrops. Consequently, it is thought that propositions of example (21) and (22) have indeterminacy. And as we have already discussed, *Yone* affixed sentence has a unique feature of including two aspects. Nevertheless, it is old information, it also has indeterminacy. That is the reason why that *Yone* and *Yo/Ne* are interchangeable or not depending on circumstances.

## 4. Discussions 2

In section 3, we examined *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* from the viewpoints of ‘indeterminacy’, ‘given information’ and ‘exclusiveness’. We showed which features *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* each have in table 1. It shows that *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* interrelate with each other, and it was suggested that *Yone* is located at the interface between *Ka* and *Ne/Yo* or *Ne* and *Yo*. Then we described more detailed interrelations and discussed how *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* have close relation with each other.

### 4.1. Interrelations between *Ka* and *Yone*

As Table 1 shows, it is possible to assume that *Ka* and *Yone* share a feature because they can be affixed to propositions that have indeterminacy, as already pointed out in section 3.2, *Yone* has a feature that enables it to be affixed to given information, and *Ka* does not have such features. There is a difference on this point. So, in Figure 1, which shows an image of the interrelation between *Ka* and *Yone*, *Ka* and *Yone* overlap partially so that there are parts that do not overlap. These descriptions enable us to explain why *Yone* seems to share same function as *Ka* in some cases. See example (24) that is somewhat modified version of

Table 1. Features of *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo*

Features	<i>Ka</i>	<i>Yone</i>	<i>Ne</i>	<i>Yo</i>
indeterminacy	(+)	(+)	(-)	(-)
given information	(-)	(+)	(+)	(+)
exclusiveness	(-)	(+)(-)	(-)	(+)

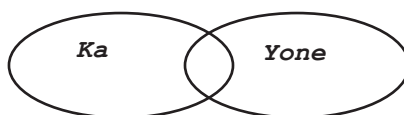


Figure 1. Image of the interrelation between *Ka* and *Yone*

example (23).

(24) [家の中で雨音を聞いて]

[ie no naka de amaoto o kiite]

[hearing the sounds of raining]

1 A: 雨降っています [か／よね]

ame hutte imasu [ka/yone]

rain rain-PROG [SFP/SFP]

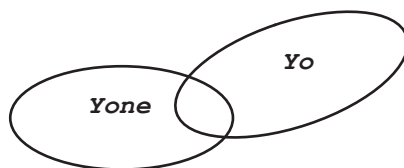
It is raining [?/isn't it?]

As mentioned above, even though the proposition that *Yone* affixed is given information, it has indeterminacy. So, it is explained that *Yone* in example (24) that is close to *Ka* in its meaning, is the case that indeterminacy is focused strongly and as a result, a feature of given information relatively weakened. It is important to note that in example (24), it is possible to interchange *Ka* and *Yone*, but in fact, they are not same meanings. *Ka* affixed sentence is regarded as a question, on the other hand, *Yone* affixed sentence is regarded as a confirmation. The reason why is explained that *Yone* still have a feature 'given information (+)'.

#### 4.2. Interrelation between *Yone* and *Yo*

Let us examine the interrelations between *Yone* and *Yo*. In section 3.3, it was confirmed that *Yo* and *Yone* are interchangeable in some cases, but they are not always interchangeable. So, in Figure 2, which is an image of the interrelations between *Yone* and *Yo*, overlap partially and the other parts do not overlap. Why do *Yone* and *Yo* overlap? What is the commonality between *Yone* and *Yo*?

We believe that it is a feature that enables them to be affixed to the propositions thought

Figure 2. Image of the interrelations between *Yone* and *Yo*

to be given information. Already quoted above, Kato (2001, p. 43) claims that *Yo* is a discourse marker which shows that the speaker has the intention of managing the information exclusively. When we have the intention of managing information exclusively, the information consequently must be given information for us because under such circumstances the information is indeterminate, it is difficult to deal with it exclusively toward our conversational partner. In contrast to *Ka*, *Yone* can be affixed to a proposition that is given information. In this respect, *Yone* and *Yo* have the same feature fundamentally. That is why *Yone* and *Yo* overlap in Figure 2.

