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\(^1\) with a falling tone (e.g., *He was here, wasn’t he \(\downarrow\)*); 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 \(\uparrow\)*); that is, it serves to form a polar question with expectation of the positive answer (e.g., “Yes, I am Arai.” in (2)).\(^2\)

\(^{1}\)See Huddleston and Pullum (2002:891–895) for a general description of English tag interrogatives.

\(^{2}\)The abbreviations used in glosses are: *Acc* = accusative, *Attr* = attributive, *Ben* = benefactive auxiliary, *Cl* = classifier, *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, *Prs* = present, *Pst* = past, *Top* = topic, *Vol* = volitional.

Some scholars treat *yone* as a sequence of the two discourse particles *yo* and *ne*.\(^3\) 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 Kinsui 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-

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\(^{3}\)See Oshima (2013, 2014) for semantic discussion of *yo*.---
particles 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\(^4\) (e.g., at the end of an imperative, as in Kite-(y)one! ‘Come!’). It is beyond the scope of this 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).\(^5\) Also, shorthand like “ne↑” will be used to represent “ne accompanied by the insisting-rise contour”, etc.

4A bare declarative refers to a declarative without a discourse particle or a discourse auxiliary (e.g., noda).

5↑ 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,\(^6\) 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).\(^7\)

(4) Mieru↓↑ toki-mo↓↑ atta\(\wedge\)
    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: φ-ne↑↓, φ-yone↑↓
    CFC: φ-ne↑, φ-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

6Utterances ending with ne↑ or yone↑, however, do not necessarily convey an emotive or childish tone.

7The rise-fall contour is also used on a sentence fragment, as in Hayaku↓↓ ‘Do it already!’ (lit. ‘Fast.’).
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{↑↑↓↓↘} orth.Nom fall.Ger-Ipfv.Prs-ne
   ‘Oh, it is raining.’

b. #A, ame-ga futte-ru-yone↑
   orth.Nom fall.Ger-Ipfv.Prs-yone
(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 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-↑ 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-Ifv.Pst-DP ‘There is a new ramen noodles restaurant in front of the station.’

B: Dekite-ta-ne{↑↑↓↓/\}_ Kaeri-ni come.to.exist.Ger-Ifv.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 kekkoo quite oishii-↑ tasty.Prs-↑ 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-↑ cheap.Prs↑ yone ‘Yeah, and it is cheap too, isn’t it’

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

(16) A: Yappari on.second.thought densha-de iku 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-ifie 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 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-
e[?yone]>/yone$
$ cold.Pst-
e/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}$
$ Cop.Attr-DAux.Prs
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: Shiroi 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. [... ]”\$

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
cimasu.
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 com(e, 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.\(^8\)

(22) Kono ranpu-ga tsuite-iru toki-ni this lamp-Nom be.lit.Ger-Ifv.Prs time-Dat
degen-o kiru-to, koshoo-no power.source-Acc cut.Prs-if trouble-Gen
gen’in-ni narimasu. cause-Dat become.Prs.Plt
Wakarimashita-\{ne\}$/\{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 grading-Nom
sunda finish.Pst
toan-wa answer.sheet-Top
kono this hako-ni box-Dat
irete-kure. put.Ger-Ben.Imp
Ii-\{ne\}$/\{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 then shuppatsu start shimasu-yo. do.Prs.Plt-DP
desu-\{ne\}$/\{yone\}\(\uparrow\downarrow\}\)
Cop.Prs-{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.

\(^8\)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.

(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\}$/\{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\}$/\{yone\}\(\uparrow\downarrow\}\)
remain.Ger-Ifv.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\}$/\{yone\}\(\uparrow\downarrow\}\)
open.Ger-Ifv.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\}$/\{yone\}\(\uparrow\downarrow\)\)
‘Yes, I finished it a while ago.’
A: Jaa yoru-wa hima then evening-top
free
da-\{ne\}$/\{yone\}\(\uparrow\downarrow\)\)
Cop.Prs-{ne/yone}
‘Then you are free in the evening, aren’t you?’
B: Un. Yes why
‘Yes, I am. Why did you ask?’
A: Eiga-no ken-o 2-mai film-Gen ticket-Acc 2-CI 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.9

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

9In 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.
“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 kita-necker
Kamiiume 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.”

(iii) Luckily, the assistant professor Hirose was just about to go home but was still in the room. He was talking fast about something 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-necker
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 replying and patiently waited for my next word.†

(34) Watanabe Ken-san
W. K.-Suffix
desu-{a. ne /b. yone↑↓}
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 situational role that S assigns to himself. In the former 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 examples: (7), (8))
b. When the condition in (a) does not hold, either 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 immediately preceding utterance by H is repeated 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 Shachinokubai*! by Jiro Akagawa, published by Shinchosha in 1982;

(32) BCCWJ (Sample ID: PB49_00605). Originally from *Hijô 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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