Gender Differences of Sentence-Final Particles in Japanese and Mandarin based on Television Dialogue

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Key Words: sentence-final particles, gender differences, Japanese and Mandarin

1. Introduction

Sociologists and historians have consistently indicated that ancient Chinese (Neo-) Confucianism has significantly influenced Japanese society. Some of Confucianism's ideas were incorporated into the politeness practices of upper-class and middle-class Japanese by the time of the Meiji Restoration. The fundamental principles of Confucianism and specific dimensions of Confucian thought, notably, the concepts of *rei* "propriety" and *tachiba* "place," were embedded in the politeness practices of upper-class and later middle-class Japanese, as the modern ideology of honorifics was promulgated via the Japanese education system (Wetzel (2004)).

However, as American-style Western culture has invaded China, the Chinese people's daily lives have steadily opened up, and their use of language has become more akin to that of Americans. The subject of politeness in Japanese, particularly in women's languages, has been extensively explored in the literature: Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1987), and Ide (1982). Notably, sentence-final particles (SFPs) are one of the most widespread features of Japanese women's language.

The occurrence of SFPs is a distinguishing feature of East and Southeast Asian languages. Japanese and Mandarin have a range of particles that occur in sentence-final positions to express additional discourse-sensitive information, including speaker attitudes and emotional indications, speech acts, and clause type. In traditional Japanese grammatical literature, Japanese SFPs can be commonly found alone (ね ne, な na, の no, よ yo, さ sa, ぞ zo, ぜ ze, か wa, か ka, and か しら kashira), or in combinations (よね yo ne, のよ (ね) no yo (ne), のね no ne, わよ (ね) wa yo (ne), わね wa ne, か しらね kashira ne; Uyeno (1971), Shibatani (1990)). Mandarin has individual SFPs (啊 a, 吧 ba, 呗 bei, 的 de, 哒 da, 哒 la, 了 le, 喽 lou, 嘛

ma, 吗 ma, 哪 na, 呢 ne, 呀 ya, and 哟 yo) and particle combinations (了呢 le ne, 了吗 le ma, 呢 啊 ne a, and 的吧 de ba).

Differences between males and females in the usage of Japanese SFPs have long been discussed in the literature (Ide (1982), Inoue (2003)), whereas gender differences of Mandarin SFPs have received little attention. In Japanese, particles such as か wa, の no, のよ (ね) no yo (ne), のね no ne, わよ (ね) wa yo (ne), わね wa ne, and かしら (ね) kashira (ne) have conventionally been described as feminine SFPs, marking softness, uncertainty, and other "weaker" affects, compared to masculine SFPs such as さ sa, ぞ zo, and ぜ ze, which suggest self-confidence, assertion, and confirmation (Inoue (2003: 319), Ide (1982: 381)). However, usage of these SFPs in recent years has become gender-neutral (Ozaki (1999), Mizokami (2003), Mizumoto et al., (2006), Ariizumi (2013) Masuda (2016), Kobayashi (2019)). By examining the language of characters in six contemporary Japanese television series, this study statistically validates the femininity of female SFPs. Moreover, we investigate the language of Chinese television talk shows using a similar research approach to clarify the relationship between the usage of SFPs in Mandarin and the speaker's gender identification compared to the Japanese findings.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 summarizes previous studies on Japanese and Mandarin SFPs. Section 3 discusses the approach used to conduct the investigation in this paper. Section 4 quantitatively analyzes the use of Japanese SFPs in television series and Mandarin SFPs in talk show programs. The concluding section is Section 5.

2. Previous Studies

In this section, we briefly overview previous studies on gender differences in the usage of Japanese and Mandarin SFPs, identifying their problems.

2.1. Gender Neutralization of Female Sentence-Final Particles in Japanese

As mentioned above, previous studies have indicated that male and female SFPs in modern Japanese culture exhibit significant differences. Moreover, as illustrated in Figure 1, Ozaki (1999) observed that the usage of feminine SFPs, such as だわ da wa, has declined in modern Japanese, which might be referred to as datsujosēka or "defeminization," while the use of asexual particles such as かな ka na has grown, which is called musēka or "asexualization" (Also see Masuda (2016)).