These explanations enable us to explain why *Yone* can appear to be very similar to *Yo* in some cases. See example (25) which appeared as example (17) earlier.

- (25) 1 A: ちょっと休んだ方がいいかな。  
           *chotto yasunda hoo ga ii kana*  
           *a little have a rest-PAST NOM S better SFP*  
           *It is better you take a holiday for a few days.*
- 2 B: でもね, バイト絶対に休めない [よ／よね]。  
           *demo ne baito zettaini yasumu koto ga dekinai*  
           *[yo/yone]*  
           *but SFP part-time job never take a rest from*  
           *can do not [SFP/SFP]*  
           *I cannot take a holiday from the part-time job,*  
           *however.*

*Yone* in (25) is the case where the feature of given information is focused strongly and

then indeterminacy relatively weakened. In example (25), it is important to note that although it is possible to interchange *Yone* and *Yo*, they actually do not have the same meanings. *Yo* affixed sentence is regarded as communicating speaker's firm determination that the proposition is true and speaker does not expect hearer's agreement about it. While *Yone* affixed sentence is regarded that speaker expects hearer's agreement. That is the difference.

The reason why there is such difference is possible to explain along the line of this paper claims. *Yone* fundamentally has a feature 'indeterminacy (+)', and *Yo* fundamentally has a feature 'indeterminacy (-)'. Even though *Yone* closed to *Yo*, *Yone* still have a feature 'indeterminacy (+)' because it is fundamental feature. That is why we found the difference between *Yone* sentence and *Yo* sentence in example (25).

#### 4.3. Interrelations between *Yone* and *Ne*

The interrelations of *Yone* and *Ne* are shown as Figure 3. In section 3.3, it was confirmed that *Yone* and *Ne* are interchangeable in some cases. So, in Figure 3, *Yone* and *Ne* overlap only partially, which explains why they are not always interchangeable.

Why do *Yone* and *Ne* overlap? What is the commonality between *Yone* and *Ne*? This paper claims that it is a feature that they can affix to the propositions which is given information. In addition to this, it should be considered that *Ne* communicates a kind of indeterminacy<sup>6</sup>. That is also the reason why *Yone* and *Ne* overlap in Figure 3.

These explanations enable us to explain why *Yone* appear to be the same as *Ne* in some cases. In fact, they are interchangeable in some cases as example (26) shows. The usage of *Ne* in example (26) is traditionally called "confirmation". Therefore, *Ne* in example (26)

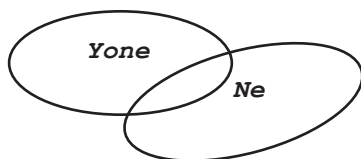


Figure 3. Image of interrelation of *Yone* and *Ne*

<sup>6</sup> Inoue (1999, pp. 83-5) also points out that *Ne* has a kind of indeterminacy as an implication.

conveys a kind of indeterminacy to the hearer. That is why *Yone* and *Ne* are interchangeable in this context. Actually, it is almost right to suppose that *Yone* and *Ne* have a commonality about a feature “indeterminacy”. But this is a simple-minded and hasty conclusion.

(26) [会議のスケジュールを同僚に確認する]

[**kaigi no sukejuuru o dooryoo ni kakunin suru**]

[**confirming a schedule of meeting**]

1 A: 会議は3時です [よね／ね]

**kaigi wa 3 ji desu [yone/ne]**

**meeting T 3 o'clock BE-PRES [SFP/SFP]**

**The meeting will start from 3 o'clock, isn't it?**

As example (26) shows, it should be noted that it is, however, possible to interchange *Yone* and *Ne*, they do not have exactly the same meanings. Things are rather complicated and requires a high degree of delineation. *Ne* affixed sentences are generally regarded as communicating speaker's confirmation, and *Yone* affixed sentences are regarded as communicating speaker's uncertainty about the *Yone* affixed proposition. There is a difference between indeterminacy that *Ne* communicates and *Yone* does. Based on claims in this paper, we can explain this by saying that *Yone* has a fundamental feature of ‘indeterminacy (+)’, and as a result, even though *Yone* closed to *Ne*, *Yone* still have the feature ‘indeterminacy (+)’. While as shown in Table 1, *Ne* does not have indeterminacy as its fundamental feature. Indeterminacy that *Ne* communicates should be considered not a fundamental feature but a presupposition from the function of ‘confirmation’. After all, indeterminacy is not a fundamental commonality between *Yone* and *Ne*.

