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Author	Kim, Angela A-Jeoung
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“I am telling you! This is what I mean!”:  
Assertion in dialogues in Japanese and Korean novels,  
focusing on ‘yo’ in Japanese  
and its functional equivalents in Korean

Angela A-Jeoung Kim

**Abstract**

A widely recognised characteristic of spoken Japanese is its frequent use of final-particles, and among them *yo* is one of the most commonly used items. This study investigates the differences and similarities between Japanese and Korean, with particular reference to the ‘assertiveness’ conveyed by the Japanese particle *yo* and its Korean equivalents. As is generally recognised, Japanese and Korean share similarities in grammar. However, with respect to the use of *yo*, which does not contribute to the propositional content of the utterance, there is no absolute one-to-one equivalent in Korean. The assertive function served by *yo* is realised in Korean by various suffixes. More specifically, with regard to the assertive function of *yo*, as a result of the speaker’s assessment of the addressee’s knowledge, this study will show that *yo* is used in a wider range of contexts than the corresponding Korean equivalents such as *-e*, *-maliya*, *-ko*, and *-nikka*. The analysis focuses on these Korean suffixes as markers that function in a pragmatically similar way to the way *yo* does in Japanese. I will argue that what determines the use of the different suffixes in Korean, in the same context where *yo* is used in Japanese, is the degree of assertiveness conveyed within the organisation of dispute in discourse. The data used in this study comprises 522 Japanese expressions containing *yo*. They were collected from dialogues in the first 100 pages of four modern Japanese novels. The Korean is taken from the translations of those novels.

**1. Introduction**

Spoken Japanese is widely recognised as frequently employing final-particles, among which *yo* is one of the most frequently used. According to Makino and Tsutsui (1989: 543, emphasis added) *yo* “indicates the *speaker’s (fairly) strong conviction or assertion* about something that

is assumed to be known only to [her/]him”. Makino and Tsutsui (1989: 543), accordingly list the English equivalents of *yo* as “I tell you, I’m telling you, you know, contrary to what you think”. The examples Makino and Tsutsui (1989) present are adapted below in (1) and (2). The English translations are as given in the original.

- (1) A: *nihongo wa omoshiroi desu ka.*  
 Japanese TOP interesting COP.POL QUE  
 “Is Japanese interesting?”

B: *ee, totemo omoshiroi desu yo.*  
 yes very interesting BE **yo**  
 “Yes very interesting, I tell you” (Makino and Tsutsui 1989: 543-544)

- (2) A: *ano hito wa sonna hon o kawanai deshoo.*  
 that person TOP such book OBJ buy.NEG CJR  
 “He probably won’t buy that sort of book”

B: *iie, kaimasu yo.*  
 no buy.POL **yo**  
 “Yes, he’ll buy it (contrary to what you think)” (Makino and Tsutsui 1989: 544)

As such, *yo* is used when the speaker wants to assert their view in a verbal interaction. With particular reference to the ‘assertiveness’ conveyed by the Japanese particle *yo*, the current study investigates the differences and similarities between Japanese and Korean, by examining the Japanese particle *yo* and its Korean equivalents.

As is generally recognised, Japanese and Korean are known to be typologically similar (Strauss 2002) and also known to share structural similarities in morphosyntax and lexicon (Horie 2002). However, with respect to the use of particles such as *yo*, which does not contribute to the propositional content of the utterance (Watanabe 1953; Saji 1956), there is not an absolute one-to-one equivalent in Korean<sup>1)</sup>. In this paper I will attempt to show that the assertive function served by *yo* is realised in Korean by various suffixes, and that what determines the use of different suffixes is the degree of assertiveness conveyed within the organisation of dispute in discourse.

The analysis will focus on the two interrelated functions of *yo*. They are (a) *yo* as a device for indicating the 'information state', and (b) *yo* as a device for imparting assertiveness. I use the term 'information state' in a broad sense in this paper. Instead of merely referring to the amount of knowledge the interlocutors have (Schiffrin 1987: 28), I use this term also to include the speaker's assessment of the addressee's knowledge (Kamio 1994, 1997a, 1997b). More specifically, I employ the term to refer to the result of the speaker's judgement: that there is a 'knowledge gap' (Cheng 1987) between the interlocutors.

Takubo (1990 cited in Masuoka 1991) observes that within a conversational discourse the speaker evaluates the addressee's degree of knowledge about a particular subject, and accordingly chooses an appropriate linguistic expression. In spoken Japanese, *yo* is one of the linguistic items most frequently used to indicate a particular information state.

This study is organised as follows: I begin with a review of the functions of *yo* in the literature, and specify the data and method adopted for this study. I then move on to examples of the Korean equivalents of *yo*. I will discuss the Korean suffixes, *-e*, *-maliya*, *-ko*, and *-nikka* in that order. That presentation will be followed by a discussion, and then concluding remarks.