¹ We use the term Mandarin to refer to China's official language.

² The femininity of an SFP means that females are more likely to utilize it.

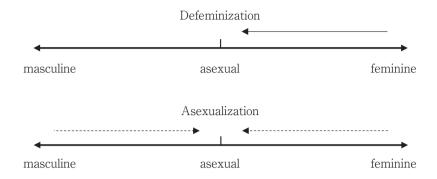


Figure 1 Defeminization and Asexualization

Ozaki (1999) clarified the usage of feminine SFPs by analyzing natural conversation data from September to October 1993 at the workplaces of career women in their 20s to 40s residing in the Tokyo metropolitan region. 11,102 records were evaluated out of 11,421 records. He focused on the following three points in-depth: (1) the insertion of the SFP $\hbar wa$, (2) the omission of the auxiliary verb $\hbar da$, and (3) the usage of $\hbar da$ wa.

Furthermore, Masuda (2016) analyzed (1) the usage of \hbar wa (adjunct), (2) the absence of the auxiliary \hbar da (deletion), and (3) the usage of \hbar da wa in the same way as Ozaki (1999), using data from daily natural discourse conducted with 15 males and 16 females from their 20s to 70s living in the Tokyo metropolitan area from June 2011 to January 2014. Given that this data is approximately 20 years apart from Ozaki's (1999) study, it is anticipated to demonstrate a shift in female language.

The investigation revealed that (1) \not wa was used in eight instances but absent in 269 instances, indicating that \not wa was not used in many cases. Furthermore, the speakers' ages showed a generational decline in the use of \not wa (Masuda (2016: 150)). However, concerning (2) the absence of the auxiliary \not da (deletion), almost half (142 instances, 48.0%) did not utilize \not da, while 154 (52.0%) did. In contrast to the SFP \not wa, there was still an

underused form of the auxiliary verb t = da, believed to be feminine. Nevertheless, compared to Ozaki's (1999) data, this retention rate had a greater proportion of t = da, showing that the tendency toward utilizing t = da has evolved. Finally, regarding (3) t = da wa, it may be stated that it "survived" as a female final particle, despite the fact that there were only two instances.

Besides the natural conversations in the real world, numerous previous studies (Mizumoto (2005), Mizumoto et al. (2008), and Kobayashi (2019)) analyzed the language used by characters in television series and films. Mizumoto (2005: 32) conducted a study of fictional dramas televised from January 2003 to May 2004. Ten women in their late teens, 22 in their twenties, and 24 in their early thirties were studied for their frequency of usage of feminine SFPs (56 total). In terms of female SFPs utilized, the majority were in their early thirties, accounting for 23 of 24.

Kobayashi (2019: 112) examined the utterances of seven individuals, four men and three women, in the film 何者 N@NIMONO, which depicts current university students seeking jobs. There were 824 utterances (538 male, 278 female, and eight non-specific), including utterances in which the voices of many individuals were aligned concurrently. There were no instances of かしら kashira as a female terminal particle or わ wa in a rising tone among them.

2.2. Speaker's Gender Identification in Mandarin

Gender distinctions have been described in classical Chinese text for centuries. The term 男女有别 nan nü you bie appears in "春秋左氏传 Chunqiu Zuoshizhuan", which means males and females have separate spheres. Male dominance and female subordination are shown by idioms such as 男尊女卑 nan zun nü bei, which translates "man superior, woman inferior." Discrimination against women in China's feudal culture has significantly influenced on the country's socioeconomic development. However, Modern Chinese has mostly abandoned language that indicates gender differences to promote gender equality. Besides the personal pronouns 他 ta "he" and 她 ta "she," modern Chinese has no gender expressions associated with a particular gender (Sun (2010)).

Cao (1987) examined the types of SFPs utilized to represent men and women in literary works. He analyzed ten transcribed works of literature written by young people in Beijing (five for males and five for women, aged 19 to 36). The results were as follows.

Firstly, the frequency with which men and females use the same SFP differed by sentence type. Declarative and exclamatory sentences occurred at about the same frequency, but interrogative and imperative phrases occurred differently. Females, in particular, used SFPs \square ma, \square ne, \square ba, and \square a, more often than males. These distinctions implied that women have a proclivity for euphemisms and soft tones, while males have a proclivity for direct and powerful emotions (Cao (1987: 44)).

