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## The interactional function of Japanese interactive markers *yo* and *sa*

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the interactional function of Japanese interactive markers yo and sa in conjunction with the notion of involvement, and sheds light on some issues of verbal exchange in spoken discourse. The study argues that these markers commonly share the function of signalling the speaker's attitude of inviting the hearer's involvement in a 'monopolistic' manner, by which the speaker is committed to enhance his/her position as a deliverer of the contents/feeling conveyed in the utterance. Further, each marker indicates the speaker's monopolistic attitude in its unique way: yo signals the speaker's monopolistic attitude of ensuring the hearer's understanding of the contents/feeling conveyed in the utterance, while sa signals the speaker's monopolistic attitude of presenting the contents/feeling conveyed in the utterance as a matter of course for him/her. Based on these functions, their co-occurrence restrictions with modal expressions and their use in social contexts are also discussed.*

KEYWORDS: ATTITUDE; INTERACTIVE MARKERS; INVOLVEMENT; MONOPOLISTIC; SPOKEN DISCOURSE

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to discuss the two Japanese interactive markers *yo* and *sa* with special reference to their function in spoken discourse.<sup>1</sup> These markers are widely acknowledged as *shuu-joshi* 'sentence-final particles' in the literature of Japanese linguistics (Saji, 1957; Watanabe, 1968; Uyeno, 1971; among others) due to the fact that they appear in sentence-final positions.<sup>2</sup> There are three points that are particularly noteworthy in relation to the general function of these markers. First, they are frequently used in the spoken language (typically face-to-face-conversation), whereas rarely found in the written language (typically expository prose) (Uyeno, 1971; McGloin, 1990; Katagiri, 2007). Second, the use of these markers does not affect the truth-condition of the propositional information, and yet it plays an important role for the hearer's interpretation of the utterance (Uyeno, 1971; Cook, 1990). Third, the use of these markers has a certain effect on the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and the hearer (Uyeno, 1971; Cheng, 1987; McGloin, 1990), or they are more frequently used in casual settings than in formal situations (Uyeno, 1971).

Reflecting the importance of the use of these markers in Japanese conversation, for decades a numerous number of studies have taken various approaches to the function of these markers (e.g. Saji, 1957; Uyeno, 1971; Cook, 1990; Masuoka, 1991; Squires, 1994; Morita, 2005; among others). These studies have offered insightful analyses in their own right. Nevertheless, they have tended to focus on partial aspects of the markers (*ne* and *yo* in particular), and/or on the informational aspect of their use. As a result, their interactional function has not been sufficiently described in an integrated manner.

In light of the above-noted features of *yo* and *sa*, the current study takes an interactional approach<sup>3</sup> to the use of these two markers by invoking the notion of involvement, and provides a synthetic analysis in terms of their interactional function in spoken discourse. To be more specific, the study adopts the 'involvement-based' approach proposed by Lee (2007), and highlights the common function of the two targeted markers as a linguistic device of signalling the speaker's monopolistic attitude. Further, the study will argue that these markers are characteristically different from each other in the sense that each marker manifests the speaker's monopolistic attitude in a different manner.

## 2. Involvement-based approach

Involvement is a fundamental element for the initiation and maintenance of verbal interaction. It is seen as a prerequisite to the success of any conversational encounter, and created and maintained by the consistent use of a variety

of linguistic forms and strategies (e.g. Arndt and Janney, 1987; Besnier, 1994; Daneš, 1994; Lee, 2007). A prominent expression of involvement often has an important role in the interaction of speech events, which is typically realized through linguistic exchanges that show a high level of tenseness and intimacy, or in Daneš' (1994) terms, 'more-than-normal' signalling cues of participants' emotions and attitudes.

Lee (2007) adopts the notion of involvement in close connection with the role of a speaker's attitude in conversation, and characterizes the interactive markers *ne* and *yo* as the incorporative and monopolistic markers, respectively. Observe (1) below.

- (1) a. *Eiga*, *omoshirokatta*.  
movie was.interesting "The movie was interesting."
- b. *Eiga*, *omoshirokatta* *ne*.  
movie was.interesting NE "The movie was interesting."
- c. *Eiga*, *omoshirokatta* *yo*.  
movie was.interesting YO "The movie was interesting."
- (Lee, 2007: 367)

Lee (2007) notes that these three utterances deliver the same propositional information, the speaker's positive evaluation of the movie, but signal different attitudes of the speaker in conveying this positive evaluation towards the hearer; (1a), without either *ne* or *yo*, indicates the speaker's attitude of unilaterally delivering his/her positive evaluation of the movie, without 'markedly' inviting the hearer's involvement. Being a 'simple' statement without involvement, it may also be used in monologue or written language. In contrast, (1b), with *ne*, invites the hearer's involvement in the way that the speaker encourages the hearer to align with his/her positive evaluation. This can roughly be glossed as 'I think that the movie was interesting. Don't you think so?' Further, (1c), with *yo*, invites the hearer's involvement in the way that the speaker enhances his/her position as a deliverer of his/her positive evaluation. This can roughly be paraphrased as 'Listen. I tell you that the movie was interesting.' (2) is a summary of the functions of *ne* and *yo* extracted from Lee (2007: 369):

