

Power Negotiation between Japanese Females and Males

Hideko Nomes Abe

Western Michigan University

We can survey the study of language and gender for Japanese by dividing it into three distinct but interlinked areas; (1) the historical study of *nyôbô kotoba* 'speech of court ladies' of the Muromachi period (2) the treatment of women in language, and (3) the actual speech of women. The first area of study investigates the historical transformation of gender ideologies and roles in society, the second area concerns the reality of language as a symbolic system, and the third questions the very existence of shared cultural gender ideologies found in the speech of individual women, which is what Sally McConnell-Ginet calls "production" and "meaning."¹

The study of gender-differences in the Japanese language contrast with the one in the English language in 4 ways; (1) the lack of substantial natural speech data; (2) the lack of explanation; (3) the lack of a feminist perspective; and (4) the avoidance of the notion of "power" as a tool to interpret the gender differences in language. These last three issues come from the notion that women and men are created differently (but they are in a complementary relation), and that gender-differences in language are "natural" (Jordan 1974). Because the differences are "natural" and language was considered a mere reflection of social realities and roles, many Japanese linguists did not see the connection between the treatment of women in language and women's oppression in society. This idea that the way women² speak originates in biological nature still prevails in current academic literature. By this logic, culturally accepted physiological characteristics of Japanese women must be reflected in their speech. For example, woman's soft body is assumed to produce indirect, polite, and/or emotional speech. Yôko Shima, a Japanese poet, claims that men's language easily accommodates theoretical concepts, whereas women's language is better suited to expressing emotions.³ It should be pointed out that these characteristics themselves, to say nothing of the

claims arising from them, have yet to be proven correct or incorrect with substantial data.

This paper discusses the area of language and gender which asks how women incorporate or “do” gender in their speech, and argues that linguistic forms are more context-specific rather than gender-specific, and that the notion of women’s speech as powerless and men’s speech as powerful should be abandoned. Not only are women aware of the distinction between “femininity” and “masculinity” attached to certain linguistic forms, but also they know how to manipulate these labels to be assertive in language. Here I use the term “assertiveness” defined by Booraem and Flowers (1978: 17), “Assertion basically involves asking for what one wants, refusing what one doesn’t want, and expressing positive and negative messages to others.”

I have chosen two linguistic items (sentence-final particles and formal vs. informal forms of predicates) to discuss how power negotiation can be observed in linguistic shifts. My study is based on field work conducted in Tokyo in 1991. My original study included 10 professional women, and fifteen hours of naturally occurring speech samples in three different contexts, but here I will discuss mainly one speech context, which is the business meeting among 3 women and 5 men.

A sentence-final particle (SFP) is located at the end of a sentence and has a function similar to the tag question in English. Certain sentence-final particles are strongly associated with gender, and every adult speaker of Japanese shares knowledge of their functions and the images they produce and their connotations. For example, on Japanese TV we observe that gay male actors and singers adopt female sentence-final particles in their speech to blur gender boundaries. Here in this study I also included verbal auxiliary expressions such as *deshô*, *darô*, *da*, *n da*, *ja nai*, quotative markers (e.g., *datte*, *tte*), and nominalizations (e.g., *koto*) in the category of “sentence-final forms” (SFF).⁴

The functions of such SFPs have been identified as: (1) indicating the speaker's emotions and attitudes such as doubt, caution, and confirmation (Makino and Tsutsui 1986:45, Martin 1975:914); (2) encouraging rapport between speech participants (Makino and Tsutsui 1986:45); (3) achieving a close monitoring of the feelings between speech participants (Maynard 1987:28); and (4) expressing one's own masculinity and/or femininity (Makino and Tsutsui 1986:49). The frequent use of SFPs is said to exhibit “involvement” (Chafe 1982) in the conversation in an expressive way and to form “an integral part of the self-contextualization process” (Maynard 1987:30).

Previous research found that (1) the use of SFPs depends on age, the gender of the speaker, level of formality (McGloin 1990); (2) both sexes use more so-called neutral SFPs with the opposite sex (Ide 1979); (3) women use more SFPs than men (Hori 1981); and (4) the more formal the situation, the less use of SFPs (Hori 1981).