Moreover, women are more prone to utilize verbal particles in imperative statements than males. The softness of the term varies based on whether or not an SFP is utilized in the statement. Cao (1987: 45) also claimed that there is a minimal difference difference between male and female verbal particles in command, interrogative, and exclamatory phrases. In declarative statements, however, women seem to use more $\mathbf{m} a$ and $\mathbf{n} \mathbf{l} a$ to list something, demonstrating feminine usage.

Hence, on average, females express more emotion using more SFPs than males (Cao (1987: 43)). However, the sample size used in Cao (1987) is too small to generate statistically significant findings and the data is rather old. Thus, it is chanllenging to represent of language usage situation in recent years accurately.

Wamsley (2019) examined the utterances of four men and four women who were guests on a Chinese television talk show, *The Jin Xing Show*. The guests were professional actors and actresses aged 36 to 50 from different Chinese provinces. The data set consisted of 17,200 words, 354 SFPs utilized. The results indicated that males used SFPs (191 at 2.04%) at about the same rate as females (163 at 2.07%). However, females were more likely than males to utilize \mathfrak{M} a and \mathfrak{L} ba. Among all SFPs, females used \mathfrak{L} ba at the highest rate (30%),

whereas males used 吧 ba at the lowest rate (11.17%). Moreover, men used more 吗 ma, 了 le, and 呢 ne than women. Therefore, 吗 ma appears to be more forceful in Mandarin and is often utilized by men. In comparison, 吗 ma was the least frequently used of the five phrases by women.

However, there are several problems in the analysis of Wamsley (2019). Firstly, the sample size is too small. Although the data refined from Cao (1987), it is questionable whether significant results were obtained by evaluating only four males and four females. Secondly, the method of data analysis was problematic since it has been suggested in several works that Mandarin SFPs are commonly restricted to occurring in root/matrix clauses because of their speaker-oriented nature (Cheng (1991), Li (2006)). The frequency of SFP use by a particular speaker should thus be measured by the number of utterances, not by the speaker's entire word count.

Furthermore, two homophones \Box ma and ma, with usage quite different from each other, are not distinguished by Wamsley (2019). This result might be because the author is not a native Mandarin speaker, making judgments from data collection difficult. Finally, Mandarin SFPs vary considerably in distribution and meaning depending on the sentence type. Thus, to obtain a more accurate picture of gender differences, it is necessary to analyze the use rates of males and females by sentence type.

In light of the problems of previous studies, the following section adopts more scientific, statistical approaches to examine gender differences in the usage of Japanese and Mandarin final particles.

3. Methodology

3.1. Japanese

In this section, we examine the femininity of five SFPs, specifically, $\hbar \downarrow 5$ ($\hbar \downarrow$) kashira (ne), $\hbar \downarrow 1$ ($\hbar \downarrow 2$) wa yo (ne), $\hbar \uparrow 1$ wa ne, $\hbar \downarrow 1$ ($\hbar \downarrow 2$) no yo (ne), and $\hbar \uparrow 1$ no ne, considered feminine SFPs, by analyzing the language used by characters in Japanese television series. To maintain an environment resembling real natural conversation, television series included in this research were limited to those broadcast from 2012 to 2019 according to the following criteria:

- i. Items that describe modern daily life (Jidaigeki [period dramas] are excluded).
- ii. Items set in a real-world background (SF works are excluded).
- iii. Those shows with characters who speak the standard Japanese.
- iv. The original form is not animation or manga.

 The show is not a remake of a foreign television series or works from the Showa period.

According to the five criteria above, six television series were selected: 最後から二番目の恋 My Second Last Love (2012), ラスト・シンデレラ Last Cinderella (2012), 最高の離婚 The Best Divorce (2013), お義父さんと呼ばせて Let Me Call You My Father-in-law (2016), 僕のヤバイ妻 My Dangerous Wife (2016), and 俺の話は長い My Story is Long (2019). From these six series, 33 episodes (approximately 24 hours) were extracted and transcribed, containing the utterances of a total of 65 characters (28 males and 37 females). In total, 17,097 utterance sentences were obtained.

