

**Japanese women's speech through life-transitions (1989-2000):  
an analysis of youth language features**

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# **Japanese women's speech through life-transitions (1989-2000):**

## **An analysis of youth language features**

### **1. Introduction**

This paper explores how complex social pressures of work, gender, class and community might influence linguistic choices after life transitions. It examines two sets of ethnographic interviews of Japanese working-class women from Kobe (Western Japan) recorded eleven years apart (1989 [at age 18] & 2000 [at age 29]). The analysis focuses on discourse markers (DM) and end-rising intonation, features associated with youth language and women's speech (e.g. Io 2006; F. Inoue 1997, 1998; Koori 2018; Maynard 2005; Mori 2012; Satake 1995, 1997; Yamane 2002), to observe how usage in the interviews shifts over time. These linguistic elements can index "subjective interactional stances" (Woolard 2008) and can be consciously adopted for "meaning negotiation" (Eckert 2000).

Focusing on highly indexical pragmatic features allows us to understand more about societal pressures that young people in Japan, particularly women, face when transitioning into adulthood. The close examination and comparison of language use across these interviews recorded more than a decade apart enables investigation of how the women are positioning and locating themselves over temporal difference. As such, these interviews, which form part of 30-years of continued research<sup>1</sup>, afford an insight into how these women navigate metapragmatic linguistic expectations of adulthood with a speaking partner with whom they have interacted as they have transitioned to adulthood. We argue that the women's linguistic choices are governed by their life circumstances creating their "linguistic capital" or the "right" variety of language as determined by their communities (Bourdieu and Boltanski 1978; Woolard 1985).

This study's data comprises ethnographic interviews where participants have the linguistic choice in regards to style, footing and voicing (Briggs 1986, 106; Koven 2014, 511). These metapragmatic features might not have been perceived by participants during the interview (Briggs 1986, 108), but through a detailed analysis of the recordings, transcriptions and ethnographic information we can obtain a deeper understanding of how the interviewees used language to convey their messages and negotiated their sense of self.

In this study, interviews are viewed as “verbally mediated speech events” (Koven 2014, 500) and are interactions that unfold “pragmatically and metapragmatically” (Koven 2014, 505). They are a communicative speech event where participants must jointly contribute towards the interaction (Briggs 1986, 57) regardless of whether they share the same language and metacommunicative competence.

Briggs (1968) identifies issues of imposition and control of the interviewer's agenda and cautions against reliance on interviews alone, and others contrast interviews and conversations. More recently, however, researchers note that if the interview is conducted in an “interactionally and culturally sensitive way” (Koven 2011, 509), then a rigid difference between naturally occurring interactions and interviews can be negotiated in a meaningful way. In our study, the interviewer speaks the same language and a close dialect to the interviewees and spent a year at their school, not only interviewing them but also talking to them in a range of situations. Since 1989, the researcher has kept in close contact with returning to interview the women every two–three years.

We selected four women who were in their last year of studies at a technical high school in 1989. Unlike middle-class high schoolers, they joined the workforce immediately after graduating as they had already secured a job through their school referral system. They talked about their dreams and aspirations, but were also keenly aware that their choices were restricted by their gender and financial limitations. In the interviews from 2000, the women

had developed a very good rapport with the researcher who had interviewed them every 2-3 years. Throughout this decade the women had taken very different life paths. Three had married, one had already divorced, and one was separated. Two had children and eventually the other two also divorced. The only single woman pursued further education by enrolling in a distance-education degree. They had also experienced the big Kobe earthquake in 1995 which affected everyone in one way or another (for more details see Okano 1993, 2009). Detailed ethnographic information of each interviewee is provided later.

The transition into adulthood involves joining new social structures and learn new linguistic forms (e.g. Eckert 2004). It has been argued that this is particularly important in Japan (Dunn 1999). Japanese are expected to become “socially mature” and acquire “linguistic adulthood” (Cook 2018; Dunn 1999; Kawasaki 2017) in adulthood (legally at 20 years old) or after entering the workforce. Most importantly, heterosexual marriage is key to being accepted as “full adults” (Kawasaki 2017) in Japanese society. “Linguistic adulthood” involves mastering formal and honorific forms and discarding features associated with youth language; however, not every adult needs to learn them. Those joining a non-white-collar job will need different linguistic varieties (e.g. Sunaoshi 2004).

Wagner (2012) and Baugh (1996) have argued that adopting prestigious variants is not always the norm in the American society. Young adults who are upwardly mobile replace stigmatised variants by standard ones, while those who identify more strongly with their neighbourhood maintain local varieties (Baugh 1996; Rickford and Price 2013; Tagliamonte 2005; Tagliamonte and D’Arcy 2007; Wagner 2012). Negotiating linguistic norms and making linguistic choices allows speakers to create a persona style (Eckert 2008) to position themselves as “urban cool” or “adult” or “professional”, etc. as seen in studies on English of adolescents who transitioned into adulthood. These studies illustrate that language choices are influenced directly by personal circumstances. (Baugh 1996, 1999; Rickford and Price 2013)

and linguistic capital is determined by their communities (Woolard 1985), and we see a parallel in the present study on Japanese women.

This study also contributes to the existing research on women's language from working-class and of dialect background. Research on Japanese female dialect speakers of non-white-collar background has been widely neglected with some notable exceptions (e.g. Okamoto 2008; Sunaoshi 2004). Most studies on gender and speech have relied on urban-white-collar, standard speakers or university students from the Tokyo area (e.g. Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith 2004, M. Inoue 2006). Scholars have argued that an ideological and idealized *onna no kotoba* "Japanese women's language" (characterised by honorific usage, embellished words and interactional particles) is a creation that does not reflect the reality of speakers of dialect, of working-class or rural background (see M. Inoue 2006, Nakamura 2014). The few studies that analysed women dialect speakers from other social groups (Okamoto 2008; Sunaoshi 2004) or women subculture groups (Gagné 2008; Miller, 2004a, 2004b) highlight the linguistic diversity or complex linguistic repertoires that women use. This study adds further insight into linguistic diversity in Japanese.

Through analysing the two sets of interviews, we show that DMs were used by dialect speaking high school girls in 1989 and eleven years later these are still used by one of them. Some women have also adopted high rising intonation. We argue that these linguistic variables reflect a particular social identity in their communities and show the importance of including the speakers' circumstances to acquire a thorough understanding of their linguistic choices.

Before embarking on an analysis, let us first overview relevant studies on language after life transitions and offer a brief explanation of linguistic features that are normatively clustered together as Japanese youth language style.

## 2. Transition and language

Traditional or first wave sociolinguistic research has explored the connection between linguistic variation such as pronunciation or syntax and associated them with gender, social class, age, etc. (Labov 1966). These large quantitative studies associated linguistic features with demographic constructions but the social meaning was not taken into account (Eckert 2012). More recently, linguistic variants are seen as reflections of social identities of communities of practice and not as static social values (Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Eckert 2008, 2012).

