JAPANESE *N DESHITA* IN DISCOURSE: PAST FORM OF *N DESU*

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Abstract

N deshita/datta, which is the past-tense form of *n desu/da*, has not been explored in depth in the field of Japanese linguistics. By using the *Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese* (BCCWJ) as a database, the present study explores the cases of *n deshita/datta* used for past events and situations. The findings of the present study show that approximately one-third of the cases of *n deshita/datta* used for past events and situations in the corpus co-occurred with grammatical elements that require past-tense connections such as the sentential ending particle *kke*, the *tara* structure, and the *tari* structure. For the cases of *n deshita/datta* that co-occurred with *kke*, *tara*, or *tari*, it was concluded that the grammatical restrictions arising from these elements triggered the occurrences of *n deshita/datta*. On the other hand, about two-thirds of the cases of *n deshita/datta* occurred without any grammatical elements that require past-tense connections. These cases of *n deshita/datta* were used to express the speaker's recollection of previously held knowledge, or as part of confirmation-seeking utterances for previously held knowledge.

Keywords: Japanese linguistics; discourse analyses; past tense; *n desu*; *n deshita*; *n datta*

Povzetek

N deshita/datta, ki je pretekla oblika strukture *n desu/da*, v japonskem jezikoslovju ni nikoli dobila pozornosti. Z vpogledom v korpus BCCWJ (*Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese*) tokratna raziskava razkriva uporabo te oblike za pretekle dogodke ali razmere. Rezultati kažejo, da se približno ena tretjina vseh primerov *n deshita/datta*, ki kažejo na pretekle dogodke ali razmere, pojavlja skupaj s stavčnim členkom *kke*, v *tara* strukturi ali pa v *tari* strukturi. Za omenjene tri primere je moč reči, da je pojavnost pretekle oblike *n deshita/datta* posledica slovničnih pravil. To pa ne velja za preostali dve tretjini primerov z obliko *n deshita/datta*, preko katerih govorec izrazi njemu že znane dogodke ali razmere oziroma o njihovi pravilnosti od sogovorca pričakuje potrdilo.

Ključne besede: japonsko jezikoslovje; diskurzivna analiza; preteklik; *n desu*; *n deshita*; *n datta*

1   Introduction

The Japanese sentential ending *n desu* structure has been discussed and explored in depth in the field of Japanese linguistics. However, previous studies focus mainly on its present-tense form *n desu*, and the past-form *n deshita* has not been included in the scope of these analyses. By examining a large corpus, the present paper will explore the usages of *n deshita* used for past events and situations in discourse, and discuss the factors that trigger the usage of *n deshita*.

2   Japanese *n desu* structure

The Japanese *n desu* structure has been the focus of linguistic inquiries by various scholars (Jorden, 1963; Alfonso, 1966; Kuno, 1973; McGloin, 1980, 1981, 1984, 1989; Aoki, 1986; Tanomura, 1990; Takatsu, 1991; Maynard, 1992, 2005; Noda, 1997; Ijima 2010; among many others). The *n desu* structure consists of the nominalizer *n* and the copula *desu*, and the structure is believed to create various interactional effects when it is added to the end of a sentence. Compare the a. sentences with the b. sentences in (1) and (2).

(1)   a. 私 は昼ごはんを食べる。
        Watashi   wa   hirugohan   o   taberu.
        I   TP   lunch   O   eat
        'I eat lunch.'

    b. 私は昼ご飯を食べるんです。
        Watashi   wa   hirugohan   o   taberu   n   desu.
        I   TP   lunch   O   eat   N   CP
        '(It is that) I eat lunch.'

(2)   a. かばんは大きい。
        Kaban   wa   ōkī.
        bag   TP   large
        'The bag is large.'

    b. かばんは大きいんだ。
        Kaban   wa   ōkī   n   da.
        bag   TP   large   N   CP
        '(It is that) the bag is large.'