In addition to this, there is one more commonality that we have to examine between *Yone* and *Ne* on indeterminacy. This paper considers it to be closely connected to a feature of given information. Already quoted above, Kato (2001, p. 43) claims that *Ne* is a discourse marker which shows that the speaker does not have the intention of managing the information exclusively. When we intend to manage the information non-exclusively, what will happen to the meaning of *Ne*? It will have ‘exclusiveness (-)’ effects on the feature of ‘given

information (+)', and then the degree of the feature 'given information (+)' is relatively reduced. The reason why is that an attitude to handle the information non-exclusively communicates that speaker is avoiding responsibility about the information. As a result, *Ne* communicates a kind of indeterminacy to the hearer.

It is important to note that such indeterminacy is not a feature which *Ne* fundamentally has, but a feature it causes pragmatically. Superficially *Yone* and *Ne* appear to have a commonality of indeterminacy, but it is not a fundamental commonality. It should be considered to have pragmatically developed.

#### 4.4. Interrelations between *Ka*, *Yone*, *Yo* and *Ne*

Even though *Yo* and *Ne* overlap with *Yone*, why is Figure 3 different from Figure 2 in its shape? It is a closely related problem mentioned in section 4.3. Assuming that *Ne* has a kind of indeterminacy pragmatically, it means that consequently *Ne* has a commonality between *Yone* or *Ka* and they will be interchangeable with each other even though they do not mean the same thing. So, the left side of the circle that represents *Ne* in figure 3 is close to the circle that represents *Ka*. The result is shown as an image in Figure 4. These interrelations are reflected on sentences, as example (27).

(27) [会議のスケジュールを同僚に話している]

[kaigi no sukejuuru o dooryoo ni hanashite iru]

[talking a schedule of meeting]

1 A: 会議は 3 時です [か／よね／よ／ね]

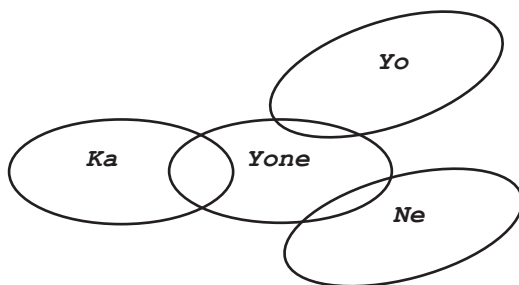


Figure 4. Image of interrelation between *Ka*, *Yone*, *Yo* and *Ne*

**kaigi wa 3 ji desu [ka/yone/yo/ne]**  
**meeting T 3 o'clock BE-PRES [SFP/SFP/SFP/SFP]**  
**The meeting will start from 3 o'clock**  
**[?/isn't it?/ø/isn't it?]**

## 5. Application

### 5.1. To Linguistics

In this section, we will try to apply our results to linguistics and Japanese language education for further verification.

From the result as described above, it can be expected to explain why *Yo* has a feature 'exclusiveness (+)' and *Ne* has a feature 'exclusiveness (-)'. *Yone* and *Yo* share the same feature by the fact that affix to given information. What will happen when the feature 'given information (+)' that *Yone* has was particularly focused pragmatically? It is assumed that with the increase of degree of 'given information (+)', 'exclusiveness' will be markedly more explicitly because to show the 'given information (+)' deliberately communicates the speaker's propositional attitude, i.e. 'that is true' or I am confidence about the truth judgment of the proposition, and as a result, it communicates the nuance of 'exclusiveness (+)' to the hearer.

