

# On the Functional Differences between the Discourse Particles *Ne* and *Yone* in Japanese

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## Abstract

The Japanese discourse particles (sentence-final particles) *ne* and *yone* both have the functions that can be roughly characterized as the ⟨shared information⟩ use and the ⟨call for confirmation⟩ use. In the literature, an adequate descriptive analysis has not been obtained as to how the choice between the two particles is made. This paper aims to clarify discourse conditions under which *ne* and *yone* can be felicitously used.

## 1 Introduction

The Japanese discourse particles (also called sentence-final particles) *ne* and *yone* each have a variety of functions, and both have the functions that can be roughly characterized as the ⟨shared information⟩ (SI) use and the ⟨call for confirmation⟩ (CFC) use. The semantic effect of *ne/yone* in their SI use is comparable to that of English reversed polarity tag interrogatives<sup>1</sup> with a falling tone (e.g. *He was here, wasn't he* ↘); that is, it conveys that S (the speaker) assumes that H (the hearer) has been aware that the propositional content (e.g., Ito's having been sullen in (1)) holds. The semantic effect of *ne/yone* in their CFC use is comparable to that of English reversed polarity tag interrogatives with a rising tone (e.g. *He was here, wasn't he* ↗); that is, it serves to form a polar question with expectation of the positive answer (e.g., “Yes, I am Arai.” in (2)).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See Huddleston and Pullum (2002:891–895) for a general description of English tag interrogatives.

<sup>2</sup>The abbreviations used in glosses are: Acc = accusative, Attr = attributive, Ben = benefactive auxiliary, Cl = classifier,

- (1) Ito-san, saikin nanka kigen  
I.-Suffix recently somehow mood  
warui-**{ne/yone}**.  
bad.Pr-**{ne/yone}**  
'Ito has been kind of sullen these days, hasn't he ↘' (shared information)
- (2) Sumimasen, Arai-san desu-**{ne/yone}**?  
excuse.me A.-Suffix Cop.Pr-Plt-**{ne/yone}**  
'Excuse me, you are Mr. Arai, right?' (call for confirmation)

Some scholars treat *yone* as a sequence of the two discourse particles *yo* and *ne*.<sup>3</sup> I treat it as a single particle, however, based on the consideration that it is hard to compositionally derive the functions of *yone* from those of *yo* and *ne*. It should also be noted that, under the “sequence-of-two-particles” analysis, the different intonational properties of *ne* and *yone* cannot be easily explained (see Section 2).

In the existing literature (e.g., Takubo and Kin-sui 1997, Miyazaki et al. 2002, Izuhara 2003, Nihongo Kijutsu Bunpo Kenkyukai 2003, Ohso 2005, McCready 2009), a satisfactory description has not been obtained as to how the choice between the two particles is made. This paper aims to clarify discourse conditions under which *ne* and *yone* can be felicitously used. Section 2 illustrates, as a preliminary, intonational contrasts between the two parti-

Cond = conditional, Cop = copula, Dat = dative, DAux = discourse auxiliary, DP = discourse particle, Gen = genitive, Ger = gerund, Hon = honorific, Imp = imperative, Inf = infinitive, Ipfv = imperfective auxiliary, Loc = locative, Neg = negation, Nom = nominative, Plt = polite, Pot = potential, Pro = pronoun, Prs = present, Pst = past, Top = topic, Vol = volitional.

<sup>3</sup>See Oshima (2013, 2014) for semantic discussion of *yo*.

cles in their SI and CFC uses, to which relatively scarce attention has been paid in previous studies. Section 3 discusses the discourse-functional differences between *ne* and *yone* in their SI use. Section 4 discusses the discourse-functional differences between *ne* and *yone* in their CFC use. Section 5 presents a summary and concludes the paper.

Two points are worth noting before we proceed. First, the functions of *ne* and *yone* are not limited to the aforementioned two. There are many other, especially if one takes into consideration cases where they occur in environments other than at the end of a bare declarative<sup>4</sup> (e.g., at the end of an imperative, as in *Kite-(yo)ne!* ‘Come!’). It is beyond the scope of the current work to discuss how the SI/CFC uses are related to the other uses. Second, the discussion in this work on the contrast between *ne* and *yone* by and large carries over to that between *na* and *yona*. *Na* and *yona* are discourse particles that have largely overlapping functions and distributions as (but tend to carry a more masculine and casual tone than) *ne/yone* and share the SI/CFC uses. The reason why this work draws on data with *ne/yone* is that they are more dominant in standard Japanese as far as the SI/CFC uses are concerned.

