

<論文>

Causativeness in Japanese and Italian

Vincenzo Mauriello

Dept. of Intercultural Studies (Part-time)

1 Causative: a definition.

I will start comparing some dictionary definitions of the word *causative* in Italian and in Japanese, to verify if there is some relevant difference in the non-specialist explanation of the word.

Definitions of causative in Italian dictionaries.

Causative verb, a verb expressing an action which the subject has carried out by someone else. i.e., to put to sleep compared to sleep. (De Mauro, 2000) Verbs or constructs stating not a carried out action, but a provoked one. (Devoto & Oli, 2009) Causative verbs (also called factive verbs), are derivative verbs that express an action not carried out by the subject but carried out by someone else. Causative function, the one the verb *fare* (to do) followed by an infinitive verb to state that the subject does not carry out the action but has it done by someone else. Some intransitive verbs can sometimes be used with causative meaning. (Treccani.it, 2015)

Definitions of causative in Japanese dictionaries.

To have someone else carry out an action or change of state. In Japanese, the causative auxiliary verb is attached to the *mizenkei* of the verb. (Shinmura, 2008)

[The causative form] in grammar is used to express to have someone else do something. In spoken language it is expressed using *seru/saseru*, in written language using *su/sasu/shimu*. (Yamada et al., 2004)

Some notes about the definitions

The Italian and Japanese definitions seem to agree that a causative sentence is one in which the subject of the sentence doesn't carry out the action expressed by the verb, by himself but has it carried out by someone else.

It should be noted that in both the Japanese and the Italian definitions the causative structure it-

self is used to explain the meaning of the word “causative”.

I will now give a more exhaustive definition: “A causative sentence is a sentence where subject A is wielding or is able to wield an influence, active or passive, on the freedom, the will or the conditions of the logical subject B carrying out or not carrying out the action or the change of state expressed by the verb V.”

It is important, to clearly distinguish a causative from a mere transitive, that the agent carrying out the action must be the *causee* B and not the *causer* A: if the *causee* is just the passive object in the action carried out by the *causer* then there is no causative but a simple transitive verb.

“He pushed down the boy” and “He made the boy fall down” are different because in the first case the boy is just the passive object and A is physically acting, but in the second case the action is carried out by the boy although caused (in a way started) by the *causer*.

Since carrying out an action after someone else will or exercising some kind control over someone else action can be considered an universal human experience, it can be assumed that a causative structure is present in any human language. The causativeness could be expressed semantically or morphosyntactically. But expressing it solely semantically would mean to have a double for every verb just to express the causativeness and that would be quite uneconomical from a linguistic point of view. It can be assumed then, that the causativeness is expressed mainly morphosyntactically.

2 Causative in Japanese.

The most common way to form a causative in Japanese is with the use of the causative auxiliary *suffixal* verb [*saseru/seru*¹] attached to the *mizenkei* of the verbs. Like the passive auxiliary *suffixal* verb, the causative is not suffixed to *stative* predicates such as [*aru*] “exist”, [*dekiru*] “be able”, [*niru*] “resemble”, and [*iru*] “be necessary”.

With a transitive verb, the logical subject or *causee*, is marked as direct object with the particle [*wo*] unless there is already a direct object of the verb, in that case the indirect object particle [*ni*] will be used as in:

okasan-ga kodomo-o tabe-saseru.

The mother make/let the child eat

okasan-ga kodomo-ni pan-o tabe-saseru

The mother make/let the child eat the bread.

With the intransitive verbs the logical subject/ *causee* is usually marked with *wo* but can be marked

¹ the *saseru* variant is used for the *ichidan* verbs and the *seru* variant for the *godan* verbs

with *ni* to express willingness of the *causee* to carry out the action, so with the use of *ni* it would be possible to express a permissive causative at least with the intransitive verbs.

2.1 Permissive/coercive distinction.

In general the simple use of the causative auxiliary doesn't allow a distinction between a permissive causative (to let) and a coercive causative (to make to have). However, a permissive/coercive distinction is possible by adding additional auxiliary verbs to the causative auxiliary.

The concessive character of a causative can be expressed adding the so-called “*benefactive verbs*” to the *te* form of the causative auxiliary as in:

okasan-ga kodomo-ni pan-o tabe-sasete-agetu.

The mother let the child eat the bread.

okasan-ga watashi-ni eiga-o mi-sasete-kureta.

My mother let me watch the movie.