Similarly, the reason why *Ne* has a feature 'exclusiveness (-)' is correlated with the feature 'given information (+)', a direction of accounting, however, is contrastively. *Yone* and *Ne* share the same feature so that it is possible to affix to given information. What will happen when the feature 'given information (+)' that *Yone* has was relatively weakly focused pragmatically? It is assumed that with the decrease of the degree of 'given information (+)', 'indeterminacy' will be marked explicitly and consequently, 'exclusiveness (-)' will be manifest because if we feel indeterminacy about the proposition that intend to express, i.e. 'That might be not true' or 'I am not confidence about the truth judgment of the proposition', we do not intend to manage the information exclusively. So, to weaken the 'given information (+)' deliberately communicates speaker's propositional attitude and as a result, it communicates a nuance of 'exclusiveness (-)' to hearer.

There is one more thing we have to note here. That is, the ‘indeterminacy’ which *Ne* communicates to us is not attributable to the affixed proposition but attributable to the speaker’s communicative attitude. Therefore, *Ka* and *Ne* are not interchangeable as example (28) shows.

(28) 1 A: 何か予定がありますか。

nani ka yotei ga arimasu ka

*what Q plan S BE-PRES Q*

*Do you have any plan?*

2 B: 決めている予定はないですね。

kimete iru yotei wa nai desu ne

*decide-PRG plan T BE-NEG SFP*

*I don't have any plan already decided.*

3 A: そうです [か／??ね]。

soo desu [ka/??ne]

*so BE-PRES [SFP/??SFP]*

*It is so.*

From the discussion above, it is possible to claim that it is worth distinguishing two attitudes that *Yo* communicates and *Ne* communicates to hearer. As Kato (2001, p. 43) already mentioned, *Yo* has a feature ‘exclusiveness (+)’ and it is explained as consequently being caused at the moment that ‘given information (+)’ is pragmatically focused. As a result, *Yo* communicates a nuance that the speaker shoulders some responsibility on the proposition, which is considered as a propositional attitude to the hearer, which it represents as a feature ‘exclusiveness (+)’.

On the other hand, the attitude that *Ne* communicates to hearer is assumed to be communicative attitude, which it represents the feature of ‘exclusiveness (−)’. This is because, as mentioned above, ‘exclusiveness (−)’ is a consequence caused by the speaker’s attitude that relatively defocuses on ‘given information (+)’ and accordingly, indeterminacy is caused relatively. Furthermore, such indeterminacy should be interpreted to show that the speaker

does not concern it with the presented proposition. Because we try to confirm it to someone in proportion to the increase of indeterminacy. Therefore, it means that the attitude that *Ne* communicates to the hearer is rather the communicative attitude than the propositional attitude even though it is caused from indeterminacy of the proposition. The indeterminacy that a *Ne* affixed sentence communicates to the hearer is rather a feature that is pragmatically caused than a feature *Ne* fundamentally has.

This research's results coincide with Najima (2006). Najima (2006, pp. 18-21) claims as follows ; *Yo* is a marker, which shows that the sentence expressed is relevant at the level of explicature and *Ne* is a marker, which shows that the sentence expressed is relevant at the level of higher-level explicature which speaker intends to communicate to the hearer. So, *Yone* shows manifestly that the speaker intends to communicate at the level of explicature and higher-level explicature both are relevant to the hearer.

It is possible to say that Najima (2006, pp. 18-21) revealed pragmatic meanings of *Yo*, *Ne* and *Yone*. On the other hand, this paper revealed semantic distinct features of *Yo*, *Ne* and *Yo*. Moreover, it showed the track records of how the pragmatic meanings are earned by using the framework that contrasts the uses and interrelations of *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo*, thereby revealing subtle differences in shades of meaning successfully.

## 5.2. Implications of our results on Japanese language education

Applying the results of this research should prove profitable for the Japanese language education. It makes possible a comprehensible and appropriate explanation of examples shown below.