(2) Functions of *ne* and *yo* (∅ = no sentence-final particle is appended)

	Marked involvement	Speaker's attitude
∅	no	Unilateral delivery towards the partner
<i>ne</i>	yes (Incorporative)	Aligning the contents and feeling of the utterance with the partner
<i>yo</i>	yes (Monopolistic)	Enhancing of the position as the deliverer towards the partner

As noted in Section 1, what is commonly expressed by the use of *yo* and *sa* is the speaker's monopolistic attitude. Below, I will demonstrate that *yo* and *sa* share a monopolistic nature.

### 3. Monopolistic nature of *yo* and *sa*

First, consider (3) which illustrates the use of *ne*.

- (3) O: *Masaka konna shinya ni okyakusan ga korareru no kana*  
 by.no.means this late.at.night customer SUB come NOM I.wonder.if  
*to omottara ippai kite-itadaite hontoo ureshikatta desu ne.*  
 QT think-CD lots come really was.glad BE NE  
 'I did not think by any means that customers would come (to see my film) at such a late time, but in fact lots of people came and I was really glad.'  
 K: *Nee.*  
 NE  
 'NE (I fully understand how you felt)' (Lee, 2007: 368)

In this example, speakers O and K are talking about a film in which O featured as a main character. The film was shown very late at night, and because of this O did not expect that many people would come to see it. O expresses his gladness to find that in fact many people had turned up, and uses *ne*. By adding *ne* here, O wishes to align with K with regard to his gladness. In responding to this, K uses *Nee* (the variant of *ne*), and shows her full alignment with O. Note that K's role is as a receiver of O's utterance here, so the use of the monopolistic markers *yo* and *sa*, instead of *Nee*, is not acceptable, since these markers, as we assume, signal the speaker's attitude of enhancing his/her position as a producer of the utterance rather than as a receiver of the other participant's utterance. As such, *ne* as an incorporative marker may be used when the speaker expects to be a receiver of, and indicates his/her alignment towards, the other participant's utterance, while *yo* and *sa* cannot be used in the same manner as *ne* due to their monopolistic nature; that is, enhancing the speaker's position as a deliverer of the utterance.

Let us now observe the use of *yo*.

- (4) A: *Ofukuro ga sabishigatteru zo. Ichinichi kurai kaerenai no ka?*  
 mother SUB feel.lonely-PROG SFP one.day about can.go.home NOM QUE  
 'Mother is missing you. Can't you come home even for one day?'  
 B: *Maketara sugu kaereru yo.*  
 lose-CD soon can.go.home YO  
 'If I lose (the baseball match), I can go home soon.' (T3)

(4) is a conversation between A and his younger brother, B, who has not gone home for a while. A asks B if he cannot come home even for one day. B replies

that he can go home soon if he loses the baseball match and uses *yo*. The intended meaning of B's reply is still denoted even though *yo* is not used, i.e. *Maketara kaereru* 'I can go home if I lose'. It is also obvious that even without *yo* B is already taking a role of the speaker by virtue of the conversational setting. Nonetheless, B employs *yo* and markedly invites A's involvement through which he is committed to enhance his position as a speaker. By doing so, he attempts to draw A's exclusive attention to what he says and ensures that A more carefully listens to him. As a result, his feeling that he wants A as well as his mother to understand his situation where he cannot go home because he keeps winning the match, is reinforced.

Since the monopolistic nature is shared by *yo* and *sa*, they are often interchangeable with respect to the speaker's monopolistic attitude. In fact, *yo* in (4) above can be replaced with *sa* as shown in (5) below, while B's monopolistic attitude is sustained.

- (5) B: *Maketara sugu kaereru sa.*  
 lose-CD soon can.go.home SA  
 'If I lose (the baseball match), I can go home soon.'

Although each sentence with a different marker indicates a different nuance, native speakers of Japanese easily notice that both markers commonly indicate the speaker's monopolistic attitude, 'Listen. I have something to tell you'. The use of these markers is to markedly draw the hearer's attention to the utterance and make sure that the hearer more carefully listens to what the speaker says. Given that *yo* and *sa* share the monopolistic nature, I will provide a detailed analysis of the use of *yo* in Section 4 and of *sa* in Section 5.

## 4. *Yo*

In Section 4, I focus on *yo*. 4.1 examines the function of the marker, and 4.2 discusses its expressive effects and their influence on the speaker's use of the marker in social contexts.

