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## 学習者コーパスにおける日本語の相互行為詞の分析： 用法基盤モデルの日本語教育への応用

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# Interactional Particle Use in a Japanese L2 Learner Corpus: Usage-based Analysis and Application to Teaching Japanese

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## Abstract

By using the International Corpus of Japanese as a Second Language (I-JAS), this study aims to advance our understanding of acquisition process of interactional particles by learners of Japanese as a second language (L2). Dialogue segments from I-JAS, involving twenty adult English-speaking L2 learners of Japanese at two proficiency levels, along with a baseline group of 10 first language (L1) adults, were selected for analysis, specifically examining their use of interactional particles. Previous studies demonstrate that the complex relationship between proficiency and the use of different types of pragmatic markers exist, as proficiency is one of the sources of individual variations in L2 learners' pragmatic performance (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos 2011). The first part of this study examined whether L2 learners' proficiency level would influence the use of interactional particles. We found that proficiency was significantly related to the overall frequency of the use of interactional particles, with the beginner group tending to use limited type of particles in formulaic expression and use them less frequently. The second half of this study investigated the discursive functions of interactional particles by each group. While both beginners and intermediate learners limited their use of *yo* and its variants, L1 speakers have a strong preference for the *n desu yo* construction and *yone*. Although both L2 learners groups used the question particle *ka*, intermediate learners show their intersubjectivity. The discussion considers the implications of promoting usage-based foreign language pragmatics teaching with corpus studies, which contributes to interactional competence and pragmatic capacity.\*

**Keywords:** corpus, interactional particles, intersubjectivity, Japanese-as-a-second language, usage-based analysis

## 1. Introduction

Learning how to interact appropriately in the social context of the target culture is fundamental for second language (L2) learners. To gain interactional competence (Young 2019), L2 learners need to understand interactive practices by participating in cumulative interactions with others. This competence is dynamic, context-specific, and co-constructed by all participants in discursive practice, involving pragmatic abilities that utilize linguistic and non-linguistic resources such as prosody, non-verbal cues, turn-taking strategies, topic management, and repair. These resources

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are accomplished collaboratively with conversation participants (Hall, Hellermann and Doehler 2011). While some pragmatic resources are universal, others are specific to the language and culture being studied. In the case of L2 Japanese, researchers have explored alignment expressions (Ohta 2001), the particle *ne* (cf. Ishida 2009, Kizu, Pizziconi and Gyogi 2019, Masuda 2009, 2011), and incomplete sentences (Taguchi 2014).

The present study focuses on interactional particles, which are essential for establishing interpersonal relationships and a crucial component of interactional competence. These particles play a vital role in creating opportunities for a relevant next action in conversation by conveying speakers' attitudes and inviting the involvement of conversation partners (Hayano 2011, 2017, Morita 2002, 2005, 2015). Previous studies have examined the acquisition of interactional particles by L2 learners in study abroad and home contexts. However, early studies have been limited to the most frequently used particle *ne* (Ishida 2009, Kizu, Pizziconi and Gyogi 2019, Masuda 2009, 2011, Ohta 2001, Sawyer 1992). Moreover, researchers have tended to investigate a small number of speakers, with some exceptions (Kizu, Pizziconi and Iwasaki 2013, Mine et al. 2020). While insightful, these analyses provide limited insight into how a larger number of learners acquires a wider range of interactional particles. Given the importance of using such particles as linguistic resource for developing interactional competence in spoken Japanese, we seek a more comprehensive understanding by adopting a corpus-based approach, in order to analyze a larger amount of L2 learner interactive data.

The current study focuses on a set of Japanese interactional particles and adopts a corpus-based approach for two reasons. First, corpus-based studies are frequently employed in usage-based approaches (cf. Bybee 2006) due to the significant impact of language usage on cognitive representation. In this approach, pragmatics-and-grammar forms a continuum from lexicon to grammar (Tyler 2012: 20). Therefore, all language is part of higher cognitive processes crucial to meaning-making and interpreting the world. In first language (L1) acquisition, children uncover frequently used patterns through their everyday experiences of analyzing large quantities of data while interacting with their caregivers (Tomasello 2003). Bybee (2008) discusses the benefit of applying a usage-based model to L2 language learning/acquisition. Second, a corpus-based approach to L2 pragmatics development has the potential to reveal the complex relationship between the use of different types of pragmatic markers and proficiency (Staples and Fernández 2019), as argued in Section 2.2. The current study utilizes the International Corpus of Japanese as a Second Language (I-JAS).

In the investigation of Japanese L2 development, our aim is to study the use of Japanese interactional particles beyond *ne* by two groups of English-speaking learners at different proficiency levels. Additionally, this study examines the use of interactional particles by L1 speakers participating in the same semi-structured conversations. By carefully analyzing the use of interactional particles at both micro and macro levels, we propose a new perspective for L2 Japanese pedagogy that integrates both pragmatics and grammar in a unified manner. Drawing on empirical evidence, this article suggests a departure from existing textbooks that heavily rely on traditional “rules of thumb” (Negueruela 2008). As Saigo (2011) points out, textbook descriptions for Japanese interactional particles such as *ne* and *yo* tend to be short and inaccurate, lacking sufficient concepts for their proper usage.

## 2. Background

## 2.1 Interactional competence in L2 acquisition and intersubjectivity in Japanese

Interactional competence differs from communicative competence (Canale and Swain 1980) in that the former is not dependent on context, while the latter is. Additionally, interactional competence involves co-construction within interactional episodes and is context-specific (He and Young 1998, Young 2011). Moreover, interactional competence also goes beyond the pragmatic competence of a single participant, as it is co-constructed by all participants in a discursive practice; thus, it is practice-specific (Young 2011: 91). The term “competence” is used to refer to a dialogical construct, as it is jointly created and socially enacted. Numerous L2 acquisition researchers have documented the development of interactional competence by examining talk-in-interaction within the framework of Conversational Analysis (cf. Young and Miller 2004 for ESL learners in tutorial setting; Hellermann 2007 for novice learners in ESL program). However, the present study adopts a mixed-method approach by incorporating corpus study and discourse analysis for the reason stated in the next section.

Intersubjectivity is another key construct for the current analysis of interactional particles. According to Young (2011, 2019), interactional competence presupposes a sphere of intersubjectivity, which is ultimately based on understanding of the speaker-addressee relationship or the construction of a shared internal context (Kramsch 1986). A speaker’s attention is not solely focused on the content of the information, but also on the addressee within the context. In general, linguistic subjectivity denotes the expressions that encode a speaker’s voice, emotions, feelings, attitudes and points of view in discourse, while intersubjectivity refers to the expression of a speaker’s attention to the hearer. Shinzato (2006: 18) provides a useful rubric of subjectivity and intersubjectivity that demonstrates similarities between the traditional Japanese and Western linguistic dichotomies, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Comparison of proposed divisions of modality (Shinzato 2006: 18)

	<b>Subjectivity</b>	<b>Intersubjectivity</b>
Haga (1954)	<i>Jittei ‘judgement’</i> =the speaker’s attitude toward the proposition	<i>Dentatsu ‘communication’</i> =the illocutionary force directed toward the addressee
Benveniste (1971 [1958])	<i>Subjectivity</i> =the expression of the attitude of the speaker with respect to the statement he is making	<i>Intersubjectivity</i> =what constitute communication as an exchange between the speaker and his addressee
Sweetser (1990)	<i>Epistemic domain</i> =the speaker’s world of reasoning	<i>Speech act domain</i> =the world of the conversational interaction
Maynard (2002)	<i>Emotive place</i> =the speaker comes into focus	<i>Interactional place</i> =the partner comes into focus

The present study builds on the view that development of interactional particles implies the speaker’s awareness of epistemic stance in talk-in-interaction and participants’ involvement in conversation with dynamic alignments along with certain attitudes (Morita 2002). In this paper, intersubjectivity proposed by Benveniste (1971) is also adopted.