The number of those who used and did not use these five SFPs was aggregated by gender. Moreover, we performed Fisher's exact test is performed using RStudio (Version 1.2.5001) to avoid type I errors. The significance level was set to 5%, with the p-value and effect size reported below.

3.2. Mandarin

Unlike the Japanese language, there is no definite conclusion about feminine SFPs in Mandarin. Therefore, this study examined which SFPs are feminine in Mandarin. We gathered data from Chinese talk shows broadcasted between 2016 and 2019. Four Chinese talk shows were included: 金星秀 *The Jin Xing Show*, 可凡倾听 *Kevin Hours*, 非常静距离 *Jing Talk Show*, and 十三邀 *Shisan Yao*, of which the dialogue is an interview between a host and a guest. All interviews lasted from 25 to 35 minutes (approximately 270 minutes in total). Four hosts (two males and two females) and eight guests (four males and four females) were included. Details about the speakers appear in Section 4.2, Table 2.

All instances of SFPs were extracted and tabulated by item and subdivided according to sentence type. Due to the same number of male and female speakers and the almost identical length of each program, SFPs used more often by females in these talk shows were judged to be more "feminine" in Mandarin.

4. Quantitative Results

4.1. Japanese

There were 297 utterances that contained feminine SFPs: かしら (ね) kashira (ne), わよ (ね) wa yo (ne), わね wa ne, のよ (ね) no yo (ne), and のね no ne. Among these, 286 utterances were used by females and while only 11 were by males. Sixteen sentences that contained かしら (ね) kashira (ne), all of them female speakers. The most frequently used

SFP was のよ(ね) no yo (ne) in 173 utterances (11 were by males). Furthermore, 72 utterances contained わよ(ね) wa yo (ne), 19 utterances contained のね no ne, and 17 contained わね wa ne.

To examine the femininity of these five SFPs, we summarized the number of people who used them and those who did not, analyzing data by applying Fisher's exact test. The results appear in Table 1.

SFPs	Sex	Use	Non-use	p value	φ
かしら(ね)	M	0	28	0.065	0.051
kashira (ne)	F	5	32	p > .05	0.251
のよ (ね)	M	4	24	0.000	0.457
no yo (ne)	F	22	15	p < .05	0.457
のね no ne	M	0	28	0.008	0.240
	F	9	28	p < .05	0.349
わよ (ね)	M	0	28	0.000	0.407
wa yo (ne)	F	16	21	p < .05	0.497
わね wa ne	M	0	28	0.016	0.202
	F	7	30	p < .05	0.302

Table 1. The Result of Feminine SFPs in Japanese

The results are described as follows:

However, as a young woman in her 20s, 杏南Anna expresses an interrogative attitude with かしら kashira rather than the asexual SFP かな ka na. Therefore, it may be assumed that feminine SFPs are still often utilized in television series.

(1) 警察 は どっち を 信じる<u>かしら</u>。 police Top which ACC believe-SFP 'Which one does the police believe?'

("My Dangerous Wife," ep. 4)

II. Males and females distinctively utilize $\mathcal{O} \downarrow (\uparrow a)$ no yo (ne). The instances used by females were significantly more frequently than those by males (p = 0.0003, medium effect).

The number of $\mathcal{O} \downarrow \mathcal{L}$ ($\not \! 1$) no yo (ne) was the largest of the five SFPs (11 by four males and 162 by 22 females). consequently, one may assume that $\mathcal{O} \downarrow \mathcal{L}$ ($\not \! 1$) no yo (ne) is an SFP associated with femininity. (2) is an example from a male speaker in his 50s.

III. Males and females used \mathcal{O} $\cancel{1}$ a no ne in different ways. The instances used by females were significantly more frequent than those by males (p < .05, medium effect). All 19 of the instances were used by females. Hence, it is plausible that \mathcal{O} $\cancel{1}$ a no ne is a feminine SFP. (3) is an example given by a female speaker in her 20s.

