

## Causative Morphology of Japanese and Indonesian Language

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### ABSTRACT

The research aims to describe the forms of causative verbs and their markers in the Japanese and Indonesian languages; causative sentences and their meanings in the Japanese and Indonesian languages, as well as the similarities and differences of causative constructions in the Japanese and Indonesian languages. The research applies structural linguistics, semantics, and contrastive analysis to compare causative verbs, causative constructions, and causative meanings in Japanese and Indonesian languages. The research findings show that the forms of causative verbs in the Japanese language can be divided into two types: morphological causative and lexical causative. Meanwhile, Indonesian causative verbs are categorised into three types: analytic causative, morphological causative, and lexical causative. The causative sentence constructions in Japanese and Indonesian are derived from non-causative sentences by changing the predicate into a causative verb. The Japanese morphological causative construction can be divided into three patterns: subject *ga* direct object *ni* V-*aseru*/V-*saseru* and subject *ga* direct object *o* V-*aseru*/V-*saseru* for intransitive bases, as well as subject *ga* nondirect object *ni* direct object *o* V-*aseru*/V-*saseru* for transitive bases—lexical causative construction in Japanese, subject *ga* direct object *o* causative verb. Unlike the Japanese language, the causative sentence constructions in Indonesian take three types: analytic causative pattern, morphological causative, and lexical patterns.

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## 1. Introduction

There are causative constructions in every language in the world. Described as a statement that includes an occurrence that results from something that happened or from an action taken by someone (Goddard, 1998). According to some experts, it's an argument that implies something happened because someone did something or because something else happened; in other words, if *x* hadn't happened, *y* wouldn't have happened (Imoh, 2014). Various kinds of causative constructions can be identified in various languages.

There are three different forms of causative constructions in languages: morphological, analytical, and lexical. There are two categories to review from semantic parameters: direct and indirect causative, and true and permissive causative. When a causative structure is an analytical causative, a distinct predicate reveals the causes; these causes are expressed by words separate from those that identify the causes. A

relationship generated by a morphological device, such as the use of affixations, between a non-causative predicate and a causative predicate is commonly referred to as a morphological causative. In other words, the lexicon that indicates cause and consequence is the only way to describe the predicate relationship that discloses cause and effect.

On the other hand, some languages only have two types of causative constructions: lexical and analytical. It is separated into two categories based on semantic parameters: direct and indirect causative, as well as actual causative and permissive. Analytical causation is a causative construction in which the cause is realized by a different term from the word that shows the cause (result); in this situation, there is a second predicate that conveys causation. A link between a non-causative and a causative predicate that is distinguished by morphological devices is known as morphological causation. Different kinds of causative constructions can be found in various languages.

It is separated into two categories based on semantic parameters: direct and indirect causative, as well as true causative and permissive. Analytical causality is a causative construction in which the cause is realized by an alternative term from the word that shows the cause (effect); in this case, there is a second predicate that shows causation. A link between a non-causative and a causative predicate that is distinguished by morphological devices is referred to as morphological causation.

Additionally, Song (2014) categorises causatives into three types: morphological, analytical, and lexical. A formal fusion continuous between the close proximity of the cause component predicate and the effect component predicate is formed by these three distinct forms of causation. Even though lexical causative verbs can't be analyzed in two morphemes, lexical causative is the optimum combination of two predicates. The following sentences provide examples of sentences:

- a. The bird passed away.
- b. The father killed the bird (cause of morphology)
- c. The bird died because of Dad. [Causative syntactic]
- d. Dad took out the bird. [Causative semantics]

Past research on this topic included Silaban et al.'s (2022) study on the Simalungun Batak Language Causative Construction. The Simalungun Batak language has three different forms of the causative, which are as follows:

- a. *Marojam pakean inang nokkon* 'Mom soaked the clothes earlier' (lexical causative)
- b. *la do mandabuhkon galas ai* 'He dropped the glass' (Causative Morphology)
- c. *Mamboli boras ia hu pasar* 'He buys rice at the market' (Analytical causative)

Furthermore, the 2020 study "Causative construction in Gayo language" by Mycellia et al. notes that there are two types of causative construction in Gayo language: lexical and analytical. The lack of affixes that can convert non-causatives into causatives accounts for the absence of morphological causatives. In the Gayo language, the causative verb *buét* 'make', with the predicate filled in, is what causes the analytical causative. The intransitive verb, transitive verb, and predicate adjective come next. The causative of the verb *mbuét* 'make' is responsible for the causative that remains; in the Gayo language, the causative can be constructed by means of the causative of the word *ngeni* 'order'. Since the two languages are not cognate, it is quite likely that the form and meaning of the correlated verbs in the two languages will differ substantially.