## 2. Functions of 'yo'

In previous studies, the characteristics of *yo* have been claimed to indicate the knowledge state, that the speaker has more knowledge than the addressee (Uyeno 1972; Ohso 1986; Masuoka 1991; Masuoka and Takubo 1992; Kinsui 1993; Maynard 1993, 1997, 2001; Kamio 1994, 1997a, 1997b; Fukushima 1998), and as imparting an assertive nuance (Uyeno 1972; Mizutani 1984; Martin 1987; Nakano 1991; Saji 1991; Backhouse 1993). Martin (1987: 919) provides some English translations for *yo* as being along the lines of 'I want you to know', 'Believe (you) me...', 'I tell you', 'I'd say', and 'Let me tell you'. Morita (2002: 228) states that "the use of the final particle *yo* does not invite negotiation and by so doing advances a stance of 'strong authority' towards one's interlocutor". The analysis of Cheng (1987: 96) seems to subsume the above claims, as she notes that *yo* is used when the speaker assumes that he/she has a higher degree of knowledge about an issue, and also when the speaker thinks that the addressee needs to know more about the issue. Cheng (1987) goes on to say that the assertive nuance of *yo* is derived from the addressee's perception. That is, when the addressee feels that the information or knowledge marked by *yo* is 'unnecessary' for him/her then the utterance marked by *yo* would be perceived as assertive. My analysis in this paper is an elaboration of Cheng's (1987) claim, incorporating the two aspects of *yo*, i.e. indication of a

knowledge/information state, and the imparting of assertiveness. In particular I examine cases of ‘disputable events’ (Labov and Fanshel 1977: 62, *italics in the original*) where “the speaker acts in a way that shows he[/she] is aware that someone [the interlocutor] might disagree with him[/her]. [And,] The most characteristic way of presenting such information is to *assert it*”. I will show that the assertive nuance, which often accompanies *yo*, is a result of the characteristics of *yo* that indicates the difference in knowledge between the speaker and the addressee. I will also demonstrate that the different suffixes that are used in Korean to serve the function of *yo* indicate different degrees of assertiveness vis. *-e*, *-maliya*, *-ko*, and *-nikka*.

### 3. Methods and data

As I regard the assertiveness of *yo* as a part of the result of the speaker’s assessment of the respective levels of knowledge and the information state, I have categorised the data according to the types of utterances in Lyons’s sense (1977: 745). These types include: ‘statements’, ‘mands’<sup>2)</sup>, and ‘questions’. In this paper, however, I will only deal with the category ‘statements’. The reason I have excluded ‘mands’ and ‘questions’ is that aside from the function of *yo* under consideration in this paper, there is another function of *yo* recognised as mitigative (Uyeno 1972; Masuoka 1991). The mitigative function of *yo* is specifically realised in the category of ‘mands’ which includes requests and commands and therefore, that category is irrelevant here<sup>3)</sup>. Moreover, although instances can be found in the data where *yo* appears in ‘question type’ utterances, I have categorised them as statements since the presence of *yo* in those cases turns the utterances into something other than mere questions. I will explain this point in detail with example (3).

For this study, 612 Japanese expressions containing *yo* were initially collected from dialogues in the first 100 pages of four modern novels<sup>4)</sup>. Ninety of those expressions were in the ‘mands’ category and have been excluded for the aforementioned reasons. Therefore, the analysis is based on the remaining 522 utterances. To examine the Korean equivalents of *yo* I have used Korean translations of these novels as they provide an identical context. The translated Korean versions of the Japanese novels are used as data in order to examine the Korean equivalents of *yo*. This genre was chosen as data because *yo* is often found in spoken expressions that contain emotions, and specifically, as mentioned above, the speaker’s assertiveness. Novels provide not only dialogue between the characters of the story, but also descriptions of the emotional states, or internal thoughts, of the characters involved in the verbal interactions. In addition, those descriptions often include depictions of verbal interaction, and the

corresponding situational information and its development, phenomena which in turn aid the reader in identifying the speaker’s use of *yo* in the course of the interaction<sup>5)</sup>.

The use of *yo* is basically determined by context and discourse. Although expressions or strategies adopted for the translated Korean version may differ slightly from the original work, both works generally share the identical settings, situations and context. It therefore reasonable to assume that the translated Korean versions provide the equivalent context and discourse as conveyed in the original Japanese novels. It is thus deemed that *yo* in a particular context shares the same function as the translated Korean version, and in this regard, they (i.e. *yo* in a particular context and its Korean counterpart) can be regarded as equivalents.

#### 4. Korean Equivalents of ‘Yo’

In the following analysis I will first present a table showing the concordance between *yo* and the different Korean equivalents. I will then discuss *-e*, the most commonly found equivalent Korean suffix, with specific reference to the data. The study then moves on to do the same for other Korean equivalents of the assertive uses of *yo*: Here I provide examples of *-maliya*, and then two other suffixes that express stronger assertiveness, *-ko* and *-nikka*<sup>6)</sup>. The result of the Korean realisation from the data is shown in the table below.

