



Variant and Usage Meaning of *-tte* as an End of Sentences Particle in Japanese Informal Conversations A Semantic Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine thoroughly the meaning of *-tte* particle that used in Japanese informal conversations. *-tte* is a contraction form commonly used in informal conversational discourse in order to express hearsay (*denbun*) and quotation (*inyou*), which also known as *sou da* and *to iu*. To support the understanding the context of conversational discourse comprehensively, we will comprehend prior *-tte* studies from Moritoki (1994), Hui (1999) also Maruyama (2002). This study used a descriptive method and collected data from 15 conversations on Corpus of Everyday Japanese Conversation (version 2022.03). The result showed that the meaning of the *-tte* particle at the end of the sentences could have been functioned as hearsay, quotation, and question, in way to indicate speaker's surprises, emphasize strong judgement, correct one's statement, indicate indirective imperative form and indicate disagreement by questioning one's statement.

Keywords: *Denbun, Informal conversation, Inyou, Japanese conversation corpus, -tte.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Japanese, one of the characteristics of the spoken language is the usage of *-tte* form, in order to emphasize the speaker's self-emotion and other purposes, which have various meanings in daily conversation. The purpose of speaking refers to expressing one's thoughts or feelings as if they were individual beings, in attempt to convey certain information to the third party, and also to force speaker to do an act indirectly (Mizutani, 1993).

Saegusa (1997) stated that *-tte* is generally classified as a discontinuation sentence, abbreviation, etc., expresses the emotions of the speaker, and has various meanings and usages depending on their position in a sentence, therefore foreign Japanese learners recognized the difficulties in using *-tte* in daily conversations. For example, *-tte* at the end of a sentence is used when the speaker quotes a third party and conveys it to the listener, or when the speaker conveys information obtained from another person to the listener (Kamada, 2000). However, *-tte* that appears at the end of this sentence is considered to be able to convey their intentions indirectly and what kind of actions he or she seeks from the other party, in

addition to the use of hearsay and quotation. Refer to data below.

Data (1) 「田中さんは先に帰るって」
Tanaka-san ha sakini kaeru tte.
'Tanaka said that he will go home first'

Data (2) 「シャンプーを変えたら、あれって！」
Shampoo o kaetara, arette.
'I changed the shampoo, and wow!'

-tte form above is often used by Japanese native speakers in daily conversation. Each *-tte* form represented in those data apparently has a different way of meaning according to the position in sentences. For example, data (1) *-tte* is located at the end of the sentence after the basic verb *kaeru* 'went home' to inform to the listener that Tanaka-san, the person stated in the sentence has already gone home (Maki, 1997). In data (2), the speaker expresses her astonishment by using *-tte* after the noun 'wow' as if she quoted some amazing changes on her hair to the listener (Hirota, 2008).

According to those data, we can easily find out that this form is frequently used by the speaker in every

expression as if it were an end particle to emphasize the speaker's emotions. Therefore, we are going to introduce prior research regarding *-tte* at the end of the sentences.

Firstly, Moritoki (1994) stated that the end-of-sentence expression *-tte* was classified and divided into three usages. The first is that *-tte* is related to linguistic expressions such as utterances and thoughts. It is the first person, that is, the usage in which the speaker expresses what he/she speaks and what he/she thinks. The second is the strong assertion of the speaker.

Secondly, Hui (1999) also examined that *-tte* at the end of the sentence is said to represent quotations/hearsays and questions such as "said", "heard", or "what does that mean?". Here, Hui emphasizes that *-tte* has three different meanings of usage. *-tte* at the end of the sentence can be used to "tell the story of a third party", "work with the other party (question back or repel the other party's story)", and "explain by quoting one's thoughts". Hui also introduced "What" at the end of the sentence.

In another hand, Maruyama (2002) referred to a newspaper, a novel, and a dialogue corpus about the usage of *-tte*, which is a particle that spans multiple particles such as case particles, solidarity particles, postpositional particles, and final particles, as captured in the conventional framework. And the spoken conversation style *-tte*, which has many compound expressions and compressed expressions, is paraphrased to some extent to what seems to be the original form.

Based on these studies, the writer has an urge to analyze thoroughly the usage meaning of *-tte* form in Japanese conversation, especially to identify the variant of *-tte* which seemed to be more varied in ways to deliver the speaker's thoughts and emotions indirectly, and politely.