## 2 Intonational Properties of *Ne* and *Yone*

*Ne* and *yone* in the two uses illustrated above contrast as to compatibility with different intonation types. The current work adopts the four-way distinction of intonations: (i) the question-rise contour (annotated with “LH%” by Venditti 2005), (ii) the insisting-rise contour (Venditti’s “H%”), (iii) the flat contour (considered as “the absence of boundary pitch movement” by Venditti), and (iv) the rise-fall contour (Venditti’s “HL%”). Throughout the paper, I use the arrow symbols ↗, ↑, ↘ and ↑↓ to represent the question-rise, insisting-rise, flat and rise-fall contours, respectively (a similar notational convention is used in Kori 1997).<sup>5</sup> Also, shorthand like “*ne*↑” will be used to represent “*ne* accompanied by the insisting-rise contour”, etc.

<sup>4</sup>A bare declarative refers to a declarative without a discourse particle or a discourse auxiliary (e.g., *noda*).

<sup>5</sup>↗ and ↘ are also used to represent the rising and falling intonations in English, without assuming that they are phonetically identical or similar to the question-rise and flat intonations in Japanese.

The question-rise contour is more concave (scooped) than the insisting rise contour. The question-rise contour is typically (though not always) used in questions, as in (3a). The insisting-rise contour adds an emotive and childish tone to the utterance when it occurs on a bare declarative,<sup>6</sup> and is exemplified in (3b). The flat contour is the unmarked intonation for declaratives, and is exemplified in (3c).

- (3) a. Mieru↗  
see.Pot.Prs  
‘Can (you) see (it)?’  
b. Mieru↑  
see.Pot.Prs  
‘(I) can see (it)!’  
c. Mieru↘  
see.Pot.Prs  
‘(I) can see (it).’

The rise-fall contour consists of a rise and a fall following it, and is often accompanied by lengthening of the final vowel. The rise-fall contour is not used on a root declarative without a discourse particle, so that *Mieru*↑↓ sounds unnatural as an independent utterance. The rise-fall may occur sentence-medially, however, indicating that the utterance has not yet finished, as in (4).<sup>7</sup>

- (4) Mieru↑↓ toki-mo↑↓ atta↘  
see.Pot.Prs time-also exist.Pst  
‘There were also, um, times when, um, (I) could see (it).’

Figure 1 illustrates actual tokens of *mieru* with the question-rise, insisting-rise, flat, and fall-rise contours.

(5) shows with which intonational contours *ne/yone* in their SI/CFC uses can be combined:

- (5) SI:  $\phi$ -*ne*{↑/↑↓/↘},  $\phi$ -*yone*↑  
CFC:  $\phi$ -*ne*↗,  $\phi$ -*yone*↑↓

*Ne* in its SI use may be accompanied by the insisting-rise contour, the rise-fall contour, or the flat contour. *Ne* with the rise-fall or flat contour conveys

<sup>6</sup>Utterances ending with *ne*↑ or *yone*↑, however, do not necessarily convey an emotive or childish tone.

<sup>7</sup>The rise-fall contour is also used on a sentence fragment, as in *Hayaku*↑↓ ‘Do it already!’ (lit. ‘Fast.’).

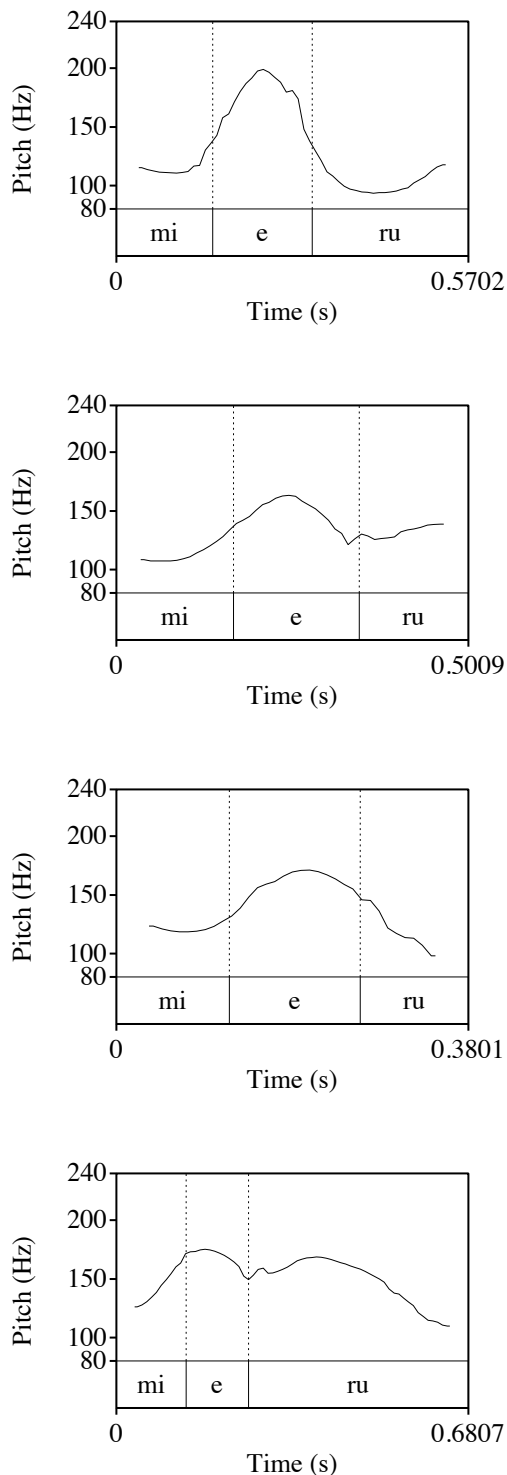


Figure 1: “Mieru↗”, “Mieru↑”, “Mieru↘”, and “Mieru↑↓...”