(1a) and (2a) simply express the semantic information included in the sentences, but (1b) includes the *n desu* structure, and (2b) includes *n da*, which is a non-polite variant of *n desu*. The *n desu* structure in Japanese is typically translated as 'it is that' in English (Jorden and Noda, 1987; McGloin, 1980, 1989; Lammers, 2005; McGloin et al., 2013; etc.), but it is recognized as one of the most obscure and difficult-to-conceptualize

grammatical structures in Japanese. Due to its wide range of usages and versatile interactional effects, various arguments have been formulated on the interactional functions of the *n desu* structure. For example, McGloin (1989) argues that by using the *n desu* structure, the speaker can "present information which is known only to the speaker or the hearer as if it were shared information" (p. 89), and it has interactional functions such as explanation, rapport building, and providing background information. On the other hand, some discuss the *n desu* structure from the perspective of evidentiality. Aoki (1986) argues that the *n desu* structure has an evidential function of marking "nonspecific evidential statements" (p. 223), which does not explicitly indicate or specify the source of information for the stated proposition though treating the information as factual.

For the description of past events or situations with the *n desu* structure, the tense of the component that precedes *n desu* is modified into the past tense, but *n desu* itself typically remains unchanged. Examples (3) and (4) show the usages of *n desu* for a past event.

(3)   私は昼ご飯を食べたんです。
      Watashi wa   hirugohan o   tabeta   n   desu.
      I   TP   lunch   O   ate   N   CP
      '(It is that) I ate lunch.'

(4)   かばんは大きかったんだ。
      Kaban   wa   ōkikatta   n   da.
      bag   TP   was large   N   CP
      '(It is that) the bag was large.'

In (3), *tabeta*, which is the past form of *taberu* 'to eat' is used before *n desu*. In (4), *ōkikatta*, which is the past form of *ōkī* 'to be big,' is used before *n desu*. In both (3) and (4), the copula component in the *n desu* structure stays in the present form and is not affected by the tense of the propositional content that precedes the *n desu* structure.

As mentioned in the introduction, past studies on the *n desu* structure primarily focus on the present-tense *n desu*, and the past-tense *n deshita* has not been explored in depth. Examples (5) and (6) include the past-tense forms of *n desu* and its non-polite variation *n da,* respectively.

(5)   私は昼ご飯を食べたんでした。
      Watashi wa   hirugohan o   tabeta   n   deshita.
      I   TP   lunch   O   ate   N   CP
      '(It was that) I ate lunch.'

(6)   かばんは大きかったんだった。
      Kaban   wa   ōkikatta   n   datta.
      bag   TP   was large   N   CP
      '(It was that) the bag was large.'

Even though it is not grammatically unacceptable to use the past-tense *n deshita*/*datta* instead of the present tense *n desu*/*da*, some speakers of Japanese may feel (5) and (6) as unnatural unless a very specific context is given, which might be the reason why the past-tense *n deshita*/*datta* is left out in previous studies. Also, in the field of teaching Japanese as a second language, the present-tense *n desu*/*da* is introduced in early stages of learning in many Japanese language textbooks, but no explanation is provided for the past-tense *n deshita*/*datta* (Jorden and Noda, 1987; Lammers, 2005; Banno et al., 2011; Hatasa et al., 2015; etc.). In addition, many intermediate to advanced level textbooks also do not include any information on the usage of *n deshita*/*datta* (Miura & McGloin, 2008; Oka et al. 2009; etc.). Furthermore, as far as the author is aware, no studies have been conducted on the usage of *n deshita/datta* by L2 speakers of Japanese.

3   Present study

N deshita, which is the past form of *n desu*, has not been explored in depth in previous studies on Japanese linguistics nor second language acquisition. In order to explore the usages of *n deshita* in discourse, the present study examined cases of *n deshita* in a large corpus. By using the corpus as a database, the present study explored the usages of *n deshita* quantitatively and qualitatively, and analyzed in which kinds of contextual situations *n deshita* is used and how its interactional properties are utilized by speakers of Japanese.