IV. Males and females significantly used $\mathfrak{D} \ \sharp \ (\ \wr a\)$ wa yo (ne) differently. Female speakers had significantly higher use than males (p < .05, medium effect). Females used all 72 instances. In addition, 80% were used by females over 40 years old. Thus, it could be considered that $\mathfrak{D} \ \sharp \ (\ \wr a\)$ wa yo (ne) is a feminine SFP. (4) is an example of $\mathfrak{D} \ \sharp \ (\ \wr a\)$ wa yo (ne) used by a female speaker in her 30s.

4.2. Mandarin

This study investigated the SFPs used by 12 speakers, consisting of six males and six females, to prevent an imbalance affecting the results. Moreover, the speaker's age and the area of origin were also be factors possibly affecting the use of SFPs. Speakers' age ranged between 29 and 54. Concerning birthplace, 12 speakers were all from Mandarin-speaking areas of China, while speakers from Cantonese regions were excluded. Although not listed in Table 2, the occupations of the 12 speakers included emcees, dancers, actors, and singers.

The results were based on the number of utterances by each speaker during the interview and the total number of SFPs used. Moreover, sex, age range, and birthplace of the speakers also appear in Table 2 below.

Name	Sex	Age range ³	Birthplace	Utterance	SFPs
Cao Kefan	male	50s	Shanghai	94	24
Huang Xuan	male	30s	Gansu Province	200	17
Jia Zhangke	male	40s	Shanxi Province	233	31
Wei Daxun	male	20s	Jilin Province	357	41
Wu Jing	male	40s	Beijing	205	52
Xu Zhiyuan	male	40s	Jiangsu Province	141	68
Jin Chen	female	20s	Shandong Province	307	18
Jin Xing	female	50s	Liaoning Province	432	145
Li Jing	female	40s	Hebei Province	294	74
Sun Li	female	30s	Shanghai	162	14
Tan Yuanyuan	female	40s	Shanghai	199	27
Yu Feihong	female	40s Zhejiang Province		170	33
		Tota	2,794	544	

Table 2. Personal Information about the Mandarin Speakers

The total number of utterances was 2,794, with 1,230 utterances spoken by the six males and 1,564 utterances spoken by the six females. Hence, the number of utterances of females tended to be higher than males. In terms of the usage of SFPs, a total of 544 sentences with SFPs appeared in the interviews, including the following 14 types, sorted from least frequently used to most frequently, as in Table 3. This study examines whether there are gender differences in the usage of SFPs usage in Mandarin. However, no difference can probably be detected in SFPs that are scarcely used. Therefore, those SFPs used less than ten times were not investigated, while SFPs used more than 10 times are highlighted.

³ The age range here refers to the age based on the speakers appearing on the show.

Table 5. Tokens of the 514 s in Wandarin							
SFPs	昂ang	哦₀	诶 <i>ei</i>	哈 ha	呗 <i>bei</i>	哪 na	的 de
Tokens	1	2	2	5	6	11	24
SFPs	啦 la	呀 ya	呢 ne	嘛 ma	吧 ba	吗 ma	啊 a
Tokens	31	32	66	67	78	86	133

Table 3. Tokens of the SFPs in Mandarin

The results above indicate nine SFPs used over ten times. 啊 a was the most frequently used, accounting for approximately 24% of the total. In comparison, 哪 na was the least frequently used. Notably, the difference in frequency of the usage between the two is over ten times. According to previous studies, SFPs in Mandarin could be used in different sentence types (exclamative, imperative, interrogative, and declarative), and every type could convey a different 语气 "mood" (Qi (2011), Zhao (2019: 35–38)).

Therefore, Table 4 below contains information on the frequency of male and female usage, totaled according to the type of sentence for each SFP, where F stands for female and M stands for male. Furthermore, sentence types that did not correlate to an SFP are shown with a backslash, while sentence types that correlated to an SFP but did not occur are indicated by 0.