The importance of looking at style and social meaning to understand linguistic variants' choice is crucial, because people adopt different variants from their repertoire for different social meanings (Rickford and Price 2013). In previous studies<sup>2</sup> that followed a small cohort of working-class adolescents who became adults to observe changes in their speech, the researchers interviewed American high school adolescents and re-interviewed them some years later. Baugh (1996) and Rickford and Price (2013) focused on stigmatized African American Vernacular English (AAVE) variants. Baugh (1996) studied vernacular variants in four African American males. Rickford and Price (2013) examined two women's use of the invariant habitual be, absence of the copula is/are and absence of the third singular -s. On the other hand, Wagner (2012) looked at young women's speech for changes of the non-standard [ɪn]. After re-interviewing the same individuals in adulthood, they report that those who adopted more prestigious variants had pursued higher education (Wagner 2012), had become mothers who wanted to get ahead socio-economically (Rickford and Price 2013) or were professionals who had to interact with a variety of people (Baugh 1996). On the other hand, those who retained stigmatized variants did not pursue further education and identified strongly with their neighbourhood (Wagner 2012), and one male who retained the vernacular AAVE was in prison (Baugh 1996).

These observations can be understood by the notion of “linguistic capital” (Bourdieu and Boltanski 1978); speakers who pursued higher education or became professionals benefit socially and economically by using standard prestigious forms (Baugh 1996; Bourdieu and Boltanski 1978; Rickford and Price 2013) that were of benefit in the dominant hierarchy. However, adopting prestigious variants, however, is not always the norm (Baugh 1996; Wagner 2012). Social meaning is a key factor when seeking to understand the speakers’ linguistic choices (Eckert 2008, 463). These studies are on American English, and it is not certain whether these findings are applicable to other languages and communities. Linguistic choices must be understood in the context of language and social practice.

Although DMs and rising intonation are not associated with social class or stigmatised to the same degree as the AAVE (Baugh 1996; Rickford and Price 2013; Wagner 2012), they are still considered inappropriate for adults in Japan as observed in books that advise the use “proper, correct and beautiful language” (Masuda 2011) . Adults are encouraged to discard words, expressions and variables associated with youth language (Endo 1997; M. Inoue 2006; Masuda 2011; Miller 2011). For example, DMs were disapproved of when they were first noticed in teenagers’ speech in the late 80s (Amano 2001, Fukuhara 2013, 2009; Horasawa 2011; Horasawa and Okumura, 2015; Maynard 2005; Satake 1995, 1997; Suzuki 1995; Tsuji 1999; Umezawa 1999). In a newspaper article (Yomiuri Shinbun, April 22 1993) that bemoans the use of these “meaningless” words, new employees are criticised for using DMs such as *toka*, *mitaina* and *tteiuka*. Commentators also register disapproval of young people for not asserting themselves, or showing accountability.

Criticism of language use, particularly towards women, is not new (Endo 1997; M. Inoue 2006; Masuda 2011; Nakamura 2014). Gender is unavoidable when discussing language use in Japan where the “normative” female language has been constructed (Endo 1997; M. Inoue 2006, Nakamura 2014). Women have been persuaded to use a particular

linguistic style or “beautiful language” (Masuda 2011; 59). Innovations are considered a threat to the language, so newly created words or slangs are strongly discouraged (Masuda 2011). Similarly, appropriate language use according to speakers’ age is considered paramount as shown by Miller (2011, 222-3) in a comical example of two salaried men using female teen slang. For young people though, these DMs are an important communicative and pragmatic tool that allows them to show solidarity, politeness and friendliness (e.g. Amano 2001; Fukuhara 2009; Horasawa 2011; Tsuji 1999). There is a tension between what young people consider important and what society and adults expect of them. In this paper, we contribute to research outside of the Anglosphere by exploring this issue in the context of the interviews recorded more than 10-years apart.

### **3. Japanese Youth language**

Young people use particular youth language styles to signal solidarity, friendship, identity, shared experience, and because it “sounds cool” (Eckert 1989, Gagné 2008; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Miller 2004a, 2004b, Miyazaki 1993; Ootah and Makise 2001). Youth linguistic features can be syntactic, semantic, phonological (Eckert 2004) or innovations like DMs and rising intonation (end-rising and High Rising Terminal (HRT), also known as uptalk) (Tyler 2015). Common DMs are like or go in English (Cukor-Avila 2002; Macaulay 2001; Tagliamonte 2005; Winter 2002) and toka, mitaina and nanka in Japanese (Lauwereyns 2002; Tsuji 1999). Some innovations are eventually adopted by the wider community (Agha 2007; Chambers 2009) as they begin to index different characteristics (Eckert 2012; Zhang 2005).

Japanese youth language is defined by three main characteristics: ingenious and playful created words, grammatical innovations (considered mistakes), and linguistic tools that facilitate communication (Kuwamoto 2010; Lauwreyns 2002). DMs and HRT have the latter



two characteristics as they are used to mollify or hedge although they are also multifunctional and are politeness communicative tools (Fukuhara 2009; Io 2006; Tanaka 2020, 2015; Tsuji 1999; Uchida 2001; Yamashita 2017).

Youth language is and has been criticised by the media and adults (e.g. Eckert 2004; Endo 1997; M. Inoue 2006; Kuwamoto 2010; Tsuji 1999). DMs, for example, were heavily criticised as meaningless words used by adolescents that “polluted” the language (reported in the media (e.g. Yomiuri Shinbun) and in academia (Fujii 2006; Onmura 2003; Satake 1995, 1997; Suzuki 1995; Tsuji 1999). Because these project a consultative stance they are also known as bokashi kotoba (hedging). Bokashi means “ambiguous” and bokashi kotoba reflects an undecided, unclear and non-committed stance (Horiuchi 2001; Lauwereyns 2002). However, researchers have argued that young people use DMs to avoid conflict with friends (e.g. Fukuhara 2009; Satake 1997; Tsuji 1999), or due to their lack of self-confidence (Satake 1995). DMs can mitigate erroneous statements or diverging opinions (Onmura 2003; Satake 1995; Umezawa 1999). At the same time DMs are used to show solidarity and group membership (Maynard 2005; Umezawa 1999).

DMs and end-rising intonation are normatively associated with young people because they were first noticed in their speech (e.g. Fukuhara 2013; Hayashi 2006; Horasawa 2011; F. Inoue 1997; Maynard 2005; Miller 2004a; Satake 1995, 1997; Sugisaki 2019; Suzuki 1995). Research indicates that young people are the most prolific users of DMs compared to older speakers (Amano 2001, Fukuhara 2013; Horasawa 2011; Horasawa and Okumura, 2015; Maynard 2005; Satake 1995, 1997; Suzuki 1995; Tsuji 1999; Umezawa 1999). Although many features of youth language are abandoned by speakers in adulthood, the 2014 survey on language use by the Agency of Cultural Affairs (Bunkachoo 2014) indicates that DMs are used by some adults in very informal settings. Comparison to a similar survey in 2010,

shows that more speakers use DMs, in particular speakers in their late 20s and early 30s. (Bunkachoo 2014, 14).