### 4.1. The function of *yo*: Ensuring the hearer's understanding

First, let us observe the examples (6) and (7). (6) is a short conversation carried out when A comes to B's café late in the night. A finds that there is no customer in the café and says a joke to B that B looks as idle as usual. B replies that what A says is nonsense and provides the reason why he looks idle at that time, and uses *yo*. As noted in Section 3, the use of *yo* here adds B's attitude of enhancing his position as a deliverer of the message.

- (6) A: *Aikawarazu hima soo da na.*  
 as.usual idle look BE SFP  
 'You look as idle as usual.'
- B: *Baka ie. Moo heiten jikan da kara da yo.*  
 nonsense say already closing,time BE because BE YO  
 'Don't say such nonsense. (I look idle) because it is already closing time.' (T1)
- (7) *Furo haitta hoo ga ii yo. Kaze hiku kara.*  
 bath enter-COMP SUB good YO cold catch because  
 'It is better for you to take a bath because otherwise you will catch cold.' (T2)

Yet, what is more important to note here is that in delivering such a monopolistic attitude, with *yo* B is committed to 'ensure' that A understands what he says and recognizes its importance, through which B enhances his attempt to correct A's misunderstanding about his idleness.

(7) is directed to the speaker's older brother who just came back home, being sopping wet. Here, the speaker suggests his brother to take a bath and his suggestion is stated with *yo*, i.e. *Furo haitta hoo ga ii yo*. Similar to the case of (6), the use of *yo* signals the speaker's attitude of enhancing his position as a deliverer of the utterance, and of ensuring his brother to understand his suggestion and realize its importance for the brother not catching cold.

As demonstrated through the examples (6) and (7) above, *yo* signals that the speaker enhances his/her position as an information deliverer and attempts to ensure that the hearer understands the contents and feeling conveyed in the utterance and recognizes their importance. The function of *yo* is summarized as follows:

- (8) The function of *yo*  
*Yo* signals the speaker's monopolistic attitude of ensuring that the hearer understands the contents and feeling conveyed in the utterance.

Keeping this in mind, let us consider the use of *yo* in the interesting case of implication. As often reported in the literature, *yo* has a usage to denote an implied message (Izuhara, 2001; Matsuoka, 2003; Lee, 2007). Look at (9) and (10) below.

- (9) [To a person who is about to go out lightly dressed]  
 (a) *Soto samui yo.*  
 outside cold YO  
 'It is cold outside. (Put on a coat.)' (Lee, 2007: 381)
- (b) ?*Soto samui.*  
 outside cold  
 'It is cold outside.'

- (10) [To a person who dropped something]  
 (a) *Nanika ochimashita yo.*  
 something dropped YO  
 'Something was dropped. (Pick it up.)' (Izuhara, 2001: 41)
- (b) ?*Nanika ochimashita.*  
 something dropped  
 'Something was dropped.'

The main concern of (9a) with *yo* is to convince the hearer to wear more clothing, as indicated in the bracket, i.e. Put on a coat. In this case, if *yo* were dropped from the statement as in (9b), the statement would be interpreted as simply expressing the coldness of outside, and the implied message, i.e. 'You should wear a coat', would not properly be delivered. Similarly, the main concern of (10a) with *yo* is to convince the hearer to pick up the thing dropped. In this case as well, the utterance without *yo* as in (10b), merely conveys the fact that something was dropped, and the implied message, i.e. 'You should pick up the thing dropped', would not sufficiently be indicated. In this regard, as pointed out by Lee (2007), the use of *yo* is crucial when the main concern of the utterance is to deliver an implied message (cf. the use of *yo* is optional in previous examples, (4), (6) and (7)).

According to Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 2001), in the course of producing an ostensive stimulus which attracts the hearer's attention to the utterance and indicates that the utterance is relevant enough to be worth his/her attention, the speaker's following two intentions play an important role: (a) 'the informative intention' which makes it manifest to the hearer some set of assumptions; and (b) 'the communicative intention' which makes it mutually manifest to the hearer and the speaker that the speaker has the informative intention. As indicated in (8) above, *yo* functions to invite the hearer's involvement and further ensure that the hearer understands what is conveyed in the utterance. In light of the function of *yo*, it is suggested that *yo* is a perfect linguistic device for the communicative intention. It directly draws the hearer's attention to the utterance, and delivers the speaker's reinforced commitment to ensure that the hearer understands the utterance content and the relevant feelings. Through this process, the speaker's informative intention of implied message is sufficiently manifested to the hearer; thereby the hearer realizes and figures out relevance between what is said and the implied message.

#### 4.2. The expressive effects of *yo* and its use in social contexts

It is of interest to note that, in the sentences of commands and requests, the effect of the marker has been accounted for differently among studies; that is, in some studies it is seen as 'strengthening' the force of command or

request (Matsumura, 1971; Hayashi, 2000 for commands; Matsumura, 1971; Masuoka, 1991 for requests), while in some others it is seen as 'softening' the force (Uyeno, 1971; Masuoka, 1991 for commands; Uyeno, 1971 for requests). As Lee (2007) has suggested, those two opposite views for the identical marker *yo* is due to the fact that each account sees only one aspect of the use of *yo*, and they are comprehensively explainable from the perspective of involvement and the monopolistic nature of the marker.