By comparing two sentence-final particles, one dominantly used by male speakers and the other exclusively used by female speakers, Reynolds (1990) argues that the particles used by women exhibit less assertiveness, thus signaling the inferior status of women. This widely-held notion of assertiveness being attached exclusively to masculine forms and weakness to feminine forms has never been questioned. That there is an ideological backdrop to this assumption is obvious when we consider that real life situations often require women to be as assertive as men.

Another linguistic item which I will discuss is the use of informal and formal style of predicates, which is often studied in relation to politeness in speech. For example, the use of the unmarked form *taberu* 'to eat' is an indication of non-politeness, while the addition of the verb ending *masu* in *tabemasu* 'to eat,' reflects higher politeness in speech. The former form is generally used among equals and/or from higher to lower positions in social status, whereas the latter is used from lower to higher in social status. However, social status is not the only factor which affects the choice of a verb form. In fact, the use of the unmarked form 'direct style,' as opposed to a verb plus polite ending, or 'distal style' in Jorden's terminology (1987: 32), conveys the speaker's openness, directness, intimacy, or familiarity toward an addressee. Here I will examine how the shifts between the two styles exhibit power negotiations between the speech participants.

Findings:

- (1) the use of SFFs in three contexts

Table 1
Frequency of the use of SFFs in three contexts

	Meetings	Conversation w/ family members	Conversation w/ friends
Average percentage of sentence-final forms in main clauses	<u>73.6%</u>	54.97%	59.1%

As you see in the first table, more frequent use of SFFs is found in meetings. This indicates the strong involvement by speech participants in the context of meetings where frequent arguments were observed. In other words, negotiation forces speech participants to use more SFFs.

- (2) three forms (masculine/feminine/neutral) in three contexts

Table 2
The distribution of the three forms in three contexts

	Meetings	Conversation w/ family members	Conversation w/ friends	Average
Masculine forms	<u>20.4%</u>	15.0%	11.58%	(15.66%)
Feminine forms	23.8%	28.6%	<u>42.56%</u>	(31.65%)
Neutral forms	55.8%	56.4%	45.86%	(52.69%)

Table 2 exhibits three forms (masculine, feminine, and neutral) of SFFs in three contexts. The terms, “masculine” and “feminine” forms should be understood as the “idealized” notion of gender in the Japanese culture. In other words, these terms have ideological implications and stereotypes which Japanese native speakers hold. In my analysis, I continue to use the terms “masculine” or “feminine” to discuss traditional classification of SFFs⁵ though I am aware of the danger of perpetuating the stereotypes which these terms may represent.

As you see, “masculine” forms are used most frequently in the meetings, “feminine” forms are the most common in conversation with female friends. The use of neutral forms does not indicate great differences among the three speech contexts.

(3) the distribution of the three forms in business meetings

Table 3
Frequency of the use of SFFs in business meetings
(Yamada, Inoue, Sagawa)
(H=superior/ L=subordinate/ E=equal)

Consultants	Yamada	Yamada	Inoue	Sagawa
Participants	Ueda (H)	Shimoda (L)	Doi (H)	1 male & 4 females (E) Tanaka (L) Satô (E)
Percentage of sentence-final forms	68.5%	<u>93.7%</u>	64.7%	64.7%
in main clauses				
Masculine	3(6.25%)	<u>19(42.2%)</u>	21(17.4%)	22(21.35%)
Feminine	2(4.2%)	1(2.2%)	45(37.2%)	<u>48(46.65%)</u>
Neutral	43(89.5%)	25(55.5%)	55(45.4%)	33(32%)

While the previous table shows the frequent use of masculine forms in

business meetings compared to the other two contexts, table 3 which lists 4 business meetings my three female consultants participated in indicates that the use of the three forms (masculine, feminine, and neutral) varies not only depending on the individual speaker, but also depending on the content of the meeting. The frequency of the use of SFFs in the three meetings is about the same. However, the meeting Yamada (early 30s, a section chief of the personnel department of a large advertisement company in Tokyo) had with her subordinate, Shimoda, shows a very different picture. The use of SFFs by Yamada exceeds more than 90% of the time. Moreover, her use of “masculine” forms is significant. Another interesting fact in the table is Sagawa’s (early 40s, a city councilor in Niiza City) frequent use of gendered-SFFs compared to other consultants (I will also discuss this below).