Shinzato (2006) argues that the division between subjectivity and intersubjectivity parallels to the distinction between soliloquy and dialogue at the pragmatic level, citing Noda’s (1997)

analysis of the *no-desu* construction or its plain/informal form, *noda*. Example (1) below can appear in self-addressed speech, representing Benveniste's (1971) subjectivity. The use of *nda* in (1) encodes information that enters the speaker's consciousness as a sudden realization. In contrast, examples (2a) and (2b) can occur in a dialogue, representing Benveniste's (1971) intersubjectivity, where the speaker has information that they have been aware of for some time and wish to share with the addressee. This type of *noda* construction requires the presence of the addressee in a conversation.

(1) Event-oriented *noda*: Benveniste's subjectivity

*Yamada-san ga ko-nai naa. Kitto yooji ga aru nda (=noda).*  
 SBJ com-NEG SP surely errands SBJ exist NODA

'Yamada's not here. I'm sure he has some errands to do.'

(2) Addressee-oriented *noda*: Benveniste's intersubjectivity

2a. *Boku ashita wa ko-nai yo. Yooji ga aru nda (=noda).*  
 I tomorrow TOP come-NEG SP errands SBJ exist NODA

'I'm not coming tomorrow. I have some errands to do.'

2b. *Kono suicchi wo osu nda!*  
 this switch OBJ push NODA

'Push this switch!'

(Shinzato 2006: 21)<sup>1</sup>

In L2 pedagogy, the *noda* expression is typically introduced in beginners' textbooks, but it has been reported that learners find it challenging to acquire (Kikuchi 2006, Shikaura and Komura 2015, Tsutada 2021). One of the reasons for this difficulty is the polysemous nature of the *noda* construction. For instance, according to Iori (2013), semantic analysis of *noda* in negative and question sentences centers around presupposition, while its use in affirmative sentences relates to modality. Ishiguro (2003) proposes *noda* to have four main functions: *jūten kinō* 'filling function', *teisei kinō* 'correction function', *kyōyū kinō* 'sharing function', and *zentei kinō* 'prerequisite function'. However, the core meaning of *noda* is to fill the epistemic gap either in the speaker or the listener when a context of pre-existing inadequate recognition exists (Ishiguro 2003: 3). I will revisit the *noda* construction in the analysis section.

## 2.2 Corpus-based approach to L2 pragmatics and language proficiency

Recent corpora and corpus analytic techniques have made it possible to uncover numerous collocational patterns, and L2 pragmatics is not an exception. A fine-tuned corpus-based investigation of target items crucially informs us about how pragmatic markers are developed. Corpus linguistics provides useful tools for studying pragmatics because it allows us to examine language production in rich and concrete contexts (Staples and Fernández 2019). For example, a linguistic examination of spoken corpora promotes our understanding of L2 learners' performance of pragmatic markers, such as the Spanish markers *pues* and *bueno* (Fernández et al. 2014), English epistemic markers (Gablasova et al. 2017), the English expression *you know* (Buysse 2017), the disagreement *yes but* construction in English (Gablasova and Brezina 2018), the Japanese ambiguous expression *chotto* (Komori et al. 2019), and Japanese interactional particles (Usami and Zhang 2022, Masuda 2023). While corpus-based studies often deal with individual items

<sup>1</sup> Bolding is added by the researcher of the present study.

at a micro-level, it is also crucial to incorporate a discourse analytic perspective by considering micro-macro interfaces (Fernández et al. 2014, Staples and Fernández 2019). By examining both individual items and broader discursive patterns, we can investigate the use of epistemic stance, which may be overlooked in traditional corpus-based studies that only focus on the micro-level. Thus, the current study adopts this new corpus-based methodology, paying attention to the micro-macro interfaces in the use of interactional particles by both L2 learners and L1 speakers.<sup>2</sup>

Proficiency is considered one of the factors contributing to individual variation in L2 learners' pragmatic performance (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos 2011). Previous studies have pointed to the complex relationship between proficiency and the use of different types of pragmatic markers. The majority of studies have demonstrated that L2 learners with higher proficiency tend to use more pragmatic markers and/or conventional expressions than those with lower proficiency (Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos 2011, Bardovi-Harlig and Su 2018, Fernández et al. 2014, Gablasova and Brezina 2018). However, only a few studies on L2 pragmatics have discussed proficiency and pragmatic markers in Asian languages, with exceptions such as Bardovi-Harlig and Su (2018), Taguchi et al. (2013), and Usami and Zhang (2022). To fill this gap, the present study examines the relationship between proficiency and the acquisition of interactional particles by English-speaking L2 Japanese learners.

Since the goal of language instruction is to enhance L2 learners' pragmatic competence, it is essential to make the best use of the results of corpus-based exploration as a valuable guide in determining instructional targets and how to effectively present them to promote language development. A wider range of new corpora is now accessible to researchers, instructors, and learners. For example, the National Institute for Japanese Languages and Linguistics has successfully compiled corpora, including the International Corpus of Japanese as a Second Language (I-JAS), which contains extensive data from 1,000 learners and 50 L1 speakers of Japanese in 2020 (Sakoda et al. eds. 2020). I-JAS consists of participant profiles, including language proficiency information measured by the SPOT (Simple Performance-Oriented Test) and J-CAT (Japanese Computerized Adoptive Test), as well as a corpus built on tasks such as picture description, story-telling, story-writing, and semi-structured conversation with an L1 speaker. By utilizing I-JAS, the current study examines semi-structured conversations by English-speaking L2 learners and native speakers to investigate how learners and L1 speakers use interactional particles during conversation.

### 2.3 Linguistic resources in Japanese conversation: Interactional particles

In Japanese, use of interactional particles, including *ne* and *yo* is indispensable for establishing interpersonal relationships with others. These particles are traditionally referred to as sentence-final particles (*shūjoshi*) or insertion particles (*kantō joshi*) in Japanese. However, this article adopts the term, “interactional particles,” which accurately captures their functions in talk (Maynard 1997, Morita 2015).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Unlike Conversational Analysis (CA), this study does not focus on social status, relations, age and occupation of the interlocutor, as the L2 learners are relatively consistent, college students who just met the interlocutor for the first time for recording. L1 speakers were also carefully selected to match the background of L2 learners' background and age.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, the particles *ne* and *sa* can appear in utterance-initial position, expressing the speaker's attitudes, involvement and judgement toward the listeners and the message.