(Table) Realisation of *yo* in Korean

Realisation	Frequency	Percentage
<i>-e/al(i)ya</i> <sup>7)</sup> (/maliya)	314 (17)	60.15 (5.42)
<i>-ci</i>	55	10.54
<i>-kwu/ko</i> <sup>8)</sup>	24	4.60
<i>-nikka</i>	18	3.45
Zero	16	3.07
<i>-tey</i>	15	2.87
<i>-ketun</i>	11	2.11
<i>-kwun</i>	10	1.92
<i>-kel</i>	10	1.92
<i>-ta</i> (level)	9	1.72
<i>-key/kkey</i>	8	1.53
<i>-p nita</i>	7	1.34
<i>-ney</i>	6	1.15
<i>-ci, mwe</i>	3	0.57
<i>-ni</i>	2	0.38
<i>-ciman</i>	2	0.38
<i>-tela</i>	2	0.38
<i>-kin</i>	2	0.38
-Tag	2	0.38
<i>-sey</i>	1	0.19
<i>-ney</i> (level)	1	0.19
<i>-lani</i>	1	0.19
<i>-cwuma</i> (level)	1	0.19
<i>-se</i>	1	0.19
<i>-ta</i> (monologue)	1	0.19
Total	522	100

The overall results show an overwhelmingly high percentage of *-e* (60.15% within which *-maliya* (*-mali* + *ya*) is included. Details of *-maliya* will be given shortly in 4.1.1.) as the corresponding Korean expression for *yo* in Japanese. The dominance of *-e* is made even more accentuated by the second most frequently realised suffix *-ci*, which occurred in only 10.54 percent (1/6 of the frequency for *-e*). The suffix *-e* is generally referred to as an infinitive suffix of a medium politeness level that can be used to manifest the declarative, interrogative, imperative, and propositive moods in Korean (K. Lee 1987, 1993; H. B. Lee 1989; K. Kim 1993, 1995; H. Sohn 1994; Chang 1996). In what follows I will discuss the assertiveness conveyed by *-e* and *-maliya* in their occurrence as equivalents of *yo*.

#### 4.1 Korean Equivalents of Japanese 'yo': '*-e*' and '*-maliya*'

##### 4.1.1 Assertive Function of '*-e*'

The suffix *-e* has not received a great deal of attention, and is usually only presented as an 'infinitive form'. The exceptions are K. Lee (1993, 1987), and H. S. Lee (1993) who both point out the assertive nature of the suffix. According to K. Lee (1993:12) *-e* is "used when the speaker thinks that there is some resistance on the part of the addressee toward what the speaker is saying, and the speaker feels it necessary to emphasize what he/[she] is saying". H. S. Lee (1993: 141) further explored the informative nature of *-e* and stated that "imparting a piece of information is communicatively proper only when the information conveyed is a part of the speaker's knowledge and the speaker assumes that the addressee is not aware of it". The informative function of *-e* as H. S. Lee (1993) has observed, and also the assertive function claimed by K. Lee (1993) and H. S. Lee (1993) seem to account for the high frequency of the suffix being used as an equivalent of the particle *yo*.

Although both studies offer insightful analyses of *-e*, there is another point closely associated with the assertive function of *-e*, which involves the form *-maliya*<sup>9)</sup>. As mentioned, the suffix *-e* renders assertiveness. However, in those cases where the speaker feels the need to project further assertion due to a challenge by or disagreement from the listener to the utterance, *-maliya*, as an elaborated expression of *-e*, tends to be used rather than *-e* by itself in the same manner<sup>10)</sup>. *-maliya* is a form derived from the expression *-mal* + *ita*: noun ['talk'] + copula (Payk 2006: 296) which embodies meanings such as "(I) mean..." or "I tell you" (Lukoff 1982; Ihm et al. 2001). The expression *-malita* is also reported as expressing emphasis (Lukoff 1982; Yonsei Tayhakkyo Hankwukehaktang 1997; Ihm et al. 2001). In contrast, *yo* can be used in both primary assertion, as well as in further assertion. This is substantiated by the

examples from the data that I will present below. Let us first examine example (3) which is drawn from the novel *Beautiful Life*. This example will show that *-e* is used as an equivalent of *yo* in the first instance, but when the speaker is further asserting their opinion with specific details (paralleling the second use of *yo* by the same speaker) *-maliya* is used instead of *-e* to express what is conveyed by *yo* in Japanese.

Up until this point in the novel, love has been in the air between Shuji and Kyoko, who is permanently in a wheelchair due to an illness. Sachi, who is Kyoko's close friend, knows about the potential relationship between Shuji and Kyoko. Sachi is frustrated that there has not been any development in their relationship, so she tries to encourage Kyoko to do something about it. Kyoko, on the other hand, has told Sachi that she had decided not to fall in love with anyone. Her reasons are that she does not want to cause the other person in the relationship to suffer the inconvenience of her being in a wheelchair, and also that she is used to resolving such feelings within herself. Kyoko has asked Sachi to stop teasing her about Shuji when he is around since she does not want to get hurt<sup>11)</sup>.