an added emotional tone in comparison to *ne* with the insisting-rise contour (Oshima 2013). Also, *ne* with the flat contour appears to be stylistically more constrained than *ne* with the insisting-rise or rise-fall contour (Inukai 2001). *Ne* in its CFC use is accompanied by the question-rise. *Yone* in its SI and CFC uses are accompanied by the insisting rise and the rise-fall contour, respectively (see Oshima 2013 for further discussion of the correlation between intonation types and the the functions of discourse particles).

Pitch trackings of actual tokens of (6a–d) are presented in Figure 2.

- (6) a. Mieru-**ne**↑  
see.Pot.Prs-*ne*  
'(We) can see (it), can't (we)↘'
- b. Mieru-**yone**↑  
see.Pot.Prs-*yone*  
'(We) can see (it), can't (we)↘'
- c. Mieru-**ne**↗  
see.Pot.Prs-*ne*  
'(You) can see (it), can't (you)↗'
- d. Mieru-**yone**↑↓  
see.Pot.Prs-*yone*  
'(You) can see (it), can't (you)↗'

### 3 The ⟨Shared Information⟩ Use

This section discusses how *ne* and *yone* in their SI use contrast with each other in their discourse-conditional distribution.

The primary factor that conditions the choice between *ne* and *yone* in their SI use is whether the propositional content is information (belief) that S acquired in the discourse situation, or in other words, “on the spot” (what is called “newly-learned information” in Akatsuka 1985). When this discourse condition holds, the choice of *ne* is compulsory and the use of *yone* is blocked.

- (7) (S and H have been working in a room without a window. Coming out of the room, they see that, to their surprise, it is raining.)
  - a. A, ame-ga futte-ru-**ne**{↑/↑↓/↘}
  - oh rain-Nom fall.Ger-IPfv.Prs-*ne*
  - 'Oh, it is raining.'
  - b. #A, ame-ga futte-ru-**yone**↑
  - oh rain-Nom fall.Ger-IPfv.Prs-*yone*

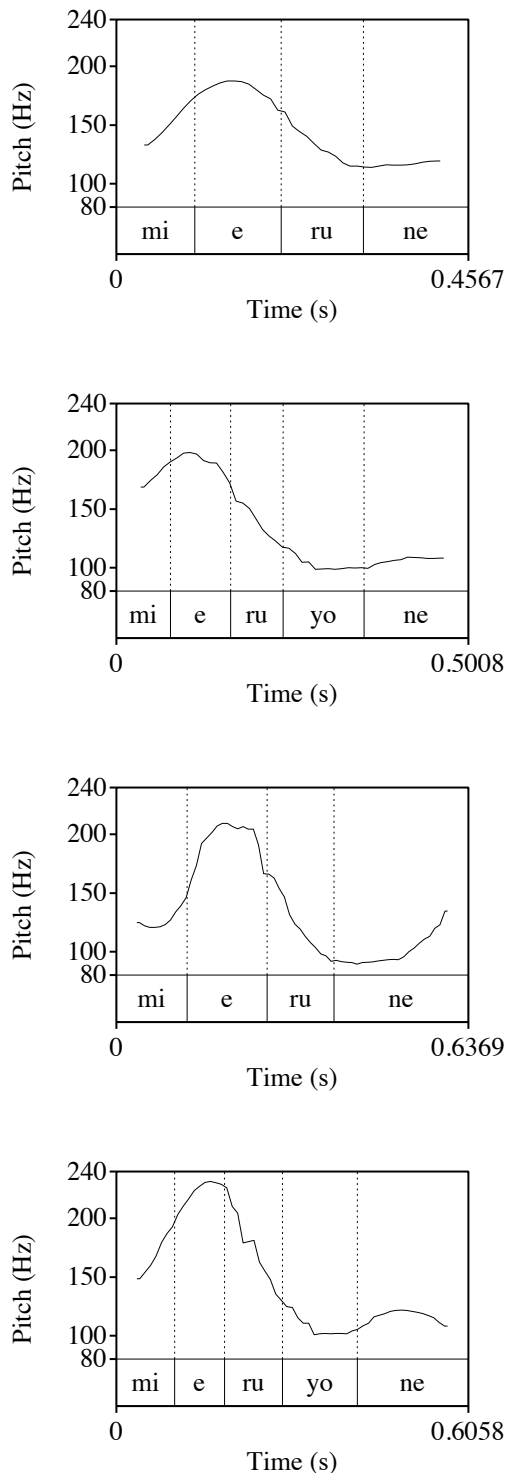


Figure 2: “Mieru-{ne/yone}{(?)}” (in the order of (6a-d))

(8) (S was invited to H’s home for the first time. Looking out on the garden, S notices that there is a pine tree.)