- 2.C: *iya. zenzen tōi desu ne.* ← confirmation  
 No at all far CP IP  
 ‘No, they are so far, *ne*.’
- 3.K: *desu yone.* ← agreement with *yone*  
 CP IP  
 ‘That’s right, *yone*.’
- 4.C: *Hakuba wa nagano no kita, etto, kita no hashi,*  
 TP GN north DM north GN edge } providing information
- 5.C: *kita, seihoku no hashi kana, seihoku de,*  
 north northwest GN edge IP northwest CP }  
 ‘Hakuba is located at the north...northwest, I wonder.’
- 6.K: *sō desu yone.* ← agreement with *yone*  
 so CP IP  
 ‘That’s right, *yone*.’
- 7.C: *Ueda wa higashi no hō nanode,* ← providing information  
 TP east GN direction so  
 ‘Ueda city is located in the east side.’
- 8.K: *a, hai, ōkī ken desu yone, tottemo* ← elaboration with *yone*  
 Oh, yeah, big prefecture CP IP very  
 ‘Oh, yeah, (Nagano) is a very large prefecture, *yone*.’
- 9.C: *Sō desu ne, yokoni nagai ken desu ne.* ← agreement/elaboration with *ne*  
 so CP IP horizontally long prefecture CP IP  
 ‘That’s right, *ne*. (Nagano is) a long thin prefecture, *ne*.’

In Excerpt (1), Interviewer K and Speaker C were talking about C’s hometown. In response to K’s inquiry, C uses *ne* when confirming that Hakuba and Ueda are very far apart. K agrees by using *yone*, as in *desu yone* (line 3), and *sō desu yone* (line 6). It is worth noticing that *yone* in lines 3 and 6 could be replaced with *ne*, as they show agreement, but *yone* implies that the speaker independently reaches the same conclusion. After explaining that Hakuba is located in the northwest while Ueda is in the east, K further elaborates by saying with *yone* (line 8) that Nagano is a very large prefecture. This epistemic evaluation attached to *yone* seems to have triggered C’s agreement, *sō desu ne* followed by details about Nagano by using *ne* in line 9.

In sum, the functions of interactional particles are crucial for becoming active interactants, making them essential linguistic devices for interactional competence, including “the sphere of intersubjectivity.” I would like to argue that a better understanding of the use of interactional particles would enhance one’s command of Japanese communication. Uyeno (1971: 131–132) states “the appropriate use of these particles reflects the speaker’s consideration of the addressee, and the addressee feels more participation in the conversation with mutual understanding.” Furthermore, in order to foster interactional competence for L2 learners of Japanese, research on the acquisition of interactional particles beyond *ne* is essential. Major current textbooks used in North America, where the author is currently located, such as *Nakama* (Hatasa et al. 2015), *Genki* (Banno et al. 2020), and *Tobbira* (Oka et al. 2022), introduce interactional particles such as *ne* and *yo* in the early lessons. For instance, *Genki* (Banno et al. 2020) introduces *ka* in Lesson 1 and *ne* and *yo* in Lesson 2. The textbook states:



statements often end with *ne* or *yo*, depending on the way the speaker views the interaction with the listener. If you are asking the listener's confirmation or agreement to what you are saying, you add *ne* ("right?") to your sentence...If you want to tell the listener that you are fully confident of what you are saying and the listener had better believe it, use *yo* ("I tell you") at the end of your sentence. (Banno et al. 2020: 64)

However, as far as the researcher is aware, no current Japanese textbook introduces *yone* and, more importantly, the reason why Japanese speakers frequently use interactional particles in conversation, especially informal conversation, is not explicitly stated.

#### 2.4 Studies on L2 learners' use of interactional particles in Japanese

Numerous studies have documented acquisition processes of interactional particles by L2 learners. These studies can be classified into two groups: (a) Japanese-as-a-foreign-language classrooms with limited natural input/interaction (e.g., Masuda 2009, Nazikian 2019, Ohta 2001, Saigo 2011) and (b) study abroad with plenty of natural input/interaction (Ishida 2009, Kizu et al. 2019, Masuda 2011, Sawyer 1992, Yoshimi 1997).

For instance, Ohta's (2001) longitudinal study of two learners in a US university classroom documented developmental stages in the use of *ne*, from expression of acknowledgement and agreement to assessment. However, after one year of study, only one learner became able to use *ne* with a limited range of expressions. Yoshimi (1997) examined the interactions between five intermediate English-speaking learners of Japanese and Japanese L1 students, and reported the frequent use of formulaic expression *sō desu ne* (76% of *ne* tokens), as well as anomalous use of *sō desu ne* (31%). Yoshimi explained that the L2 learners used *ne* to refer to information that they believed was shared, but to the L1 speakers, it was *not yet* shared. This indicates that L2 learners' challenges in learning *ne* stem from an epistemic gap between English and Japanese.

In a more recent longitudinal study by Kizu et al. (2019) on 10 intermediate and 10 advanced English-speaking L2 learners of Japanese in Japan, it was found that proficiency seems to be one of the preconditions of using *ne*. Rather than the amount of naturalistic exposure in an immersion context, a certain level of lexical and grammatical knowledge and efficiency in online processing are likely to be a decisive factor in the development of *ne*.

Similarly, Usami and Zhang (2022) examined the use of *ne*, *yo* and *yone* by Chinese-speaking learners of Japanese residing in Japan, using the Basic Transcription System for Japanese (BTSJ) Corpus. Their analysis compared three sets of data: (a) interactions between advanced learners and a Japanese friend, (b) interactions between advanced learners and Japanese native speakers who met for data collection, and (c) interaction between beginners and a Japanese friend. Advanced learners interacting with a friend most frequently used *yo*, with an error rate of 4%, followed by *ne* (5%) and *yone* (7%). In the data from (b) and (c), *ne* was most frequently used, followed by *yo* and *yone*. In formal conversations of (b) where participants met for the first time, the error rates of *ne*, *yo*, and *yone* were 11%, 4%, and 24%, respectively. In (c), where beginners employed a casual style<sup>5</sup>, the error rates of *ne*, *yo*, and *yone* were 30%, 67%, and 50%, respectively. These findings indicate that both proficiency level and psychological distance influenced the use

<sup>5</sup> The Japanese language has two main speech styles: the polite form (the *desu/masu* form or addressee honorifics) and the plain form (informal or casual form). By appearing in verbal endings, the style that the speaker chooses indexes a social meanings like formality, politeness, and affect (Cook ed. 2008).

patterns of interactional particles. Notably, *yone* was challenging for all JSL learners, regardless of proficiency and psychological distance. This seems to be consistent with findings of Kizu et al. (2013) and Masuda (2009, 2023) that also reported less use of *yone*.

## 2.5 Research questions

The current study has two steps. First, it provides an overview of types of interactional particles used at the end of utterances. Second, it examines specific focal particles, namely, *yo*, *yone*, and *ka*. This study is significant for three reasons: (a) it supports the use of corpus-based approach to investigate pragmatics such as the use of interactional particles; (b) it employs discourse-oriented methodology to explore interactional particles beyond the well-studied *ne* particle; and (c) it offers pedagogical implications by examining how these interactional particles are actually used by both learners with different proficiency levels and native speakers, thereby informing Japanese language pedagogy. We aim to address the following three research questions.