End-rising intonation, known as *burikkogo*, is associated with cute young girls (Miller 2004a, 2004b; Sasaki 2004). This style constitutes a “feigned naivete” which Miller argues distances the speaker from sexuality (Miller 2004b, 148) and heteronormative gender expectations. Unlike DMs, it was not present in the data, nor were other popular features associated with youth language (e.g. vocabulary items, abbreviations, etc.). This suggests that on both occasions, the women were aware of the interview setting and avoided trendy “in-group” linguistic features. However, some of the women used high rising terminal, a new intonation pattern, in the 2000 interviews recorded not present during the first interviews. Both types of rising intonation has also been observed in young women’s speech (F. Inoue 1998; Koori 2011; Miller 2004b; Sasaki 2004)

The rationale for choosing DMs and high-raising intonation in this study was based on three factors. First, they are youth language features noticed in the late 80s and early 90s among adolescents (Amano 2001; Fukukara 2013; Horasawa 2011; Maynard 2005; Suzuki 1995; Satake 1995, 1997; Tsuji 1999; Umezawa 1999). Second, frequency is an important feature of linguistic variables for iconicity and change (Woolard 2008). The extensive use of DMs was noticeable in the 1989 first interviews and the use of HRT in the 2000 interviews, particularly in contrast to the interviewer’s speech. Third, unlike other youth linguistic features used exclusively to show membership, they are used to facilitate and enhance communication that project a particular stance shared by their peers.

We suggest that the DMs were used as a politeness strategy due to their hedging quality (see e.g. Fukuhara 2009; Io 2006; Tsuji 1999; Uchida 2001; Yamashita 2017). In the 2000 interview, the women’s use of DMs differ from 1989, but the use of HRT projects a similar stance.

### 3.1 Discourse markers in Japanese

DMs have been studied in these last decade with the common view that they are polyfunctional (Fischer 2006) and differences are based on the criterion of integratedness. In this study, we use Schiffrin's (1987) and Jucker's (1993) classification. DMs (a) are short, (b) do not change the propositional content, (c) do not influence the truth condition of the utterance, (d) have distributional properties, (e) are multi-functional and polysemous and (f) are used to facilitate communication.

We analysed the most conspicuous DMs in the data: *nanka*, *toka*, *mitaina* (like), and *~tteiuka* (in other words). Commonly observed in informal conversations (e.g. Lauwereyns 2002; Oikawa 2000), they have pragmatic, textual or quotative functions. Pragmatic functions include avoidance of disagreements or boasting or diminishing impoliteness. Textual functions facilitate the delivery of the narrative. The earliest academic papers and newspaper articles on DMs were published in the early 1990s attesting that they were used in the late 1980s, coinciding with the time of the first interviews. Looking at the interviews 10 years later on enables us to ascertain that speakers' transition out of youth speech.

#### 3.1.1 Toka

*Toka*, one of the most frequently used DMs in the data, is originally a conjunction to list items, states, etc. (see Ex (a)). As a DM it functions to soften an opinion (Lauwereyns 2002; Tsuji 1999), to mark quotations (see (Ex b from the data)) and to emphasise (Amano 2001). Tsuji (1999) argues that *toka* is closely related to a psychological desire to build non-restrictive human relationships while Yamashita (2017) argues that its function is in-line with

politeness rules because it does not risk other-face-loss, in particular, when used in requests, persuasion, or when giving additional information.

In a similar development to other quotative markers in English such as “go” or “like” (see e.g. Cukor-Avila 2002), *toka* is more informal compared to other Japanese quotative markers *te* and *to* (Oikawa 2000).

- a) Pen *toka* enpitsu *toka* o kaimashita<sup>3</sup>.  
'I bought (things) like a pen and a pencil'
- b) Miyuki: chotto itte mitai na *toka* itte  
'I am like I want to just go and see'

### 3.1.2 Nanka

*Nanka* is one of the most commonly used and researched DMs (e.g. Fukuhara 2009; Hayashi 2006; Io 2006; Miyanaga and Ohama 2010; Uchida 2001). It is originally an adverb or pronoun composed of the question word *nani* “what” and question particle *ka*. Its original meaning is “anything/something” (Ex. c). *Nanka* is also considered as a hedge (Lauwereyns 2002) or a filler, because it can function as such (Yamane 2002). It is used as a preface before explaining a difficult state/situation (Mori 2012), or starting/developing/changing a topic, or the main point (Ex. d) (Hayashi 2006; Uchida 2001).

It is also used to maintain the floor (Io 2006) therefore useful to preserve positive and negative face (Fukuhara 2009). Young women use *nanka* more frequently than male speakers and used it to engage and captivate the listener with anticipation (Tanaka 2020), in particular while gossiping.

- c) **Nanka** taberu mono aru?

Is there anything/something to eat?

- d) Kanako: a **nanka** wakarahan kedo **nanka** kyokudo ni kirau kara uchi no oya wa.

Oh, **nanka** I don't know, but **nanka** my parents really hate it

### 3.1. 3 Mitaina

Mitaina is an adjective that expresses likelihood or conjecture (Ex. e) and is sometimes used in its adverbial form mitaini. As a DM, it functions as a hedge, but most distinctively as a quotative marker in reported or direct speech or to describe psychological states/attitudes (Ex. f) (Horasawa 2011; Hoshino 2009; Maynard 2005; Tanaka 2020). The addition of quotations, feelings or thoughts using mitai(na/i) in conversations enriches the interaction by providing multi-voicedness and emotivity (Fujii 2006; Maynard 2005). Speakers can convey either feelings or thoughts or actual quotations using mitaina in the conversation because it leaves a certain degree of ambiguity. As with other DMs, mitaina is used to facilitate communication. Both toka and mitaina have parallels with the English DMs “like” and “go” used by young people as quotative markers.

- e) Ano mise wa takai mitai desu yo.

It seems (/I have heard that) that shop is expensive, I am telling you.

- f) Kanako : zutto iwareteten soo iu no dake wa itte hoshikunai: **mitaini**

I was always told that they don't want me to (do that kind of job) **mitaini**

### 3. 1. 4 Tteiuka

Tteiu<sub>ka</sub> derives from *to iu ka*, the formal variant, formed by the quotative marker *to*, the verb *iu* and the question particle *ka* (Maynard 1997). Its shortened versions *teka* and *tsuuka* are used in informal conversation. Criticized as a meaningless preface to an explanation (Hayashi 2007; Tsuji 1999) it is used when giving a mitigated opposing (Miao 2014) (Ex g).

- (g) Yayoi: u::n tanoshii **tteiu<sub>ka</sub>**, maa, un. ima yatto nanteiu n kana, hito toori  
 wakaruyoo ni natte..kono shigoto wa, 6nen ka 7nen ni narukedo  
 ‘Yayoi: uuhm, fun, **tteiu<sub>ka</sub>**, well, uuhm, finally now, I don’t know how to  
 say, I came to understand about my work, it is already the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> year at  
 this job’

### 3. 2 Rising Intonation: end-rising and HRT

In Japanese there are two types of rising intonation innovations: *shiriagari* intoneeshon end-rising intonation and HRT, *hangimon* or *uptalk*. End-rising intonation was first observed around the 1970s among young women who used it to sound cute and pretty (F. Inoue 1998) known as *burikko* style (Miller 2004a, 2004b). It consists of a rise-fall pattern and lengthening of the last vowel. Like any other innovation it was criticized by older generations (Miller 2004b; Sasaki 2004). They function pragmatically to get the listeners’ attention and they are most common in the speech of people born after the 1970s (Koori 2018).