Another way to express the permissive causative is the use of the auxiliary verb *oku* attached to the *te* form of the causative auxiliary as in:

nomi-tai to iu nara sukina dake noma-sete-oki-nasai.

If he says he wants to, let him drink as much as he likes.

watashitachi wa kodomotachi wo niwa de asoba-sete-oku.

We let the kids play in the garden.

The coercive meaning of a causative can be clarified by adding the passive auxiliary verb *reru/rareru* to the causative auxiliary as in:

watashi-wa chichi-ni sake o noma-se-rare-ta.

My father made me drink the alcohol.

watashi wa chichi ni aruite kaera-se-rare-ta.

My father made me walk home.

When the passive auxiliary verb is used the sentence became passive thus the *causee* became subject and the *causer* direct or indirect object of the verb.

2.2 Variations of the causative auxiliary verb

There is a short variation *sasu/su* and some new variation formed through a concatenation of the short and long causative *seru/saseru*. It is not clear yet if these variants can be used to convey some variation in the meaning of the causative or if these variation or variations of the meaning would apply to all verbs or just some of them.

2.3 Causative expressed with the *benefactive verb morau*.

Japanese descriptive grammars seem to agree that in a causative sentence the subject *causer* must be equal to or higher than the *causee* in terms of social status. Thus sentences with a *causer* having a lower status than the *causee* are considered unacceptable or inappropriate. Therefore the following sentence could not be used because the student has a lower social status than the teacher.

Watashi wa sensei ni paati ni ko-saseru tumori desu.

I am going to let/make the teacher come to the party.

I think that a clearer distinction should be made between the linguistic appropriateness and the social appropriateness of a sentence. The causative can be used even in contexts in which the social status of the *causer* is inferior to the *causee*. Let's consider the following sentence:

baba ni yaraseru.

I'll have it done by grandma.

This sentence is not only grammatically correct but probably normally used in some contexts i.e. high school students talking to each other. A patient talking to his wife about a nurse can actually say something in the line of:

ano kangoufu ni karada wo fuka-se-te hoshikunai.

I don't want that nurse wipe my body.

It would probably be more correct to say that the use of the causative with a *causer* with a lower social status than the *causee* can be considered impolite in some contexts, depending on the relation between the speaker and the listener and their respective relations to *causer* and *causee*. Therefore, it will be up to the speaker to judge if the use of the causative is appropriate.

Should the speaker consider the use of the causative inappropriate to the context, he can express the causativeness with the *benefactive verb morau*. For example:

“The boy had his father buy him a bicycle” could be expressed with the sentence:

kodomo wa otosan ni jitennsha wo katte moratta.

Instead of:

kodomo wa otousan ni jitennsha wo kawaseta.

So the *-te morau* sentences can be used as a kind of “polite causative”. It must however be noted that *-te morau* sentences can also be interpreted with a passive meaning: where the subject is a passive beneficiary of the action carried out by the object by his own will. The distinction between a causative meaning and a passive meaning of a *te-morau* sentence can be made only by the context in which it is used.

2.4 Causative with inanimate subject.

Matsumura (1970) affirms that the causative sentences with an inanimate *causer* were not present in the pre-Meiji era Japanese language, but started spreading from the Meiji era due to the influence of the translations of western literature. Ichikawa et al., (1971) affirms that although not completely unused, the causative with inanimate subject, is limited to convey special nuances or in translations from English. While its use in other cases is felt quite strange because in Japanese it is difficult to use an inanimate subject with the causative or other verb structures with transitive use.

In current Japanese, causative sentences with an inanimate subject are quite limited but not unheard of. Some examples are :

kore wa naka-seru eiga desu (Kinoshita, 2001 p.197)

This movie makes me cry.

kunijuu ni fuuan wo idaka-se-ta nyuusu. (Obana, 2000 p.258)

News that gave the country fear.

umai sushi wo tabe-saseru mise. (Obana, 2000 p.258)

A restaurant that serves good (tasty) sushi.

Nani ga kanojou wo sou sa-seta ka? (Matsumura, 1970 p.281)

What made her act like that?

2.5 Use of causative to ask for permission and to state an intention.

In Japanese, as in English, the speaker can use the causative, combined with a *benefactive* verb (*kureru* or *kudasaru*), to ask politely for permission for himself or somebody else to do something.

ika-sete kudasai.

Please let me go. Please, allow me to go.

kare ni hana-sasete kudasai.

Please, let him talk.