The comparison of causative morphology in Japanese and Indonesian is particularly compelling because Japanese has a rich and productive morphological causative system, primarily marked by the suffixes *-seru* and *-saseru*, which can encode

both direct and indirect causation in nuanced ways. In contrast, Indonesian, while also employing morphological strategies such as the use of affixes (*me-...-kan*, *me-...-i*, *memper-*), exhibits different distribution patterns and semantic constraints. Examining these two languages side by side enables a deeper understanding of how typologically distinct languages encode similar causal relationships through distinct morphological mechanisms. This contrast not only enriches cross-linguistic typological studies but also contributes to a broader understanding of causative construction universals and language-specific variations.

## 2. Theoretical Basis

For the most part, causation means "causing or making someone do something" or "causing something to become something different." He discovered that the connected subject is transported and serves as an object, but the causative suffix adds a subject that acts as an agent to an intransitive verb. In accordance with Shibatani (1976) and Goddard (1998), who contend that causation is a situation that occurs in two related events, one of which shows the cause. In addition to these consequences, Comrie (1989) declares that every causative situation involves two components of the situation or event: cause and effect. Although causality is viewed by Dixon (1994) as a transitive process, it makes sense that causative signals could become intransitive. There are three types of causative constructions: morphological, analytical, and lexical. The syntactic construction called the analytical causative has a unique verb.

The mechanisms that lead to morphological causes include affixation. Words like "kill," "send," and "feed" are examples of lexical causatives (Imoh, 2014; Shibatani, 1976). Productive suffixes, also known as morphological causatives, are used to convey this. According to typological distinctions, there are three types of causal constructions: morphological, syntactic/periphrastic, and semantic/lexical (Comrie, 1983, p.19–161). The relationship established by morphological markers between a causative and non-causative predicate can be referred to as morphological causation. The existence of two distinct predicates in articulating the concepts of cause and consequence is referred to as syntactic causation. The relationship between the concepts of cause and effect that are inclusively incorporated in a single predicate is known as semantic causation.

The mechanisms that lead to morphological causes include affixation. Words like "kill," "send," and "feed" are examples of lexical causatives (Imoh, 2014; Shibatani, 1976). Productive suffixes, which are additionally known as morphological causatives, are used to convey this. Meanwhile, lexical, morphological, and analytical causatives are the three categories into which causal types are divided. Furthermore, a detailed description of the grouping of kinds and types of causatives states that causative constructions fall into two categories. The number of clauses in a relationship structure determines that difference.

These categories can be grouped into two main types: morphological or lexical causatives and periphrastic or analytic causatives. Morphological/lexical causative constructions are generally mono-clausal, while periphrastic/analytic causatives are bi-clausal. Morphological or lexical causatives are often referred to as direct causatives. Based on formal characteristics, causatives can be classified into lexical, morphological, and analytical types.

According to Shirokawa (2001, p.126), causative expressions in Japanese generally carry the following meanings:

- ① Forcing or causing someone to do something.
- ② Allowing or permitting someone to do something.

These can be seen in the following example sentences:

1. Haha wa musuko ni issōkenmei benkyō saseru.  
母は息子に一生懸命勉強させる。  
'The mother makes her son study hard.'
2. Kodomo-tachi o asobasete oite, sono aida ni kaimono ni itte kuru.  
子供たちを遊ばせておいて、その間に買い物に行ってくる。  
'I let the children play while I go shopping.'

The first example shows a compulsive causative (requiring someone to act), while the second shows a permissive causative (granting someone permission to act). This distinction is supported by Koyama (2001, p. 140), who explains that in Japanese grammar, the term *shieki* (使役) encompasses both coercion and permission. In practice, *shieki* forms are created from transitive or intransitive verbs by adding the suffixes *-seru* or *-saseru*, which indicate the idea of making someone do something or letting someone do something.

Example:

3. Sensei wa gakusei-tachi o hashiraseru.  
先生は学生たちを走らせる。  
'The teacher makes the students run.'

Despite its apparent simplicity, learners of Japanese—regardless of their level—often struggle to fully understand *shieki*. Common mistakes include incorrect particle usage or inappropriate verb forms, as shown below:

1. Seitotachi ga sensei o okoraseru.  
生徒たちが先生を怒らせる。  
'The students make the teacher angry.'  
(Incorrect version used "ni" instead of "o" for the object particle.)
2. Watashitachi wa taiiku no sensei ni hashirasemashita.  
私たちは体育の先生に走らせました。  
'The sports teacher made us run.'  
(An incorrect form might use "hashirare mashita," which is the *shieki-ukemi* [causative-passive] form and changes the meaning.)

