

■ The Passive with Intransitive and Transitive Verbs

There are many verbs that occur in intransitive and transitive pairs, such as *aku:akeru* and *tatsu:tateru*.

When change to the insentient subject is involved, the intransitive passive and transitive passive are similar, in that the subject that makes the change is marked by *ga* in both cases.

(1) *Mado ga {aita/akerareta}* ‘The window opened/was opened.’

(2) *Ekimae ni biru ga {tatta/taterareta}* ‘A building went up/was built in front of the station.’

The intransitive passive differs from the transitive passive in the following regards.

First, one cannot explicitly describe the agent in an intransitive sentence, but one can do so in the transitive passive.

(3) *Biru ga XXX Kensetsu ni yotte {*tatta/taterareta}* ‘The building was built by XXX construction company.’

When a natural phenomenon is involved, an intransitive verb may be used, providing the cause is expressed with *de*. (Transitive passive sentences may not be used.)

(4) *Kaze de mado ga {aita/*akerareta}* ‘The window opened because of the wind.’

Second, intransitive verbs cannot express the process of an event using the *-teiru* form, while transitive passive sentences can.

(5) *Chakuchakuto biru ga {*tat/taterare}te iru* ‘Buildings are steadily being built.’

Biru ga tatte iru only signifies the result of an action and does not co-occur with adverbs that describe process, such as *chakuchakuto*.

When an intransitive verb occurs with a sentient subject, sometimes the intransitive sentence expresses an action done willfully by the agent her/himself, and the transitive passive sentence expresses an action performed willfully by someone else.

(6) *Konna tokoro, hairitakute haittanjanai. Ireraretanda* ‘I came into a place like this not because I wanted to. I was forced to enter.’

Intransitive verbs that express emotion, such as *nayamu* ‘be troubled’, *gakkari suru* ‘be disappointed’, do not have transitive counterparts, and they sometimes semantically resemble the intransitive causative passive.

(7) *Sō-on ni {nayande iru/nayamasarete iru}* ‘I am troubled by the noise.’

→ 自動詞と他動詞 Intransitive Verbs and Transitive Verbs (2-B), 授受表現の諸特徴 Various Characteristics of Giving and Receiving Expressions (2-E)

● References

Hayatsu, Emiko (1990) ‘Yū-tsui tadōshi no ukemi hyōgen ni tsuite – mu-tsui tadōshi no ukemi hyōgen to no hikaku o chūshin ni’ (On the Passive Expressions of Transitive Verbs That Have Intransitive Counterpart—Mainly in Comparison to the Passive Expressions of Transitive Verbs That Have No Intransitive Counterpart) in *Nihongogaku*, May Issue.

(Yamada Toshihiro)