Table 4
The distribution of the three forms in
Yamada’s business meeting with Ueda

Yamada	Ueda	(Yamada’s superior)
Masculine forms	6.25%	10.5%
Feminine forms	4.2%	12.3%
Neutral forms	<u>89.5%</u>	<u>77.2%</u>
direct style	24.3%	<u>90.15%</u>
distal style	<u>75.7%</u>	9.85%

Table 4 shows the distribution of the three forms by Yamada and her speech participant, Ueda, who is Yamada’s superior. In this meeting, Yamada asked Ueda to explain in detail what happened at the workshop he recently attended. No intense discussion was involved in the meeting. Note that both speakers prefer neutral forms to gendered forms, yet the differences between the two in terms of status within the company is clearly marked in the use of direct vs. distal style of predicates; Ueda, Yamada’s superior uses direct style predominantly whereas Yamada uses distal style of predicate.

Table 5 exhibits the distribution of the three forms by Yamada and Shimoda at a meeting where Shimoda, Yamada’s *buka* ‘subordinate,’ seeks an explanation from Yamada concerning *eigyô teate* ‘business expenses.’ Note that (1) Yamada uses masculine forms quite frequently; (2) Shimoda uses no masculine forms; and (3) Yamada uses direct style whereas Shimoda uses distal style as their dominant style of predicates.

Table 5
The distribution of the three forms in
Yamada's business meeting with Shimoda

Yamada	Shimoda	(Yamada's subordinate)
Masculine forms	<u>42.2%</u>	<u>0%</u>
Feminine forms	2.2%	4.4%
Neutral forms	55.5%	<u>95.6%</u>
direct style	<u>75%</u>	22.9%
distal style	25%	<u>77.1%</u>

Table 6
The distribution of the three forms in a business meeting
(Inoue, Doi & Tanaka)

Inoue	Doi	Tanaka	
		(moderator)	
Masculine forms	17.4%	7.14%	11.76%
Feminine forms	37.2%	7.14%	23.53%
Neutral forms	45.4%	85.7%	65.7%
direct style	83.4%	53.1%	63%
distal style	17.6%	46.7%	37%

Table 6 shows Inoue's use of SFFs with her male colleagues. Inoue, in her early 30s and a researcher in gerontology, uses the direct style most frequently. In this meeting where they discussed the content of a questionnaire, we see a higher percentage of the use of gendered-SFFs by both Inoue and Tanaka compared to the meeting Yamada participated in.

Discussion:

(1) Yamada with Shimoda

Let us look at a conversation between Yamada and Shimoda, her male subordinate, in which Yamada used direct/informal styles 75% of the time and Shimoda used distal/formal styles 77.1% of the time. This clearly indicates that Yamada is higher in status than Shimoda within the company. The interesting thing here is, however, the use of the SFFs by Yamada. She used 19 masculine forms which is 42.2% of

total and only one feminine form (*deshô*) (2.2%). The meeting with her male subordinate takes place at her office, where he seeks an explanation from her concerning *eigyô teate* 'business expenses'. He argues that employees in his department should be paid an equal amount of business expenses as the employees in sales department since both departments involve the similar kind of work. But Yamada, who had experience working in the sales department does not agree.

Observe the examples.

Yamada (1): Demo sa eigyô/ teate/ wa naze ichi-man-ni-sen
en ni na tte n no ka tte saa/ nan **nan darô ne.**

'But, I wonder how it was decided that the amount of allowance for the sales department should be 12,000 yen.'

Shimoda (1): **Nan deshô ne.** 'I wonder that too.'