2. METHOD

In order to examine all of the classifications of *-tte* at the end of the sentences, this research focusses on an analysis descriptive method (Sudaryanto, 2015), and conducted by semantic theory (Djajasudarma, 2016). The data used is taken from Corpus of Japanese Spontaneous and Corpus of Everyday Japanese Conversation (version 2022.03). This corpus has a total of 512 conversations with various situations, different relationships between participants and the length of duration, etc. The author decided to use 13 conversations 30 minutes in length, and divided them into three categories based on their situations, which consisted of conversations with family members (5 conversations), friends and co-workers (5 conversations), and customers (3 conversations). Then focusing on collecting data that has *-tte* form at the end of the sentences from each conversation, then classifying them into several types based on their function.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing collected data, the variant and usage meaning of *-tte* form at the end of a sentence based on its position can be categorized in the third type below.

3.1. *-tte* Form as Hearsay

In formal speech, modalities *sou da* will perform a hearsay function, to state that the speaker will deliver a piece of information from the third party to the listener. Thus, in informal conversation, the modality *sou da* will be shortened into just *-tte* at the end of the sentence (Morita, 1990). *-tte* form which appears at the end of a sentence commonly follows a clause and complete sentence. See the data below.

On data (3), the speaker used *-tte* form to quote the third person's statement so that he could convey the message to the listener.

Data (3)

IC03_いっくん: でも料理学校でもやっぱりこう
(0.804)自分で分量で入れるとこ
と(0.579)置いてくれていることある
やん?。

IC01_萌 : あー。うん うん うん。

IC03_いっくん : これとこれと調味料があるからこ
れ入れたら味間違いないですよっ
て。

IC01_萌 : うんー。

IC02_佐久 : うん。

(CEJC, K001_013)

IC03_Ikkun: Demo ryouri gakkou demo yappari kou
(0.804) jibunde jibunryoude ireru koto
(0.579) oitekureru tokoaruyan?

IC01_Moe: Aa. Un, un, un.

IC03_Ikkun: Kore to kore to choumiryou ga arukara, kore
iretara, aji machigainai desuyotte.

IC01_Moe: Unn.

IC02_Saku: Un.

IC03_Ikkun: But I think it's the same with the cooking school as well, there's a place where we should put the amount by ourselves and another place to put some, right?

IC01_Moe: Oh, yeah that's right.

IC03_Ikkun: We have these and those seasoning, if we put this, we wouldn't make any mistakes he said.

IC01_Moe: I see.

IC02_Saku: Oh.

Data (3) is a conversation between friends, talking about cooking, and so on while eating dinner. In the

above fragment, the speaker, Ikkun, in the cooking school cooking style, expressed his opinion on the addition of seasonings, but when he conveyed to the listener what the school lecturer had said, he used the word *-tte* at the end of the sentence. *-tte* on this fragment is, ‘There are these and those the seasoning, so if you put this on it, it will taste right’. When providing trusted information, the speaker used the hearsay meaning of *-tte* at the end of the sentence because he treated his thoughts as someone else’s utterance as if he emphasized his strong opinion based on the information, he heard directly from the instructor during a cooking class at school.

3.2. *-tte* Form as Quotation

This quotation is used to emphasize utterances that the speaker wanted to convey to the listener so that they would pay attention. In formal speech, *-tte* form which indicates a quotation, is derived from *to iu* pattern (Morita, 1988). In informal speech, this quotation form will have two different types of quotation. The first is the quotation that is directly quoted from the third party or other information sources (such as mass media, etc.), and the second is quoted by the speaker himself in order to show their subjective thoughts or emotions indirectly.

3.2.1. Indicate Correction of One’s Statement

Data (4)

- IC03_義母 : (D #)(W コエ|これ)九十一だよ。
 IC01_溝口 : 森島?
 IC06_妻 : うーん
 IC05_義妹 : うん。
 IC06_妻 : おばちゃんがね 二度目の(D コ)(W (D
 ノ)|脳)脳梗塞起こして。
IC05_義妹 : 九十だって。
 IC05_義妹 : おばちゃん。
 IC03_義母 : あ。そう。
 IC05_義妹 : うーん。

(CEJC, T013_009)

- IC03_Giri Haha : (D #)(W Kore) Kyuujuu ichi dayo.
 IC01_Mizoguchi : Morishima?
 IC06_Tsuma : Uun.
 IC05_Giri Ane : Un
 IC06_Tsuma : Obachan ga ne nidome no noukousoku
 okoshite
IC05_Giri Ane : Kyuujuu datte.
 IC05_Giri Ane : Obachan
 IC03_Giri Haha : A. Sou.
 IC05_Giri Ane : Uun

- IC03_Mother in law: (D #)(W This) Its 91.
 IC01_Mizoguchi : Morishima?
 IC06_Wife : Yess.