(3) (3.1) (J-life: 51)

- a. Sachi: *Kizutsuku kana?*  
be hurt I wonder
- b. Kyoko: *E?*  
what
- c. Sachi: *Wakannai jan, sore wa. Kizutsuku kadooka*  
understand.NEG COP that TOP be hurt whether or not  
  
*wakannai jan.*  
understand.NEG COP
- d. → Kyoko: *Nani mukininatten no yo.*  
what serious.become FP yo



e. → Sachi: *Dakara watashi wa kyoko ga sooyatte nannimo suru*  
 what I mean is I TOP Kyoko SUB as such anything do

*mae kara kokoro ni futashichau no yananda yo.*  
 before from heart LOC lid.do.AUX NOM hate.COP **yo**

(Sachi's eyes are starting to fill with tears)

f. Sachi: *Sonna koto ittetara, issloo, koidekinai jan.*  
 such thing say.COND one's lifetime love.POT.NEG COP

*issloo sukina hito dekinai jan.*  
 one's lifetime like person do.POT.NEG COP

g. Kyoko: *Sachi.....*  
 Sachi

h. → Sachi: *Kyoko wa kireidashi, kawaiishi, chotto kawatterukedo*  
 Kyoko TOP beautiful.COP.CN cute.CN little being different.CN

*omoshiroishi, watashi, kyoko no koto jimandashi. Sore*  
 interesting.CN I Kyoko LK thing pride.COP.CN that

*nanoni itsumo kooiu koto ni naru to sa.*  
 even though always such as this thing to.become.COND FP

*Hikutsu ni nacchau kyoko ga iyananda yo.*  
 pessimistic to.become.AUX Kyoko SUB hate.COP **yo**

(3.2) (K-life: 42)

a. Sachi: *Sangche patul kka?*  
 wound receive QUE

- b. Kyoko: *Ung?*  
what
- c. Sachi: *Alswu eps canha, kuke n. Sangche patul ci, ettel ci*  
know.NOM NEG COP.ES that TOP wound receive whether or not  
  
*alswu eps nun ke canha!*  
know.NOM NEG TOP NOM COP.ES
- d. → Kyoko: *Eccayse kulehkey cengsaykhamye malhay?*  
why as such in serious manner talk.e
- e. → Sachi: *Kulenikka, na nun kyoko ga kulenshikulo, mwusun*  
what I mean is I TOP Kyoko SUB such manner.with some  
  
*il haki to ceney, maum uy mwun ul mili*  
thing do.NOM even before heart LK door OBJ beforehand  
  
*tatapelinun ke silhe.*  
close.AUX NOM hate.e  
  
(Sachi's eyes are starting to fill with tears)
- f. Sachi: *Kulehkey malhamyen, phyengsayng salang kathun ke hal swu*  
as such say.COND one's lifetime love such as NOM do NOM  
  
*eps canha. Phyengsayng cohanun salam to*  
NEG COP.ES one's lifetime be loved person also  
  
*sayngkilswu eps canha.*  
happen.NOM NEG COP.ES

g. Kyoko: *Sachi...*  
Sachi

h. → Sachi: *Kyoko nun yeppuko, kwiyepto, com pyelnakin*  
Kyoko TOP pretty.CN cute.CN little different.NOM.CN

*hay to caymiisso, nan kyoko ka calangsulewuntey,*  
do even though interesting.CN I.TOP Kyoko SUB be proud of.CN

*hangsang ilen il sayngkimyen... pikwul hakeytoymanun*  
always such as this thing happen.COND pessimistic become.CN.AUX

*kyoko ka siltan maliya.*  
Kyoko SUB hate.CN **maliya**

- a. Sachi: '.....I wonder if you'd get hurt'
- b. Kyoko: 'What?'
- c. Sachi: 'You don't know that. You don't know whether you'd get hurt or not'
- d. → Kyoko: 'What are you being so serious about?' **yo (-e)**
- e. → Sachi: 'What I mean is.....I hate the way you just try to avoid such things even before anything happens' **yo (-e)**
- f. Sachi: 'If you say such a thing, then you cannot fall in love for the rest of your life, you cannot love anyone for the rest of your life'
- g. Kyoko: 'Sachi...'
- h. → Sachi: 'You are beautiful and cute. Although you are a little odd at times, you are interesting and I am proud of you. Despite all that, every time something like this happens, you become so pessimistic, and I really hate that' **yo (-maliya)**

In lines (a) and (c) Kyoko is challenged by Sachi over her refusal to try to love anyone. Kyoko's utterance in (d) is marked by *yo* in Japanese and *-e* in Korean. As Kyoko was challenged in lines (a) and (c), it is natural that she has noticed the difference between her and Sachi's

perceptions. Kyoko's use of *yo* at the end of the utterance in line (d) demonstrates such a difference in their perceptions. Without *yo* in its present position, the utterance would have sounded as if Kyoko were merely asking a question: *nani mukini natten no* 'why are you being so serious?' which would have not delivered the nuance it does with *yo* attached<sup>12)</sup>.