Table 4. Frequency of Mandarin's SFPs in Terms of Sentence Type

	Exclamative Imperative Interrogative Declarative						- m . 1		
	Exclai	native	Imperative		Interro	ogative	Decia	rative	Totals
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	(F, M)
哪 <i>na</i>	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	4	11 (5, 6)
的 de	1	0			0	0	19	4	24 (20, 4)
啦 la	3	2			2	2	5	17	31 (10, 21)
呀 ya	7	1	0	0	8	2	9	5	32 (24, 8)
呢 ne	1	0			21	32	8	4	66 (30, 36)
嘛 ma	0	0	2	1			26	38	67 (28, 39)
吧 ba	3	2	0	0	23	2	28	20	78 (54, 24)
吗 ma				45	41			86 (45, 41)	
啊 a	6	7	6	2	34	11	38	29	133 (84, 49)
Totals	2	29 16		6	226		257		528
(F, M)	(19	,10)	(11, 5)		(134	, 92)	(136, 121)		(300, 228)

As shown in Table 4, females tended to use more SFPs than males. The total number of SFPs used was 528, with 300 SFPs by six female speakers and 228 SFPs by six male speakers. The analysis was conducted according to sentence types and speakers' gender.

In terms of sentence types, Table 4 shows that SFPs are most likely to be associated with declarative sentences in Mandarin. On the contrary, the number of imperative sentences was the smallest. As the most frequently employed SFP in daily speech, 啊 a could occur in four sentence types (Qi (2011: 1–2), also verified through this investigation.

Judging from the sex of the speakers, we found that all four sentence types had more SFPs used by females. Chan (2012: 69) noted that females tended to use SFPs more than males in Cantonese. This study had similar results: females used SFPs more frequently than males, regardless of the sentence types.

Therefore, in terms of the speaker's gender, for both males and females, 啊 a was most frequently used. The second most frequently used SFP for male speakers was 吗 ma; for female speakers, it was 吧 ba. Table 4 also shows that in male speech, 哪 na, 啦 la, 呢 ne, and 嘛 ma were more frequent than in female speech.

Notably, usage of 嘛 ma and 呢 ne aligns with Wamsley's (2019: 12) findings that males used 嘛 ma and 呢 ne more frequently, while females used 的 de, 呀 ya, 吧 ba, 吗 ma, and 啊 a more frequently than males. Especially for 吧 ba, 呀 ya, and 的 de, females used them 2.25 to 5 times more than males. The result of 吧 ba was also consistent with Wamsley's (2019: 12) findings.

Analyzing the usage of SFPs by individuals, Jin Xing (F), Li Jing (F), and Xu Zhiyuan (M) used 啊 a, 吗 ma, 吧 ba frequently in interrogative sentences. This result highly likely related to their occupations, show's host. Using SFPs, it would sound softer when they pose questions to guests.

The SFPs 的 de, 呀 ya, 吧 ba, and 啊 a, which are used far more frequently by females than males, should be examined further. Specifically, the number of those who used and did not use these five SFPs are aggregated by gender and analyzed via Fisher's exact test. Here are examples.

(6) 上千双 肯定 有 <u>的</u>。

thousands of pairs must Exist SFP

'There must be thousands of pairs.'

(Tan Yuanyuan, female, 40s)

(7) 这 压力 也 很大 呀。

this stress also big SFP

'It is also very stressful.'

(Li Jing, female, 40s)

(8) 咱们 让 她 赶快 结婚 吧。

we get her hurry up marry SFP

'Let's get her married as soon as possible.'

(Jin Xing, female, 50s)

(9) 我们 要 换个 地方 坐 吗?

we need change a place to sit SFP

'Shall we change seats?'

(Xu Zhiyuan, male, 40s)

Mount Everest top to propose such romantic SFP

'How romantic it could be if I propose on the top of Mount Everest!'

(Wu Jing, male, 40s)

5. Conclusion

This paper has examined gender differences in the usage of Japanese and Mandarin SFPs based on the analysis of television dialogue. According to the results of the investigation of 17,097 utterances of 65 characters in six Japanese dramas, four of the five female SFPs examined in this study has been significantly different between males and females, indicating a tendency toward neutralization (or asexualization), but not completely, of the usage of female SFPs in TV dramas. As for Mandarin SFPs, the results of the investigation of 2,794, utterances spoken by 12 people in Chinese talk shows has revealed that four of nine SFPs examined in this study has been different between males and females in all types of sentences. In particular, The usages of 巴 ba, and 阿 a have represented a significant difference between women and men in the interrogative. Consequently, it is claimed that Mandarin has feminine SFPs as well as Japanese.

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