The corpus used in the present study was the *Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese* (BCCWJ), which is a balanced language database for written Japanese that was created by the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (Maekawa, 2008). The data in the BCCWJ is comprised of approximately 104.3 million words, and it covers text genres such as general books, magazines, newspapers, business reports, blogs, internet forums, textbooks, and legal documents among others. The search for the linguistic data in the database was conducted through the *Chūnagon* search portal, which was also developed by the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics, and has a user interface similar to an internet search engine.

The scope of the present study was limited to cases of *n deshita* that follow another component in the past form in order to highlight the difference between using the present-tense *n desu* and the past-tense *n deshita* for past events, and also to limit the number of cases to be examined due to the large size of the BCCWJ. As for the selection of examples from the database, *n deshita* and *n datta* that follow the past marker *–ta* or *–da* were searched on the *Chūnagon* search portal. The search results were examined quantitatively and qualitatively.

4   Results and discussion

In order to identify individual examples of the past-tense form of *n desu* used for past events or situations, the four possible *hiragana* sequences for the combination of the past morpheme –*ta*/*da* and *n deshita*/*n datta*, which are *ta n deshita* (たんでした) *ta n datta* (たんだった), *da n deshita* (だんでした), and *da n datta* (だんだった) were input into the *Chūnagon* search portal. The search yielded 180 cases of the four possible *hiranaga* sequences for the –*ta*/*da* + *n deshita*/*datta* combination, but 13 cases were coincidentally matching cases such as *kantan datta* 'it was easy,' which are irrelevant to the scope of the present study. After eliminating the matching but irrelevant cases, 167 cases were available for further analysis. The following table summarizes the breakdown of the 167 cases of –*ta*/*da* + *n deshita*/*datta* found in the corpus.

Table 1: -*ta*/*da* + *n deshita*/*datta* in the BCCWJ

Hiragana sequence	# of cases
-*ta*/*da n deshita*	61
-*ta*/*da n datta*	106
Total	**167**

4.1   -*ta*/*da n deshita*/*datta* co-occurred with *kke*, *tara*, or *tari*

The 167 cases of -*ta*/*da* + *n deshita*/*datta* in the corpus were examined qualitatively. Out of the 167 cases of -*ta*/*da* + *n deshita*/*datta*, 63 cases (37.7%) co-occurred with the sentence final particle *kke*, the *tara* structure, or the *tari* structure. *Kke*, *tara*, and *tari* all require a past-tense connection for the preceding grammatical item. The cases of -*ta*/*da* + *n deshita*/*datta* that co-occurred with *kke*, *tara*, or *tari* will be analyzed in this section.

Out of the 167 cases of -*ta*/*da* + *n deshita*/*datta* found in the corpus, 35 cases (21.0%) co-occurred with the sentence final particle *kke*. More precisely, 30 cases were -*ta*/*da n deshita* co-occurring with *kke*, and 5 cases were –*ta*/*da n datta* co-occurring with *kke*. The sentence final particle *kke* requires the past-tense form before the particle when it follows a verb or an *i*-adjective. *Kke* can also follow a predicate that includes a noun or a *na*-adjective, but the tense of the predicate can be either present or past, depending on the type of copula used at the end of the predicate (Martin, 1975; Kosaka, 2004; McGloin et al, 2013; etc.).

Example (7) includes a case of *n deshita* used with *kke* found in the corpus. (7) is from an internet discussion board included in the BCCWJ, on which its users ask and answer questions about topics related to everyday life.

(7)   リンドバーグのボーカルの渡瀬マキってギターかベースやってた
      Rindobāgu no bōkaru   no Watase Maki tte gitā   ka bēsu yatte ta
      Rindobāgu LK lead singer LK Watase Maki QT guitar or bass played

      髪の長い人と結婚したんでしたっけ？
      kami no nagai hito   to kekkon shita n deshita kke?
      hair LK long   person to got married N CP   FP

      'Am I right that Maki Watase, who was the lead singer of Rindobāgu (name of
      a rock band), married the person who was playing the guitar or bass?'