Research Question 1: How frequently do L2 learners at two different proficiency levels use interactional particles in the corpora?

Research Question 2: Are there any differences in the interactional competence strategies employed by L2 learners of varying proficiency levels?

Research Question 3: Are there any distinct patterns of interactional particles used by native speakers that are rarely exhibited by L2 learners?

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Corpora

For this research, the I-JAS corpus was utilized. This corpus contains samples collected from both L2 learners with different linguistic backgrounds and proficiency levels and L1 speakers, making it suitable for the purposes of the present study. The ‘dialogue’ data was obtained from English-speaking L2 learners from the United States and the United Kingdom and two proficiency levels were examined<sup>6</sup>: a) 10 beginning level students without study abroad experience and b) 10 intermediate learners with varying durations of study abroad experience ranging from one month through 1.5 years. Each group consists of six males and four females. Beginners were all Americans, while the intermediates consist of four American and six British students. Table 2 provides a summary of L2 learners’ information.

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<sup>6</sup> The I-JAS corpus also contains English-native speakers’ samples taken from Australia and New Zealand. However, these students’ samples were not included in this study. Many of them speak multiple languages, including English and Chinese, and because of this their linguistic background may have affected their use of interactional particles.

Table 2 Summary of L2 learner participants

	Beginners	Intermediates
The number of participants	10	10
Average years of Japanese study*	1.25 year	3.8 year
Range of years of Japanese study	6 months to 2.5 years	1 year to 8.5 years
Average age	21.5	23.3
Range age	19–29	22–35
SPOt score average	40.8	67.1
SPOt score range	30–51	61–75

\* This number only includes formal instruction.

Additionally, 10 sets of conversations by L1 speakers in their twenties and thirties, with an average age of 24, were examined. These L1 speakers resided in Tokyo or Kanagawa at the time of recording. All L1 speakers, with the exception of two individuals, were either undergraduate or graduate students. Each semi-structured conversation lasted about half an hour, totaling approximately 15 hours of recorded data. The topics of conversation, initiated by the interviewer, covered various aspects such as daily life, hobbies, hometowns, favorite teachers, scary experiences, and dream jobs. Given that the speakers were meeting for the first time during the data collection, they primarily used the formal *desu-masu* style of speech.

### 3.2 Analysis and coding

The analysis and coding process involved two steps. First, a search was conducted using *Chūnagon* search engine, entering *shūjoshi* ‘final particle’ in the category of *hinshi* ‘part of speech’. This retrieved interactional particles such as *ne*, *yo*, *ka*, and *kke*. In addition, two modal expressions such as *desho* and *(nan)darō* were searched, since these expressions overlap in function with *yone*.<sup>7</sup>

Second, the researcher downloaded the participants’ information, transcripts, and recorded conversation files to ensure transcription and recording accuracy. Manual checks were performed, and adjustments were made as needed, including separating particle combinations. For instance, *yone* and *kane* were manually separated, since *Chūnagon* automatically counts them twice. The modal expression *desho* for confirmation and *(nan)darō* and *(nanda)kke* for self-recalling or making uncertainty observed in self-addressed speech were also included, as they appear at the end of utterances. The size of each corpus varies as shown in Table 3, with the L1 speaker’s corpus being the largest at 37,982 morphemes, the intermediate learners’ corpus totaling 27,201 morphemes, and beginners’ corpus being the smallest with 11,719 morphemes.

Table 3 Size of corpora

	Beginners	Intermediates	L1 speakers
Number of morphemes	11,719	27,201	37,982
Average number of morphemes uttered by per speaker	1,172	2,720	3,798
Range of morphemes	946–1,313	1,542–4,522	2,718–6,354

<sup>7</sup> Hasunuma (1995) states that like *yone*, *desho* and *darō* has the function called *kyōtsū ninshiki no kanki* (evoking common recognition). E.g., *Asoko ni yūbin posuto ga mieru desho/mieru yone/mieru darō* where one points out directions to the taxi driver.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Overall distribution of interactional particles by L2 learners and L1 speakers

The results of the overall distribution of interactional particles by L2 learners and L1 speakers are presented in Table 4. This table shows the frequency of interactional particles, both an absolute frequency (Freq.) measure and a normalized frequency (NF), normalized to 100,000 morphemes. Comparing the beginning and intermediate groups, the intermediate learners have an NF three times higher than that of beginners. Additionally, the NF of L1 speakers is 2.6 times higher than that of intermediate learners.

Table 4 Frequency of the use of interactional expressions

	Beginners	Intermediates	L1 speakers
Token frequency of interactional particle use	39	264	971
Type frequency of interactional particle use	4	9	13
NF	333	971	2,556
Range of frequency	0–10	3–93	38–159

Table 5 illustrates the usage of different interactional particles in the three groups. It is evident that *ne* was the most frequently used particle in all groups, followed by *ka*. Beginners employed only four different particles: *ne*, *ka*, *kana* and *yo*. In contrast, intermediates utilized nine different types including *na*, *yone*, *sa*, *desho*, and *no*, although the frequencies of these were less than 10% of the total usage. As expected, L1 speakers employed a broader range, with as many as 13 different types, including the variants *kane*, *darō*, *kke* and *zo*.

Table 5 Variations of the use of interactional expressions

	Beginners		Intermediates		L1 speakers	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
<i>ne</i>	21	53.8	195	73.6	625	64.4
<i>ka</i>	10	25.6	29	10.9	58	6.0
<i>kana</i> <sup>1</sup>	6	15.4	12	6.0	50	5.1
<i>kane</i> <sup>2</sup>					49	5.0
<i>na</i>			5	2.5	54	5.5
<i>yo</i>	2	5.2	3	1.5	48	4.9
<i>yone</i>			1	0.5	51	5.3
<i>sa</i>			1	0.5	1	0.1
<i>desho</i>			4	2.0	6	0.6
<i>no</i>			14 <sup>3</sup>	7.0	1	0.1
<i>darō</i>					2 <sup>4</sup>	2.1
<i>kke</i>					8 <sup>5</sup>	0.8
<i>zo</i>					2 <sup>6</sup>	0.2
Total	39	100	264	100	971	100

1. The particle sequence *kana* is when the speaker asks himself/herself about something. It expresses the speaker's monologue question 'I wonder' but not someone else's monologue. It can be used to solicit the listener's answer indirectly, but the textbook description states that it should not be used toward someone in higher position as it is informal speech (Hatasa et al. 2015: 458).
2. The particle sequence *kane* is also a softer way to ask a question (Martin 2004: 934).
3. Two out of 14 occurrences were made by a single learner (UK28) in the form of *nante iu no* 'How can I say?' He switched to casual style in the self-addressed speech.
4. *darō* was used in the form of *nandarō* 'What was/is?' in the self-addressed speech.
5. *kke* was used in the form of *nanda kke* 'What was/is?' for self-recalling and used by three speakers.
6. *zo* was used when the speaker imitated someone's voice.

Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate a correlation between L2 learners' proficiency levels and their usage of interactional particles. As proficiency increases, learners tend to employ a greater number of interactional particles, exhibiting more diverse functions in their interactions. This finding aligns with previous studies (e.g., Hasselgren 2002, Fernández et al. 2014) that indicate high-level L2 learners use pragmatic markers more frequently and demonstrate a wider range of pragmatic functions. As mentioned in Section 4.1, *ne* is the predominant interactional particle in the L2 learners' corpora, accounting for the majority of uses in both beginner (53.8%) and intermediate (73.6%) speakers. Additionally, the question marker *ka* is the second most frequently used particle in both groups, representing 25.6% in the beginners' data and 10.9% in the intermediate speakers' data. However, qualitative analysis has revealed a distinctive use of *ka* within each group. Since the previous studies have hardly dealt with particles other than *ne*<sup>8</sup>, Sections 4.2 and 4.3 discuss use of *ka* and *yo* (and *yone*), respectively.

#### 4.2 Qualitative analysis of use of the interactional particle *ka* by L2 learners

The question marker *ka* is typically introduced early in Japanese language textbooks. However, L2 learners in the corpora exhibited individual differences in its usage, with only two L2 beginners using it, while seven intermediate learners employed it. The qualitative analysis revealed an interesting finding. Both beginner and intermediate learners often used *ka* in “formulaic language or a conventional expression” (Bardovi-Harlig 2019). Here, conventional expressions refer to the recurrent strings or expressions used for specific pragmatic purposes which often capture the illocutionary force of a contribution and are likely to be adopted by the native speakers (Bardovi-Harlig 2019: 100). The formulaic expressions observed in the present study, such as *X wa nan desu ka* ‘What is X?’ and *X tte wakarimasu ka* ‘Do you know X?’, can be considered candidate expressions for conventional usage, although further data in both L1 and L2 contexts is needed to confirm this. Note that *tte* (a quotation marker) also contributes to the meaning of formulaic language as in *X tte wakarimasu ka*. This pattern is more appropriate if the hearer may not know X. A pattern *X ga wakarimasu ka*, where the nominative marker *ga* is used instead of *tte*, is more

<sup>8</sup> The overall use of *ne* in both L2 and L1 speakers' corpora reveals a prevalent presence of the formulaic expression *sō desu ne* as well as other instances of *ne* (see Table 5).

Table. Frequency of the use of *ne* and its variants

	Beginners	Intermediate	L1 speakers
<i>Sō desu ne</i>	7 (33.3%)	44 (29.1%)	289 (46.2%)
<i>other ne</i>	14 (66.7%)	151 (70.9%)	336 (53.8%)
<i>Total of ne</i>	21	195	625

However, individual differences were observed. Among 10 beginners, four did not use *ne* at all, while all intermediates and L1 participants used *ne* to some extent. Among the beginners who used *ne*, three out of six employed the formulaic expression *sō desu ne*. This expression *sō desu ne* can serve multiple functions depending on intonation and context. When uttered with a lowing pitch, it indicates agreement ‘That’s right/ I agree’. For example, in a conversation where person A says *ī tenki desu ne* ‘it’s a nice weather, *ne*’, person B responds with *sō desu ne* ‘that’s right’. On the other hand, when *sō desu ne* is accompanied by a prolonged *ne*, it functions as a hesitation marker or a way to express uncertainty ‘Let’s see’. For instance, if person A might respond suggests, *issboni karaoke ni ikimasenka?* ‘Let’s go to karaoke!’, person B might respond with *sōdesu ne=*. ‘well, let’s see...’. It is important to note that due to space limitations, a detailed analysis of *ne* goes beyond the scope of this study.

appropriate if the speaker assumes that the hearer has heard X before.

Speakers with higher proficiency exhibited more intersubjectivity in their use of *ka*-marked formulaic language compared to beginners. Excerpts 2 and 3, taken from beginners' data exemplify instances of subjectivity where the learner K asked clarification questions about the words, *kowakatta* 'scary' (line 2 of Excerpt 2) and *shigoto* 'job' (lines 3, 4 of Excerpt 3). By using the formulaic expression *~wa nan desu ka?* as a chunk, consisting of the topic marker, the word *nan* meaning 'what', copula *desu*, and the question particle *ka*, the learner attempted to sustain the conversation. Although actively participating, the learner was in the R-turn of the Initiate-Response-Follow up (IRF) pattern.

Excerpt 2: Interviewer I asks K to share a scary experience (Beginner US18)

- 1.I: *ja, nanika imamade, kowakatta koto tte, arimasu ka?*  
 then DM so far scary things QT there is IP  
 'Then, is there anything that scares you so far, *ka?*'
- 2.K: *hmm... kowakatta?*  
 well, scary?
- 3.I: *[un]*  
 yeah.
- 4.K: *[-wa nan] desu ka?* ← clarification with the formulaic language  
 TP what CP IP  
 'What is scary, *ka?*'

Excerpt 3: Interviewer I tried to find out student K's dream job. (Beginner US18)

- 1.I: *ima, ninensei desu ka?*  
 now sophomore CP IP  
 'Are you sophomore now, *ka?*'
- 2.K: *un.*  
 yeah.
- 3.I: *ano=, shōrai? Donna shigoto wo, shitai desu ka?*  
 well, future. what job AC want-to-do CP IP  
 'well, in the future, what type of job would you like to do, *ka?*'
- 4.K: *-shigo...to? A=, wa nan desu ka?* ← clarification with the formulaic language  
 job oh, TP what CP IP  
 'job? Oh...what is that, *ka?*'

Excerpt 4 provides another example of formulaic language from the beginner's corpus. In line 1, Interviewer I asked student M if she had roommates, knowing that M lives on campus. In response to the interviewer's comment, 'it is fun, *ne?*' in line 3, M uttered *sō= desu ka*, a formulaic expression that she often used, with a rising intonation. M's utterance indicates her uncertainty and/or hesitation. After a short pause, Interviewer I rephrased her question, asking 'Do you also have a hard time, *ka?*' and 'Who is cleaning (the room), *ka toka?*' to keep the conversation going. M's formulaic utterance was successful in facilitating the interviewer to rephrase her questions; however, the formulaic language with the question marker *ka* once again occurred in the R-turn in the Initiate-Response-Follow up (IRF) pattern.

Excerpt 4: Interviewer I asked whether M is enjoying life with her roommates. (Beginner US26)

1.I: *ima wa, rūmumēto to isshoni, sundeiru n desu ka?*  
 now TP roommate with together living EP CP IP

‘Now, do you live with your roommate, *ka?*’

2.M: *hai, a=, etto, sannin desu.*  
 yes. well DM three people CP

‘Yes, well, with three people.’

3.I: *a=, sannin desu ka. Tanoshī desu ne?*  
 oh, three people CP IP fun CP IP

‘Oh, you have three roommates. It’s fun, *ne?*’

4.M: *mmn... (2.0) sō= desu ka=?*  
 well so CP IP

‘Well... is it the case, *ka?*’

5.I: *taihenna koto mo arimasu ka?*  
 hard things also there is IP

‘Do you also have a hard time, *ka?*’

6.M: *u=, un.*

‘uh-huh.’

