

## ■ *Tte* and *Wa*: Variations of the Topic

In addition to the particle *wa*, the *tte* form is another form used to present the topic of a sentence.

Unlike *wa*, the *tte* form may make not only a person or object but also an utterance and expression into the topic. Further, it has the following three characteristics shown in (a) through (c).

(a) *Tte* asks about the meaning and content of what has been chosen as the topic, and defines and explicates its meaning.

(1) “*Hokasu*” *tte* *dō iu imi desuka?* ‘What does *hokasu* mean?’

(2) *Mō aitakunai tte, dō iu koto?* ‘What do you mean, you don’t want to see me anymore?’

(3) *Kurōn ningen tte, onaji ningen ga takusan dekiru no?* ‘Do cloned humans mean that there will be many of the same person?’

In speech *tte* is used often. There is also the form *to iu no wa*, and in written language the *to wa* form may be used.

(4) *NGO to wa “hi-seifu soshiki” no ryakugo de aru* ‘NGO is the initialism for “non-governmental organization”.’

□ *Tte* asks what the topic designates as the object, or confirms what it is when the designated object is not clear. It also describes the designated object.

(5) A: *Yamada san kara denwa ga atta yo* ‘Mr. Yamada called.’

B: *Yamada san tte, dono Yamada san?* ‘Which Mr. Yamada?’

A: *Eibunka no Yamada san da yo* ‘Mr. Yamada of the English Department.’

(6) *Koko de no Eigo to iu no wa, Igirisu eigo dewa naku, Amerika eigo no*

*Koto de aru* ‘What I am referring to here as English is not British English but American English.’

□ *Tte* describes the characteristics and nature of what is picked out as the topic.

(7) *Hataraku tte, taihen na koto na n da na* ‘Working is serious business.’

(8) *Jinsei to wa kibishii mono da* ‘Life is hard.’

*Tte* is used often in utterances where the speaker, having made a new discovery or realization about the characteristics and nature of the topic, describes the topic with awe and wonder, or joy or disappointment, or when the speaker re-evaluates the situation.

(9) (Having eaten sea urchin) *Uni tte, oishii!* ‘Sea urchin is delicious!’

(10) (Having witnessed a heartless remark or act by the other party) *Kimi tte, sonna ni tsumetai hito data no ka* ‘I didn’t know you were such a cruel person.’

(11) (Having heard criticism from the other party on the speaker's inadequacies) *A, baka desu ne, watashi tte* 'Oh, I am a fool.'

→ 主題 Topic (2-I)

● References

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