According to Martin (1975), *kke* marked utterances are used to indicate "thinking back, recollecting to oneself, or questioning oneself about some situations to be recalled" (p. 937). However, as Hayashi (2010, 2012) claims, *kke* is also commonly used in utterances addressed to another person. In regards to the usage of *kke* in interactional situations, Hayashi (2010) argues that "unlike *ka* and *no*, *kke* makes implicit reference to knowledge or information previously held by the speaker and shared with the addressee, but which the speaker has somehow forgotten or is unsure about" (p. 2687). Example (7) is a question about Maki Watase, who is a well-known musician in Japan, and the person who asked the question used to have the information but he or she is not sure as of now, and this uncertainty is marked with *kke*. As for the usage of *n deshita*, the particle *kke* requires the past form for the preceding item when it follows the long-form copula *desu*, and this grammatical constraint seems to be the main factor that triggers the usage of *n deshita* here. The two forms of Japanese copula, *da* and *desu*, mark different levels of politeness, and generally speaking, *desu* is considered to be more polite than *da*. When *kke* follows the less polite copula *da*, the tense of *da* can be either the present-tense *da* or the past-tense *datta*, and neither of them are grammatically incorrect. Examples (8) and (9) demonstrate the acceptability of using *datta* and *da* directly before *kke*, respectively.

(8)   あの人、田中さんだったっけ？
      Ano   hito, Tanaka-san datta   kke?
      that person Tanaka Mr. CP   FP
      'Am I right that that person is Mr. Tanaka?'

(9)   あの人、田中さんだっけ？
      Ano   hito, Tanaka-san da   kke?
      that person Tanaka Mr. CP   FP
      'Am I right that that person is Mr. Tanaka?'

Even though the tense of the copula component is different in (8) and (9), there are no semantic or communicative differences between (8) and (9). However, as Kosaka (2004) points out, when the long-form copula *desu* is used before *kke*, it must be modified into the past-tense *deshita*, and the present-tense *desu* cannot precede *kke*. Observe (10) and (11).

(10) えーと、どちらさんでしたっけ？
　　　Ēto,　　dochira san　deshita　kke?
　　　well　　who　　　　CP　　　FP
　　　'Well, (I used to know but) who are you?'

(11) *えーと、どちらさんですっけ？
　　　*Ēto,　dochira san　desu　　　kke?
　　　well　　who　　　　CP　　　FP
　　　'Well, (I used to know but) who are you?'

<div align="right">(Kosaka, 2004, p. 139)</div>

In (10), *deshita*, which is the past form of the *desu,* is used directly before *kke*, and it is an acceptable sentence. On the other hand, the present-tense *desu* is used in (11), and the sentence is not acceptable.

The above mentioned explanation is also applicable to the usage of *n deshita* in (7), which has already been examined. (12) provides a hypothetical example in which *n desu* in used instead of *n deshita* in (7).

(12) *リンドバーグのボーカルの渡瀬真紀ってギターかベースやってた
　　　*Rindobāgu no bōkaru　　　no Watase Maki tte gitā　ka bēsu yatte ta
　　　Rindobāgu　LK　lead singer　LK　Watase Maki QT guitar or bass　played

　　　髪の長い人と結婚したんですっけ？
　　　kami no　nagai hito　　to kekkon shita　n　desu　kke?
　　　hair　LK　long　person to got married　　N　CP　　Q

　　　'Am I right that Maki Watase, who was the lead singer of Rindobāgu (name of a rock band), married the person who was playing the guitar or bass?'