HRT is another characteristic of youth language and of female speech style (Eckert 2000; F. Inoue 1998; Koori 2018; Tyler, 2015). HRT is a rising intonation in mid-sentence even though the speaker is not asking a question (Ex h). Known as *hangimon* “half-question” in Japanese, it is associated with insecurity; however, it functions as a politeness strategy in

rather formal interactions (F. Inoue 1998), such as media interviews or first-time interactions (Tanaka 2015). In Japan, HRT was reported at the start of the 1990s and is observed mainly in young females' speech (F. Inoue 1997; Noro 2001), and as shown in our data, it is not observed in the late 1980s.

(h) Miyuki: .....anmari muitehen kara. (un) **zutto sore o shite iku tte iu no ga?**

(un) **tanjun ni?** (un) un dakara tabun muite naito omowaretan chau ka na  
to omotte.

Miyuki: ...I am not good at counting (uh-huh) **to do it all along?** (u-huh)  
**simply?** (uh-huh) that's why I think that they might have thought that I am  
not good at it'

The use of these youth language features illustrates what Eckert (2008, 2012) discusses as styling or persona style. By choosing a particular linguistic feature that has a high indexical field, speakers are reasserting themselves socially. By using HRT or DMs in their speech speakers affiliate to the metapragmatic stereotypes of "coolness" or "attractiveness" associated with these features. The indexical field of DMs (and HRT) has "coolness" and "modern" qualities. The fact that they are still used by young people, in particular university students in urban centres (see e.g. Horasawa 2011; Tanaka 2020) suggests that these tokens may have acquired a new value, that of "urban".

#### 4. Fieldwork and interviews with four women in 1989 and 2000.

The selected women for this study are Kanako, Miyuki, Yayoi and Satoko<sup>4</sup>. In 1989, Kaori, the interviewer, spent one whole year at their municipal vocational high school as part of her ethnographic study. The interviews followed a structured question-answer format but in 2000 they were rather informal. They had built a rapport with Kaori, and although she is mainly who asks the questions, she also shares personal information. This intimacy between the women and the researcher, we argue, is an important part of the contextual background to the interviews, because frequent reference is made to past events and to other members of the group who participated in the initial study. The fact that these interactions have continued with the same interviewer for so many years has enormous advantages that offset the lack of recordings of other type of interactions as the only differentiating factor is time. Moreover, they had built an excellent rapport over time that allows them to talk without the interviewer's prodding. The interactions become more informal with time (e.g. Iwasaki 2018; Nakane 2018; Maree 2018). They use Kobe and Osaka dialects and standard Japanese, this is also integral to exploring the transitions in language across the decade (Takagi et al 2019).

### **5. Variations in the use of DM and HRT**

The numerical results of 1989 show that Yayoi was the most prolific DM user, followed by Kanako, Miyuki, and Satoko, who used them minimally. There are no instances of 'end-rising intonation' nor of HRT. Miyuki used formal Japanese, and Kanako and Satoko were very informal and used Kobe dialect most of the time. Due to differences in length (1989 interviews were on average 40 minutes long, while in 2000 they were more than double in length) we calculated the rate of DMs and HRT.

In 2000, the frequency of DMs changes drastically. Kanako and Yayoi show a big decrease although Yayoi uses HRT. Miyuki, on the other hand, uses more DMs than in 1989



and has adopted HRT. Satoko is the most prolific user of HRT and also shows a slight increase in DMs. There were no instances of end-rising intonation.

[Insert Table 1 here ]

[Insert Figure 1 here]

[Insert Figure 2 here]

Tteiuka was used by all the women with the same function: as a softener when giving an opposite opinion and when rephrasing. Mitaina, in 1989, was used mainly as a hedge and as a quotative marker, whereas toka was mainly used as a quotative marker, however in 2000 all of them show differences in usage. Similar patterns of nanka were observed in 1989 in Miyuki and Satoko (textual level), Yayoi (textual and pragmatic), whereas Kanako used nanka as a hedge. In 2000, Kanako and Miyuki use nanka mostly at the textual level (to introduce new information or to highlight the unexpectedness of the story), while Yayoi's pattern is reversed and Satoko uses only at the textual level.

To offer further insights of their speech across those years excerpts from those interviews are presented below. Their background is given first followed by excerpts. The 1989 interviews' topic revolves around getting a job, while in 2000 the topic is about their lives in general.

### **3.1 Yayoi.**

Yayoi lived with her parents, her older sister and her younger brother. Her father worked in the post office and her mother was a housewife but did some sewing jobs at home. Yayoi was an active member of her high school where she was the secretary of the Student's Council. She had close friends with whom she still met in 2000. She wanted to become a hairdresser,

but her parents wanted her to obtain a job that required a high school diploma. She reluctantly applied for a sales job through the school-based job referral system, and was very happy to get her first preference at an electrical appliance chain store. However, she was assigned to a clerical position in a small computer repair workshop. She befriended other female colleagues who liked to go out after work and she enjoyed this experience, but was happy to leave her job when she met a casual delivery man, Yusuke, at work and married him against her parents' and friends' advice.

Married to a first-born male meant that they were encouraged to live with the in-laws in a provincial city about three hours from Kobe. Yusuke was not able to hold any jobs for long and eventually, at his insistence, they started working at the same local company. She soon found out that he was embezzling money from the company to support his recreational activities, and tried to make up for the loss by working after hours as a bar hostess.

Ultimately, she left him and returned to her parents' house. After casual jobs she landed on a continuing technical position and enjoyed a stable income. Then the Kobe earthquake in 1995 destroyed her parent's house, but she was able to buy a flat through a special government loan for those affected by the earthquake.

In 1989, Yayoi was the highest user of DMs. Her most frequent DM is *nanka* and mostly used at the textual level. In excerpt (1) she says that she had talked to her teacher when deciding about her job but adds *kedo* (but) (line 1) indicating a referential contrast is to follow (Onodera 2004). There are 4 *nanka* tokens which function as a preface. The first is before she describes what her teacher thinks about sales, and *mitaina* functions as a quotative marker. Kaori shows surprise in line 3. So, Yayoi starts her turn with *nanka*, to say that everyone has a rather negative impression about sales. She uses various linguistic strategies that show doubt like the expressions *chigauka naa* (oh, is it wrong, isn't it?) and the ending *omounen yanka* (I think), inviting agreement from Kaori. *Aa soo* is only a backchannel (line

6), so Yayoi uses another *nanka* that follows the exclamative *hora* after *hanbai ni kanshite* (in relation to sales) to get Kaori's agreement. In this instance, Yayoi's *nanka* functions as a filler as it appears that she is not very confident and seems to ask for support by saying *ironna aru desho* (there are many ( things), aren't there). She says that if she was to work for Kidensha, the girls around her would ask for a discount for electrical goods. The next *nanka* is before the name of the company Kidensha, before her main point. The last *nanka* is used before a quotative-like phrase that is marked by another DM *toka* as a quotation marker.