Yamada (2): Mazu ano kutsu dai deshô?/ Fuku dai to ka sa./
Hun/ demo eigyô tte sore igai ni sono soto kara den'wa o suru
da to ka/ kô / tte **aru** yo ne./

'First, there's the cost for shoes, and clothes, too. But people in sales have to make telephone calls from outside to the office, and whatever, right?'

Shimoda (2): Soryaa issho **desu** yo zen'zen./
'But that is absolutely the same as our department.'

Yamada (3): Demo/ ichinichi sono/ niju kken to ka /ju kken
toka/ iwaba mawa tte/ eigyô mantte mawaru **ja nai desu** ka./

'But don't the sales people have to go around to the 10 or 20 companies they're assigned every day?'

De/ soide/ mawa tte/ den'wa o kakete/ aiteru jikan ni a den'wa o
kake te/ de/nani ka todoketari/ tte iu yô na koto **yaru yo ne./
'And they do things like visiting places, making telephone calls when they have time, and taking things to places.'**

N de soreni kan'suru/ tatoeba den'wa dai nan'te/ betsu ni so kaisha

ni seikyû shite nai **ja nai desu** ka/ nijû kken kakeyô ga/

'And besides, they don't ask for reimbursement for the money they spent for the telephone calls, whether they make 20 calls or not.'

Shimoda (3): Dakara chokusetsu utte iru ka, utte inai ka tte iu sa wa ookiku chigai ari masu yo./

'Therefore, there is a big difference regarding whether direct sales are involved or not.'

Yamada (4): Sô da yo ne. Ichinichi 20 sha tobikonderu ka tte chigau yo ne./

'That's right. The fact that one visits 20 companies a day makes a difference.'

In her first utterance, Yamada uses *darô*, which is informal, direct style with the neutral SFP *ne*; whereas the male subordinate uses *deshô*, which is formal, distal style with the same SFP. Here again, the difference between the two in status is well marked in the use of direct vs. distal style. These auxiliary expressions *darô* and *deshô* are associated with gender as well. *Darô* which Yamada uses is traditionally considered a male form whereas *deshô* which her male subordinate uses is considered a female form. In (2) Yamada keeps using informal/direct style (*aru*) with the neutral SFP *yo ne*, but after Yamada's second utterance, the male subordinate strongly disagrees with her, which is shown in his utterance (2) where he uses the more forceful sentence-final particle *yo* with the adverb *zen'zen* 'absolutely,' which normally accompanies a negative statement. This FTA (Face Threatening Act) by the male subordinate leads Yamada to switch to distal style as she tries to defuse his previous statement in (3). The use of more forceful SFP *yo* has, what Fairclough (1989) calls "expressive value." This switch (FTA) is motivated by, what Ting-Toomey (1988) calls, "dissociation" needs since she wants to distance herself from her male subordinate in order to successfully dispute his argument. By using the rhetorical question form *ja nai* with *desu* (redressive action), however, Yamada's statement is softened at the same time. Then, Yamada's male subordinate uses *yo* for the second time in (3). He, for the first time, admits that there is a difference between the work of the two departments. Note here that he cannot use *yo* with the direct style, though this would have made him more assertive and persuasive, because his status at the company is lower than Yamada's. After this

statement, he wants to continue his argument by saying that there is a difference between the two departments, but that the difference is very small. However, Yamada immediately responds to him using *da yo nee*, the direct style with the masculine SFF, before he can say anything. Agreeing with him using the masculine form of SFF allows her to utilize the assertiveness with which he tries to impress Yamada. After this, she switches to the less assertive particle *yo ne*, which is considered a neutral form, to reduce the tension which is created by the first expression. In other words, *yo ne* softens her previous statement. Throughout the discussion, this fact, the difference between departments involved directly in sales and those which are not, played the key role in determining when Yamada is persuasive and assertive. Since this meeting involves a tense discussion, the switch from a masculine form of SFF to a neutral form, or vice versa, by Yamada appears quite often. Moreover, the frequency of the use of SFFs is 93.7%, which indicates Yamada's strong involvement in the conversation. Moreover, Yamada, using more assertive SFFs, is trying to be more direct, yet at the same time is trying to narrow the communicative distance between the two created by the intense discussion. Thus, the shifts among the three forms, neutral, feminine, and masculine of SFFs as well as the shifts between direct and distal style of predicates reflect the immediate power negotiation between the speech participants during the conversation. Especially since SFFs are traditionally classified by gender of speaker, the shift reveals the function of masculine or feminine particles in relation to power. In other words, masculine particles allow speakers to be more assertive and direct than feminine particles, which is observed in the case of Yamada with her male subordinate. Yamada chose masculine forms to show her assertiveness. However, this is not the case with other consultant whose name is Sagawa.