The presence of *yo* in line (d) shows that this is not merely a neutral question, but that it implies some pragmatic meaning. The underlying pragmatic meaning here is Kyoko's evaluation of Sachi's unexpected reaction. Kyoko has understood that Sachi is being serious about the issue. However, instead of simply asking why Sachi is being so serious, Kyoko challenges Sachi, indicating her (Kyoko's) own judgement that there is nothing to be serious about, and that Sachi's serious tone is unexpected or inappropriate. In line (d) therefore, we can say that Kyoko is asserting her view toward Sachi. The English meaning of this utterance would be close to 'what are you going on about?' It also seems to be the case that the utterance marked with *yo* has triggered a counter assertion by Sachi in the following lines (e) and (h).

In line (e), Sachi tries to explain and justify why she is so serious about the issue. Given that she was challenged by Kyoko about being serious, her utterance may also be interpreted as a counter assertion. Although it does not appear to be the case that Kyoko is trying to challenge Sachi in (g), Sachi goes on to explain and justify why she acted in the way she did. Once again, it is her own feelings that are in question, and therefore she is in the dominant position with respect to the information marked by *yo*. Also, this *yo*-marked utterance contains more specific and detailed explanations of Sachi's justification, which in turn, gives a possible interpretation such as 'I am telling you this is what I mean'.

In lines (d) and (e), the utterances by Kyoko and Sachi respectively, the suffix *-e* is used in Korean. The reason for this is that in both cases the difference in knowledge has led to *yo* being used as a challenge and in an assertive manner. However, in line (h) where *yo* is used by Sachi, to mark a stronger and elaborated counter assertion, one that provides more detailed account than her initial assertion, the Korean equivalent of *yo* is realised as *-maliya* instead of *-e*. This shows that *-e* is not the only equivalent of *yo* and that *-maliya* is used in the second use of *yo* by the same speaker to provide further assertion. With respect to its status as an equivalent of *yo*, I now turn to discuss the assertive function of *-maliya* in comparison to *-e*.

4.1.2 Assertive Function of ‘-*maliya*’

In the data, 5.42 percent of the translations of *yo* were the suffix *-e* in its elaborated form, *-maliya*. All of those examples are found in a similar context to that of example (3) above. In other words, *-maliya* is used for a stronger assertion than the primary assertion marked with *-e*. Recall that a stronger assertion refers to an instance in which *yo* is used a second time by the same speaker. The example below, taken from the novel *Norwegian Wood*, shows another case of *-maliya* being used in such a context (i.e. as a further assertion after the *-e*-marked initial assertion). The protagonist of the novel, Watanabe, shares a dormitory room with another student. A few days after they have started to share the room, Watanabe decides to talk to him about a problem. The problem is the roommate’s daily routine of radio callisthenics at 6.30 a.m. Watanabe had tried to talk him into doing the callisthenics somewhere else, but he refused. Left with no other choices, Watanabe is trying to make a compromise, that he (the roommate) may do his callisthenics in the room as long as he leaves the ‘jumping’ part out.

(4) (4.1) (J-wood: 33)

a. Roommate: *Cho, chooyaku? chooyaku tte nan dai, sore?*  
 juh jumping jumping QT what COP.FP that

b1. → Watanabe: *Chooyaku to ieba chooyaku da yo.*  
 jumping QT say.COND jumping COP **yo**

b2. *Pyonpyon tobu yatsu da yo.*  
 bouncing noise jump thing COP **yo**

(4.2) (K-wood: 36)

a. Roommate: *To, toyak ila ni? Kukey mwe ni?*  
 juh jumping QT QUE that what QUE

b1. → Watanabe: *Toyak i ttwinun ke ci mwe ya.*  
 jumping SUB jumping.LK NOM LK what **e**

- b2. *Ku khwungkhwung ttwinun kes **malya**.*  
that bouncing noise jump.LK NOM **mal(i)ya**
- a. Roommate: 'Juh, jumping? What's that?'
- b1. → Watanabe: 'Jumping is jumping **yo(-e)** the thing you do,  
b2. bouncing up and down **yo (maliya)**'

In line (a), the roommate appears not to know what Watanabe is talking about. Watanabe, therefore explains what he meant in line (b). He used *yo* in both utterances, indicating the difference in their knowledge (i.e. I am telling you). In the first utterance he says 'jumping is jumping', but then realising that it might not have helped the roommate understand what it really is, he explains it in more detail in the second utterance of the line. Notice that in Korean, *-e* was used in the first utterance and *-mal(i)ya* in the next. This *-mal(i)ya* is used in a similar way as it was in the example (3) mentioned above; it provides the stronger meaning of 'I am telling you this is what I mean', marking the utterance with more specific details to support and reinforce the initial assertion. I will now consider two other suffixes, *-ko* and *-nikka*, which are also used to render stronger assertiveness than *-e*.

