

■ *Kara, Node and Te*: Cause and Reason

Both *kara* and *node* express the cause that brings about the result.

(1) *Natsu wa atsui {kara/node}, hana ga sugu kareru* ‘Because it’s hot in summer, flowers wither quickly.’

(2) *Kusuri o nonda {kara/node}, netsu ga sagatta* ‘Because I took my medicine, the fever went down.’

They also express the ground for the speaker’s judgment that appears in the main clause, and the reason for the speaker’s attitude (e.g., command and wish).

(3) *Heya no denki ga tsuiteiru kara, mada naka ni hito ga iru nodarō* ‘The lights in the room are on, so there still must be some people inside.’

(4) *Kaze o hiku kara, uwagi o kinasai* ‘Put on your jacket, or you’ll catch a cold.’

(5) *Kekkonkinenbi nanode, hayaku kaeritai* ‘I want to go home early because it’s our wedding anniversary.’

Kara (polite equivalent *node*) in some instances is not interpreted as expressing cause or reason.

(6) *Sugu modoru kara, koko de matteite* ‘I’ll be back soon. Please wait here.’

(7) *Sugu chikaku da kara, chotto yotteikō* ‘It’s nearby. Let’s stop by.’

(8) *Dō medaru de ii kara, hyōshōdai ni agaritai* ‘I would want to stand on the podium, even if I only had the bronze medal.’

The main clause expresses desire or intent, and the reason clause with *kara* expresses the information that will facilitate the realization of such desire or intent, or it expresses a situation that gets things in motion. There are idiomatic expressions using *kara* that are used as an introduction to a strong expression of the speaker’s desire or intent.

(9) *Onegaida kara, ii ko de ite ne* ‘Please do me a favor and be a good girl.’

(10) *Ichido de ii kara kyabia o tabetai* ‘If I can eat caviar only once...’

Kara and *node* express almost the same meaning, but *node* goes better with polite expressions.

(11) *Zutsū ga shita node kesseki shimashita* ‘I was absent because I had a headache.’

In polite expressions, *shimashita kara* fits better than *kara*.

Semantically, *kara* and *node* are similar. There are grammatical differences between *kara* and *node*.

First, *kara* is affixed to the conclusive form, while *node* is affixed to the adnominal form.

(12) *Miseenen da {kara/na node}, sake wa nomenai* ‘I can’t drink because I am a minor.’

Second, only *kara* may be affixed to *darō/deshō*, *mai*, and *no*.

(13) *Asu wa hareru darō kara, supōtsu taikai no sankasha wa kyonen yori fueru to omou* ‘I predict that there will be more participants in the athletic meeting than last year, because the weather will be good tomorrow.’

(14) *Taiinshita bakari nanda kara, muri shinai de* ‘Don’t strain yourself, since you just got out of the hospital.’

Third, particles may be affixed to *kara* to form expressions such as *kara ka*, *kara koso*, and *kara niwa*.

Fourth, *kara* may accompany *da* to form a predicate, and can also be used in cleft sentences.

(15) *Naze yasunda no? Isogashikatta kara desu* ‘Why were you absent? Because I was busy.’

(16) *Yasunda no wa isogashikatta kara da* ‘The reason I was absent was because I was busy.’

In (15) and (16) the non-polite form is prefixed to *kara*.

In addition, *kara* has a usage where it is used like a sentence final particle, and this usage is not simple ellipsis. It urges the listener to act cooperatively and with understanding.

(17) *Jaa, ittekuru kara* ‘I am leaving now.’

(18) *Jikan dōri ni konakattara yurusanai kara* ‘I won’t forgive you if you don’t come on time.’

The *te* form may also express cause and reason.

(19) *Gōkaku dekite, ureshii* ‘I am happy to have passed the exam.’

(20) *Osokunatte, sumimasen* ‘I am sorry to be late.’

(21) *Yōsho wa takakute kaenai* ‘Foreign books are too expensive to buy.’

(22) *Itazura o shite chichi ni shikarareta* ‘I got scolded by my father for my mischief.’

The *te* form expresses the sequential relationship between events. When the proceeding event occurs as the inevitable result of the preceding event, the *te* form is interpreted as the cause or reason. The *te* form is more suitable than *kara* or *node* in expressing the cause of emotion in the main clause, as in (19) and (20). The *te* form is also used to express the situation which the speaker cannot control or which is considered inevitable.

→ 理由を表す節の周辺 Expressions Related to Clauses of Reason (2-J), テ節・continuative-form clauses *Te*/Continuative-Form Clause (2-J)

● References

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