(1) [Yayoi 1989 (345)]

1 Yayoi: *hanashiteta. kedo. **nanka** Yamauchi sensei wa moo hitotsu sono hanbai tte no wa..*

2 *konomashikunai **mitaina** kanji de omotteta mitai*

3 Kaori: *a hontoo*

4 Yayoi: ***nanka.** jibun. nande ka shiranaikedo. are chigau ka naa, minna hanbai tte anmari*

5 *ii inshoo tte naitte omoune n yanka.*

6 Kaori: *aa soo.*

7 Yayoi: *hanbai ni kanshite hora **nanka** ironna aru deshoo. moshi atashi **nanka** kidensha*

8 *yattara moo mawari no ko ga watashi ga Kidensha ni kimatta toki wa. aa **nanka***

9 *denkiseihin yasukushite nee **toka***

'Yayoi: I talked to him, but, *nanka* teacher Yamauchi seems that he is thinking that sales is not a very good thing *mitai*

Kaori: Oh, really

Yayoi: *Nanka*, I don't know why, but I think that, oh, maybe I am wrong, people do not have a good impression about sales, don't they.

Kaori: Really.

Yayoi: In relation to sales, you see, nanka there are lot of things, aren't they. If I was {going to work at} Kidensha, well all the girls around me, when it was decided I would go to Kidensha, they {said} toka things like give me a discount, nanka.

Kaori: uh-[huh].'

In 2000 Yayoi uses less DMs but uses HRT. Mitaina is mainly used at the textual level, and she uses other quotative markers instead of toka. In (2), Kaori asks her whether her continuing technical position is fun. Yayoi answers with the word tanoshii (line 1) followed by the DM *tte iuka* which indicates that the word fun does not really reflect how she feels about work (Miao 2014). Yayoi seems to be looking for words as she uses the fillers *maa* (well), *un* (yeah). She continues explaining that after six to seven years, she finally feels that she has learnt her job. After Kaori's backchannel (line 3), Yayoi continues her explanation with another DM *nanka* (line 4). This *nanka* functions as a precursor of her main point, and this use is observed in her 1989 speech. She says that it is about two to three years ago that she feels confident and she can finally answer questions (about work). She finishes her sentence with an HRT (I can finally give answers?) Naturally, this rising intonation does not function as a question and can be used to indicate modesty (Tanaka 2015) or to emphasize (Koori 2018). In this case, it appears that Yayoi does not want to brag about her accumulated experience.

(2) [Yayoi 2000- 289]

1 Yayoi: u::n tanoshii **tteiuka**, maa, un. ima yatto nante iu n kana, hito toori wakaruyoo ni

2        natte..kono shigoto wa, 6nen ka 7nen ni narukedo

3 Kaori: un

4 Yayoi: dakara yatto, **nanka**, wakaruu yooni natte kita yuutara are yakedo, koko 2 3 nen

5 guraide. yatto dakara hito ni shitsumon sarete. yatto kotaerareru yoo ni **natte kita?**

6 Kaori: un

‘Yayoi: uuhm, fun, tteiuuka, well, uuhm, finally now, nanteiu kana I came to understand the whole (work/job), it is already the 6th or 7th year at this job

Kaori: uh-[huh].

Yayoi: that’s why, finally, nanka, I finally came to understand, but in these 2 or 3 years. Finally, when asked by others, I am now able to give an answer?

Kaori: uh-huh

### 3.2. Kanako

Kanako lived with her parents and five younger sisters in 1989. Her father worked as a security guard and her mother worked part-time in a chemist shop. At school she was not particularly interested in studying, and one of her dreams was to become an actress, but her parents were against, considering it as financially precarious. She had a group of friends she was still close to in 2000.

She obtained a position in a pearl jewellery factory through the school-based job referral, but quit after three months when she found she was pregnant. She married her sweetheart and had two more daughters with him. Her husband was initially unable to keep jobs until he started working in his father’s fishing boat and later in his uncle’s. Kanako, as the wife of a fisherman, had to work for free which was the norm of the fishing cooperative they belonged to. She was not happy with the arrangement as she always wanted to earn her own money, something she did when her husband was hospitalized twice. They suffered from the Kobe earthquake and bought a flat with a special government loan for those affected by

the earthquake. Kaori interviewed Kanako, a mother of three girls, in the new flat in 2000 shortly after the family moved there.

Kanako was a prolific user of DMs in 1989. In (3), Kaori asks her why her parents would oppose her working as a waitress. Kanako says that they really disapproved of this type of job and uses *mitaini* as a quotative marker (line 1). Then, she replies to Kaori (line 2) that they thought negatively of any hospitality jobs. Here she uses *toka* as quotation marker (line 3). Kaori asks her again for the reason (line 4) and Kanako says that she does not really know. She uses *nanka* twice. The first *nanka* (line 5) after the *a* functions as a filler. She says *wakarahen kedo* (I don't know, but), and a second *nanka* functions as a preface before a more detailed explanation. These two DMs highlight Kanako's not knowing of the reasons why her parents dislike jobs related to hospitality. Here, too, as with Yayoi's example (1), Kanako uses the expression *wakarahen kedo* (I don't understand/know though) which shows some insecurity which is in contrast to her word choice in 2000.

(3) [Kanako 1989 (345)]

1 Kanako: *zutto iwareteten sooiu no dake wa itte hoshikunai mitaini*

2 Kaori: *ueetoresu wa yametokette? nande?*

3 Kanako: *soo iu kyakushoobai wa akan toka tte*

4 Kaori: *aa dooshite*

5 Kanako: *a nanka wakarahen kedo nanka kyokudo ni kirau kara uchi no oya wa.*

'Kanako: I was always told that they don't want me to {do that kind of job}

*mitaini*

Kaori: Don't do waitressing? Why?

Kanako: That kind of job is no good, *toka* {they said}

Kaori: Ooh, Why?

Kanako: Oh, **nanka** I don't know, but **nanka** my parents really hate it'

In 2000, Kanako uses very few DMs, except for the quotative toka<sup>5</sup>, consequently, her talk projects a different stance. Even when she does not know how or what to answer, she chooses other words. She sometimes uses nanka when telling an incident (textual level) and mitaina as a quotative in 2000. In excerpt (4), Kaori asks Kanako how they decided to buy their flat (line 1). Kanako says that it was her initiative and when she is asked why, she answers with an expression sorosoro (it is about time). After a short pause she says ne, a particle that invites the listener to agree with her. Kaori gives a minimal response, so Kanako continues explaining that following the tradition where they live, newly married couples customarily get a house.

(4) [Kanako 2000 (345)]

1 Kaori: kono kau kaoo tteiu

2 Kanako: a! kao tte iidashita no wa atashi

3 Kaori: nande?

4 Kanako: mo::: sorosoro:::(0.2) ne::?

5 Kaori: un

6 Kanako: chotto::minna mawari ga hora, koko no hitotachi tte moo kekkon shita toki

7       kara, shintakuwake. tte iu no ga atte.

'Kaori: This buy- the buying

Kanako: Oh! I was the one who proposed

Kaori: Why?

Kanako: Well::it's time:::(0.2) isn't, it?

Kaori: Yeah

Kanako: well, everybody around, you see, the people here, when they get married, they get a house.;

### 3.3 Miyuki

Miyuki lived with her parents and two older sisters in 1989. Her father worked as a taxi driver and her mother as a cleaner. Her sisters started working immediately after finishing high school. She was a very cheerful and talkative girl interested in art, but she applied for a cashier's position at a large cooperative retail chain store renowned for having a great training program so that their employees were highly sought after if they changed jobs.

