EMI MORITA, *Negotiation of Contingent Talk: The Japanese Interactional Particles* ne *and* sa. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2005. Pp. xvi, 240. Hb $138.00

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The large category of Japanese words or morphemes commonly labeled "particles," or in Japanese *joshi*, has long been problematic for linguists. This in large part due to the variety of apparent grammatical or pragmatic functions the category encompasses. While some particles seem to function as more or less straight forward post-positions, others are said to mark case or discourse function, and still others have pragmatic function but no clearly agreed syntactic or semantic position. The two particles tackled by Emi Morita's new book, *ne* and *sa*, are of this last variety. Morita argues that these "interactional particles" serve important roles of marking stance or activity in ongoing talk-in-interaction. As Morita puts it, "[T]he insertion of interactional particles may serve to 'salientize' or 'set apart' certain units of talk in order to make them interactionally relevant to immediately adjacent action" (95).

Morita's opening chapter provides a brief overview of interactional linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996, Schegloff, Ochs, & Thompson 1996), a type of linguistic analysis influenced by conversation analysis which views linguistic structure as emergent from real talk in real time, and positions the study within this framework. Chapter two provides a comprehensive summary of existing literature on the particles *ne* and *sa*, albeit one that could do with more synthesis of the existing work, or greater attempt to position this analysis relative to previous studies.

The heart of the volume is located in chapters three, four, and five, which treat the overall concept of interactional particles, and the specific functions of *ne* and *sa*, respectively. The basic claim here is that speakers use *ne* or *sa* to mark some portion

of a turn at talk as interactionally relevant, and therefore provide a space for interlocutors to respond in a variety of ways. For example, Morita shows how the use of *ne* may, in different positions, help secure a turn at talk, call for a listener's gaze or minimal response, or mark some component—such as a hedge or assessment contained within a larger turn—as particularly salient. The functions of *sa* are similarly manifold, and subject to the specifics of a particular interaction.

All of this could appear rather unsatisfying for someone looking for *the* meaning of a particle. However, as Morita illustrates, such searches are probably misguided. Rather than looking for the meaning or function of a word or other linguistic structure prior to interaction, far more nuanced understandings are possible from the analysis of actual language use.

The main weakness of the book is its sometimes insufficient engagement with other frameworks. The book presents interesting analysis, but does not always explain how this complements or problematizes earlier work. Welcome exceptions to this critique come in discussions of intonational variation, and the function of *ne* as an "attention getter," both areas in which Morita's conclusions fit with existing literature. A bit more of this engagement might show that interactional linguistics is not merely an alternative to cognitive or structural linguistics, but a means of both deepening and widening our understanding of language and social interaction.

Couper-Kuhlen, Elizabeth, & Selting, Margret (1996) (eds.). *Prosody in Conversation: Interactional Studies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schegloff, Emanuel, Ochs, Elinor, & Thompson, Sandra (1996) (eds.). *Interaction and Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.