Again, as in English, these kinds of requests can be used as an indirect order.

tabe-sasete kudasai.

Let me eat.

The above-mentioned sentence can be used to say: “Do not disturb me while I am eating”.

kodomo wo nesasete kudasai.

Let the baby sleep.

The above-mentioned sentence can mean: “Do not wake up the baby”.

When combined with the *morau* or *itadaku*, *benefactive* verbs, the Japanese causative can be used

to state the intention to do something. These kinds of statements although polite and humble, can carry a quite assertive nuance as in:

ika-sete itadaki-masu

(By your leave), I will go.

hantai iken wo nobesasete itadakimasu.

Allow me to state my contrary view.

It must be noted that in these kind sentences the subject is the *causee*, while the causer usually being the interlocutor, is often omitted.

2.6 Lexical causative

In Japanese, there are several transitive/intransitive couples of verbs. For some of these couples the transitive verb is considered a lexical causative of the intransitive one. As evidence of this, it is pointed out that the intransitive verb of the couple the morphological causative cannot be used. Therefore, the transitive variant should be considered the causative of the intransitive verb. However, this is not always the case: there are often instances of morphological causative of the intransitive verb being commonly used. Iwasaki explains the coexistence of morphological and lexical causative affirming that when they coexist, the lexical causative expresses a direct causative while the morphological causative expresses an indirect causative. The problem with this distinction is that the definition of a direct causative given by Iwasaki (2013) as direct manipulation of the *causer* over the *causee* seems to overlap too much that of a simple transitive verb.

The second problem with the definition of the transitive variants as lexical causative is that almost all these transitive variants have a morphologic causative form normally used. Considering the transitive variant a lexical causative of the intransitive verb would mean that the morphologic causative form of the transitive should be considered the causative of the causative of the intransitive verb.

The lack of a causative for some of the intransitive verbs could be explained semantically with the causative form of the transitive verb being used as causative of the intransitive as well. For example in the couple to open *aku* (intransitive) *akeru* (transitive) the morphological causative of the transitive (*akesaseru*) seems to be used as causative of the intransitive as well. Some examples are:

jidoudoa no mae ni tattemo doa wo ake-sasenai koto ga dekiru. (Nomad News, 2015)

(Somebody) is able to stand in front of an automatic door without the door opening (not making it open).

Again *kobosaseru*, the causative of the transitive variant of to spill could be interpreted used as the causative of the intransitive *koboreru* as in:

shiroi shiruku shatsu ni wain wo kobosaseru. (Airline, 2015)

Spill the wine on a white silk shirt

2.7 Causative as transitive.

In Japanese, there are some instances where the meaning of a causative form of an intransitive verb seems to be closer to a simple transitive variant of the verb than a real causative.

Intransitive :

kuukou ni chakuriku suru.

To land at the airport. Causative as transitive:

Pairotto wa hikouki wo nohara ni chakuriku sa-seta.

The pilot landed the plane on the field.

Intransitive:

Kuruma wa yukkuri hasshitta.

The car ran slowly.

Causative as transitive:

Kare wa zenryoku de kuruma wo hashira-sete-ita.

He was running the car at full speed.

Intransitive:

Enjin ga uniari wo agete jidou shita.

The engine started (up) with a roar. Causative as transitive:

Saikin enjin wo jidousaseru to, iyana oto ga shimasu.

Lately when I start the engine, I hear an ugly noise.

Therefore, it seems, the causative structure, in some cases, can be used to create transitive variants of intransitive verbs.

3 Italian Causative

The Italian causative is usually realized with the use of the verb *fare* (to do) as auxiliary verb while the verb, stating the action or change of state carried out, is an infinitive form.

Faccio giocare i bambini.

I let the children play

The *fare* verb is the one being conjugated to express the subject and the tense and the mood.

Il professore ha fatto alzare gli studenti.

The professor made the students stand up.

The *causer* is usually the subject of the sentence while this *causee* becomes the direct object of the verb. If the verb is transitive and already has a direct object then the *causee* will become indirect object and will be marked by the preposition *a*.

Ha fatto ascoltare la sua canzone a tutti.

He made everybody listen to his song.

Ho fatto leggere il libro ai bambini.

I made the children read the book.

The *causee* can be marked by the preposition *da* as well. Since *da* is usually used to mark the logical subject in a passive sentence, when *da* is used to mark the *causee* the sentence could be interpreted as the causative of a passive sentence.