#### 4.2 Korean Equivalents of Japanese 'yo': '-ko' and '-nikka'

Along with the expression *-maliya*, the suffixes *-ko* and *-nikka* are also used in instances of a counter assertion or a stronger assertion in Korean. Both *-ko* and *-nikka*, which have been observed as devices to express 'pursuing agreement' (K. H. Kim and Suh 1994) and asserting the speaker's own opinion (S. Sohn 1996), occurred in 4.60 percent and 3.45 percent respectively of examples in the data. The following examples demonstrate that in the cases of *yo* where there is a stronger assertion or a challenge, in Korean *-ko* and *-nikka* are used instead of *-e*. Consider the following example of *-ko* used in such a context of the novel 'N.P.'

##### 4.2.1 Assertive Function of '-ko'

This is Sui and Kazami's first encounter in the novel. Sui, who wants Kazami to go for a drive with her, has shown Kazami her (Sui's) driver's license to make Kazami believe that she (Sui) can drive. Kazami, however, is not sure whether she should trust Sui's driving skills and also is not very interested in the idea. She has been hesitating when she sees a big dent on Sui's car.

(5) (5.1) (J-NP: 68)

a. → Kazami: *Nani yo, ano hidoi hekomi wa.*  
 what yo that terrible dent TOP

b. → Sui: *Mukashi, butsuketa no yo. Saikin janai wa yo.*  
 a long time ago hit.PAST FP yo recent COP.NEG FP yo

(5.2) (K-NP: 68)

a. → Kazami: *Ceken mve ya. Wumphwuk tuleka isscanhayo.*  
 that.TOP what e deeply go in be.COP.ES.POL

b. → Sui: *Eysnaley pakun keya. Yocum il i anila ko.*  
 a long time ago.TEMP hit.LK NOM.e recent thing SUB NEG.COP ko

a. Kazami: 'What is that terrible dent **yo(-e)**?'

b. → Sui: 'I hit something ages ago **yo(-e)**, it's not a recent thing **yo(-ko)**'

Kazami declines Sui's proposal to go for a drive, and is also doubtful of Sui's driving skill. She uses *yo* in her utterance in line (a) to assert her opinion, that is, 'if you can really drive, how do you explain that dent?' Sui does not give ground, and challenges Kazami strongly in line (b), also marking her utterance with *yo*. This usage of *yo* is similar to the *yo* used in previous examples (3h) and (4b2). Sui in the second utterance tries to provide a stronger reason for Kazami to act/think in the way that Sui wants her to, in this case trusting her driving skill and going for a drive with her. In lines (a) and (b) both speakers expect a challenge from the interlocutor as it is clear to them their knowledge/information does not coincide. In Korean *-e* was used in Kazami's utterance, and Sui's first utterance. However, Sui's second utterance in line (b) has been marked with *-ko* as she is providing additional information to support her counter assertion towards Kazami's assertion. I now move on to the example of *-nikka* to mark a stronger assertion in Korean as a counterpart of *yo* in Japanese.

#### 4.2.2 Assertive Function of '-nikka'

The dialogues below are drawn from the novel *Coin Locker Babies*. In this segment, Hashi, a thirteen year-old boy, has been hypnotised by Kanae. When asked by Kanae where and how he was, Hashi told her that he was in Hawaii and that it was very hot. After a few more questions, Kanae suggests to Hashi to go back to the time when he was a newborn baby, and asks him how it feels.

(6) (6.1) (J-coin: 49-50)

a. Hashi: *Atsui.*  
hot

b. → Kanae: *E? Moo hawai kara wa kaetta no yo,*  
what already Hawaii from TOP return.PAST FP **yo**  
  
*ima, doko ni iru no?*  
now where LOC be FP

c. Hashi: *Atsukutte shini soo da.*  
hot.because die.as if COP

d. → Kanae: *Hashi kun, moo hawai kara wa modottekita no yo.*  
Hashi title already Hawaii from TOP return.AUX.PAST FP **yo**

(6.2) (K-coin: 60)

a. Hashi: *Tewe.*  
Hot

b. → Kanae: *Un? Hawaii ese nun pelsse tolawasscanh a.*  
what Hawaii from TOP already return.PAST.COP **e**



*Cikum eti ey issci?*  
now where LOC be.ES

c. Hashi: *Tewese cwukul kes katha.*  
hot.because die NOM as if.ES

d. → Kanae: *Hashi kwun, hawai eyse nun pelsse tolawassta nikka.*  
Hashi title Hawaii from TOP already return.PAST **nikka**

a. Hashi: 'It's hot'

b. → Kanae: 'What? (I said) you are already back from Hawaii **yo(-e)**, now  
where are you?'

c. Hashi: 'It's so hot that it is killing me'

d. → Kanae: 'Hashi, (I SAID) you are already back from Hawaii **yo(-nikka)**'