- a. Matsu-no ki-ga arimasu-**ne**{↑/↑↓/↘}
- pine-Gen tree-Nom exist.Prs.Plt-*ne*
- ‘You have a pine tree.’
- b. #Matsu-no ki-ga arimasu-**yone**↑
- pine-Gen tree-Nom exist.Prs.Plt-*yone*

When the condition that the propositional content is added to S’s belief store on the spot does *not* hold, *yone* is chosen as a general rule, but there are cases where the choice of *ne* is still possible. First, in an utterance (whose propositional content is assumed to be known by H and) whose purpose is to bring up a new discourse topic, not only *yone* but also *ne* can be used.

(9) (S and H live on the same floor of the student dormitory. There was thunder last night.)

- Kinoo-no kaminari
- yesterday-Gen thunder
- sugokatta-**{a. ne↑/b. yone↑}**
- extraordinary.Pst-**{a. ne/b. yone}**
- ‘The thunder last night was extraordinary, wasn’t it↘’

(10) (S and H are graduate students studying at the same department.)

- Iwata-sensei, kinoo-no konshinkai-no
- I.-professor yesterday-Gen party-Gen
- toki, nanka fukigen
- time somehow sullen
- datta-**{a. ne↑/b. yone↑}**
- Cop.Pst-**{a. ne/b. yone}**
- ‘Prof. Iwata was kind of sullen at the party yesterday, wasn’t he↘’

(11) is a naturally occurring discourse segment in a novel; here, *ne*↑ can be replaced with *yone*↑ without leading to unnaturalness. Throughout the paper, examples that are adapted from naturally occurring texts (novels), including (11), are marked with the dagger symbol (†) at the end, and their sources are provided in Appendix A. Also, for ease of presentation, some long examples are presented in the form of: (i) the preceding context, (ii) the key segment, and (iii) the following context, where original

Japanese texts and/or glosses are omitted from (i) and (iii).

(11) (The interlocutors are talking about how Murasaki Shikibu, an author in the classical period, came to be named so.)

(i) Hagi said, “Yeah. People like Akiko Yosano advocate such a view too, but some say that people around her called her after [the character in her novel] Murasaki no Ue, who was very popular then, and some others say that the direct reason was that, as written in *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki*, Fujiwara no Kinto said to her [jokingly], ‘My, is young Murasaki around here?’. I think these are the major theories out there”. Then, he said,

(ii) “Tokorode, Omiya-kun-ga shinda-**ne**↑  
by.the.way O.-Suffix-Nom die.Pst-*ne*  
Kimi-wa naka-ga  
you-Top relation-Nom  
yokatta-ndaroo?”  
good.Pst-DAux.Presumptive  
‘By the way, Omiya died, right? You were close to him, weren’t you?’

(iii) Takako said, unflinchingly, “Yes, everyone in the seminar class says he was killed by somebody. I want to find out the culprit, no matter what it takes”. She wanted to ask him about his alibi, even though she would risk offending him by doing so.†

Another environment in which the use of *ne* is allowed is an utterance where S echoes part (or the whole) of the immediately preceding utterance by H with a tone of sympathy.

(12) (in reply to (9a) or (9b))

Sugokatta-**ne**{↑/↑↓/↘}  
extraordinary.Pst-*ne*  
‘It was extraordinary, indeed.’

(13) (in reply to (10a) or (10b))

Fukigen datta-**ne**{↑/↑↓/↘}  
sullen Cop.Pst-*ne*  
‘He was sullen, indeed.’

(14) (A and B work at the same office. One day, on his way to work, A notices that there was a new

ramen noodles restaurant in front of the nearby station. After getting to the office, he reports this to B.)

A: Ekimae-ni atarashii  
station.front-Dat new.Prs  
raamen-ya-ga  
ramen-shop-Nom  
dekite-ta-yo.  
come.to.exist.Ger-IPfv.Pst-DP  
‘There is a new ramen noodles restaurant in front of the station.’

B: Dekite-ta-**ne**{↑/↑↓/↘} Kaeri-ni  
come.to.exist.Ger-IPfv.Pst-*ne* return-Dat  
yotte-miyoo-ka?  
stop.by.Ger-try.Vol-DP  
‘I know. Shall we try it after work?’

In the contexts of (12)–(14), it is also possible to use *yone*↑↓.