Look at the following examples. In (11a) and (11b) *yo* is attached to a command *hottoko* 'leave alone' and a request *yonde* 'please invite', respectively.

(11) (a) *Rui, hottoko yo.*  
 Rui leave.alone YO  
 'Rui, leave (him) alone.' (HD1)

(b) *Kekkonshiki yonde yo.*  
 wedding please.invite YO  
 'Please invite me to your wedding.' (CMM4)

In these examples, by using *yo*, the speaker markedly draws the hearer's attention, 'Listen. I have something to tell you,' and further indicates 'I want to ensure that you leave him alone' in (11a) and 'I want to ensure that you invite me to your wedding' in (11b). As noted above, it has been reported that *yo* with sentences of commands and requests as in (11) strengthens the force of these sentences, and indeed the use of *yo* in (11) has a sort of pushy tone towards the hearer. This pushy tone can be seen as representing the monopolistic nature of *yo* which accompanies the speaker's attitude of enhancing his/her superior position over the hearer in delivering information and his/her feeling, 'Listen. I have something to tell you and I want to ensure that you understand this'. This reinforced attitude of the speaker induced by *yo* appears as the expression of his/her strong feeling to push the hearer to do as he/she commands or requests, and the force of the command or request is heard to be strengthened.

However, what is important to remark on is that this does not necessarily mean that it carries a higher degree of command/request force. This point is shown more clearly when the above sentences in (11) are compared to those without *yo* as in (12) below.

(12) (a) *Rui, hottoko.*  
 Rui leave.alone  
 'Rui, leave (him) alone.'

(b) *Kekkonshiki yonde.*  
 wedding please.invite  
 'Please invite me to your wedding.'

These sentences unilaterally state the speaker's command and request, i.e. 'I command/request you to do as I say, and have no more to say'. With such an official tone, the assertiveness of the command/request tone is straightforwardly expressed. Compared to them, the sentences with *yo*, i.e. *hottoko yo*, and *yonde yo*, markedly indicate the speaker's invitation of the hearer's involvement, by which it explicitly shows the speaker's recognition of the hearer as his/her conversation partner and his/her willingness to maintain the conversation with the hearer. With the sentences associated with the speaker's such a recognition of, and feeling towards, the hearer, the assertiveness of the command/request tone would be moderated, and the sentences would sound softer.

In short, the use of *yo* has dual aspects in terms of its expressive effects, i.e. strengthening and softening. Its effect to strengthen the tone/force of an utterance can be seen as a realization of the monopolistic nature of *yo*, which reinforces the speaker's attitude of ensuring that the hearer listens to and understands what he/she says. This reinforced attitude of the speaker appears to express his/her strong feeling to push the hearer to do as required, and is interpreted as strengthening the tone/force of an utterance. In contrast, the speaker's attitude of inviting the hearer's involvement indicated by the use of the marker is realized as an expression of the speaker's recognition of the hearer as his/her conversation partner. This appears to moderate the assertiveness of the utterance, which is interpreted as softening the tone/force of the utterance.

Let us now turn to discuss the use of *yo* in social contexts. It is often reported that the use of *yo* indicates 'intimacy' (Masuoka, 1991; Nishikawa, 2000). It is also pointed out that the use of *yo* is interpreted as impolite in formal conversation (Masuoka, 1991; Hayashi, 2000), or is more restricted in formal conversation (Nishikawa, 2000). Such features of *yo* are closely related to the attitudinal aspect of the marker. Formality/informality is generally ensured not only by the formality of verbal forms, but also by the speaker's different way of expressing his/her attitude and feeling/emotion towards the hearer, e.g. indirect or direct manner. For example, as shown in (11) above, the speaker's attitude and feeling, regardless whether it softens or strengthens the tone of the utterance, are more directly and strongly indicated compared to the case without *yo*. In relation to this, it is also important to note that a direct display of the speaker's attitude and feeling/emotion towards the hearer is in principle more easily allowed in a situation where the conversational participants have a close relationship (Lee, 2002). *Yo* signals the monopolistic attitude of the speaker, through which the speaker's attitude and feeling, 'Listen. I want to ensure that you understand what I say and how I feel', are directly expressed. Furthermore, as shown above, the marker also denotes the speaker's feeling, 'I

recognize you as my conversation partner and wish to continue the conversation together'. The use of *yo* directly expresses such attitude and feeling of the speaker towards the hearer. In this regard, the use of the marker is interpreted as indicating the speaker's 'intimacy' towards the hearer, since the use of the marker is presumed as such that the speaker treats the hearer as a person who is close enough to directly show the speaker's attitude and feeling. This aspect of the marker provides a straightforward account for the reason why the use of *yo* is often interpreted as impolite in formal conversation where expressing intimacy is less reciprocal and the conversational participants are expected to keep interpersonal distance. This is also the reason for its less frequent use in formal conversation.