7.I: *sōji wa dare ga shimasu ka toka?*  
 cleaning TP who NM do IP DM

‘Who is cleaning (the room), *ka toka?*’

8.M: *u=n, @@@ ie=, kitanai apāto desu. @@@*  
 aha... no messy apartment CP.

‘Oh...@@ no, it’s a messy apartment. @@’

Intermediate learners also utilize formulaic language with the question marker *ka* such as *X tte wakarimasu ka?* ‘Do you understand X, *ka?*’, demonstrating their intersubjectivity, as it reflects the speaker’s attention to the hearer within their narrative. For example, in Excerpt 5, when student K shared his scary experience, he attempted to ensure that the addressee was following along by checking if a new referent in the discourse, Lock-up (line 9 of Excerpt 5), the bar they went to, was familiar to the hearer. Learning that Interviewer I was unfamiliar with Lock-up, K briefly explained it to maintain the conversation.

Excerpt 5: After Interviewer I’s inquiry on K’s scary experience, K talked about getting very drunk in a bar in Kobe, Japan on his friend’s birthday, and waking up in the hospital. (Intermediate UK03)

1.I: *...kawai koto wa nakatta?*  
 scary things TP there was:NG

‘Don’t you have any scary experience?’

2.K: *sōyū no, a=, n=, nihon de wa ne.*  
 such GN well oh Japan LC TP IP

‘That’s sort of thing in Japan, *ne?*’

3.I: *hōhō*  
 ‘aha aha.’

- 4.K: *nihon de, aruhi, kōbe made, ano asobini itte,*  
Japan LC one day Kobe to DM play to went  
'One day in Japan, I went to Kobe to have fun there.'
- 5.I: *un*  
'yeah'
- 6.K: *tomodachi to isshoni, sono=, sore wa,*  
friend with together well that TP
- 7.K: *ano tomodachi no tanjōbi no tameni?*  
that friend GN birthday GN for  
'with my friends, well, that's for celebrating my friend's birthday.'
- 8.I: *un un*  
'yeah, yeah'
- 9.K: *asobini itte, ano are, Lock-up to iu izakaya tte wakarimasu ka?*  
play went DM DM QT say bar QT understand IP  
'I went there to have fun. Do you know a bar called 'Lock-up', *ka*?'
- 10.I: *shiranai.*  
'I don't know.'
- 11.K: *kangoku no tēma no izakaya.*  
jail GN theme GN bar  
'It's a type of bar featuring jail/cells.'

In Excerpt 6, during the discussion of his working holiday plan, K confirmed whether Gaba, an English conversation school (line 4 of Excerpt 6) was familiar to the hearer. These instances illustrate how intermediate learners employed formulaic language with the question marker *ka* to establish common ground and sustain the conversation.

Excerpt 6: Interviewer I asks K how they are spending their year in Japan on a working holiday visa. (Intermediate UK03)

- 1.I: *ja, shigoto wa nani suru n desu ka?*  
then, job TP what do EP CP IP  
'Then, what type of job are you doing, *ka*?'
- 2.K: *sore wa yappari, e=, eikaiwa, toka ne*  
that TP as expected well English conversation DM IP  
'(teaching) English conversation, *ne*.'
- 3.I: *a=, a=,*  
'I see.'
- 4.K: *eikaiwa no GABA to iu kaisha tte wakarimasu ka?*  
English conversation GN QT say company QT understand IP  
'Do you know a company called 'Gaba', an English language school, *ka*?'
- 5.I: *ha=, ha=, wakaru.*  
yeah yeah understand  
'yeah, yeah. I know.'

Excerpt 7 presents another instance of the formulaic expression *tte wakarimasu ka*, used by a different intermediate learner, C, in line 2. C was talking about her travels in Japan and



demonstrated her awareness of the speaker-addressee relationship. Upon realizing that the interviewer was familiar with the famous hot spring resort area, Hakone, C continued her narrative, confident in their mutual understanding.

Excerpt 7: Student C talking about traveling in Japan with Interviewer I. (US 32)

1.I: *doko no onsen ga yokatta desu ka?*  
 where GN hot spring NM good CP IP

‘Which hot spring was your favorite, *ka*?’

2.C: *ano=, hakone tte wakarimasu ka?*  
 DM QT understand IP

‘well, do you know a place called Hakone, *ka*?’

3.I: *wakarimasu.*

understand.

‘I understand.’

In sum, use of the question particle *ka* in formulaic language displayed distinct characteristics in both learner groups. More proficient learners demonstrated a concern for intersubjectivity by checking the addressee’s familiarity with referents they mentioned in their narratives. In contrast, beginners typically used *ka* to ask for clarification of the meaning of words uttered by the interviewer, in the R-turn in the Initial-Response-Follow up (IRF) routine.

#### 4.3 Qualitative analysis of use of interactional particles *yo* and *yone* by L2 and L1 speakers

Quantitative analysis reveals L2 and L1 speakers exhibited different variation patterns of interactional particles including *yo*, as shown in Table 5. Table 6 provides an overview of *yo*, its variant *yone*, and the *n desu yo* construction. Interestingly, while L1 speakers often used *yo*’s variant, *yone* and the *n desu yo* construction<sup>9</sup>, L2 learners exclusively used the bare form of *yo*. In the beginners’ corpus, there were only two instances of *yo*, uttered by different learners. These instances occurred when L2 learners attempted to express an attitude with respect to a referent that they were talking about. For instance, one learner emotionally described big cockroaches in Arizona as *hidoi yo*= ‘they’re terrible, *yo*’, and the other learner expressed enjoyment of local Mexican food as *oishi yo*= ‘it’s yummy, *yo*’. It is worth noting that these bare *yo* utterances were produced by different learners who likely switched to the casual style to emphasize their emotions. Note that in Japanese discourse, interactional particles are ubiquitous especially in casual conversation. This is because these particles express speakers’ attitudes, reflecting close psychological proximity among conversation participants (Masuoka 1991).

Table 6 Frequency of *yo* and its variants

	Beginners	Intermediates	L1 speakers
<i>yo</i>	2 (100%)	3 (100%)	8 (8%)
<i>n desu yo</i>	0	0	51 (52%)
<i>yone</i>	0	0	40 (40%)
<i>Total of yo and its’ variants</i>	2 (100%)	3 (100%)	99 (100%)

<sup>9</sup> See Masuda (2021) reports frequent use of the *n desu yo* construction by students talking to their professors.

In the intermediate learners' corpus, two out of three uses of *yo* appeared in the formulaic phrase, *sō desu yo*. 'That's right, *yo*', used to emphasize the speaker's love for Osaka. Another *yo*-marked utterance was *sō da yo* 'That's right, *yo*' in casual form, when imitating someone's voice. The remaining *yo*-marked utterance was *bikkuri shimasu yo*, 'you'd be surprised, *yo*' used when explaining a cosplay show at a Japanese festival.

Now, let's consider the use of *yo* by L1 speakers. The occurrence of bare *yo* was rare in the L1 corpus, accounting for only eight tokens (8%). L1 speakers exhibited two distinctive patterns of using *yo*: a) its variant *yone*, as shown in Excerpt 1 in Section 2.3, and b) the *n desu yo* construction. Due to the limited space, the following section discusses some instances of L1 use of the *n desu yo* construction.