When none of the conditions discussed above that license the use of *ne* is met, *yone* must be chosen, or at least is strongly preferred (note that *ne* is acceptable in (15A) because it can easily be interpreted as an utterance to bring up a new discourse topic).

(15) A: Ekimae-no raamen-ya-san  
station.front-Gen ramen-shop-Suffix  
kekko oishii-**{ne↑/yone↑}**  
quite tasty.Prs-**{ne/yone}**  
‘The ramen noodles restaurant in front of the station serves tasty food, doesn’t it↘’

B: Un, sore-ni nedan-mo  
yes and price-also  
yasui-**{??ne↑/yone↑}**  
cheap.Prs-**{ne/yone}**  
‘Yeah, and it is cheap too, isn’t it↘’

B’: Un, demo nedan-ga chotto  
yes but price-Nom a.little  
takai-**{??ne↑/yone↑}**  
expensive.Prs-**{ne/yone}**  
‘Yeah, but it is a little expensive, isn’t it↘’

(16) A: Yappari densha-de iku  
on.second.thought train-Loc go.Prs  
koto-ni shiyoo.  
matter-Dat do.Vol  
‘On second thought, let’s go by train.’

B: Ii-yo. Densha nara  
good.Prs-DP train Cop.Cond

juutai-no shinpai-ga nakute  
 traffic.jam-Gen worry-Nom not.exist.Ger  
 ii-{{ne↑/yone↑}}  
 good.Prs-{{ne/yone}}  
 ‘Okay. (As you know) a good thing about  
 going by train is that we don’t need to  
 worry about traffic congestion.’

- (17) A: Sakki terebi-de Akan-ko-no  
 a.while.ago TV-Loc A.-lake-Gen  
 dokyumentarii-o yatte-te,  
 documentary-Acc do.Ger-Ipfv.Ger  
 Kushiro-ni ryokoo shita toki-no  
 K.-ni trip do.Pst time-Gen  
 koto-o omoidashita-yo.  
 matter-Acc recall.Pst-DP  
 ‘A documentary about Lake Akan was on  
 TV a while ago, and it reminded me of our  
 trip to Kushiro.’

B: Ano toki-wa samukatta-{{ne↑/yone↑}}  
 that time-Top cold.Pst-{{ne/yone}}  
 ‘It was cold then, wasn’t it?’

#### 4 The <Call for Confirmation> Use

This section discusses how *ne* and *yone* in their CFC use contrast with each other in their discourse-conditional distribution.

When S asks for confirmation or clarification about the content of what H has just said, *ne* must be chosen. (In (20), which is a naturally occurring example, it would be unnatural to replace *ne* with *yone*.)

- (18) A: Kono shorui-no copii-o onegai  
 this document-Gen copy-Acc favor  
 dekiru-kana? 20-bu hitsuyoo  
 do.Pot.Prs-DP 20-Cl need  
 na-nda.  
 Cop.Attr-DAux.Prs  
 ‘Can I ask you to photocopy this docu-  
 ment? I need 20 copies.’

B: 20-bu desu-{{ne↗/#yone↑↓}}  
 20-Cl Cop.Prs.Plt-{{ne/yone}}  
 Wakarimashita.  
 understand.Pst.Plt  
 ‘You need 20 copies. I got it.’

- (19) (A is handing B paper bags with sandwiches in them.)

A: Shiro-ga biifu de, chairo-ga  
 white-Nom beef Cop.Inf brown-Nom  
 yasai desu.  
 vegetable Cop.Prs.Plt  
 ‘The white ones are the beef (sandwiches)  
 and the brown ones are the vegetable (sand-  
 wiches).’

B: Shiroyi fukuro-ga biifu  
 white.Prs bag-Nom beef  
 da-{{ne↗/#yone↑↓}}  
 Cop.Prs-{{ne/yone}}  
 ‘(Let me make sure.) The white bags are  
 the beef.’

- (20) (An experienced cop is giving advice on inves-  
 tigation to a younger cop.)

(i) ‘There is another thing to pay attention to.  
 This often explains an unnatural death in an  
 apartment, like the one we investigated this  
 morning. In an old apartment, you should  
 carefully check any hot-water heaters.’

(ii) ‘Fukanzen nenshoo desu-**ne**↗’  
 incomplete combustion Cop.Prs.Plt-*ne*  
 ‘You are talking about incomplete combus-  
 tion, right?’

(iii) ‘That’s right. [. . .]’<sup>†</sup>

This type of utterance needs to have a nominal pred-  
 icate, or the discourse auxiliary *noda*.

- (21) A: Ashita-wa Maeda-san-ga  
 tomorrow-Top M.-Suffix-Nom  
 kimasu.  
 come.Prs.Plt  
 ‘Maeda will come tomorrow.’

