

## The role of gender in the grammaticalization process of the Japanese connective (*sore*)*de*

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The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to quantitatively describe the on-going change of the connective (*sore*)*de* ‘and then/so’ to gain insights into the grammaticalization process of Japanese discourse markers, and (2) to test the effects of gender in this process. In particular, this study will address the issue raised in previous studies on whether grammaticalization exhibits an asymmetrical pattern of gender effects between phonological and non-phonological domains (Pichler, 2013; Tagliamonte & D’Arcy, 2009).

*Sorede*, consisting of the anaphora *sore* ‘that’ and the gerund form *de* of a copula, is the most frequent connective in conversational Japanese. Diachronic studies show that this connective has undergone the process similar to those that created other Japanese connectives such as *demo* ‘but’ and *jaa* ‘then’ (Matsumoto, 1988). Over the last two and a half centuries, it has acquired pragmatic functions with its original semantic meaning bleached out and its morphological form reduced. Synchronic studies also support this claim with the finding that *sorede* and *de* are part of a continuum that shows gradation in meaning and function (Sadler, 2001, 2006).

This study is based on 633 tokens of the connective from recorded interviews on war-time and natural disaster experiences. Each token’s phonological form, semantic meanings, and pragmatic functions were examined, followed by multivariate analyses with age and gender as explanatory variables.

The results show that the female speakers are leading phonological reduction by one generation. The meaning of temporal sequence and the function of local coordination are also spreading among younger speakers, but no gender difference is found. These findings echo the gender effects found in the grammaticalization of English discourse markers (Pichler, 2013; Tagliamonte & D’Arcy, 2009).

## References

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