- (29) 1 A: 雪祭りに行こうと思っているの。

*yuki-matsuri ni ikoo to omotte iru no*  
*yuki-matsuri LOC go-VOL think-PRG NOM BE-PRES*  
*I think that I will go to the snow festival.*

- 2 B: もうそろそろ雪祭りです [か／よね／ね／よ]。

*moo sorosoro yuki-matsui desu [ka/yone/ne/yo]*  
*already soon yuki-matsuri BE-PRES [SFP/SFP/*

***SFP/SFP]***

***Is it already a snow festival soon? /***

***It is already a snow festival soon.***

*Ka* is used when the speaker is processing a new piece of information ‘sorosoro yuki-matsuri da’ or has indeterminacy about it. In the former case, *Ka* is pronounced with a falling intonation and in the latter case it is pronounced with a rising intonation. *Yone* is used when the speaker is in possession of a given (old) piece of information ‘sorosoro yuki-matsuri da’ and have some indeterminacy about it. *Ne* is used when the speaker has a given information that does not have indeterminacy ‘sorosoro yuki-matsuri da’ and intends to show that he/she does not have the intention of managing the information exclusively as Kato (2001, p. 43) claims. *Yo* is used when the speaker has given information that does not have indeterminacy ‘sorosoro yuki-matsuri da’ and intend to show that he/she has the intention of managing the information exclusively as Kato (2001, p. 43) claims. As shown above, it becomes possible to explain the meaning that each sentence-final particles has and also makes possible to describes differences between *Ka*, *Yone*, *Yo* and *Ne* with viewpoints of common three distinctive features.

The examples below are the infelicitous sentences already cited in section 2. If we apply the results of this paper’s research, we can explain why they are judged as infelicitous or not and also explain differences of meaning with each other with the use of the conclusion of this research. In example (30), B’s answer is a new piece of information for A and A is processing the information. So, *Ka* is more felicitous than *Ne*.

(30) 1 A: 何か予定がありますか。

**nani ka yotei ga arimasu ka**

**what Q plan S BE-PRES Q**

**Do you have any plan?**

2 B: 決めている予定はないですね。

**kimete iru yotei wa nai desu ne**

**decide-PRG plan T BE-NEG SFP**

*I don't have any plan already decided.*

3 A: そうですね。

*soo desu ne*

*so BE-PRES SFP*

*It is so.*

In example (31), B's answer is given information for B himself but it does not have indeterminacy for B because he mentioned the apartment where he lives. So, *Yone* sounds strange in this situation and absence of sentence-final particles is the best reply in this context. The use of *Ne* is also acceptable. The reason why is ; *Ne* have a feature 'indeterminacy ( - )' and the proposition does not have indeterminacy, in addition to it, it is a situation where it is advisable NOT to show the intention of managing the information exclusively because A asked about the hearer's apartment. This explained also that *Yo* sounds infelicitous in this context.

(31) 1 A: ( あなたのアパートは ) 三条町ですか。

*(anata no apartment wa) Sanjoo-machi desu ka*

*(your apartment T) Sanjoo-machi BE-PRES Q*

*Is your apartment in Sanjo-machi?*

2 B: そうですね, そうです, はい。

*soo desu yone, soo desu hai*

*so BE-PRES SFP, so BE-PRES yes*

*That's right. It is so. Yes.*

As shown above, applying the results of this research, it makes possible a comprehensible and appropriate explanation of examples of errors or corrects. It contributes to Japanese language education.

## 6. Conclusions

In this paper discussed about Japanese sentence-particle *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* with a perspective of interrelations between them. Our conclusions are as follows ; *Ka* and *Yone* are distinguished from *Ne* and *Yo* in terms of indeterminacy. *Ka* is distinguished from *Yone* because *Ka* cannot be affixed to given information but *Yone* can be affixed to it. Observations find *Yone* has both features of *Ne* and *Yo*. *Yone* and *Yo* have a similarity about ‘given information (+)’ and *Yone* and *Ne* also have a similarity about ‘given information (+)’. It is assumed that *Yone* is a primitive type which *Ne* and *Yo* do not differentiate.