B: #Maeda-san-ga kimasu-{{ne↗/#yone↑↓}}  
 M.-Suffix-Nom come.Prs.Plt-{{ne/yone}}  
 (Maeda will come.)

B’: Maeda-san desu-{{ne↗/#yone↑↓}}  
 M.-Suffix Cop.Prs.Plt-{{ne/yone}}  
 ‘It is Maeda (who will come, I got it).’

B’’: Maeda-san-ga  
 M.-Suffix-Nom  
 kuru-ndesu-{{ne↗/#yone↑↓}}  
 come.Prs-DAux.Prs.Plt-{{ne/yone}}  
 ‘Maeda will come(, I got it).’

Also, when S checks whether H understood what  
 he has just said (e.g., instructions, directions, S’s

planned action), *ne* must be chosen.<sup>8</sup>

- (22) Kono ranpu-ga tsuite-iru toki-ni  
 this lamp-Nom be.lit.Ger-Ipfv.Prs time-Dat  
 dengen-o kiru-to, koshoo-no  
 power.source-Acc cut.Prs-if trouble-Gen  
 gen'in-ni narimasu.  
 cause-Dat become.Prs.Plt  
 Wakarimashita- $\{ne \nearrow / \#yone \uparrow \downarrow\}$   
 understand.Pst.Plt-*ne/yone*  
 'If you shut off the power when this lamp is on,  
 that may cause a breakdown. Okay?'
- (23) Saiten-ga sunda tooan-wa  
 grading-Nom finish.Pst answer.sheet-Top  
 kono hako-ni irete-kure.  
 this box-Dat put.Ger-Ben.Imp  
 Ii- $\{ne \nearrow / \#yone \uparrow \downarrow\}$   
 good.Prs-*ne/yone*  
 'After grading the answer sheets, please place  
 them in this box. Okay?'
- (24) (The driver of a van starts the engine and says  
 to the passengers:)  
 Jaa shuppatsu shimasu-yo. Ii  
 then start do.Prs.Plt-DP good.Prs  
 desu- $\{ne \nearrow / \#yone \uparrow \downarrow\}$   
 Cop.Prs.Plt-*ne/yone*  
 'We are leaving, then. Okay?'

In environments where neither of these discourse conditions that block the use of *yone* is met, the availability of *ne* is quite limited. To illustrate, in the contexts of (25)–(27), the choice of *ne* would be unnatural.

<sup>8</sup>When the purpose of the utterance is to confirm that H agrees to comply with S's request, or that H approves S's action, on the other hand, *yone* can be used and often is the preferred option.

- (i) Kono shigoto-wa suiyoobi-made-ni shiagete-kure.  
 this work-Top Wednesday-by-Dat finish.Ger-Ben.Imp  
 Ii-*yone* $\uparrow \downarrow$   
 good.Prs-*yone*  
 'Please finish this work by Wednesday. You can do it, can't  
 you ↗'
- (ii) Kuruma kariru-yo. Ii-*yone* $\uparrow \downarrow$   
 car borrow.Prs-DP good.Prs- $\{ne/yone\}$   
 'I'll use your car. You don't mind, do you ↗'

- (25) (A and B are friends. They are at a restaurant. A looks out of the window and sees a man standing at some distance who looks like a mutual friend of theirs. A asks B:)  
 Nee, asoko-ni iru-no Ueda-kun  
 hey there-Dat exist.Prs-Pro U.-Suffix  
 da- $\{ \#ne \nearrow / \#yone \uparrow \downarrow \}$   
 Cop.Prs- $\{ne/yone\}$   
 'Hey, the guy over there is Ueda, isn't he ↗'
- (26) (A and B are roommates. A wants to use soy sauce for cooking, but cannot find it. A asks B:)  
 Nee, shooyu mada  
 hey soy.sauce still  
 nokotte-ta- $\{ \#ne \nearrow / \#yone \uparrow \downarrow \}$   
 remain.Ger-Ipfv.Pst-*ne/yone*  
 'Hey, we have some soy sauce left, don't  
 we ↗'
- (27) (A and B are going to leave the office where they work together. A asks B:)  
 Ekimae-no hon'ya-tte mada  
 in.front.of.station-Gen bookstore-Top still  
 aite-ru- $\{ \#ne \nearrow / \#yone \uparrow \downarrow \}$   
 open.Ger-Ipfv.Pst-*ne/yone*  
 'The bookstore in front of the station is still  
 open, isn't it ↗'

There are, however, two more types of contexts where the use of *ne* is possible. The first is cases where the truth of the propositional content is a prerequisite for the speech act that S plans to perform subsequently. In (28), the truth of the proposition that B will be free in the evening is part of the preparatory conditions, in Searle's (1975) sense, for A's speech act of inviting B to the movies.