As demonstrated by (12), the present-tense of the copula *desu* cannot precede *kke* due to the grammatical constraint imposed on the usage of *kke*. Therefore, in order for the speaker to use *kke* after the *n desu* structure, and if the speaker also wants to preserve the politeness level marked with the long-form copula *desu*, the speaker has no choice other than to use the past-tense *deshita* with *kke*. There are many examples of *n deshita* co-occurring with *kke* similar to (7) in the corpus, and the usages of *n deshita* in those cases appear to be resulting from the grammatical constraint discussed above.[1]

Another grammatical form that frequently co-occurred with *-ta/da n deshita/datta* in the corpus was *tara*. Out of the 167 cases of *–ta/da n deshita/datta* in the corpus,

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[1] As demonstrated in the comparison between (8) and (9), the non-polite *da* and *datta* are interchangeable before *kke* and the meaning of the sentence does not change regardless of the choice. The five cases of *–ta/da n datta kke* in the corpus seem to be resulting from the flexibility of using *da* or *datta* directly before *kke*.

26 cases (15.6%) co-occurred with the *tara* structure. Generally speaking, the Japanese *tara* structure is considered to express conditional meaning similar to 'if' or 'when' in English. *Tara* indicates that "the action/state expressed by the main clause in a sentence takes place after the action/state expressed by the subordinate clause" (Makino and Tsutsui, 1989, p. 452). The structure is typically labeled as the "*tara*" structure in linguistic research, but technically the *tara* structure consists of the past form of a verb, an *i*-adjective or a copula, and *ra* that follows it. For example, the *tara* structure for the verb *taberu* 'to eat' is *tabeta ra*, which consists of the past form *tabeta* 'ate' and *ra*. When *ra* follows a copula, *datta ra* or *deshita ra* is formed depending on the intended politeness level.

The following example is from the BCCWJ, and it was uttered by a character in a novel. (13) contains a case of *-ta n datta* that co-occurs with the *tara* structure.

(13) どうもこうも引き返すしかないなあ。病院に帰ってから
Dō mo kō mo hikikaesu shika nai nā. Byōin   ni   kaette   kara
anyway   go back   have to FP hospital to   return   then

気が付いたんだったら、明日に廻しちゃうけど。
kiga tsuita n datta ra, ashita   ni   mawashi chau kedo.
notice   N CP   if   tomorrow until wait   FP

'Anyway, I have to go back. If (it was that) I noticed it after I return to the hospital, I would have waited until tomorrow.'

As mentioned earlier, in order for the *tara* structure to be formulated, the grammatical unit that directly precedes *ra* must be in the past form. Therefore, whenever the *tara* structure is used with a predicate that ends with the *n desu* structure, the copula component must be converted to the past-tense *deshita* or *datta*. This is very similar to what was observed for the sentence final particle *kke* earlier, since the usage of the past-tense *n deshita* is triggered by the grammatical restriction caused by a grammatical component that directly follows *n desu* for both *kke* and the *tara* structure.

The third type of grammatical element that requires a past-tense connection co-occurring with *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* is the *tari* structure. In the examined corpus, 2 cases of *ta/da + n deshita/datta* co-occurred with the *tari* structure. The *tari* structure is used to express "inexhaustive listing of actions or states" (Makino and Tsutsui, 1989, p. 458), and it is typically used with verbs as in *utatta ri odotta ri suru* 'do things like singing and dancing,' but it can also be used with nouns and adjectives as well. As for the formation of the structure, *tari* consists of a past-tense form of a predicate + *ri* and *suru* 'to do,' forming structures such as *tabeta ri nonda ri suru* 'to do things like eating and drinking,' *ookikatta ri omokatta ri suru* 'to be big, heavy, etc.,' *tsukue datta ri isu datta ri suru* 'desks, chairs, etc.' In addition, the *tari* structure is sometimes used as a sentential ending expression that marks uncertainty. This usage of the *tari* structure

usually co-occurs with the gerund form ending *shite*, forming expressions such as *ōkikatta ri shite* '(something) might be big.'

The following example, (14), is one of the cases of *-ta/da n deshita/datta that* co-occurs with *tari* found in the corpus. It is taken from a scene in a novel where the protagonist recalls his childhood memories.

