

■ Causative

Causative sentences have a predicate where the verb stem is suffixed by *-(s)aseru*, as in *oya o komaraseru* ‘cause the parent to suffer’, *seito ni kokuban o misaseru* ‘make the pupils look at the blackboard’. Causative sentences carry the meaning that someone works toward the realization of a situation. The causative is classified into (1) the causative of instruction, (2) the causative of permission, and (3) the causative of occurrence of a situation, all of which are based on the criteria whether the causer intentionally starts up a situation, and whether the causee wishes for the situation to happen.

● Semantic Types of Causative Expressions

In the causative of instruction (1), as in *Kantoku ga senshu o hashiraseru* ‘The manager makes the players run’, *Hahaoya ga musuko ni sara o arawaseru* ‘The mother makes the son wash the dishes,’ the causer recommends to or orders the causee to help realize a certain situation. In the causative of permission (2), as in *Chichioya ga musume o ryokō ni ikaseru* ‘The father lets his daughter go on a trip’, *Yukiko ga Hanako ni sukinadake fuman o iwaseru* ‘Yukiko lets Hanako complain all she wants,’ the causer gives permission and support to the causee, or does not interfere with the causee’s effort, so that the situation which the causee wants to realize will come true. In the causative of occurrence of a situation (3), a certain situation occurs for one reason or another, despite the fact that the causer does nothing intentionally for it to occur, as in *wasurete ite niku o kusaraseru* ‘let the meat rot because of negligence’, *fukaku ni mo teki ni ten o toraseru* ‘make the blunder of letting the opponent score points’ This type of causative connotes that the causer was unaware of the development of the situation, that s/he was sorry that s/he was not effective in handling the situation, and that the causer feels responsible and regretful. When something that belongs to the subject is the causee, as in *me o hikaraseru* ‘keep an eye out’, *ashi o suberaseru* ‘slip’, *hyōjō o kumoraseru* ‘wear a gloomy look’, *fuan o tsunoraseru* ‘heighten one’s anxiety’, the occurrence of the situation is spontaneous, and can be considered a type of the causative of occurrence of a situation. In addition to (1) through (3), a causative expression may describe the result deriving from a cause that takes the subject position within the sentence, as in *Kisei kanwa ga keizai o kasseika saseru* ‘Deregulation revitalizes economy’, *Sono hitokoto ga kanojo ni taibu o omoitodomaraseru* ‘That one word stops her from leaving the club’.

● Forms Marking Causees

A causee is marked by *o* or *ni* in a causative sentence. A causee is often marked by *o* when there is a force working to realize a certain situation by affecting the causee directly, regardless of the causee’s wishes or will, as in *heishi o senjō e ikaseru* ‘make the soldiers go to the battlefield.’ *O* must be used when verbs of emotion are involved (e.g., *minna o warawaseru* ‘make everyone laugh’, *oya o komaraseru* ‘cause the parent to be distressed’, *imōto o bikkuri saseru* ‘surprise the little sister’), or when the causee is insentient (e.g., *jitensha o hashiraseru* ‘run the bicycle’, *denki o tentō saseru* ‘turn on the light’, *keikaku o seikō saseru* ‘carry out a plan successfully’).

Triggering emotion, as in *warau* ‘laugh’, *komaru* ‘be troubled’, and *bikkuri suru* ‘be surprised’, occurs regardless of the causee’s will, and insentient objects do not possess volition. Naturally, no consideration is given to their wishes.

The causee is marked with *ni* when a transitive verb that denotes volition is used in the causative construction, as in *kodomo ni shigoto o tetsudawaseru* ‘make the child help with work’, *senshu ni genryō o saseru* ‘make the players lose weight.’ One reason for the use of *ni* here is to avoid the double *o* construction. In intransitive causative sentences, *ni* may be used, as in *musume ni ikaseru* ‘let the daughter go’, *Hanshin ni kataseru* ‘let the Hanshin Tigers win’. This tends to occur when someone works on the causee’s willingness to make a certain situation happen. *Ni*, instead of *o*, is used in *kodomo ni “itadakimasu” to iwaseru* ‘have the child say, “Thank you for the meal”.’ This is because the speaker is trying to teach and persuade the child and bring out the child’s willingness to do the act. In *kodomo ni “maitta” to iwaseru*, ‘make the child say, “I surrender”,’ *ni* can be replaced with *o*. This is because the speaker has no respect for the child’s willingness.

● Forms of Causative Predicate

Giving and receiving expressions may be attached to the causative construction as auxiliary verbs. *Yasumasete morau* ‘have someone help/permit her/him to take a rest’ and *shashin o torasete morau* ‘have someone allow the speaker to take photos’ express the speaker’s desire to make something happen. *Ikasete kudasai* ‘Please let me go’ and *Mizu o nomasete kudasai* ‘Please let me drink water’ express the speaker’s request that something s/he desires be realized.

One of the causative forms has *-(s)aseru* suffixed to the verb stem, as in *yomaseru* ‘make someone read’ and *misaseru* ‘make someone see.’ There is another form which has *-(s)asu*, as in *yomasu* ‘make someone read’ and *misasu* ‘make someone see’. The use of the *-(s)asu* form is somewhat restricted depending on the conjugated form ; it is not used much in the 中止形 *chūshi-kee*, continuative form. Still, in the causative passive construction, this form is used just as often as the other form (e.g., *tatasareru /tataserareru* ‘is made to stand up’, *motasareru /motaserareru* ‘is made to carry’).

→ ヴォイス Voice (2-E), 使役と他動詞 Causative and Transitive Verbs (2-E), 自動詞と他動詞 Intransitive Verbs and Transitive Verbs (2-B)

● References

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