- (28) (A and B are college students and roommates.)  
 A: Kadai moo owatta?  
 assignment already finish.Pst  
 'Have you finished your homework?'  
 B: Un, sakki-ne.  
 yes a.while.ago-*ne*  
 'Yes, I finished it a while ago.'  
 A: Jaa yoru-wa hima  
 then evening-Top free  
 da- $\{ \#ne \nearrow / \#yone \uparrow \downarrow \}$   
 Cop.Prs-*ne/yone*

‘Then you are free in the evening, aren’t you↗’

B: Un. Dooshite?

yes why

‘Yes, I am. Why did you ask?’

A: Eiga-no ken-o 2-mai

film-Gen ticket-Acc 2-Cl

moratta-nda. Issho-ni ikanai?

receive.Pst-DAux.Prs together go.Neg.Prs

‘Someone gave me two movie tickets. Do you want to come with me?’

The occurrences of *ne* in (29)–(31), adapted from novel texts, are of the same kind; in these cases, the truth of the propositional content to be confirmed with *ne* is a prerequisite for the representational speech act (i.e., statement) that S plans to perform subsequently.

(29) (Two friends are talking about the circumstances of a certain criminal case.)

(i) “Is that right? Then, I must ask you to tell me about the alibis for everyone who was related to the [murder] case.”

(ii) “Aribai-wa-*ne*, minna pat-to alibi-Top-*ne* everyone spectacularly shinai-nda. Heitaro-no

do.Neg.Prs-DAux.Prs H.-Gen

aribai-wa hanashita-*ne*↗

alibi-Top tell.Pst-*ne*

‘Speaking of alibis, none of them had a strong one. I’ve told you about Heitaro’s alibi, haven’t I↗’

(iii) Nobody other than him has a clear alibi. To start with, his mother Yasue was apparently saying that she was out in Ginza [...]”†

(30) (i) “That tower too has been there since before the war, and it imitates [the building known as] Juunikai, but I heard that the real Juunikai was very close to here.”

“Where was it?”

The proprietor walked to the center of the road.

(ii) “Kono toori-zoi-no zutto saki this street-along-Gen far ahead desu. Hora, asoko-ni Cop.Prs.Plt hey there-Dat

kooban-ga miemasu-*ne*↗

police.box-Nom see.Pot.Plt-*ne*

‘It was along this street, at a far distance from here. Look, you can see a police box over there, right?’

(iii) They say Juunikai and [the pond known as] Hyootan-ike were in the area beyond it, where there now is a bowling alley.”†

(31) (i) “Now, explain to me about your scheme to remove Nobuko [from her position as the president]?”

(ii) “Haa . . . Kore-o hanashitara, hmm this-Acc tell.Cond shachoo-ni president-Dat

torinashite-moraemasu-*ne*↗”

intercede.Ger-Ben.Pot.Prs.Plt-*ne*

‘Hmm . . . Will you intercede with the president [= Nobuko] on behalf of me if I tell you about it?’

(iii) What a pathetic guy! Resisting temptation to kick him hard, Junko made him a promise, saying, “Okay, fine.”†

In (29)–(31), *ne* can be felicitously replaced with *yone*. It appears that in contexts where either *ne*↗ or *yone*↑↓ can be used, the former tends to sound more casual (less formal) than the latter.<sup>9</sup>

Another kind of context where the choice of *ne* is possible is situations where S considers himself to carry the role of a “questioner”, i.e., an interlocutor who is expected primarily to ask questions and gather information from the other interlocutor; typical examples of a questioner are a police detective questioning a suspect or a witness, and a journalist interviewing a celebrity. Two naturally occurring examples are presented below; in these discourse segments too, it is not unnatural to replace *ne* with *yone*.

(32) (i) He [= Detective Jimbo] quietly got off the car and passed through the gate of the ryotei [(Japanese-style luxurious restaurant)]. When he entered the entrance hall, a hostess in her sixties came out to greet

<sup>9</sup>In Nihongo Kijutsu Bunpo Kenkyukai (2013:268), it is pointed out that *ne* in its CFC use is, in comparison to *yone*, often inappropriate in a conversation with somebody who is socially superior.



him.  
 “You are meeting somebody, I suppose.”  
 “I am not a customer.”  
 Jimbo flashed his police ID card. The  
 hostess’ round-cheeked face became  
 strained.