Kanae, who does not know about Hashi's experience as a newborn baby, that he had been abandoned inside a coin operated locker, thinks that Hashi is still talking about being hot in Hawaii as indicated in line (d), '(I'm telling you), you are back from Hawaii, (and this is what I mean)'. Therefore, Kanae perceives Hashi's utterance in line (a) as a mistake, and entreats him to go back to his babyhood in his hypnotic state. Due to the unexpected response from Hashi in line (c), Kanae, once again, strongly tells him that he is supposed to have left Hawaii. In both of Kanae's utterances in lines (b) and (d), she uses *yo* to impart forceful nuance, and in Korean *-e* (a) and *-nikka* are used respectively. This function of stronger assertion, conveyed with *-nikka*, is similar to *-maliya* as shown earlier with the examples (3) and (4) in that it marks further/stronger assertion than *-e*, while in Japanese in both cases *yo* is used.

## 5. Discussion of the Findings

There are two important points to discuss regarding the findings of this study. Firstly, I agree with the claim that *-e* has an assertive function. The fact that *-e* occurred more than other suffixes as the equivalent of *yo* in Japanese is partly due to the assertive function of *-e*. However, as I have attempted to show in this paper, it is not only the assertive function of *-e* which has contributed to such a high percentage of instances of the suffix.; it is also due

to one of the interrelated characteristics of *-e*, namely that *-e* can also be used as a device to indicate the 'information state'. This claim may be supported by the informative function of *-e* (H. S. Lee, 1993) noted earlier, that is, it is only logically possible to inform someone when the speaker assumes or knows that they possess more knowledge/information than the addressee. *-e*, therefore, not only has the function of assertion, but also of indicating the information state, that there is a 'knowledge gap' between the interlocutors and that the speaker has more knowledge than the addressee.

The other noteworthy point regarding the Korean suffixes *-maliya*, *-ko*, *-nikka*, and *-e* that I have examined in this paper is that although all of them were found to serve the same function of *yo*, that is assertion as a result of difference in knowledge between the interlocutors, they can be distinguished through their degrees of assertiveness. Indeed, had *-e* and the other three suffixes been exchanged within the same context of the examples presented above, the assertive force of the utterance would not have been the same, and would have sounded unnatural. Even with the three suffixes *-maliya*, *-ko*, and *-nikka*, which seem to have a relatively similar degree of assertiveness in comparison to *-e*, there is some difference in the degree of the speaker's emotional involvement. Further examples from a broader database and in-depth analysis of contexts would be useful in order to elucidate the more specific functions of *-maliya*, *-ko*, and *-nikka* and also to find out the difference between these suffixes with respect to the speaker's emotional involvement. For the moment, however, it seems reasonable to conclude that *-maliya*, *-ko*, and *-nikka*, in emphasizing the speaker's self-justification enjoy a stronger function of assertion than the suffix *-e* alone.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have briefly discussed the assertive function of the particle *yo* in Japanese and its Korean equivalents, focusing on the suffix *-e*, which seems to function in a similar manner as *yo* as it was used in nearly two thirds of all instances of *yo*, and other suffixes that are used to impart a stronger assertion than *-e*. I am aware that using pseudo-dialogue is not the most ideal for the analysis of *yo* and also that the analysis based on the translated language could limit the validity of findings since translated language is said to display "patterns which are either restricted to translated text or which occur with a significantly higher or lower frequency in translated text than they do in original" (Backer 1995: 235)<sup>13</sup>. I therefore do not intend to state that the findings in this study are exhaustive and would like to further the current research with an analysis of extended conversational data. Notwithstanding the

shortcomings of the data source, it has been clearly demonstrated that the function of the Japanese particle *yo* is realised as a variety of suffixes in Korean, rather than one absolute equivalent, despite the fact that the two languages have similarities in many other aspects of grammar. More specifically, with respect to the assertive function of *yo* as a result of the speaker's assessment of the addressee's knowledge, this study has shown that *yo* is used in a wider range of contexts than the corresponding Korean equivalents, which is realised mainly by *-e*, *-maliya*, *-ko*, and *-nikka*. Within the same context, where *yo* is used in Japanese it was found that different suffixes are used in Korean depending on the degree of assertion.

## Notes

- 1) Elsewhere, I have shown that this is the case with another Japanese particle *ne*. See A. Kim (2002) for details.
- 2) According to Lyons (1977: 746), utterances such as “tell me what he did” (in Japanese the utterance would have been “*kare ga nani o shita no ka oshiete yo*” – my translation) belong to the category of ‘mands’. According to this definition of ‘mands’ I classified utterances such as the one presented immediately below in this category.

*kocchi ni oide yo.*

here LOC come.IMP **yo**

“Come this way” (J-wood:19)

Masuoka (1991) considers examples such as these as mitigation.

- 3) A close examination of the function of *yo* in the ‘mands’ category in comparison to Korean suffixes seems to lead to interesting outcomes in its own right. Since this is a broad enough topic by itself, I will limit my focus on the use of *yo* in the category of ‘statements’.
- 4) The data used in this study are drawn from the following Japanese novels and their translated versions in Korean. Abbreviations, such as J-wood etc., will be used for convenience to indicate data source for each example.