In 2000, Miyuki, still lived with her parents. Her elder sister had divorced and was raising her son. Her other sister had already married but complained about her marriage. Seeing her two sisters' unhappy marriages might have influenced her as she was in no hurry to get married. At the time of this interview, Miyuki was in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year of distance university studies that included some on campus lectures in Tokyo. She was still working at the same cooperative she entered after high school, where she initially worked as a cashier. In 2000, she was working as an artist doing window displays. She had moved to four different branches where she had different types of responsibilities, but she was happiest as an artist. At the fourth branch she was already a middle manager. She tried to maintain a harmonious and pleasant working environment. Although working and studying was very demanding, she seemed to be very happy and satisfied.

In 1989, she was the second highest DM user. In (5) Kaori had asked her whether her teacher, Mr. Yamauchi, was happy about her decision (choosing a job). She also asked her whether he was agreeable for her to go to Kansai Co-op, a supermarket chain, and a long-established and respectable organization. Miyuki uses *mitaina* (line 2) as a quotative marker to report that he had said a *sooka* (Is it so?). Kaori repeats Miyuki's words, partly to confirm



and partly to get more information (line 3). Miyuki reports that he had said *sono mama ganbare mitaina* (he said to continue doing my best) using *mitaina* as a quotative marker (line 4). As with Yayoi's and Kanako's interviews in 1989, the high use of DMs projects the image of a young adolescent.

(5) [Miyuki 1989]

1 Kaori: *fuun. de Kan-kansai seikyoo ni kanshite mo warito sansei shita to.*

2 Miyuki: *hai. asoo ka mitaina*

3 Kaori: *a soo ka toiu kanji*

4 Miyuki: *sono mama ganbare mitaina.*

5 Kaori: *fuun.. a soo.*

'Kaori: I see, and in relation to Ka-Kansai cooperative, did he also agree to it.

Miyuki: Yes. I see **mitaina**

Kaori: He said I see

Miyuki: Yes. Keep trying as you have done *mitaina*

Kaori: I see'

In 2000 Miyuki increased using DMs and also adopted HRT. *Nanka* was used pragmatically and on the textual level, and although *mitaina* is overwhelmingly used as a quotative marker, she uses them also as signs of modesty. In (6), Miyuki is explaining about various aspects of her work. In line 1, she tells an incident when working at the cashier with a younger employee whom, she was certain, made some calculation errors. Her first *nanka* ties or connects two subtopics, in this case it is the fact that Miyuki was paired with that colleague (line 2). The second *toka* functions as a quotative marker but it is not clear who the speaker is

because subject omission is common in Japanese (line 3), and also the agent is not needed because it is in the passive.

Miyuki says that she was infuriated of being accused of making errors because she knew it was her colleague's fault. Kaori then asks what happens when such errors occur (line 6). Miyuki's answer (line 7) starts with *nanka*, used often before detailed and long explanations. She explains that she/they must write reports on the errors. Here, too, *toka* is a quotative marker in *isan hookoku kake* (write a report on the errors). We know that it is her boss' speech because it is in imperative form, and it might be male. She adds that she herself is not good at counting, so she was transferred to another section. She uses HRT in two occasions: one after the expression *zutto sore o shite iku no ga?* (to do that {counting} all throughout?) and after *tanjun ni?* (simply?) (lines 8-9). It is obvious that these are not questions despite their intonation and either ask for attention or agreement.

(6) [Miyuki 2000]

- 1 Miyuki ... *zettai sono ko mo. dashiteru tte watashi wa kakushin ga atta n desu yo.*
- 2 Kaori: *uun un un.*
- 3 Miyuki: *demo nanka kumi a kumasarete. isan dasu wa toka iwarete.*
- 4 Kaori: *honto*
- 5 Miyuki: *mecha haratatte*
- 6 Kaori: *de sono baai doo suru wake detara?*
- 7 Miyuki: *nanka. n. iwarerushi ne. isan hookokusho toka kake: toka itte. (fun) demo watashi*
- 8 *ano kazoeru jitai mo. anmari muitehen kara. (un) zutto sore o shite iku tte iu no*
- 9 *ga? (un) tanjun ni? (un) un dakara tabun muite naito omowareta n chau ka na*
- 10 *to omotte.*

‘Miyuki: .. I am sure that she also did calculations errors. I am sure about it.

Kaori: Uh-huhh

Miyuki: But nanka I was pa- paired with her, and was told I made calculation errors toka

Kaori: Really?

Miyuki: Was fuming

Kaori: And what do you have to do when there are errors?

Miyuki: nanka. uhm. I am told as well. 'Write the report about your miscalculations' toka but I am not good at counting (uh-huh) to do it all along? (u-huh) simply? (uh-huh) that's why I think that they might have thought that I am not good at it'

### 3.4 Satoko

Satoko lived with her mother and grandparents in a small flat in 1989. Her mother was hard working and obtained a cook's certification despite having finished only compulsory education. She obtained a permanent position at a hospital cafeteria after a series of casual jobs. Satoko was a loner in school but she did not have problems teaming with others for a project. She wanted to work in the public service like her mother, however, failed to pass the examination. The school urged her to apply for a technical drawing job at a big electric company where she was accepted.

Satoko married in 1993 when she was 21. Her husband became a self-employed truck-driver and because he did not have a stable income, she was the main bread-winner. It was hard trying to combine full-time work and being a mother of two young boys. She was transferred to different branches on a number of occasions. At every move, she had a different position and she had to build human relationships, which are very important in

Japan. She was in better terms with part-time staff than her permanent colleagues, because very few of the latter were female. These transfers increased commuting time and reduced her time with her family.

Contrary to her other classmates, she rarely used DMs in 1989. In (7), Satoko had previously told Kaori that she failed to get a position as a public officer, and here they are talking about how she applied for Shitamatsu. Satoko explains that one teacher said that no one was applying to go to that company and asked her if she was interested. She replied that she would go anywhere, so the teacher said he/she was going to make a phone call to inquire. Very few DMs are used throughout the interview and the only DM in this excerpt is *mitaina* used as a quotative marker (line 7). The other two quotations are in the Kobe dialect that do not have quotative particles as it would occur in SJ. She uses an informal style (short forms) that projects a very direct and friendly attitude. Satoko's speech is interesting, because it shows that not every young person uses DMs or uses language that is considered "cool" (see e.g. Bucholtz 2010; Eckert 2004).

(7) [Satoko 1989]

1 Kaori: *ichiran tte niji boshuu no ichiran?*

2 Satoko: *janakute ano sono: nan yattenyaro. nanya sonoo konpyuuta iretottan yana.*

3 *nyuuroku deshoo ya (un) are mitara Shitamatsu no namae nakattanya*

4 Kaori: *sorede?*

5 Satoko: *sorede dare kana? dare ka sensei ga (un) Shitamatsu daremo itte hen kara*

6 *Shitamatsu ikuka: iidashite (un) dokodemo ee wa: iute (un) sositara ippen*

7 *denwa shite kiite mitaruwa **mitaina** 11gatsu 11nichi yattakana? (un) yoo oboeteru*

8 *wa @@*

'Kaori: Is the table of the second recruiting round?