- (ii) “Sukoshi mae-ni Kamiume-ga  
 a.little before-Dat K.-Nom  
 kita-**ne**↗”  
 come.Pst-*ne*  
 ‘Kamiume came a while ago, didn’t he↗’
- (iii) “Um, yes.”  
 “Which room is he in, and with whom?”  
 “I cannot answer that kind of question.  
 Unless you have a search warrant, I  
 mean.”†

- (33) (i) Luckily, the assistant professor Hirose was  
 just about to go home but was still in the  
 room. He was talking fast about some-  
 thing with a young man who looked like  
 an assistant, but stopped the conversation  
 when he caught sight of me.  
 “Are you Professor Hirose? Could I have  
 a moment of your time?”  
 I gave him my business card.  
 The young man left his seat and moved to  
 the other side of a partitioning screen, so  
 that he will not stand in the way.  
 “How may I help you?” [. . .]
- (ii) “Kinoo, Tozai Hoteru-ni  
 yesterday T. hotel-Dat  
 ikaremashita-**ne**↗  
 go.Pst.Hon.Plt-*ne*”  
 ‘You went to Tozai Hotel yesterday, didn’t  
 you↗’
- (iii) I immediately cut to the chase.  
 “...”  
 As the way I asked the question was  
 abrupt, Hirose carefully refrained from re-  
 plying and patiently waited for my next  
 word.†

(34a) sounds at least as natural as (34b) – at least in  
 fictional writing like detective stories – as an utter-  
 ance made by a police detective to somebody who  
 he wants to question.

- (34) Watanabe Ken-san  
 W. K.-Suffix  
 desu- $\{a. \text{ne} \nearrow / b. \text{yone} \uparrow \downarrow\}$   
 Cop.Prs.Plt- $\{ne/yone\}$   
 ‘You are Mr. Ken Watanabe, right?’

On the other hand, in a situation where one finds  
 an actor or a professional sports player on the street  
 and addresses him to ask for his autograph, (34a)  
 would be unnatural while (34b) would be fine. This  
 contrast can be attributed to the difference in the sit-  
 uational role that S assigns to himself. In the for-  
 mer situation, he would naturally consider himself a  
 “questioner”; in the latter situation, he would not.

## 5 Summary and Conclusion

This paper discussed how the Japanese discourse  
 particles *ne* and *yone* contrast in their discourse-  
 conditional distribution, focusing on two major uses  
 shared by them.

The principles based on which the choice between  
*ne* and *yone* in their ⟨shared information⟩ use is  
 made can be summarized as follows:

- (35) a. The choice of *ne* is compulsory (the choice  
 of *yone* is blocked) when the condition  
 holds that the propositional content of the  
 utterance has been added to S’s belief store  
 in the discourse situation. (relevant exam-  
 ples: (7), (8))
- b. When the condition in (a) does not hold, ei-  
 ther *ne* or *yone* can be used in an utterance  
 (i) whose purpose is to bring up a new topic  
 or (ii) where part (or the whole) of the im-  
 mediately preceding utterance by H is re-  
 peated with a tone of sympathy. (relevant  
 examples: (9)–(14))
- c. In an utterance that does not meet none of  
 the conditions described above, *yone* must  
 be chosen, or at least is strongly preferred.  
 (relevant examples: (15)–(17))

The principles based on which the choice between  
*ne* and *yone* in their ⟨call for confirmation⟩ use is  
 made can be summarized as follows:

- (36) a. The choice of *ne* is compulsory (the choice  
 of *yone* is blocked) in an utterance (i)  
 (which is with a nominal predicate or the

discourse auxiliary *noda* and) where S asks for confirmation or clarification about the content of the immediately preceding utterance by H or (ii) where S checks if H understood what he has just said. (relevant examples: (18)–(24))

- b. When neither of the conditions in (a) holds, either *ne* or *yone* can be used (i) if the propositional content to be confirmed constitutes part of the preparatory conditions for S's subsequent speech act or (ii) S considers himself to carry the role of a “questioner” in the discourse situation. (relevant examples: (28)–(34))
- c. In an utterance that does not meet none of the conditions described above, *yone* must be chosen. (relevant examples: (25)–(27))

While the licensing conditions of *ne* and *yone* are rather complicated, the general pattern behind their contrasts seems to be as follows: the more tightly bound to the discourse situation the propositional content is, the more likely *ne* rather than *yone* is chosen. It is an interesting question how the described division of labor between the two particles arose historically. I leave this issue open for future research.

### Appendix A. The Sources of the Examples Adapted from Naturally Occurring Texts

(11) Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (BCCWJ; Sample ID: LBb9\_00147). Originally from *Murasaki Shikibu Satsujin Jiken* by Misa Yamamura, published by Chuokoron-sha in 1987; (20) *Chi-no Wadachi* by Hideo Aiba, published by Gentosha in 2013; (29) *Senseijutsu Satsujin Jiken* by Soji Shimada, published by Kodansha in 1981; (30) *Kakei Toshi* by Soji Shimada, published by Kodansha in 1986; (31) *Onna Shachō-ni Kanpai!* by Jiro Akagawa, published by Shinchosha in 1982; (32) BCCWJ (Sample ID: PB49\_00605). Originally from *Hijō Rensa* by Hideo Minami, published by Tokuma Shoten in 1987; (33) BCCWJ (Sample ID: LBj9\_00004). Originally from *Iesu Kirisuto no Nazo* by Sakae Saito, published by Kobunsha in 1995.

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