Faccio lavare la macchina a Marco.

I make Marco wash the car.

Faccio lavare la macchina da Marco.

I have the car being washed by Marco.

Italian language makes extensive use of pronouns. Their usual syntactical position is before the verb they are related to. In case of infinitive and other non-inflective verb forms the pronouns can be attached to the end of the verb, but in causative sentences, the pronouns cannot be putted before the infinitive verb or attached to it but must come before the auxiliary verb.

Lo faccio aspettare.

I make him wait.

3.1 Concessive/coercive causative.

When *fare* is used the distinction between a concessive and a coercive use of the causative can be gained only by the context. It is however possible to state clearly the concessive nature of the causative with the use of the verb *lasciare* instead of *fare* as in:

Li faccio dormire.

I make/let them sleep.

Li lascio dormire.

I let them sleep.

To clearly express coercive causative the verbs *costringere* (to force) *obbligare* (to oblige, to coerce) *imporre* (to impose) can be used instead of *fare*. Even though verbs are not usually mentioned in the grammars as causative auxiliaries, they are actually used to express a coercive causative as in:

Lui fa lavorare i bambini.

He makes the children work.

Lui costringe i bambini a lavorare.

He forces the children to work.

With the verbs *costringere*, *obbligare* and *imporre* the infinitive verb must be preceded by the preposition *a*. The *causee* is always marked as direct object even if the infinitive verb has his own direct object as in:

Faccio lavare la macchina a Marco.

I make Marco wash the car

Costringo Marco a lavare la macchina.

I make (force) Marco wash the car.

The verbs *permettere* (to permit, to allow) and *consentire* (to allow) are synonymous of *lasciare* to express a concessive causative. They however require the preposition *di* before the infinitive and the *causee* is always marked by *a* as in following sentences:

Lascio dormire i bambini.

Permetto ai bambini di dormire.

Consento ai bambini di dormire.

I let the children sleep

Lascio mangiare il gelato ai bambini.

Permetto ai bambini di mangiare il gelato.

Consento ai bambini di mangiare il gelato

I let the children eat the ice cream

3.2 Non-interventive causative

The verb *lasciare* used as causative auxiliary can express a “non-interventive causative” to mean that the subject could but does not intervene to avoid or stop a negative outcome thus being a passive causer of the action expressed by the verb as in:

Lui ha lasciato bruciare la casa.

He let the house burn.

La madre ha lasciato piangere il bambino tutta la notte.

The mother let the baby cry all night long.

3.3 Causative with inanimate subject.

In Italian, causative sentences with inanimate subject are possible and widely used. Some exam-

ples are:

Il rumore non mi fa dormire.

The noise does not let me sleep.

Le sue parole mi hanno fatto riflettere.

His words made me think.

Questo lavoro mi ha fatto venire sete.

This work made me thirsty.

It is also possible to have both inanimate subjects and inanimate objects as in:

Il freddo non fa partire la macchina.

Because of the cold the engine won't start.

Questa cpu fara` andare il computer piu` veloce.

This cpu will make the computer run faster.

3.4 Causative with reflexive verbs.

In Italian reflexive verbs are created adding reflexive pronouns to transitive verbs. Thus:

Io alzo la mano.

I raise my hand.

Io mi alzo.

I wake up/ I stand up.

In the case of a causative with a reflexive verb, the reflexive pronoun disappears. The distinction between the transitive or reflexive meaning of the infinitive verb will then be possible only by the *causee* being marked as direct or indirect object. If the verb is used with a transitive meaning there will be a direct object thus the *causee* will become the indirect object of the verb. While if the verb is used with a reflexive meaning the *causee* will be marked as direct object as in:

Lui fa alzare la mano al bambino.

He makes the child raise his hand.

Lui fa alzare il bambino.

He makes the child stand up. /He makes the child wake up.

3.5 Passive causative.

The passive form of the Italian verbs is the past participle of the verb preceded by the auxiliary verb *essere* (to be). The auxiliary verb *essere* is then conjugated to express the subject, the tense and the mood. The logical subject is marked by the preposition *da*. For example:

Gino legge il libro.

Gino reads the book.

The above-mentioned sentence will become:

Il libro è letto da Gino.

The book is read by Gino.

Applying this rule to the auxiliary causative verb it is possible to make a passive causative sentence. The object of the causative becomes the subject and both the *causer* and *causee* can be omitted. The causative passive carry the usual causative meaning, so the action has been done by somebody after someone else's volition or permission as in the following sentence:

La macchina è stata lavata.