Another common error is the omission or misuse of *shieki* in contexts requiring it:

3. Tarō ga Hanako o butai ni agaraseta.  
太郎が花子を舞台に上がらせた。  
'Taro made Hanako go up onto the stage.'
4. Tarō ga isu o butai ni agaraseta.  
太郎が椅子を舞台に上がらせた。  
'Taro raised the chair onto the stage.'

In example (3), the sentence correctly uses morphological *shieki* because the causee (*Hanako*) is animate and capable of performing the action. In example (4), although grammatically possible, the meaning is no longer a true *shieki* in the sense of "making someone do something," since the object (*chair*) is inanimate and does not act

autonomously. True *shieki* typically requires an animate causee capable of volitional action.

### 3. Method

The method used in this research is a descriptive method and is presented qualitatively. What this means is that the data obtained is not judged as true or false; it is presented as it is, in accordance with the linguistic facts obtained. The use of this descriptive method aligns with Sudaryanto's (2015, pp. 131-143) explanation, namely that the data obtained are the result of the author's observations, without judging whether the data are right or wrong. The stages of this research are divided into three main stages: the data provision stage, the data analysis stage, and the presentation of data analysis results.

The implementation of this study's research began with the collection of data using the note-taking method (Sudaryanto, 2015, pp. 131-143). Some of the techniques employed in this method include tapping techniques, active listening, free listening, recording, and note-taking. The data described in this article were obtained from *Minna's book, Nihongo chukyu*, which aligns with the interests of this research. The flow of providing data goes through at least several stages.

The data in this research are written sentences that utilise causative constructions in Japanese, as found in the book *Minna Nihongo chukyu*. The linguistic method used to collect data in this research is the bibliographic method, namely by recording sentences that use causative constructions in the book *Minna Nihongo chukyu*. After the data is obtained, it is analyzed and grouped using the Morphological Causative theory in Typology studies. Meanwhile, Indonesian language data was obtained from the translation of the book *Minna Nihongo chukyu* into Indonesian.

### 4. Results and discussion

This study has examined the intrinsic elements of Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein, with particular emphasis on characterization and the psychological development of the main character. Through a qualitative analysis of selected chapters, it becomes evident that Victor Frankenstein is portrayed as a complex and evolving character, whose internal and external conflicts are deeply intertwined with the themes of ambition, ethical responsibility, and human limitations.

In Japanese, there are two types of causatives: lexical causatives and productive morphological causatives. Lexical causatives are transitive verbs that have an inherently causative meaning, which are always paired with intransitive verbs. Morphological causative is a form of causative with the addition of the causative morpheme in the form of the suffix *~saseru* 「させる」 to the basic verb, known as *shieki*. The term "*shieki*" in Japanese is a form of verb that means ordering or making someone do an activity (Sutedi, 2003, p. 126). Because causative sentences exist in every language, there are times when students will tend to make foreign language causative sentences with the same meaning and steps as causative sentences in their mother tongue.

#### 4.1. Morphological causative constructions in Japanese

Based on the research that has been carried out, it can be seen that in Japanese, the morphological causative structure is:

##### 4.1.1. O-causative and ni-causative

The basic structure of a causative verb is: Subject Cause (N1) *wa* actor (N2) *ni* / *o* action. A "causal subject" is a subject that causes something to happen. Usually followed by the particle *wa* or *ga*. For "doers" or those who carry out an action followed by *ni* or *o* particles, this is marked with NPs. Meanwhile, "action" is a causative (transitive/intransitive) verb. This causative form is only used if N2 is of a lower level than N1.

Shibatani (1990, p. 309) "[o-causative] implies that the causative intent is ignored by the person who causes something, while in [ni-causative], the person who causes something causes the caused to carry out the event caused." In general, causation in o-causative has a more compelling interpretation than in ni-causative. For clarity, causative sentences are divided into two.

#### 4.1.2. Causative Intransitive Verbs

In causative intransitive verbs, the actor is designated with the particle *o* 「*wo*」 and is followed by a causative intransitive verb.

- *Buchō wa Katō-san o Ōsaka e shucchō-saseru.*  
部長は加藤さんを大阪へ出張させる。  
'The head of the department told Mr. Kato to go to Osaka.'
- *Watashi wa musume o jiyū ni asobaseta.*  
私は娘を自由に遊ばせた。  
'I let my daughter play freely.'