## 5. *Sa*

This section examines *sa*. Before starting the analysis of the marker, it is informative to note that, compared to *yo*, *sa* has some co-occurrence restrictions with particular expressions. These distributional facts of *sa* have, in fact, widely been acknowledged in many studies (Uyeno, 1971; Nihongo Kyooiku Gakkai, 1987; Miyazaki *et al.*, 2002; among others). Nonetheless, to the best of my knowledge, there have been no studies which systematically deal with the facts in relation to the function of the marker. For the purpose of presentation, I deal with the distributional facts of *yo* together with those of *sa* below. I assume that the distributional facts of these markers are not random, but linguistically motivated, and they are important clues to clarify the function of, as well as the difference between, *yo* and *sa*. In Section 5, I first show some distributional facts related to the use of *yo* and *sa* in 5.1, and then in relation to those facts, examine the function of *sa* in 5.2. In 5.3, I discuss the expressive effects of the marker and their influence on the speaker's use of the marker in social contexts.

### 5.1. Distributional facts of *yo* and *sa*

As illustrated below, *sa* cannot co-occur with particular types of modal expressions, while *yo* does not have such restrictions and can co-occur with any types of modal expressions.

- (13) (a) *Hanako mo konya no paatii ni kuru soo yo/\*sa.*  
Hanako also tonight LK party to come heard YO  
'I heard that Hanako will also come to the party tonight.'
- (b) *Hanako mo konya no paatii ni kuru yoo yo/\*sa.*  
Hanako also tonight LK party to come apparently YO  
'Hanako apparently comes to the party tonight, too.'

- (c) *Hanako mo konya no paatii ni kuru rashii yo/\*sa.*  
Hanako also tonight LK party to come seem YO  
'It seems that Hanako will also come to the party tonight.'
- (d) *Hanako mo konya no paatii ni kuru ni chigainai yo/sa.*  
Hanako also tonight LK party to come must YO SA  
'Hanako must also come to the party tonight.'
- (e) *Hanako mo konya no paatii ni kuru daroo yo/sa.*  
Hanako also tonight LK party to come suppose YO SA  
'I suppose that Hanako will also come to the party tonight.'
- (f) *Hanako mo konya no paatii ni kuru kamoshirenai yo/sa.*  
Hanako also tonight LK party to come may YO SA  
'Hanako may also come to the party tonight.'

(13a), (13b) and (13c) illustrate that *sa* is incompatible with the modal expressions *soo(da)* ('hearsay'), *yoo(da)* 'apparently' and *rashii* 'it seems', respectively, while *yo* is compatible with all of the given expressions. (13d), (13e) and (13f) show that both *yo* and *sa* are compatible with *(ni)chigainai* 'must (be)', *daroo* 'suppose' and *kamoshirenai* 'may (be)', respectively.

The second fact is that *sa* cannot co-occur with the sentences of commands, requests and proposals, whereas *yo* can.

- (14) (a) *Ima ike yo/\*sa.*  
now go YO  
'Go now.'
- (b) *Ima ikinasai yo.*  
now go YO  
'Go now.'
- (15) (a) *Ima itte yo/\*sa.*  
now please.go YO  
'Please go now.'
- (b) *Ima itte kudasai yo.*  
now please.go YO  
'Please go now.'
- (16) (a) *Ima ikoo yo/\*sa.*  
now let's.go YO  
'Let's go now.'
- (b) *Ima ikimashoo yo.*  
now let's.go YO  
'Let's go now.'

*Ike* in (14a) is a command, whereas *itte* in (15a) and *ikoo* in (16a) are a request and a proposal, respectively. Further, (14b), (15b) and (16b) are more formal version of (14a), (15a) and (16a), respectively. As shown, *sa* is incompatible with these types of sentences<sup>4</sup>, while *yo* is compatible.

As such, *sa* has some co-occurrence restrictions with particular types of expressions, compared to *yo*. In the next sub-section, I elaborate on these distributional facts and clarify the function of *sa*.

## 5.2. The function of *sa*: Presenting the utterance as a matter of course for the speaker

With regard to the function of *sa*, the most prominent claim in the literature is that it indicates that what is conveyed in the utterance is *toozen* 'natural' (Cheng, 1987; Nihongo Kyooiku Gakkai, 1987; Miyazaki *et al.*, 2002) or in Uyeno's (1971) term 'the obviousness of the matter'. Alfonso (1974) also notes that *sa* is used to indicate that something is obvious, which is equivalent to 'naturally'. Observe the following example.