Satoko: No, it isn't. well uhm what was it. Uhm (he) was entering in the computer, probably inputting, and when I had a look the name of Shitamatsu wasn't here

Kaori: And then?

Satoko: And then, who was it? Some teacher (uhn) started saying that because nobody went to Shitamatsu will you go (un) I said wherever (uhn) and he kinda said I'll phone once. I think it was the 11<sup>th</sup> of November (uhn) I remember really well @@@

In 2000, Satoko started using some DMs, and particularly, HRT, although her style (using plain forms and Kobe dialect) did not change. She had been transferred to the headquarters in the centre of Osaka Business District where she had to work with many people, and was friendly with contract and casual workers. In (8), they are talking about the type of work she was in charge of. Satoko was assigned to the electrical wiring board department and Kaori asks whether clients ask her to design them (line 1). Satoko tries to explain that the word design is not the most appropriate. She says *dezain chuu ka ne* (don't know whether we can call it design) and tries to explain how this panel works. She says *yoo wa naka?* (what is important is, inside?) and continues explaining how the electricity is transmitted from the box or panel to the electric outlet. There is a pause before the word *konsento* which is accompanied by HRT (line 6). She gives some examples of electric appliances and says that these are the best for those sort of machines. In a way, the HRT that Satoko uses might show an attitude of modesty because she is explaining Kaori something she is not familiar with, and she softens her utterance so that she (Satoko) does not sound arrogant or with a "know-it-all" attitude.

(8) [Satoko 2000]

1 Kaori: sore kon nan konnan o dezain shite kudasai tte iwareru wake?

2 Satoko: dezain chuu ka ne **yoo wa naka?**

3 Kaori: a soo nan.

4 Satoko: yoo wa kooiu kooiu.. shukan- shukan **itutara mein?**

5 Kaori: un

6 Satoko: ichiban hajimeni denki ga too haitte kite (un) de sokkara.... **konsento?** (un)

7 *konsento toka sentakki toka. denshi renji toka ni... ga tsuyoi .yoo wa kimattan-*

8 *annen ne?*

‘Kaori: That, do clients ask for it to be design this way?’

Satoko: I do not know whether you call it design, but what is important is inside the box?

Kaori: Oh really

Satoko: The important is the main [electricity] line, the main is main [in English]

Kaori: Yeah

Satoko: First. the electricity enters from here (u-huh) and from there ... to the outlet? (u-huh) the outlet you find in washing machines, or in microwave oven, the strong ones, That is, there are set ones, you see?’

Other times, Satoko uses HRT when she is unsure of the information. So, it appears that the use of HRT is multifunctional, and Satoko uses them accordingly.

#### 4. Discussion

We have looked at the interview speech of four Japanese women from Kobe focusing on their retention or loss of youth language features after they transitioned into adulthood. They were first interviewed in 1989 as adolescents and then in 2000 as adults. We analysed the most conspicuous DMs, *nanka*, *toka*, *mitaina*, *tteiuka*, and also rising intonation (end-rising intonation and HRT) because they are closely associated with youth language.

The linguistic market in the workplaces they joined are very different to those in adolescence, and each one of them took different life courses, therefore their linguistic choices were varied. The “linguistic market” does not necessarily reflect the hegemonic language variety, but it reflects the “right” variety of the different communities (Bourdieu and Boltanski 1978; Woolard 1985). The analysis shows a complex picture even in 1989. Even though they were attending the same technical high school, had a similar background and were of the same age, they exhibited different linguistic features<sup>6</sup>. While three (Kanako, Miyuki and Yayoi) used DMs frequently, one used them minimally (Satoko). The most prolific user of DMs was Yayoi, followed by Miyuki and Kanako. There were no instances of end-rising intonation nor HRT. In 2000, Kanako and Yayoi’s linguistic choices support the view that youth language features are abandoned in adulthood. However, Miyuki shows the opposite trend. Satoko, who seldom used DMs as a high school student, was a prolific user of HRT. Yayoi and Miyuki also adopted HRT in their speech.

Their differing speech choices can be understood through their linguistic capital (Bourdieu and Boltanski 1978; Woolard 1985). As young adults they were exposed to different linguistic pressures and had to negotiate their new identity/social relationships/roles in completely new environments which had an alternative linguistic capital (Woolard 1985). As Eckert (2012) writes, speakers are not passive actors but “stylistic agents” that modify their linguistic styles. Looking in detail at each women’s circumstances, Kanako, for

example, helped her husband on the fishing boat and worked in fishing cooperatives where the speech style is very different to that used in an office or a shop, not only in the use of honorifics but of standard Japanese and dialects. Using DMs in that environment would not have helped her integrate in that community. This is also noted in other studies where particular linguistic forms of variants would be beneficial or not depending on the circumstances of the individual (Baugh 1996). It is noteworthy that both, Yayoi and Kanako, worked for a short time as bar hostesses. Kanako had to support her family while her husband was hospitalized and Yayoi had to earn extra money to repay her husband's misuse of the company's funds. Waiting on clients in Japan requires the use of polite language, and although the same level of politeness is not expected at a bar, the fact that it is a service job would have required both to speak in polite shakaijin (mature/adult) Japanese (Cook 2018; Dunn 1999, 2013). From this information, we can gather that the linguistic practices at both Yayoi's and Kanako's workplaces did not value youth language features and that the speech style expected from, particularly, female employees differs according to the type of job, as attested by several researchers (see e.g. Sunaoshi (2004) on female farmers and their use of dialect and standard Japanese, Oohara (2004) on higher pitch as a politeness strategy, Takasaki (1997) on the use of traditional "feminine" language).

Other aspects that might have directly influenced their linguistic choices are marital status, further education, place of work/residence. The change of status from single to married in a heteronormative society like Japan that places great social meaning on the traditional family, which forms the core unit of the society, is considered an essential step to become a "real adult" (Kawasaki 2017). This could be a factor in Kanako and Yayoi's decrease use of DM's as they have married and now occupy the position of 'real adults' in society. We can also infer that DMs were not used in their social networks. Yayoi divorced in 1996 after going through a tumultuous marriage which involved moving away to a provincial city far north



from Kobe for few years. In 2000, Kanako was married with three children. Her case is somewhat similar to the young adults who started using standard variants in Rickford and Price's study (2013) who were mothers themselves and one of them was the owner of a children's centre. Kanako had to talk to teachers and child-carers of her children, therefore, we can surmise that these language practices crossed over into her presentation in the conversations with Kaori.

Satoko used very few DMs in 1989. She was a 'boyish' girl who did not have close girlfriends in school. She liked to play baseball in a local club after school. By not being a member of a particular girl's group in school, she did not need to use DMs as her classmates did. She married young and had children but, in 2000 she starts using DMs. Like Miyuki, she had to work at different branches where she had to build new social networks.

The only woman who pursued further education while working fulltime was Miyuki. Her correspondence junior college degree from 1997 to 2000 included on-campus teaching components in Tokyo. As previous research has found university students demonstrated comparatively higher use of DMs and HRT (Horasawa 2011; Lauwereyns 2002; Tanaka 2000, Uchida 2001; Yamashita, 2017) we can infer that Miyuki adjusted her speech to the linguistic practices of young urban people, and therefore we see an increase in DMs in her conversations with Kaori as well. Moreover, she had been transferred to different branches where she had to build new relationships and adopt the linguistic features of those social groups, including younger staff members. An alternative explanation is that the DM's indexicality had changed or expanded over time to symbolise a particular social group of young adults who live/work/study in urban areas, and not only adolescents. This phenomenon is discussed by Eckert (2012) and Zhang (2005) in relation to the ways in which particular linguistic features can be re-enregistered and given new social categories and social meanings.