(2) Sagawa and Satô

Examine the conversation between Sagawa, a city councilor in her early 40s and a male politician, Satô. The conversation starts when the male politician asks Sagawa if she can attend a committee even though she is not a member of the committee.

Sagawa (1): Nan'de watashi?/ giun ja nai no ni dôshite **agaru** no?/

'Why me? I'm not a committee member.'

Satô (1): Ano ne sore de owa tta ato ne/ a shigi chiku yûsen
kumiai no/ kan'kei giin san ni ne/ ano/ nani ka shichô ga.../

'Well, after the meeting, the mayor wants to talk to city
counselors who are involved in Shiki Priority Union.'

Sagawa (2): Iya sô yû no **komaru** yo./

'Well, it's too rushed.'

kara/ Dakedo watashi wa giun no iin ja naku tte/ iin ja nai

hokani/ mô yakusoku shite a tte/ sochira no hô no yôji ga
aru n desu yo ne.

'But since I'm not a committee member, I do have
another appointment.'

desho?/ Dakedo ashita/ ja nakereba mô/ mô ma ni awa nai

'But tomorrow is the only possible day, right?'

De/ nan'ji nan **desu** ka? sore wa./

'Well, what time does it start?'

Satô (2): Sorede ne/ sore wa ano aa/ yôka no hi no ne/ tokubetsu
iin kai no/ kan'kei/ mo aru kara ne/ ne./

'Well, it's on the eighth, but we have another committee
to consider, so, well...'

Sagawa (3): Nan'ji kara tte iu koto o daitai kime te **kudasara nai** to./

'You have to decide about the time. Otherwise..'

Satô (3): Ashita ichi ji/ ichi ji./

'Tomorrow one o'clock, one o'clock.'

Sagawa (4): Ichi ji kara hito to yakusoku ga **aru no** watashi./

'I have an appointment to meet someone at one
o'clock.'

Satô (4): A sô **desu** ka./
'Is that right?'

Sagawa (5): N, koma tta na./
'What shall I do?'

Jaa ato de chotto mata/ **ukagai masu** ne./
'What shall I do? Well, I'll come to your office to talk
about it later.'

The frequent shifts from one form to another by Sagawa are interesting. In (1) she uses the direct/informal style + the neutral SFP *no*, in a question. Then she switches to another direct/informal style + the masculine SFP *yo*, as she is strongly arguing that there is no reason why she has to attend the meeting (*iya sô yû no komaru yo*). This switch is an FTA trying to avoid deference (thus, negative politeness). Then, she switches to the distal/formal style + the neutral SFP *yo ne*, and uses the feminine auxiliary expression, *deshô* in a single speech context. These switches are "redressive" actions (Ting-Toomey 1988). The use of the direct/informal style + the masculine SFP *yo* at the beginning (*komaru yo*) gives Sagawa assertiveness in her argument, whereas the use of neutral SFP allows her to narrow the distance which is created by the previous statement. She tries to maintain the softness by using feminine auxiliary expression, *deshô*, in the next utterance. However, when she asks him what time the meeting starts, he cannot tell her time since it was not decided. In (3) Sagawa forces the male politician to decide the time for the meeting, using the distal/formal style. After he finally tells Sagawa the time for the meeting, she tells him that she cannot attend the meeting after all due to her previous engagement with someone else, using the direct style + the strong feminine SFP *no*. This use of feminine form makes the male politician very uncomfortable, which is reflected in his shift from direct/informal to distal/formal style for the first time. The use of the feminine SFP *no* by Sagawa here is not motivated to narrow the distance between the two, but it is another FTA to show the speaker's avoidance of deference. But why does Sagawa use the feminine SFP *no* with which we associate less power? I argue that if a woman uses a strong feminine SFP with a man when she knows that she is winning, the use of feminine SFP makes a male speaker feel more uncomfortable than the time when she uses a masculine form. Notice that we often associate masculine forms of SFPs with assertiveness and feminine forms with less assertiveness. Yet, Sagawa's use of feminine forms shows very strong avoidance of deference. In other words, she asserts herself by the use of feminine SFP. However, this is possible only when the speaker has more power than the interlocutor at the immediate speech context. Thus, the feeling of disapproval of the