- IC05_Sister in law : Yeah
 IC06_Wife : My aunt had a second stroke.
IC05_Sister in law : I heard it’s ninety.
 IC05_Sister in law : Aunty.
 IC03_Mother in law: Oh, yeah.
 IC05_Sister in law : That’s right

On data (4), *-tte* form used on the utterance from the sister-in-law, who stated, ‘Ninety’. The sister-in-law has already provided her utterance that ‘It’s ninety’ about the age of the grandpa in the topic. Meanwhile, the sister-in-law realized that her mother-in-law had mistakenly thought that the age of the grandfather in the topic was ninety-one, then she tried to correct the wrong utterance, and corrected the information she had already told in a sharp utterance. When the speaker conveys information to the listener, he or she may either quote all the information from the source as it is or quotes only the important parts. In that case, the speaker took only the important information of ‘ninety’ from the completed sentence ‘I heard that (Grandpa) is ninety’ in order to correct the mother-in-law’s utterance, and added a *-tte* to indicate the quotation at the end, and again strongly conveyed ‘ninety’. The utterance, which describes the hearsay usage of ‘ninety’ would consider a sharp correction of the speaker.

3.2.2. Indicate the Speaker’s Surprises

Data (5)

- IC04_翔太 : 靴(W ムラッ|もらっ)たんだって。
 IC01_小川 : 靴もらったの?
 IC04_翔太 : そうだよ。
 IC03_美紗子: ハキームから?
 IC04_翔太 : うん。
 IC03_美紗子: すごい。
 IC04_翔太 : 後輩だから。

(CEJC, T015_018)

- IC04_Shota : Kutsu morattandatte!
 IC01_Ogawa: Morattano?
 IC04_Shota : Soudayo!
 IC03_Misako: Hakim kara?
 IC04_Shota : Un.
 IC03_Misako: Sugoi!
 IC04_Shota : Kouhai dakara.
 IC04_Shota : Alan got his shoes you know!
 IC01_Ogawa : He did?
 IC04_Shota : I heard it!
 IC03_Misako: Did he get it from Hakim?
 IC04_Shota : Yeah.
 IC03_Misako: Cool!
 IC04_Shota : Since he’s Hakim junior.

Data (5) is also a conversation about family relations, consisting of four members: Ogawa (father), Hisako (mother), Shota (son), and Misako (daughter), but the form of the ending of the sentence *-tte* in hearsay usage

is different. In the fragment of data (5), he talks about a story about an acquaintance of his son who received a pair of shoes from a famous player while watching a soccer game. The speaker's son is about to tell the listener's father in his utterance that his acquaintance Alan received a pair of shoes from a famous player, Hakim. When the Shota speaks to his family member about the information he heard from a third party or other sources, in the case of a polite sentence type, it is 'I heard ~' in hearsay expression, whereas if we look at the utterance of the data, the speaker takes only the important information of 'Alan got shoes, you know' and uses *-tte* in the last utterance. This utterance that expresses hearsay usage, 'Alan got his shoes' is more than just sharing information, it is conceivable that the speaker's emphasis shows pride as a friend of the third party.

3.2.3. Indicate Indirective Imperative Form

Data (6)

- JM002: なんかさー、バット終わったらさ、無言で、
す、す、戻ってきて、こう座ってさ(うん)、
“ありやりやりやりやりや” <2人で笑い>、
“ありやりやりや”って<笑いながら>。
JM002: <おれ>{>}、座ったけど、“こえー”つつつて、
どうしたらいんだろうって思ったもん。
JM001: 「人名6あだ名」も、だって(うん)、あれだ
もん、“[JM001 苗字]さん、りゅ、留学い、
行かないでください”って、
JM002: <あー、そうなん?>{<}>。
(CEJC, T002_001)
- JM002: *Nankasa, batto owattara sa, mugonde, su, su, modottekite, kousuwattesa “Aryaryaryarya” < futaride warai>、 “Aryaryaryarya”tte<warainagara>*
JM002: *<Ore>, suwattakedo, “Koe”tsutte, doushitara indaroutte omottamon*
JM001: *“Jinmei 6 adana” mo, date, aredamon “JM001 Myouji san, ryu, ryugaku..I, ikanaide kudasaitte..*
JM002: *<Aa, sounan? >*
- JM002: Somehow when the bat is over, silently, come back and sit down like this. “There is” <They both laughing>, “I told you there is” <laughing>
JM002: <See, I’m>, just sitting, but then, I felt scared, what should I do!
JM001: “Nickname from the 6th person” also, but you see, then he said “JM001’s family name” please don’t go study abroad!
JM002: <Oh, was it? >

In data (6), we could see that the speaker trying to emphasize his will/ volition to the listener in an indirective imperative speech by using an informal

imperative form (a negative form of *ikanaide* ‘don’t go’) followed by *-tte*.