Turning to the use of end-rising intonation and HRT, there were no cases of the first innovation in the 1989 data, and the second phenomenon was not present in the 1989 interviews, but by 2000 it was widely used by all, except for Kanako. End-rising intonation has been reported as a phenomenon closely connected to the Tokyo and Kanto area and middle-class speakers (e.g. TV announcers, actors, doctors) (F. Inoue 1998; Koori 2018). The lack of end-rising intonation, therefore, may be attributed to the fact that this innovation had not yet spread to the Western part of Japan. Moreover, the metapragmatic stereotypes associated this form with the image of a “cute” girl (Miller 2004a, 2004b; Sasaki 2004) suggests that they did not position themselves as belonging to a subculture of “cute-girls”.

HRT, on the other hand, has been reported to be used by “intellectual female professional women” and might have been introduced from English (F. Inoue 1997, 20). Therefore, HRT might index characteristics associated with working women, an attribute we observe in Satoko, Miyuki and Yayoi.

Location of residence/workplace might reflect the use of HRT. The high frequency of HRT might be also connected to where the women worked or studied. Satoko’s workplace was in Kyobashi, right in the centre of Osaka. Miyuki was not only studying (she had to attend occasional on-campus classes), but was working as an artist in the display section of her company. Yayoi was designing arcades and her duties involved visiting construction sites, climbing roofs, and obtaining permits from government officials. These three women had had to interact with a variety of people, including younger colleagues. Kanako, in contrast, did not have a paid job and she lived in a fishing town away from the Kobe metropolitan area.

We acknowledge that ethnographic interviews are not the same as conversations; therefore we do not claim that our findings are exhaustive. It is not possible to know how they talked

in other speech events or with their family members and close friends or co-workers; therefore, these results are but only one aspect of their speech. Instead, this study offers insights into these women's positioning of themselves within these recurring ethnographic interviews with the same researcher over the years as they share their life stories. We could also observe that in the 2000 interviews the interactions alternated between interview and small talk showing that intertextual simultaneity emerged (Kovan 2014) offering more data to understand how they constructed the interactions. Further aspects such as the use of lexical choice, politeness honorifics, dialect, and standard Japanese use that would undoubtedly give us a more complete picture of their speech, and this are tasks for the future.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study looked at the speech of four Japanese women from Kobe interviewed in 1989 and in 2000 to observe how linguistic features associated with youth language are used as they transitioned into adulthood. We focused on DMs and end-rising intonation, linguistic features traditionally associated with youth language, because of their high indexical pragmatic field and their frequency. Results suggest that various factors such as their workplace, marital status, motherhood, further education, work and/or domicile location, etc. influenced their linguistic choices. They encountered a variety of linguistic practices and built new social networks as they went through changes in their lives resulting in the retention, loss, and increase of these linguistic features. Similarly, the data suggests that DMs' indexicality might have changed over time and these are associated not only with adolescents, but with young adults studying, living, and working in urban areas.

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## **Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> The project includes bi-annual interviews of eight women from 1989 to 2019. Other linguistic aspects such as the use of Kobe and Osaka dialect (syntax, phonology, semantics), responses to different questions, performance and contestation of normative gender and sexuality, etc are being studied. We use a Multi-Analytical Discourse approach that provides a multi-layered analysis to discourse. For more details see Okano 1993, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Although Cukor-Avila's (2002) study on the use of like examines the speech of 14 speakers from Springville, the purpose focuses on the use of quotatives, and not on the social meaning, therefore it has not been included.

<sup>3</sup> The Hepburn system was used for Japanese Romanization. Diphthongs and long vowels are represented by a sequence of two vowels (hontoo, ueetoresu)

::: (colon) = lengthened syllable,

. (period)= slight pause

(0.0)= length of silences

@ =audible laughter

(un) listeners' backchannels

<sup>4</sup> The names of people and institutions have been changed.

<sup>5</sup> Due to space limitations we cannot show an example.

<sup>6</sup> The difference is also observed in their use of dialects and formal/informal styles.

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Table 1. Discourse Markers and HRT in 1989 and 2000 (rate/min)

		<b>Tte iuka</b>	<b>nanka</b>	<b>toka</b>	<b>mitai</b>	<b>HRT</b>
<b>1989</b>	Satoko	0	0.119	0.02	0.023	0
<b>2000</b>		0.033	0.263	0.148	0.164	1.284
<b>1989</b>	Kanako	0.452	0.333	0.52	0.571	0
<b>2000</b>		0.018	0.018	0.030	0.006	0.024
<b>1989</b>	Miyuki	0.437	0.25	0.75	0.875	0
<b>2000</b>		0.161	1.235	1.844	0.239	0.378
<b>1989</b>	Yayoi	0.806	1.645	0.77	0.806	0
<b>2000</b>		0.132	0.363	0.397	0.099	0.380

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Figure 1. Discourse Markers and HRT in 1989 (rate/min)

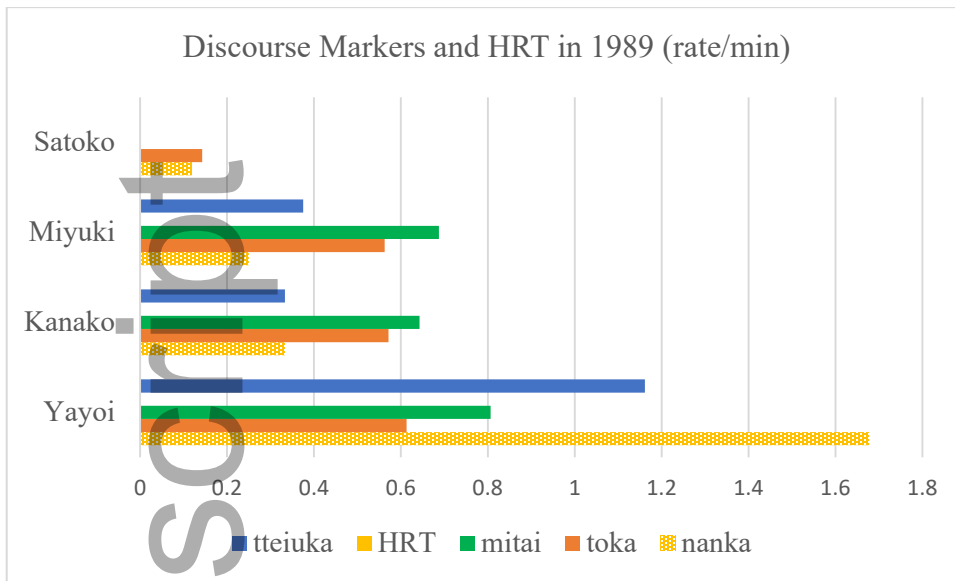


Figure 2. Discourse Markers and HRT in 2000 (rate/min)