male politician is increased when Sagawa uses feminine form of sentence-final particle. This suggests that it is not a sentence-final particle which is associated with assertiveness, rather it is power of the speaker which adds assertiveness to a sentence-final particle. In other words, female speakers can be as assertive as male speakers even when they use so-called "feminine" forms.

I have shown how urban Japanese professional women control their speech in interaction. Those women certainly know how to manipulate their speech to satisfy their goals. My study is an attempt to challenge the long-standing stereotypes of Japanese women's speech as powerless and unassertive. By looking at how women assert themselves through the use of direct and distal styles of predicates and SFFs, I have shown how women co-opt the stereotypes in their linguistic struggles.

Notes

1. Sally McConnell-Ginet, "Language and Gender," in *Linguistics: The Cambridge Survey IV*, ed. Frederick J. Newmeyer (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1988), 78.
2. Reiichi Horii, "Joseigo no seiritsu" (Foundation of women's language), in *Sekai no joseigo, nihon no joseigo* (Women's language in the world and Japan), ed. Sachiko Ide (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1993), 100.
3. Yôko Shima, "Onna to kotoba to nihon bunka (Women and language and Japanese culture)", in *Onna to nihongo* (Women and Japanese), ed. Katsue A. Reynolds (Tokyo: Yûshindô, 1993), 18-9.
4. Okamoto, Shigeko, and Chie Sato, 1992. Less Feminine Speech among Young Japanese Females. Paper Presented at Women and Language Conference at Berkeley.
5. The table below was constructed from various studies, primarily Okamoto and Sato's.

Classification of sentence-final forms by sex of speaker.

Masculine forms	Feminine forms
	(1) assertion/ insistence
zo (Taberu zo 'I'll eat, I tell you.')	zo (Suru zo 'I'll do it.'—talking to herself.)
ze (Taberu ze 'Look I'll eat.')	wa (Taberu wa 'I'll eat.')

(Atsui wa 'It's hot.')

wa yo (Taberu wa yo 'I'll eat,
I tell you.')

(2) mild assertion

verb/i-adj + yo (Iku yo 'I will go, I tell you') no + yo (Iku no yo 'I will go, I tell you.')

noun/na-adj + yo—high sustained
intonation)

(Kirei yo 'It's pretty, I tell you.')

noun/na-adj + da (Ame da 'It's raining.')

noun/na-adj + yo (Ame yo 'It's raining.')

da + yo (Ame da yo 'It's raining, I tell you.')

da wa (Ame da wa 'It's raining.')

da wa yo (Ame da wa yo 'It's raining, I
tell you.')

n da (Ame na n da 'The fact is it's raining.')

no (Ame na no 'The fact is it's raining.')

(Shizuka na n da 'The fact is it's quiet.')

(Shizuka na no 'The fact is it's quiet.')

(Taberu n da 'The fact is I'll eat.')

(Taberu no 'The fact is I'll eat.')

(Oishii n da 'The fact is it tastes good.')

(Oishii no 'The fact is it tastes good.')

n da yo (Ame na n da yo 'The fact is it's raining,
I tell you.')no yo (Ame na no yo 'The fact is it's
raining I tell you.')