This paper also discussed how *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* interact with each other in meanings. It is summarized as follows ; when a feature ‘given information (+)’ that *Yo* has is focused, *Yone* is closer to *Yo*. On the other hand, when a feature ‘given information (+)’ that *Yo* has is relatively focused weakly, a kind of indeterminacy is incurred and *Yone* is closer to *Ne*. It has become clear that *Yone* is not only at the interface between *Ne* and *Yo* but also between *Yo*, *Ne* and *Ka*. Lastly, we showed that conclusions of this paper are applicable to linguistics and Japanese language education.

This research mentioned only one of the features that *Ka*, *Yone*, *Ne* and *Yo* have. Further researches are required to give more detailed description.

## Acknowledgment

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## Abbreviations

ACC : accusative maker	BE : various forms of the verb ‘be’
COM : comitative marker	CONC : concessive form
COND : conditional form	HON : honorific form
LOC : locative maker	NOM : nominalizer
PAST : past form	PRES : present form
PROG : progressive form	S : subject marker
SFP : sentence-final particle	T : topic marker
Q : questions marker	VOL : volitional form

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## Sentence-Final Particles in Japanese : Interrelation Meanings of *Ka*, *Yone*, *Yo* and *Ne*

NAJIMA Yoshinao

### Abstract :

This study is an analysis of sentence-final particles in Japanese, mainly focused on *Yone* that is one of linguistic forms whose meaning and function is difficult to describe. My claims are the following two points. One is about a framework and the other one is about the meanings of sentence-final particles. Sentence-final particles are generally considered to be arbitrary in their usage, largely dependent upon pragmatics. However, findings in error analyses show that some sentence-final particles are not arbitrary at all. So, functions of sentence-final particles should be regarded as results of interplays of semantics, syntax and pragmatics. It is important to have a perspective not only in defining 'discrete meanings' but also defining 'interrelation meanings' for describing sentence-final particles. *Yone* shares some features with *Ka*, while, in other cases, *Yone* shares features with *Yo* and *Ne* in meaning and function, and in still other cases, *Yone* seems to share some other features with *Ne* and *Yo*. *Yone* is traditionally decomposed into *Yo* and *Ne*. However, *Yone* should be considered not as a compound form or derivation from *Yo* or *Ne*, but a primitive type of *Yo* and *Ne*. *Yone* is situated at the interface of *Yo*, *Ne* and *Ka*.

### 要旨 :

本稿は、特にその意味・機能の記述が困難であるとされる「よね」に焦点を当てて日本語の終助詞「よ」「ね」「か」「よね」について論じたものである。本稿の主張は大きく二つに分けられる。一つは考察する方法論についてであり、他方はそれらの終助詞の具体的な意味・機能の記述である。

方法論についての主張は以下の通りである。終助詞の選択は一般的に任意である場合が多く、その選択は語用論的に決定される場合が多いとされる。しかし、日本語学習者の産出した誤用例を見てみると、ある種の終助詞の使用は任意ではなく必須と見なすべきものがあることが明らかになる。それを受けて考えると、終助詞の意味・機能は、意味論・文法論・語用論が相互に関与し合ったものとして見る必要がある。その記述に当たっては、各終助詞の個別の意味を明らかにするだけでなく、相互に関連し合う意味をも明らかにすることが求められる。

その方法論によって分析を行ったところ終助詞「よ」「ね」「か」「よね」の相互間の関係が明らかになった。「よね」は「か」と共通する特徴を持っている。一方、別の状況では「よね」は「よ」や「ね」と共通する意味・機能を有していると考えられる場合がある。以上から、「よね」はこれまで「よ」と「ね」の結合したものとして位置づけられることが一般的であったが、「よね」は「よ」と「ね」の単純な複合形として見なすべきではなく、「よ」や「ね」の原始形として考えるべきである。「よね」は「よ」「ね」「か」の意味・機能のインターフェイスである。これが終助詞の具体的な意味・機能の記述に関する本稿の主張である。