- (17) A: *Doo naru ni (de) su ka ne, kono shiai.*  
 how become NOM BE QUE NE this game  
 'How does this game end?'  
 B: *Katsu sa.*  
 win SA  
 '(We) will win.' (T5)

In this conversational exchange, A asks B (who is in the same baseball team) how the ongoing baseball game will end. B states *Katsu* 'We will win', and uses *sa*. The important fact is that, as pointed out in the literature, the use of *sa* here indeed delivers a nuance that winning of their team is obvious and natural for B.

Previous studies have well captured this special characteristic of *sa*. However, the majority of those studies has largely relied on their intuitive knowledge without much empirical or theoretical discussion. I, thus, develop the initial spirit of the account given in previous studies and propose the function of *sa* in a more comprehensive manner. As will be shown shortly, the proposed function of the marker will also systematically deal with its distributional facts illustrated in 5.1. The function of *sa* is stated as follows:

- (18) The function of *sa*  
*sa* signals the speaker's monopolistic attitude of presenting the contents and feeling conveyed in the utterance as a matter of course for him/her.

Bearing this proposed function in mind, let us consider the use of *sa* in (19) below.

- (19) A: *Warui wane, wazawaza. Bokushingubu ga bodiigaadonara anshin da.*  
 sorry SFP kind.offer boxing.club SUB bodyguard-CD security BE  
 'Thank you for your kind offer (to protect me). I feel secure as the person (i.e. you) from the boxing club is my bodyguard.'  
 B: *Abunakunattara nigeru sa.*  
 become.dangerous-CD run.away SA  
 'I will run away if I face a dangerous situation.' (T3)

In (19), A shows her appreciation to B for taking her home in the night. In responding to A, B humorously states that he will run away if he faces a dangerous situation. He employs *sa* here. Similar to the case of *yo*, B's role as an information deliverer is naturally identifiable by the given conversational setting, and yet B uses *sa* and indicates his monopolistic attitude of enhancing his position as a message deliverer. Further, more importantly, with *sa*, B presents his emphasized feeling that what he says is a matter of course for him, which can roughly be paraphrased as 'I of course run away if I face a dangerous situation'. Note that without *sa*, B's statement would simply indicate what he would do, i.e. *Abunakunattara nigeru* 'I will run away if I face a dangerous situation'. Compared to this, the use of *sa* adds the feeling that this (he will run away) is just natural for him and he will of course do as such. This additional feeling in turn reinforces the humorousness involved (he is a very big and strong man). I now turn to explore the distributional facts of *sa* in conjunction with the function of the marker proposed in (18) above.

## Compatibility/incompatibility with modal expressions

The first fact to be considered is the co-occurrence restriction of the marker with particular types of modal expressions. As shown in 5.1, *sa* cannot be used with the modal expressions such as *soo(da)* 'hearsay', *yoo(da)* 'apparently' and *rashii* 'it seems', while it can with *(ni)chigainai* 'must (be)', *daroo* 'suppose', and *kamoshirenai* 'may (be)' (examples were given in (13) earlier).

It is widely agreed among Japanese linguists that *soo(da)*, *yoo(da)* and *rashii* differ from *(ni)chigainai*, *daroo* and *kamoshirenai*, in terms of the speaker's attitude towards the truth-value or factual status of the proposition (cf. Moriyama, 1989; Miyazaki, 1993; Johnson, 2003; among others). The former expressions, i.e. *soo(da)*, *yoo(da)* and *rashii*, are generally seen as indicating that the speaker has gained the information through secondary source and understood as such ('evidentials' in Johnson's (2003) term). The latter expressions, i.e. *(ni)chigainai*, *daroo* and *kamoshirenai*, indicate the degree of the speaker's certainty with regard to the truth of the proposition ('suppositionals' in Johnson's (2003) term).

What is informative to our current discussion is that the difference between the two types of modal expressions, i.e. evidentials and suppositionals, induces



the compatibility/incompatibility of *sa* with those modal expressions. Note that *sa* signals the speaker's attitude that what he/she says is just natural and a matter of course for him/her. Focusing on the case of the suppositionals first, the co-occurrence of *sa* with these suppositionals seems to be a well predicted one. As noted above, the suppositionals indicate how certain the speaker is about the truth of the proposition. This relies on the speaker's belief as such, that is, he/she believes it strongly or less strongly, and the use of *sa* adds the speaker's feeling that his/her belief and the level of its strength is just natural and a matter of course for him/her. Thus, for example, (13d) above, *Hanako mo konya no paatii ni kuru ni chigainai sa* 'Hanako must also come to the party tonight-SA', is interpreted as such that 'It is just natural and a matter of course for me to strongly believe that Hanako will also come to the party tonight'.