The car has been washed. (by somebody)

La macchina è stata fatta lavare.

The car has been washed. (by somebody, after someone else's order or permission)

If the *causer* and *causee* are present in the sentence the first is marked by *da* the latter by *a* as in:

La classe è stata fatta lavare agli studenti dal professore.

The classroom has been cleaned by the students. (After the professor's order).

3.6 Reflexive causative

With the reflexive conjugation of the fare causative auxiliary, it is possible to produce a reflexive causative sentence.

In this kind of sentence, the *causer* subject is also, the object of the verb carried out by the *causee*. The *causee* is always marked by the preposition *da*

Reflexive causative sentences, quite common in Italian, can be used:

1. To express an action the *causer* has carried out by the *causee* for the *causer* own benefit as in:

Antonio ha fatto preparare la cena alla madre.

Antonio had his mother cook the dinner.

Antonio si è fatto preparare la cena dalla madre.

Antonio had his mother cook him the dinner.

Michela ha fatto comprare la macchina al padre.

Michela had her father buy the car.

Michela si è fatta comprare la macchina dal padre.

Michela had her father buy her the car.

2. If the verb express a negative outcome for the *causer* subject/object, the reflexive causative is

used to state a co-responsibility of the *causer* in the negative outcome as in:

Hanno rubato il passaporto a Michele.

They stole Michele's passport.

Michele si e' fatto rubare il passaporto.

Michele had his passport stolen.

In the first case, Michele is just a victim, but the second sentence meaning imply it is also Michele fault his passport has been stolen.

3. Non *interventive* causative as in:

Mi sono lasciato andare.

I lost control, or I let myself go.

Si è lasciato cadere sulla poltrona.

He collapsed into the armchair.

3.7 Use of causative form to ask for permission.

As in English and Japanese, in Italian too is possible to use the causative to ask for permission or make a request as in:

Fammi parlare per favore.

Please, let me speak.

Per favore lasciarmi andare.

Please, let me go.

Again as in English and Japanese, these kinds of sentences are often used to give an indirect order to the subject *causer*, usually to not do something that would hinder the action the object *causee* is carrying out as in:

Fammi dormire, per favore.

Please, let me sleep.

Mi fai dormire?

Will you let me sleep?

3.8 Causative as transitive.

As in Japanese in Italian, there are some instances where the causative form of an intransitive verb conveys a transitive meaning. In these cases, the causative form is used to realize a transitive complementary variant of an intransitive verb.

Intransitive:

Questa macchina parte subito.

This car starts very fast.

Causative transitive:

Faccio partire la macchina.

I get the car going.

Intransitive:

L'aquilone vola alto

The kite flies high. Causative transitive:

Il bambino fa volare l'aquilone.

The kid flies the kite.

Intransitive:

L'aereo è atterrato in tempo.

The plane landed on time. Causative transitive:

Il pilota ha fatto atterrare l'aereo.

The pilot landed the plane.

Intransitive:

Questo programma non gira bene.

This program does not run well. Causative transitive:

Ci vuole molta memoria per far girare questo programma.

It takes a lot of memory to run this program.

Intransitive:

I suoi capelli sono cresciuti molto.

His hair grew a lot. Causative transitive:

Mi sono fatto crescere la barba perché odio radermi.

I grew a beard because I hate shaving.

3.9 The reflexive causative used in idiomatic expressions.

There are several instances of the causative form used in idiomatic expression.

These idiomatic expression usually cannot be translated in Japanese with an equivalent causative sentence in Japanese language. Some cases are:

Mi farò sentire

(I will make myself be heard from) You'll be hearing from me

Il freddo comincia a farsi sentire

(The cold started making itself being felt) Cold weather is setting in.

Fatti sentire!

Make yourself heard!

Lei non si è fatta vedere alla festa

(She did not make herself be seen at the party) She didn't turn up to the party.

Questo vino si fa bere/ questo vino si lascia bere.

(This wine let itself be drunk) This wine goes down well.

Si è lasciato andare.

He let himself go.

Si è fatto perdere la mano.

He lost control of the situation.