(3) directives

plain imperative (Tabero 'Eat.')

te-form of a verb + ne (Tabe te ne
'Please eat, won't you?')plain imperative + yo (Tabero yo 'Eat,
I am telling you.')

negative command (Taberu na 'Don't eat.')

negative command (Tabe nai de 'Don't
eat.')negative command + yo (Taberu na yo
'Don't eat, I tell you.')negative command + ne (Tabe nai de ne
'Please don't eat.')

(4) assurance/seeking agreement

verb + na (Taberu na 'You will eat,
won't you?')verb + wa ne (Taberu wa ne 'You'll
eat, won't you?')

i-adj + na (Atsui na 'It's hot, isn't it?')	i-adj + wa ne (Atsui wa ne 'It's hot, isn't it?')
na-adj + da na (Shizuka da na 'It's quiet, isn't it?')	na-adj + da wa ne (Shizuka da wa ne 'It's quiet, isn't it?')
da ne (Ame da ne 'It's raining, isn't it?')	da wa ne (Ame da wa ne 'It's raining, isn't it?')
da yo ne (Ame da yo ne 'It's raining, right?')	da wa yo ne (Ame da wa yo ne 'It's raining, right?')
	wa yo ne (Taberu wa yo ne 'You'll eat, right?')
	noun/na-adj + ne (Ame ne 'It's raining, isn't it?')
n da ne (Ame na n da ne 'The fact is raining, isn't it?')	no ne (Ame na no ne 'The fact is it's it's raining, isn't it?'),
n da yo ne (Ame na n da yo ne 'The fact is it's raining, right?')	no yo ne (Ame na no yo ne 'It's raining, right?')

(5) modesty-nominalization

koto (Kirei da koto 'It's pretty.')

(6) confirmation/probability

darô (Taberu darô 'You'll eat, won't you?')	deshô (Taberu deshô 'You'll eat, won't you?')
(Ame darô 'It'll probably rain.')	(Ame deshô 'It probably will rain.')

(7) question/criticism

ka? (Taberu ka? 'Will you eat?')	no? (Tabe masu no? 'Will you eat?')
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ka yo (Taberu no ka yo 'Will you eat?')

(8) self-questioning

ka ne? (Taberu ka ne? 'I wonder if s/he eats.')	kashira (Taberu kashira? 'I wonder if s/he eats.')
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(9) invitation

ô ka? (ikô ka? 'Shall we go?')

Neutral Forms

In addition to the masculine and feminine forms mentioned above, there are sentence-final forms which native speakers of Japanese do not associate with gender. These are called "neutral" forms. Both male and female speakers can use neutral forms. The eight forms below, all incorporating sentence-final forms, are considered neutral forms for the purposes of my study.

1. yo ne (Taberu yo ne. 'You'll eat, won't you?')
2. verb/i-adj + ne (Taberu ne? 'You will eat, won't you?'—This form is classified as a masculine form by Mizutani and Mizutani and a neutral form by Okamoto and Sato.)
3. verb/adj/noun + mon/mon ne for mild assertion (Taberu mon. 'The fact is I'll eat.')
4. verb/adj/noun + jan/jan ne for mild assertion (Taberu jan. 'S/he eats, doesn't s/he?')
5. verb/adj/noun + ja nai for mild assertion (Ame ja nai. 'It's raining, isn't it?')
6. wa with falling intonation (Taberu wa. 'I will eat.')
7. ka na for self-questioning (Ame ka na? 'Is it raining?'—This form is classified as a masculine form by Mizutani and Mizutani and a neutral form by Okamoto and Sato.)
8. tte/datte as a quotative marker (Ame datte. 'I heard that it's raining.')

Okamoto and Sato (1992) classify the direct styles of nouns, *na*-adjectives, *i*-adjectives, and verbs as neutral forms of sentence-final forms, but I do not include these forms in my study, reasoning that utterances ending without particles do not show a speaker's involvement as much as those with particles, and thus these direct styles are marked for lack of involvement. Compare these two examples:

Taberu no? 'Will you eat?'

Taberu? 'Will you eat?'

The first example (direct style + *no* in a question form) is considered neutral by researchers. If we consider the second example neutral as well, we ignore the function of *no* since the first example, with *no*, indicates mild assertion.

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