In contrast, the impossible use of *sa* with evidentials is due to the fact that the nature of the evidentials does not match with the speaker's intention delivered by the use of the marker. Recall that the main concern of the evidentials is to indicate that the speaker has gained information through secondary source and understood as such. For example, in the sentence, *Taroo wa gakusei da soo da, soo da* '(hearsay)' adds the information that 'I understand that Taroo is a student and it is based on what I heard (I heard that Taroo is a student)'. While the use of the evidential, *soo(da)* '(hearsay)', indicates that the speaker has gained the information from other people (what they said) and understood as such, it is not something for which the speaker believes to be natural and a matter of course for him/her. In other words, with *soo(da)*, there is no room for the speaker to judge/believe it as a matter of course. Thus, while the use of *sa* is based on the speaker's judgement or belief of something as a matter of course, for example, (13a) earlier, *\*Hanako mo konya no paatii ni kuru soo sa* 'I heard that Hanako will also come to the party tonight-SA', with the intended interpretation of "? It is just natural and a matter of course for me to have gained and understood the information (that Hanako will also come to the party tonight) from a secondary source' sounds odd since here the fact that 'I have gained the information from other people (what they said) and understood as such' is something to be merely recognized, and is not something to be judged or believed as a matter of course (see also Uyeno (1971) for a similar claim).

As shown in (13), unlike *sa*, *yo* does not have such a co-occurrence restriction with the different types of modal expressions, and it is compatible with evidentials as well as suppositionals. This is because the speaker's intention delivered by the use of *yo* is to ensure the hearer's understanding of what is said (cf. 4.1), and how he/she has gained and understood the information or how certain he/she is about the proposition's truth is not an issue. For example, *yo* with the suppositional (*ni*)*chigainai* in (13d), *Hanako mo konya no paatii ni*

*kuru ni chigainai yo* 'Hanako must also come to the party tonight-YO', can be interpreted as such that the speaker attempts to ensure that the hearer understands that she strongly believes Hanako's participation in the party. Similarly, *yo* with the evidential *soo(da)* in (13a), *Hanako mo konya no paatii ni kuru soo yo* 'I heard that Hanako will also come to the party tonight-YO', can be interpreted as such that the speaker is committed to ensure that the hearer understands that the speaker has gained the information, i.e. Hanako will also come to the party, from other people (what they said), and understood as such.

#### Incompatibility with command/request/proposal

The next distributional fact of *sa* to be discussed is that the marker cannot be used with the sentences of commands, requests and proposals, as shown in (14a), (15a) and (16a). What commonly underlies these three types of sentences, is the speaker's intention of controlling the hearer's future action. For example, all the sentences, i.e. *ike*, *itte* and *ikoo*, convey the speaker's intention of making the hearer go. Naturally, these sentences presuppose that the hearer will completely understand what he/she is supposed to do, and otherwise, he/she would be unable to correctly respond to the speaker's intention. From the speaker's point of view, these sentences require the speaker's strong commitment to make sure that the hearer understands what to do. In other words, the speaker needs to 'consider the hearer's side' in order to make sure that the hearer does take an action as he/she (the speaker) commands, requests or proposes. This point of 'considering the hearer's side' in these three sentences can be seen more clearly by comparing with a simple descriptive statement, for example, *Ima iku* 'I go now'. The descriptive statement can still inform the content of statement to the hearer, but, it is only by virtue of the interactive conversational setting, i.e. 'While I am talking, you are assumed to listen to me', and the level of the speaker's commitment to make sure that the hearer understands the conveyed information is relatively low, especially when it is not accompanied with any involvement cue of the speaker such as great volume of his/her voice, eye gaze, etc. That is to say, the speaker's 'consideration of the hearer's side' is not particularly expected in this case, while the earlier three types of sentences involve a high level of the speaker's 'consideration of the hearer's side', since, as noted above, the success of the speaker's intended goal with these sentences depends on whether or not the hearer understands and acts as the speaker required.

The speaker's 'consideration of the hearer's side' is well observed in the case of *yo* when it is used with the sentences of commands, requests and proposals. Unlike the case of *sa*, *yo* is compatible with all of these sentences, as illustrated in (14)–(16) earlier. Given that *yo* signals the speaker's attitude of ensuring the hearer's understanding of the contents and feeling conveyed in the utterance

(cf. 4.1), the marker clearly indicates the speaker's reinforced commitment to make the hearer understand what he/she says. In this regard, *yo* is seen as explicitly indicating the speaker's 'consideration of the hearer's side'. Therefore, its use perfectly matches with the speaker's intention conveyed by commands, requests and proposals, and adds the speaker's further effort to make sure that the hearer understands what is commanded, requested and proposed.