(14) あれから、しばらくして、僕と兄さんは一緒にお風呂に入る
Are kara, shibaraku shite boku to   nīsan   wa issho ni ofuro ni hairu
that since after a while   me   and older brother TP with   take a bath

ことはなくなってしまったんだけど、もしかして、僕は
koto wa nakunatte shimatta n   da   kedo, moshika shite, boku wa
N   TP stopped   N   CP   but   perhaps   I   TP

まだ兄さんと入りたかったんだったりして。
mada nīsan   to   hairitakatta   n   datta ri shite.
still   older brother with wanted to take N   CP   might

'A little after that, my older brother stopped taking a bath with me, but perhaps, I still wanted to take a bath with him.'

In the above example, the *tari* structure is used to express uncertainty at the end of the sentence. Similar to the *tara* structure discussed earlier, in order for the *tari* structure to be formulated, the grammatical element directly before *ri* must be in the past form. Therefore, the copula *da* in (14) must be in the past form for the sentence to be grammatically acceptable.

In this section, the usages of *kke*, the *tara* structure, and the *tari* structure with *-ta/da n deshita/datta* were qualitatively examined. These three grammatical elements require a past-tense connection for the preceding item, and this grammatical restriction seems to trigger occurrences of *-ta/da n deshita/datta.* The next section will explore the cases of *-ta/da n deshita/datta* that occurred without any grammatical elements which would require past-tense connections.

4.2   *-ta/da n deshita/datta* without required past-tense connection

4.2.1   *-ta/da n deshita/datta* for recollection of previously held knowledge

Out of the 167 cases of *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* in the examined corpus, 104 cases (62.3%) were *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* that did not precede any grammatical elements that require past-tense connections. After examining each case of *-ta/da + n deshita/datta*, it was found that there are several ways in which *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* is used in discourse*.*

The first type of usage of *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* without being followed by grammatical elements that require a past-tense connection was expressing the

speaker's recollection of previously held knowledge. As Jorden and Noda (1987) explain, Japanese past-tense forms can be used for currently continuing actions or conditions, and it may refer to the speaker's recalled knowledge. Observe the past-tense copula *deshita* in B's utterance in (15).

(15) A: アメリカ大使館、どこですか。
      Amerika taishikan, doko   desu ka.
      America embassy   where CP   Q
      'Where's the American Embassy?'

     B: えーと、虎ノ門でしたね。
      Ēto, Toranomon   deshita ne.
      uh   Toranomon   CP   FP
      'Uh, it was Toranomon, wasn't it?' (i.e., as I recall it)

(Jorden and Noda, 1987, p. 196)

In response to A's question, B uses the past-tense *deshita*, but this does not necessarily mean that the American Embassy was located in Toranomon in the past and now it has moved to a new location. The usage of the past-tense form here indicates that the speaker has just recalled his/her previously held knowledge, and the relocation of the American Embassy is not being implied or indicated.

In the examined corpus, there were many cases of *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* that were used to indicate the speaker's recollections of previously held knowledge. The next example, (16), is from a blog entry about taking pictures of rare birds.

(16) たしか去年も彼に撮影を邪魔されたんだった。
     Tashika kyonen mo kare ni satsuē   o jama sareta   n datta.
     perhaps last year also him by photo shoot O got interrupted N CP

     'If I remember right (now I recall that) he (my husband) also interrupted
     my photo shoot last year.'

In this part of the blog, the writer recalls that her husband interrupted her photo shoot last year, and the recollection of the information is indicated by the past-tense *datta* at the end of the sentence. Some readers may feel that the speaker's recollection is also expressed by *tashika* 'if I remember right' in (16), but even when *tashika* is removed, the indication of the speaker's recollection does not change. Observe (17).

(17) 去年も彼に撮影を邪魔されたんだった。
     Kyonen mo kare ni satsuē   o jama sareta   n datta.
     last year also him   by photo shoot O got interrupted N CP

     '(Now I recall that) he (my husband) also interrupted my photo shoot last year.'