3.2.4. Indicate One’s Unpleasant Feelings

Data (7)

- IC03_いっくん: ご飯おいしい。たべよ。
IC02_佐久 : ほら。最近そうゆうお笑い見ないじゃん。
IC03_いっくん: うん。
IC01_萌 : でも最近テレビに出てないよ。
IC03_いっくん: 出てないな。
IC02_佐久 : 何やってんの?
IC01_萌 : うん。
IC03_いっくん: ほんま出てへんよね。
IC01_萌 : なんか干されちゃったんだって。
IC02_佐久 : 舞台?。
IC03_いっくん: 男前やから。

(CEJC, K001_013)

- IC03_ Ikkun : *Gohan oishii. Tabeyo.*
IC02_ Saku : *Hora. Saikin souiu owara minaijyan!*
IC03_ Ikkun : *Un.*
IC01_ Moe : *Demo saikin terebi ni detenaiyo!*
IC03_ Ikkun : *Detenaina.*
IC02_ Saku : *Nani yattenno?*
IC01_ Moe : *Un.*
IC03_ Ikkun : *Honma detehen yone!*
IC01_ Moe : *Nanka nagasarechattan datte!*
IC02_ Saku : *Butai?*
IC03_ Ikkun : *Otokomae yakara!*

- IC03_ Ikkun : The meal looks good! Let’s eat!
IC02_ Saku : Hey. I haven’t seen those comedies lately.
IC03_ Ikkun : Yeah
IC01_ Moe : But, apparently they rarely showed on TV!
IC03_ Ikkun : Yeah, they don’t!
IC02_ Saku : What the hell they’re doing then?
IC01_ Moe : Well,
IC03_ Ikkun : That’s bad!
IC01_ Moe : Heard that they’ve been drowned out
IC02_ Saku : from the stage?
IC03_ Ikkun : Because they’re all gentlemen!

The conversation in data (7) is between acquaintances, and participant were talking about a comedy story. In response to the remark of the speaker, Ikkun, who does not often see special comedy on TV, the listener Moe provided some information about comedy ‘that something bad has happened to comedian’ and used *-ndatte* in the last sentence. This strongly expresses the use of quotations such as “Something has drowned out” is conceivable not only to share information but also to show her disappointment to the third party.

3.3. *-tte Form as Question*

-tte form located at the end of the sentence with the rising tone, express a strong question from the speaker toward the listener somehow to show disagreement, and complain (Fujimura, 1993). Refer data in data (8) below.

Data (8)

IC01_杉田 : ああ、もう、むりだな！
 IC02_川内 : 無理って？
 IC01_杉田 : や、何でもない！
 IC02_川内 : もう少し頑張ればできるでしょう
 (CEJC, K002_004)

IC01_Sugita : *Aa, mou muri danaa!*
 IC02_Kawauchi : *Muri tte?*
 IC01_Sugita : *Yaa, nandemonai!*
 IC02_Kawauchi : *Mou sukoshi ganbareba dekirudeshou!*

IC01_Sugita : Guess, I can handle it no more!
 IC02_Kawauchi : What do you mean by you can't?
 IC01_Sugita : Naah, its nothing.
 IC02_Kawauchi : Just try a little bit, I know you can!

From data (8), the speaker, Sugita tried to complain literally to Kawauchi, that he cannot finish the work after all. But then Kawauchi who realized his intention, tried to show disagreement by saying ‘what do you mean by you can’t?’ followed with *-tte* in the rising tone.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, *-tte* form at the end of the sentences is divided into three groups, which are hearsay, quotation, and question. And each category has different usage meanings such as indicating the speaker’s surprises, emphasizing strong judgement, correcting one’s statement, showing indirective imperative form, indicating one’s unpleasant feelings, and showing disagreement by confirming one’s statement. Even though there are differences between the number and the term which is used, the author wanted to emphasize that ‘indicate a correction to one’s statement, indirective imperative form, one’s unpleasant feelings and disagreement by questioning one’s statement’ meaning is the newest discovery of the latest meaning usage of *-tte* at the end of sentences.

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