It should now be clear that 'considering the hearer's side' is essential for the success of command, request and proposal sentences. Most relevant to the current discussion is the relationship between this nature ('considering the hearer's side') of these sentences, and the speaker's attitude signalled by the use of *sa*. Recall that *sa* signals the speaker's attitude of presenting what is stated is a matter of course 'for him/her'. The focus with the speaker's attitude with *sa* is on the speaker himself/herself. In fact, *sa* is pointed out to be a 'speaker-centred' expression in many studies: for example, *sa* is an expression of *aite o tsukihanasu* 'lit. abandoning the hearer' (Saji, 1957), or of *kikite no mae ni hooidasu* 'lit. throwing (the information) to the hearer' (Nihongo Kyooiku Gakkai, 1987). Furthermore, it is also characterized as 'ego-assertive' or even as 'scornful' (Uyeno, 1971; Martin, 1975). As these interpretations indicate, again, with *sa* the speaker focuses on his/her own side of providing his/her belief as a matter of course to the hearer, and does not show special 'consideration to the hearer'. *Sa* cannot be used with commands, requests and proposals because it is speaker-centred and basically focuses on the speaker's own side, and conflicts with what is required for the success of these sentences.

### 5.3. The expressive effects of *sa* and its use in social contexts

As illustrated below, the use of *sa* is restricted to the plain forms. The marker cannot be used with the polite forms such as *desu* in *omoshiroi desu* as in (20a) and *masu* in *furimasu* as in (21a).

- (20) (a) \**Kono eiga omoshiroi desu sa.*  
 this movie interesting BE  
 'This movie is interesting.'
- (b) *Kono eiga omoshiroi sa.*  
 this movie interesting SA  
 'This movie is interesting.'
- (21) (a) \**Ashita wa ame ga furimasu sa.*  
 tomorrow TOP rain SUB fall  
 'It will rain tomorrow.'
- (b) *Ashita wa ame ga furu sa.*  
 tomorrow TOP rain SUB fall SA  
 'It will rain tomorrow.'

It is also pointed out by many researchers that the marker cannot be used in formal conversation (Uyeno, 1971; Alfonso, 1974; McGloin, 1990; among others). The impossible use of *sa* with the polite forms as well as in formal conversation is also consistently accounted for in terms of its expressive effects.

In 5.2, I have characterized the function of *sa* as signalling the speaker's monopolistic attitude of presenting the contents and feeling conveyed in the utterance as a matter of course for him/her. Furthermore, I have shown that with this attitude, the marker does not indicate the speaker's particular 'consideration of the hearer's side', but rather focuses on the speaker's own side. As noted above, such a property of *sa* is interpreted as speaker-centred and ego-assertive/scornful. Note that the *desu/masu* form is a typical verbal device to express formality and/or politeness in the Japanese language (e.g. Ide, 1982; Mizutani and Mizutani, 1987). It is obvious that the speaker-centredness and ego-assertiveness/scornfulness indicated by the use of *sa* is far from one's formal and/or polite attitude expressed by the polite forms. Hence, it is thought that the nature of the polite forms does not allow the marker to be appended. Needless to say, this equally means that the use of the marker is impossible in a formal conversation. In such a situation, the speaker is in principle presumed to use the *desu/masu* form, anyway.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has provided a synthetic analysis of the function of the interactive markers *yo* and *sa*, in conjunction with the notion of involvement. The interactional aspect of these markers can be highlighted as follows:

- (a) The common property shared by these markers is to indicate the speaker's monopolistic attitude.
- (b) These markers are different from each other in terms of the speaker's particular monopolistic attitude indicated by each marker and its consequent effects.
- (c) Given that these markers indicate the speaker's monopolistic attitude, by which they invite the hearer's involvement, the use of these markers presupposes the hearer's existence, and this is the ground for the fact that these markers are basically used only in spoken language, while rarely used in monologue or written language.
- (d) Given that these markers directly express the speaker's attitude and feeling towards the hearer by inviting the hearer's involvement in a monopolistic manner, this is the ground for the fact that they are more frequently used in casual conversation than in formal conversation.

## Notes

1. This study is based on a paper presented at the 2010 Free Linguistics Conference in Sydney.
2. Note that *yo* and *sa* are also viewed as *kantoo-joshi* 'sentence-medial particles' as well, since they may also occur in sentence-initial or sentence-medial positions. I do not include the analysis of the non-sentence-final use of these markers in this paper due to its limited space. See Saji (1957) and Watanabe (1968) for details of the use of *yo* and *sa* in these positions.
3. What is meant by 'interactional approach' here is not situated in sequentially based approaches such as turn-taking systems. Rather, it focuses on the effect of the speaker's use of the markers on the hearer, and how the markers operate within social contexts.
4. (14b), (15b) and (16b) do not include the case of *sa*, because it cannot be used with the polite forms in any way, as shown in (20a) and (21a).

## Abbreviations

BE	Various forms of the 'be' verb
CD	Conditional
COMP	Comparative construction
LK	Linker (Linking nominals)
NOM	Nominalizer
PROG	Progressive form
QT	Quotation
QUE	Question
SFP	Sentence-final particle
SUB	Subject marker
TOP	Topic marker

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All names used in examples are pseudonyms, using letters such as 'A' or 'B' unless they are specified.