In Excerpt 8, Interviewer I and the Speaker C were discussing about C's part-time job. Curious about C's commute to her workplace, a café located at a highway service area, Interviewer I asked a question using the *n desu ka* construction (line 2). In response, C used *n desu yo* (line 3) to provide information on how to get there, saying 'enter from the back, *n desu yo*.' By using *n desu yo*, C fills the epistemic gap for the interviewer with *n desu*, while providing the information in a way that expresses the speaker's familiarity or assurance, indicated by *yo*.

Excerpt 8: Interviewer I and the Speaker C are talking about C's part-time job. (JJ 14)

1.C: *arubaito wa kafe de yatterimasu.*

Part-time TP coffee LC doing.

'I'm doing a part-time job at the café located (at highway service area).'

<A few lines omitted>.

2.I: *a=, ja, wazawaza sābisu eria ni ikanakyaikenai n desu ka?*

DM then, all the way service area to have to go EP CP IP

'Oh, then you have to drive to service area all the way to work there, *ka*?'

3.C: *iya, ano, ura kara haireru n desu yo.*

No well back from can enter EP CP IP

'No, I can enter from the back, *n desu yo*.'

Three instances of the *n desu yo* construction were observed in Excerpt 9, where the Speaker JJ told a scary experience in Canada. By using the *n desu yo* construction to provide background information such as 'really enjoyed talking,' 'looking at the outside of the room,' and 'there was a buffet the next morning,' the Speaker JJ successfully highlighted the context of her scary story in a friendly manner. Following Ishiguro's terms, JJ fills the epistemic gap for the interviewer with *n desu*, satisfying the sharing function, which foreshadows the inevitability of subsequent development. Additionally, it provides information with a sense of familiarity from JJ, indicated by *yo*.

Excerpt 9: Speaker JJ 13 was narrating her scary experience in Canada.

*Kowakatta keiken wa (hai)...ano kanada ni ano, ikkagetsukan ano, ryūgaku ni itteta n desu kedo, hōmusei ni (un un un un) sono toki ni, dokoni ittanokana, dokka dekaketa n desu ne. (hai)de, tomodachi to futaride hoteru ni ite, shitara, ohanashi sugoi moriagatta n desu yo. Futaride. ... (a few lines omitted) moriagatte itara, kyūni doa o tatakuru hito ga ite (@@@) urusai mitai na kanjide, (a few lines omitted) don don don don tatakarete, de, sore wo mita n desu yo, ano anakara. (un un). (a few lines*

omitted) *sono tsugi no asa baikingu datta n desu yo. De, soko de @@@ kinō no hito ga ite, demo acchi wa atashitachi no kao shiranai node (un) yokattan desukedo, sorega ichiban kowakatta desu, imamade.*

English Translation: ‘My scary experience was when I spent a month in Canada and did homestay. I went out with my friend, and stayed at a hotel, and we really enjoyed talking at night in the room. (a few lines omitted) Suddenly, I heard someone banging on the door, because our conversation was so loud. So, I looked at the outside through the peephole on the door. (a few lines omitted) The next morning, there was a buffet. Then, I saw the man who had banged on the door the night before. But well, he had no way of knowing us, so it was ok, but that was the scariest experience for me.’

As observed in Excerpts 8 and 9, in spoken Japanese, it is common for a clause to take the form of a sentence extension *no* or its clitic form *-n* followed by the copula and an interactional particle. This type of utterance contributes to interaction and demonstrates speaker’s emotional involvement (Kondo 2010: 139). Use of the extended predicate *n/no* is often presented in textbooks as a means of providing explanations or inviting additional information beyond a simple answer, creating a sense of harmony, shared atmosphere, and friendliness (cf. Hatasa et al. 2015: Chapter 8). However, it is also noted that overusing this construction can sound imposing or rude. In addition, current textbooks do not explicitly mention the occurrence of the *n desu* construction with interactional particles. Therefore, it is understandable that the learners examined in this study did not show use of the *n desu yo* construction, even though L1 speakers preferred this pattern.

In sum, both L2 beginner and intermediate learners had limited usage of *yo* and its variant *yone*, as well as the *n desu yo* construction. On the other hand, L1 speakers had a strong preference for using the *n desu yo* construction and *yone*. These findings align with Yamauchi’s (2004) study on the KY corpus, which identifies phrases such as *n desu yo* and *n desu ne* as indicators of advanced learners, demonstrating their good command of interactional particles in natural and active conversation.

## 5. Discussion

The discussion section begins by addressing the first research question, which focuses on the effect of proficiency on the use of interactional particles. The results, as shown earlier in Table 5, indicate that proficiency level plays a significant role in the acquisition of interactional particles by English-speaking L2 learners of Japanese. Intermediate learners who have studied abroad exhibited a higher frequency of interactional particle use compared to beginners who had not participated in such programs. Moreover, the intermediate learners demonstrated a wider range of interactional particle usage than the beginners. While the beginners primarily used the basic four, *ne*, *ka*, *yo*, and *kana*, more proficient learners employed up to nine types including *yone*, *sa*, *no*, *na*, and *desho*. These additional particles appeared to facilitate their active participation in conversations.

The second research question focuses on the qualitative differences in the use of interactional particles in relation to proficiency levels. While individual differences existed within each group, both beginner and intermediate L2 learners showed limitations in their use of the particle

*yo* and its variant *yone* was rarely employed. A similar finding was reported by Masuda (2023) in a study examining the acquisition process of interactional particles by Chinese-speaking learners in Japan over a three-year period.

Interestingly, the analysis of interactional particle usage at micro and macro levels revealed that beginners and intermediate learners often used the question marker *ka* but in different ways. For beginners, *ka* served as a tool for clarification within the formulaic expression *X wa nan desu ka* (what is X?). This usage aligned with the responses turn of the Initiate-Response-Follow up (IRF) sequence, indicating that beginners were primarily focused on clarifying understanding of a word that the interlocutor used. On the other hand, intermediate learners used *ka* within another formulaic expression *X tte wakarimasu ka* (Do you know X?). The use of this expression is significant as it demonstrates the development of the intermediate learners' interactional competence, which involves the construction of a shared internal context or sphere of intersubjectivity (Kramsch 1986: 367). By employing this type of formulaic expression, intermediate learners actively engage in conversation with the addressee, to ensure the referent that they were talking about was familiar to the listener, and enhancing their roles as conversational participants through alignment activities.

The third research question, which explores distinct patterns of interactional particle usage exhibited by L1 speakers, but not commonly observed in L2 learners, was addressed by comparing the usage patterns of interactional particles between the two groups. Findings indicate that L2 learners tend to use the particle *yo*, but primarily in its base form. On the other hand, L1 speakers frequently use the variant form *yone*. Their use of *yone* allows L1 speakers to express their opinion or belief, indicating that both participants have independently arrived at the same conclusion regarding a shared referent, for which they possess prior first-hand knowledge. Consequently, *yone* facilitates the mutual alignment of interactants, as it enables them to convey their epistemic stance (knowledge or access to information) and evaluation stance (agreement or disagreement) to one another.