4 *An outline of the relevant differences and similarities between Japanese and Italian causative.*

	Japanese Causative	Italian Causative
Formation	Morphological causative with the use of an auxiliary verb affixed to the main verb Periphrastic causative with the use of the <i>morau</i> benefactive verb	<i>Fare, lasciare</i> , and other verbs are used as auxiliary verbs and will be conjugated to express subject, tense and mode.
causer/causee grammatical rules	In the case of the morphological causative, the <i>causer</i> is the subject of the sentence, the <i>causee</i> is the object and is marked by the <i>wo</i> if it is a direct object or by <i>ni</i> if it is an indirect object or is used to express permissive causative with intransitive verbs. In a periphrastic causative sentence the rules are inverted: the <i>causee</i> is the subject and the <i>causer</i> becomes indirect object marked by <i>ni</i> In a passive causative too the <i>causee</i> becomes the subject and the <i>causer</i> the indirect object marked by <i>ni</i> .	In a causative sentence the <i>causer</i> is the subject, the <i>causee</i> is the direct object (unmarked) or the indirect object marked either by <i>a</i> or <i>da</i> . In a passive causative the <i>causer</i> is marked by <i>da</i> the <i>causee</i> is marked by <i>a</i> . The object of the main verb becomes the subject.
Permissive/Coercitive distinction	The coercive nature of the causative can be expressed by the passive causative form. The permissive meaning of the causative can be expressed by the use of benefactive verbs affixed to the causative auxiliary. In case of an intransitive verb is also possible to mark the object (<i>causee</i>) with <i>ni</i> can to express permissive causation.	Coercive causative can be realized with the use of verbs as <i>costringere, obbligare, etc.</i> as auxiliary verbs. When these verbs are used the main verb must be preceded by <i>a</i> . The <i>causee</i> is always direct object of these auxiliary verbs. Permissive causative is realized mainly with the use of <i>lasciare</i> as causative auxiliary verb.

	Japanese Causative	Italian Causative
Causative with inanimate subject.	Although possible, the use of causative sentences with inanimate subject seems to be quite limited in Japanese.	Use of the causative with inanimate subject is quite common in Italian.
Use of causative to ask for permission and to state an intention.	In Japanese the causative is commonly used to ask politely permission. As in English, the permission request with a causative can be pragmatically used to express an order. In Japanese the causative sentence is commonly used to politely state the intention to realize an action. The <i>causee</i> is the subject of the sentences	In Italian the causative can be used to ask for permission. As in English and in Japanese, these permission requests can be used pragmatically as an indirect imperative. In Italian the causative is not used to state an intention.
Lexical causative	A few transitive verbs are sometimes defined as lexical causatives.	A very few verbs by their meaning could be considered lexical causatives
Reflexive causative	There are no morphological reflexive causative verbs in Japanese.	In reflexive causative sentences the <i>causer</i> is both subject of the sentence and direct object of the causative auxiliary verb. The reflexive causative sentences are commonly used in Italian to express the advantage gain (when the outcome is positive for the <i>causer</i>) or co-responsibility (when the outcome is negative for the <i>causer</i>) of the action carried out by the <i>causee</i> .
Passive causative.	The passive auxiliary verb can be affixed to the causative auxiliary verb to express coercive causative. In these kinds of sentences the <i>causee</i> is the subject and the <i>causer</i> the object marked by <i>ni</i> . The causative auxiliary verb usually is not affixed to the passive auxiliary verb.	In Italian, it is possible to realize a causative passive sentence using the verb <i>essere</i> as a passive auxiliary verb and usually <i>fare</i> or <i>lasciare</i> as causative auxiliary verbs. The conjugating verb becomes <i>essere</i> , followed by the past participle of the causative auxiliary and the infinitive of the verb stating the action. The <i>causer</i> is marked by <i>da</i> . The <i>causee</i> becomes the subject of the sentence with an intransitive verb, or is marked by <i>a</i> with a transitive verb.
Causative as transitive.	There are instances of causative of intransitive verbs used to realize a transitive form of the verb.	There are instances of causative of intransitive verbs used to realize a transitive form of the verb.

5 Japanese and Italian causative in textbooks and grammars for foreign students.

I examined a sample of grammars and textbooks to verify if there are differences the way the Japanese and Italian causative are explained to foreign students.

For the Italian causative, the sample is composed of 21 titles of which seven are published in Japan and written by Japanese authors and 14 are published in Italy and written by Italian authors.

The sample for the Japanese causative is composed of 11 textbooks or grammars, all but one² written by Japanese authors.

As it may be expected, the degree of thoroughness of the explanations varies between the titles, although it appears much more uniform for in the case of the Japanese causative.

