Characteristics of Giving and Receiving Expressions

Giving and receiving verbs express the transference of the object Z between the two parties, X and Y. These verbs are used in patterns of X ga Y ni Z o... or X ga Y kara Z o ....

When X is the source of Z, verbs such as ataeru, yaru, kureru, watasu, dasu, sazukeru, juyosuru, are used. Yaru contrasts with ageru and sashiageru (humbling). Kudasaru is the honorific form of kureru.

Ataeru differs from the yaru group in the following regard. The yaru group is used only when Z is beneficial to the recipient Y. In contrast, ataeru does not have to connote beneficial meaning.

1. Purezento o {yatta/ataeta} ‘Gave a gift.’
2. Songai o {*yatta/ataeta} ‘Gave damage.’

In subjective expressions which express the will of the first person subject, for instance, the yaru group is used.

3. Kore, kimi ni {yaru/ageru/*ataeru} yo ‘Here, I’ll give this to you.’
4. Kore, {sashiagemasu/*o-ataeshimasu} yo ‘I will give this to you.’

The kureru group and yaru group have different directionalities for the transference of Z when seen from the viewpoint of the speaker. On the uchi to soto scale of the speaker < what belongs to the speaker < listener < what belongs to the listener < the third party, the yaru group is used for the movement toward soto, which is away from the speaker (centrifugal) or transferenceence of a third party. In contrast, the kureru group is used with the movement toward uchi, which is inward (centripetal).

5. (Watashi ga) Tanaka kun ni purezento o ageta ‘(I) gave a gift to Tanaka.’
6. Tanaka kun ga (watashi ni) purezento o kureta ‘Tanaka gave (me) a gift.’

Unlike with the yaru and kureru groups, there is no limitation on directionality with other verbs, such as ataeru and watasu.

When X is the recipient of Z, verbs such as morau, uketoru, and ukeru are used. The humble form of morau is itadaku.

The morau group expresses the transferenceence of the beneficial Z, the same as the yaru and kureru groups. Uketoru, on the other hand, does not connote beneficial meaning.

7. Purezento o {moratta/?uketotta} ‘received a gift.’
8. Seikyūshō o {*moratta/?uketotta} ‘received an invoice.’

Uketoru is used with the transference of concrete objects while ukeru is used with the transference of something abstract.

9. Seikyūshō o {uketotta/*uketa} ‘received an invoice.’
(10) Songai o {*uketotta/uketa} ‘suffered a damage.’

Y, the source of Z, may also be marked by kara.

(11) Chichi {ni/kara} hon o moratta ‘received a book from my father.’

The kureru group and morau group depict the same phenomenon from the opposing perspectives as far as voice is concerned.

(12) Boku ga ojisan ni purezento o moratta ‘I received a gift from my uncle.’

(13) Ojisan ga boku ni purezento o kureta. ‘My uncle gave me a gift.’

→ Expressions Using Giving and Receiving Verbs as Auxiliary Verbs (2-E), Studies in Voice (7-D)

● References


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