Another characteristic of L1 speakers related to the use of *yo* in the *n desu yo* construction. According to Kondo (2010) from a cognitive linguistics perspective, the function of the particle *n/no* is to draw attention to background information and emotions that the speaker intends to share with the addressee. In other words, use of *n/no* requires joint-attention between the speaker and the hearer. By using *n/no*, the speaker highlights their epistemic or evaluative stance within the discourse. Although the *n desu* construction (without any interactional particles) is introduced in elementary and intermediate-level textbooks, it is challenging for L2 learners to acquire (Kikuchi 2006); textbook writers often overlook actual usage patterns and present “rules of thumb” (Negueruela 2008) and/or list polysemous nature of the *n-desu* construction in a piecemeal fashion (Tsutada 2021). Shirakawa (2005: 56), for instance, suggests that the introduction of *n desu* should occur within a task-based approach, such as in teaching refusals and apologies, since overusing *n desu* can sound rude. Shikaura and Komura (2015) suggest focusing on the core meaning of the *n desu* construction, such as reasoning and shared background where the *n desu* construction is required. Fujishiro (2010) also promotes a metaphor for teaching this construction: ‘door opening metaphor’ (revealing the truth) for teaching *no-da*, while increasing ‘awareness of a perception gap’.

However, no textbook explicitly highlights the strong tendency of interactional particles to be used in the construction such as *n desu* and the underlying motivation behind the use of *n desu*

*yo*, which poses a significant challenge for L2 learners (Kondo 2010: 139). Note that we are not proposing that L2 should be forced to mimic L1 uses without understanding the concept behind them, but rather to teach hard-to-acquire but often used-items using a more systematic and conceptually-based approach. Instead of teaching isolated rules that only apply in specific instances, there is a need to provide more systematic and unified knowledge of the language by focusing on core meanings, aiming to enhance L2 learners' interactional competence by providing a conceptual foundation from the early stages of learning.

Usage-based linguistics researchers suggest that it is important to direct L2 learners' attention to concepts of the language that are hard to grasp, such as passives, the omission of the first person pronoun 'I', psychological predicates, benefactive constructions, and motion verbs in Japanese (Ikegami and Moriya eds. 2009, Masuda and Ohta 2021, Masuda et al. in progress). In line with these perspectives, the present study argues that in order to enhance L2 learners' interactional competence, a more systematic approach to teaching interactional particles should be adopted. This involves presenting the concepts of intersubjectivity alongside the core concepts of the major interactional particles (see Masuda 2023) in contexts that L2 learners are likely to encounter. It is more practical and productive to focus on the meaning-based motivation behind the use of interactional particles, the effect of expressions, and co-occurring constructions like *n desu yo* rather than teaching specific rules that only apply in limited contexts, and without considering the most commonly used patterns. Kramsch (1986) has suggested that an interactionally-oriented curriculum should explicitly include the discourse factors of language in use. This is particularly relevant in Japanese pedagogy, as the Japanese language predominately favors subjective construal, which immerses the speaker themselves in the scene. Ikegami (2005) emphasizes the benefits of teaching Japanese by contrasting it with typologically different languages like English, which frames events using objective construal. Based upon corpus-based analysis, the present study argues that the subjective construal pattern not only influences grammatical aspects but also deeply motivates pragmatic and discourse features, including the frequent use of interactional particles, which are integral to construal processes within the framework of usage-based linguistics. This article proposes that intersubjectivity or joint attention (*kyōdō chūshi*) fosters conceptual knowledge for English-speaking L2 learners, enabling them to grasp the interactional resources in Japanese more effectively.

## 6. Conclusion

Since this study is based upon a small-scale corpora (the total participants is 30 including both L2 and L1 speakers), we need to exercise caution when interpreting the results. As a reviewer suggested, this study has a residual problem in potential L2 learners' avoidance when interpreting non-use of interactional particles as well as possible misuse of the interactional particles. Future studies should explore a larger number of L2 learners in the I-JAS, including learners with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds with more detailed analysis, in order to gain a deeper understating of the development process of interactional particles. Additionally, it would be desirable to examine intonation patterns of interactional particles, as sound data is available in I-JAS and the study of prosody in L2 pragmatics in Japanese is still in its early stages. Furthermore, the results of a corpus-driven approach to L2 pragmatics should be incorporated and tested for the development of better teaching materials. In Japanese pedagogy, emphasis should be placed on the notion of (inter)subjectivity, not only for teaching difficult grammatical

constructions such as passives, benefactives, and motion verbs and their related constructions, as stated by Masuda and Ohta (2021), but also for teaching L2 pragmatics, including the use of interactional particles, style-shifting, and speech acts (See Masuda et al. in progress). To achieve this, the creation of easy-to-access and visually salient representations such as SCOBAs (Schema for a Complete Orienting Basis of Action) proposed by sociocultural research, appears to be the most promising approach.

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### Related websites

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## 学習者コーパスにおける日本語の相互行為詞の分析

### ——用法基盤モデルの日本語教育への応用——

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#### 要旨

多言語母語の日本語学習者横断コーパス (I-JAS) の対話データ (約 15 時間) を用い、言語熟達度の異なる英語母語話者 (留学経験のない初級後半学習者 10 名、留学経験のある中級学習者 10 名) と日本語母語話者 (10 名) の相互行為詞の言語使用の実態を検討した。Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos (2011) によると、言語熟達度と語用論的マーカーの使用には複雑な関係があるが、熟達度が高い学習者ほど汎用的なマーカーの使用が多く、使用頻度も高い。本研究では、「ね」「よ」「よね」など文末に現れる相互行為詞の種類とその頻度を調査した。その結果、(1) 初級後半のグループは定型表現が多く、「ね」「よ」「か」「かな」の 4 種類に限られていたが、中級学習者は使用の種類も 9 種類と広がりを見せ、頻度も多く、言語熟達度と相互行為詞の使用にはある関係性が確認できた。(2) 「か」の機能にも、言語熟達度による質的な違いが見られた。初級後半学習者の注視先は、あくまで話者主体であり、会話に出てくる言葉の意味確認のために使われていたのに対し、中級学習者の注視先は会話の相手で、自分のナラティブを理解しているのかを確認するための表現 (「*Lock-up* という居酒屋ってわかりますか」) に使われていた。つまり言語熟達度が上がると、主体と会話相手が持つ知識や経験に注視し、相互主体性が高くなるようだ。(3) 「よ」に関しては、学習者の使用は非常に限られているのに対し、日本語母語話者は「よね」や「んですよ」という「よ」のバリエーション表現が多かった。相互行為詞と同様に「のだ」構文も初級の教科書に出てくるが、その多義性や文脈依存性のために、習得が難しい。I-JAS の母語話者は、ナラティブにおいて背景状況を伝えるために「んですよ」を使ったり、話し手が意見を主張しながらも聞き手に同意を求める感情的な関わりの高い「よね」を使用していた。今後は、コーパスを活用し、用法基盤モデルの研究成果を活かし、言葉をルールではなく、言葉の概念を中心に相互主体性の視点も取り入れ体系的に教えることが望ましいと思われる。

**キーワード:** コーパス, 相互行為詞, 相互主体性, 第二言語としての日本語, 用法基盤モデル