J-wood: Murakami, H. (1991). *Noruei no mori-Joo* [Norwegian Wood-1]. Up to p. 106. Tokyo: Kodansha.

K-wood: Murakami, H. trans. Ywu, Y. (1994). *Sangsil uy sitay*. Up to p. 133. Seoul: Mwonhak Sasangsa.

J-life: Kitagawa, E. (2000). *Byuutifuru raifu* [Beautiful Life]. Up to p. 100. Tokyo: Kawakado Shoten.

K-life: Kitagawa, E. trans. Cwungnam tayhakkyo sahoikyoywukwen sukhulin ilpone. (2001). *Byuthiphwul laiphu*. Up to p. 82. Taecen: Cwungnam tayhakkyo sahoikyoywukwen sukhulin ilpone.

J-coin: Murakami, R. (1984). *Koin lokka beibizu-Joo* [Coin Locker Babies-1]. Up to p. 107. Tokyo: Kodansha.

K-coin: Murakami, R. trans. Kim, U. (1998). *Khoin lokhe peyipicu*. Up to p. 119. Seoul: Kiwencen.

J-NP: Yoshimoto, B. (1992). *N.P.* Up to p. 107. Tokyo: Kawakado Shoten.

K-NP: Yoshimoto, B. trans. Kim, N. (1999). *N.P. pwukkukcem*. Up to p. 103. Seoul: Book Story.

- 5) In discussing the validity of data from comics for an analysis of the Japanese marker *nan(i)*, Maynard (2000) also mentions similar reasons.
- 6) In this study, I will use ‘stronger’ in terms of the degree of assertion, to refer to cases in which the same speaker used *yo* for a second time. The relatively ‘stronger’ nuance of the second use of *yo* can be justified by acknowledging that the speaker’s use of *yo* presupposes a difference in knowledge. The difference in knowledge after the first use of *yo* implies that the speaker is urged to assert his/her opinion even further. Furthermore, the examples demonstrate that the utterances marked by *yo*, which follow a previous utterance also marked by *yo*, are usually accompanied by specific details of support

for the assertion, which in turn reinforces the speaker's initial assertion. Thus, the repeated use of *yo* can be regarded as conveying a 'stronger' assertion.

- 7) *-e/a* are phonological variants, the selection of which is conditioned by the type of vowel found in the preceding syllable, i.e. 'vowel harmony' rules (H. B. Lee 1989; S. Sohn 1994). These rules specify *-a* to appear only when the preceding vowel is *a* or *o*; otherwise *-e* is used (S. Sohn 1994: 450). *-(i)ya* and *ay* are also variants of *-e/a*. *-e* will be used hereafter as the representative form.
- 8) *-kwu* is an allophone of *-ko*. *-ko* will be used henceforth as the representative form.
- 9) Keep in mind that *-ya* is a variant of *-e*.
- 10) Here I am only concerned with the linguistic form employed. It would be possible to use *-e*, of course, if a facial expression of annoyance, a voice tone that implied the same, or any other prosodic features appropriate to indicate the same feeling were employed.
- 11) Abbreviations: AUX auxiliary verbs; CJR conjecture; CN connective particles; COND conditional; COP copula; ES ending suffix; FP final particles; IMP imperative; LK linker (linking nominals); LOC locative; NEG negative morpheme; NOM nominalizer; OBJ object marker; PAST past tense marker; POL polite marker; POT potential; QT quotative marker; QUE question marker; SUB subject marker; TEMP temporal marker; TOP topic marker  
 Romanization  
 Japanese: Hepburn system (slightly modified: Long vowels are expressed by a succession of two short vowels *aa*, *ii*, *uu*, *ee*, and *oo*, instead of short vowels with superscript diacritics (i.e.  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{i}$ ,  $\bar{u}$ ,  $\bar{e}$ ,  $\bar{o}$ )).  
 Korean: Yale system (slightly modified: Instead of using *u* after bilabials (i.e. *p*, *pp*, *ph*, and *m*) *wu* is used (i.e. *pwu*, *ppwu*, *phwu*, and *mwu* instead of *pu*, *ppu*, *phu*, and *mu*)).
- 12) Once again what is under consideration is the effect delivered by the linguistic form only (i.e. utterances with *yo* vs. those without *yo*). If the appropriate prosodic features were adopted to express the challenge, then the same utterance without *yo* could engender the same effect. I am also aware that the sequential position of this particular utterance (as a counter to what is understood as a negative evaluation in a disagreement sequence), and the content (a negative evaluation of the action performed by the prior utterance) contributed to its likelihood of being interpreted as a 'challenge' even without *yo*. However, this does not deny the contribution of *yo* in producing the effect.
- 13) I am grateful to one of the anonymous referees (of a different journal) for pointing this out and the reference.

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