However, for this particular example, if the present-tense *da* was used instead of *datta* at the end of the sentence, the sentence would give the impression that the writer has just come to realize what she stated. In (18), the past-tense *datta* in (17) is modified into the present-tense *da*.

(18) 去年も彼に撮影を邪魔されたんだ。
        Kyonen mo kare ni satsuē   o jama sareta   n da.
        last year also him   by photo shoot O got interrupted N CP

    'He (my husband) also interrupted my photo shoot last year.'

As demonstrated by (18), if the sentence ended with the present-tense *da*, it would give the impression that the writer has just realized that her husband interrupted her photo shoot last year, and the speaker's recollection of previously held knowledge is not expressed. In addition, as Sadanobu (2004) argues, speaker recollection can be marked by using a past-tense ending only when the sentence is about stative situations, and it cannot be marked when the sentence is about dynamic actions.

(19) 去年も彼に撮影を邪魔された。
        Kyonen mo kare ni satsuē   o jama sareta.
        last year also him   by photo shoot O got interrupted

    'He (my husband) also interrupted my photo shoot last year.'

N datta in (17) is removed in (19). As demonstrated by (19), since *jama sareta* 'got interrupted' is a dynamic action, simply using the past tense for the action does not indicate that the speaker just recalled previously held knowledge. However, as we observed in (16) and (17), the speaker can indicate recollection of previously held knowledge for dynamic actions when *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* is used.

    The examined corpus included many other cases of *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* similar to (16). The following are some of the examples of *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* that were found in the corpus, and they appear to be indicating speaker recollection of previously held knowledge.

(20) そう言えば、去年もピンクのシクラメンを二鉢
        Sō ieba,   kyonen mo   pinku no shikuramen o ni   hachi
        speaking of which last year also   pink   LK cyclamen   O two pots

    くれたのを思い出した。
    kureta   no o omoidashita.
    gave me LK O recalled

    'Speaking of which, I recalled that I also received two pots of pink cyclamens
     last year.'

一鉢は上手く咲き続けたけど、もう一鉢は
Hito hachi wa umaku saki   tsuzuketa kedo, mō hito   hachi   wa
one pot   TP well   kept blooming but   another pot   TP

すぐにだめになちゃったんだった。
sugu ni dame ni nacchatta n   datta.
quickly bad   became   N   CP

'(Now I recall that) the cyclamens in one pot kept blooming well, but the ones in another pot went bad quickly.'

(21) ああ、そうだ。あんまりに反応が悪いので、グーグルアドワーズを
Ā, sō da. Anmari ni hannō   ga warui node,   gūguru ado wāzu o
oh so CP   extremely response SB bad   because Google AdWords O

停止にしておいたんだった。
tēshi ni   shite oita n   datta.
turn off   set   N   CP

'Oh, yes. (Now I recall that) I turned off Google AdWords because the response was very bad.'

Both (20) and (21) are sentences about dynamic actions that happened in the past, and –*ta n datta* is used at the end of the sentence. The past-tense *datta* in each sentence seems to be indicating speaker recollection of previously held knowledge.

4.2.2   *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* in confirmation-seeking utterances

The corpus also included cases of *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* used in sentences for seeking confirmation and agreement. This type of usage seems to be derived from *-ta/da + n deshita/datta* that indicates the speaker's recollections, especially when sentence final particles such as *ne* and *yone* are added to the sentence. According to Izuhara (2003), both *yo* and *yone* have the interactional function of establishing shared recognition between the speaker and the addressee, and this function of *ne* and *yone* seems to be contributing to the formation of the interactional effect.[2]

    Example (22) is from an article based on an interview with a victim of aerial bombing during World War II. The utterance is made by the interviewer.

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[2] Technically speaking, Izuhara (2003) categorizes *ne* as a confirmation seeker, and *yone* as an agreement seeker. However, since the focus of the present study is not the difference between *ne* and *yone*, the difference between the two particles is not fully discussed here. For more details, see Izuhara (1993, 2001, 2003).

