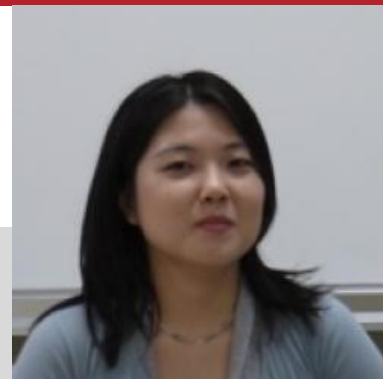


Institute for Japanese Studies (IJS) & Institute for Chinese Studies (ICS) Lecture:

# What do neurolinguistic experiments tell us about East Asian language uses?

**Sachiko Kiyama**

Department of Linguistics  
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Tuesday, October 23, 2018

2:20 to 3:40 pm

Jennings Hall 160 (1735 Neil Ave)

**Abstract:** Some East and South-East Asian languages have sentence-final particles (SFPs) to yield various discourse functions. Particularly in Japanese, SFPs such as -ne and -yo have no obvious effect on the truth conditions of a sentence, but they encompass a diverse range of usages, from typical to atypical, according to the context and the interpersonal relationships in the specific situation. The most frequent particle, -ne, is typically used after addressee-oriented propositions for information sharing, while another frequent particle, -yo, is typically used after addresser-oriented propositions to elicit a sense of strength. In this talk, she will introduce a neurolinguistic study utilizing event-related potentials (ERP) from electroencephalography (EEG) data (Kiyama, et al., 2018, *Journal of Neurolinguistics*), which sheds light on individual differences in understanding of the addressee-oriented -ne based on their ability to infer the mental states of others). The result plausibly reflects low-ability mentalizers' stronger sense of strangeness toward atypical -ne usage. While high-ability mentalizers may aptly perceive others' attitudes via their various usages of -ne, low-ability mentalizers seem to adopt a more stereotypical understanding. Based on the finding, she argues that native Japanese speakers with low mentalizing ability have the greater degree of difficulty in using SFPs to establish a smooth regulation of interpersonal distance during social encounters.

**Bio:** Professor Sachiko Kiyama received her BA from Waseda University, MA from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, and PhD from Reitaku University, Japan, and has taught English and linguistics at Mie University and Tohoku University, respectively. Prior to these teaching positions, she also held research appointments at Nagoya University and the National Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology, Japan. She is currently Associate Professor at the Department of Linguistics, Tohoku University. Dr. Kiyama's research has centered on the uses of sentence final particles to modulate interpersonal distances, utilizing neurolinguistic methodologies, particularly, with the uses of ERP and fMRI. She has published a number of articles in journals such as *Journal of Neurolinguistics*, *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, *Language*, and *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*.

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