Of the Japanese causative the following aspects are explained in almost all titles

1. Use of markers (*ni* and *wo*) for the *causee*, (but only half of texts explain the use of the marker *ni* with intransitive verbs to express permissive causative.)
2. Passive causative to express coercive causative
3. Causative followed by *benefactive* verbs (*morau*, *kureru*, *itadaku*) to express request or desire to fulfill an action.
4. Limit in the use of causative only with *causee* with lower social status than *causer*.

Only Ballhatchet H. & Kaiser S. (2004) & AJALT (1997), mention that in Japanese the causative with inanimate subject is very limited.

In the case of Italian causative the degree of thoroughness is much less uniform. In some texts the causative structure is explained together with other structures simply as a kind of phraseological verb, thus not even defining the concept of causative, other textbooks cover just the basic usage but don't mention other typical use of the causative in Italian (i.e. reflexive causative is explained in only four texts out of 21) and only two out of 21 cover the Italian causative quite thoroughly

The most striking and important difference between the Japanese and Italian causative in the way they are taught in textbooks for foreign students, is that while the causative structure is taught in all Japanese textbooks and grammars, the Italian causative is covered by only less than half of the sampled texts. In other words more than half of the sampled texts do not mention at all the causative sentence.

One possible explanation for this phenomenon could be that the causative is commonly used in Japanese while in Italian its use is marginal or exotic in common language and thus not covered by many textbooks. Although I do not have data to prove or disprove this possible explanation it does not seem to me that the Italian causative sentences are less common than the Japanese ones. On the contrary, considering the wider usage contexts of the Italian causative, (inanimate subject, reflexive causative) it is possible that the Italian causative is used more than the Japanese causative.

² Ballhatchet H & Kaiser S. Teach Yourself Japanese Complete Course 3rd Edition.

Another, and in my opinion, more likely explanation, could be found in the way the causative structure is formed in the two languages: while both the languages use an auxiliary verb to express the causative, the Italian auxiliary verb is *fare*, a verb that having the basic meaning of “to do”, “to make” is one of the most used verbs in Italian language with a huge number of acceptations and idiomatic usages. The auxiliary suffixal verb *saseru* on the contrary is only used in the formation of the causative. The existence of an exclusive auxiliary verb, probably make one more linguistically aware of the causative structure in the language and in the meantime it makes necessary the inclusion of the causative structure in the textbooks and grammars to explain the usage of this auxiliary verb.

For the same reason for example, all Italian textbooks explain the future tense, even if in common usage it is more and more often substituted by the present tense, while, since there is no future tense in Japanese almost no Japanese language textbook has a section to explain the formation of future sentences in Japanese, although, of course, it is possible and common to talk about future events in Japanese.

This opens the important question of what outline should be followed in deciding what has to be included in the textbooks for students of a second language. In my opinion too many textbooks, still have a too strong grammatical approach while a functional/pragmatic would be much more effective.

Conclusions

Learning a language as a L2 is not just learning the grammar and the words of a language to mentally translate sentences and expressions. What must be learned is how the concepts, the speaker wants to convey, are expressed in the target language, being aware that sometimes they could not be present at all in the language he/she is studying, while sometimes it could be necessary to learn new concepts that are not even present in one's culture but are quite common in the language being learned.

In comparing the causative structure in Japanese and Italian, I did try to prove this point.

What, in my opinion, is needed, beyond the classical grammars and dictionaries, is a catalog or a dictionary of core linguistic concepts that explains how (and if) they are expressed in the different languages.

The students should be trained in thinking what they are really communicating when they are using a grammatical structure, a set phrase or an idiomatic expression in their own language. Only after understanding it, can they learn how to express the same idea concept or feeling in the language they are learning, being aware that it could be expressed in a very different way or sometimes not at all.

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Causativeness in Japanese and Italian

Vincenzo MAURIELLO

Dept. of Intercultural Studies (Part-time)

Abstract

Due to the universality of the core concept it expresses, a causative structure can probably be found in every natural language. Causativeness is, however, a complex concept. Since it concerns the interaction between two agents, (the *causer* causing the action or change of state and the *causee* carrying out the action or change of state) the causativeness is interconnected to other basic linguistic concepts as transitivity, passivity and politeness. The aim of this paper is to try to examine the extension and complexity of the concept of linguistic causativeness by comparing the causative structure and its usage in two unrelated languages, such as Japanese and Italian.