(22) 空襲の時は本郷まで歩いていらっしゃったんでしたね。

     Kūshū   no toki wa Hongō made aruite irasshatta n deshita ne.
     bombing LK when TP Hongo to   walked   N CP   FP

     'You walked to Hongo when the bombing happened, right?'

In (22), it appears that the interviewer had already held the stated information when the utterance was made, and the sentence final particle *ne* is used to indicate the whole utterance was made as a confirmation seeking utterance.

    In addition to *ne*, *yone* was also used with *-ta/da* + *n deshita/datta* in several confirmation seeking sentences in the corpus. (23) is a question utterance by an interviewer in an interview with a musician.

(23) ツアー自体は広島から始まったんでしたよね。

     Tsuā jitai wa Hiroshima kara hajimatta n deshita yone.
     tour itself TP Hiroshima in   started   N CP   FP

     'The (concert) tour itself started in Hiroshima, right?'

In (23), *-ta n deshita* is followed by *yone*. Similar to the example that included *ne*, (23) appears to be uttered as a confirmation seeking utterance for the propositional information that was previously held by the speaker. The examined corpus also included many other examples that were similar to (22) and (23). Based on the abundant usage of these cases in the corpus, the combination of *-ta/da* + *n deshita/datta* and *ne* or *yone* seems to be a commonly recognized way of seeking confirmation for previously held knowledge.

5   Conclusion

The present paper has explored the usages of *-ta/da* + *n deshita/datta* in discourse by examining a large corpus. The findings have shown that 37.8% of *-ta/da* + *n deshita/datta* in the corpus co-occurred with either *kke*, the *tara* structure, or the *tari* structure. *Kke*, *tara*, and *tari* all require past-tense connections for the preceding grammatical element. The analysis has shown that the occurrences of *-ta/da* + *n deshita/datta* with *kke*, *tara*, or *tari* are triggered by the grammatical constraints arising from those sentential ending expressions or connections. In addition, in the examined corpus, 62.2% *-ta/da* + *n deshita/datta* was not accompanied with any grammatical elements that require past-tense connections. Those cases of *-ta/da* + *n deshita/datta* are used to indicate the speaker's recollection of previously held knowledge, or used as part of a confirmation seeking utterance for previously held knowledge when it is used with the sentence-final *ne* or *yone*.

The author of the present study is aware of the limitations in the present study. The present study only focused on the past-form of the *n desu* structure that is used for past events and situations. Needless to say, it is possible for the speaker to use *n deshita/datta* for ongoing or future events and situations as long as the information was previously recognized in the past. Further analysis of those cases may contribute to expanding our understanding of the usages of the past-tense *n deshita/datta*. In addition, *no de atta*, which is the past-tense form of *no de aru*, was not explored in the present study. *No de aru* is a variant of *n desu,* and it is predominantly used in formal-style written texts, especially in narrative texts such as the main body of novels. The relationship between tense, aspect, and point of recognition seems to be operating on a different system in those narrative texts, and communicative functions of *no de aru* and *n desu* in colloquial utterances also seem to be highly differentiated. Conducting a comparative study on *n deshita/datta* and *no de atta* may further reveal the interactional effects created by using the past form of the *n desu* structure.

Finally, in the field of Japanese language pedagogy, explicit instruction on the usages of *n deshita/datta* is usually not included in the curriculum, even though the *n desu* structure itself is introduced in elementary-level textbooks. Due to the complexity around the usages of *n desu*, not including *n deshita/datta* may be reasonable in order to avoid overwhelming beginning-level learners. However, it may be beneficial for learners of Japanese to include instruction on *n deshita/datta* in intermediate to upper level courses as part of activities to fine-tune their usage of the *n desu* structure.

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Appendix: Transcription Conventions and Abbreviations

CP   various forms of copula verb *be*

FP   final particle

LK   nominal linking particle

N   nominalizer

NEG   negative morpheme

O   object marker

Q   question marker

QT   quotative marker

SB   subject marker

TP   topic marker