#### 4.1.3. Causative Transitive Verbs

In transitive causative verbs, the actor is designated with the particle *ni* and is followed by a transitive causative verb.

- *Watashi wa musume ni asagohan no junbi o tetsudawaseru.*  
私は娘に朝ご飯の準備を手伝わせる。  
'I told my daughter to help prepare breakfast.'
- *Sensei wa seito ni jiyū ni iken o iwaseta.*  
先生は生徒に自由に意見を言わせた。  
'The teacher allowed the students to express their opinions freely.'

##### 4.1.3.1. The Double-o Constraint

O-causative with transitive verbs always produces ungrammatical sentences because of an obstacle called Double-o. This can be seen in the following sentence:

✗ *Haha ga Tarō o hon o yomaseta.*  
母が太郎を本を読ませた。  
'Mother told Taro to read a book.'

In summary, the Double-o Constraint prevents clauses from having two NPs being marked with the accusative case particle *o*. Thus, in the causative sentence above. This means that whenever a verb subcategory to NP marked with an accusative case particle, an o-causative with the verb produces an ungrammatical sentence.

The Double-o constraint is not a specific constraint for the formation of causative sentences, however. Instead, it is a more general obstacle that finds application



elsewhere—for example, sentences with verbal nouns. For example, verbal nouns can appear with the verb "*suru*" (meaning "to do"). In the latter case, the verbal noun appears with the Accusative case particle *o*. Both cases are depicted below.

- a) *Sensei ga kenkyū suru.*  
先生が研究する。  
'The teacher does research.'
- b) *Sensei ga kenkyū o suru.*  
先生が研究をする。  
'The teacher does research.'

The complex verb in (a), *kenkyuu-suru*, can be thought of as transitive (requiring an object), and is therefore often accompanied by a direct NP object, as in the Accusative case *o*.

#### 4.1.4. Passive Causative Sentences

Causative and passive constructions can be combined to form causative passive sentences. That is, the causative morpheme (s)-ase and the passive morpheme -(r) will both suffix to the verbal root at the same time. Changes in causative passive verbs can be written as shown in the table.

Table 1. Conjugation of Causative and Causative Passive Japanese Verbs (Present and Past)"

Group	Verb	Causative Verb	Causative Passive Verb	
			Present	Past
I	<i>Iku</i>	<i>ikaseru</i>	<i>ikasareru</i>	<i>ikasareta</i>
	* <i>hanasu</i>	* <i>hanasaseru</i>	* <i>hanasaserareru</i>	* <i>hanasaserareta</i>
II	<i>taberu</i>	<i>tabesaseru</i>	<i>tabesaserareru</i>	<i>tabesaserareta</i>
II	<i>Kuru</i>	<i>kosaseru</i>	<i>kosaserareru</i>	<i>kosaserareta</i>
	<i>suru</i>	<i>saseru</i>	<i>saserareru</i>	<i>saserareta</i>

From the table above, it can be concluded that changing the causative verb to the passive form is as follows:

- Group I: [i] changes to [asare-ru] after the verbal root.  
Example: [*hanasu*] → [*hanasaseru*] (causative), [*hanasaserareru*] (causative passive).
- Group II: verbal roots take the suffix [sase-rare-ru].
- Group III: [*kuru*] → [*kosaserareru*]; [*suru*] → [*saserareru*].

When a causative sentence is in the passive form, the causative morpheme appears to the left of the base of the passive verb. The relative order between causative and passive morphemes is reversed.

Causative sentence:

*Tomodachi wa watashi ni shukudai o tetsudawaseta.*

*My friend asked me to do an assignment.*

Passive causative sentence:

*Watashi wa tomodachi ni shukudai o tetsudawasareta.*

*I was asked by a friend to do an assignment.*

#### 4.2. Morphological causative construction in Indonesian

In Indonesian, causative verbs are usually formed by adding affixes to base words, changing their grammatical meaning. For example, the combination of the affix *me-kan* can mean "to make" or express the reason someone performs an activity (Kridalaksana, 1996, p.53).

Kridalaksana (1996, pp. 84–85) also notes the existence of the affix *me-kan* with a causative meaning, as in *mempertandingkan* (to compete), *mempertahankan* (to defend), *mendengarkan* (to listen), etc.

According to Kridalaksana (2009, p. 255), causation concerns actions (verbs) that cause a situation or event. For example, in the sentence *mengaktifkan gerakan pramuka* ("to activate the scout movement"), the meaning is "to make active."

Sneddon (2004, p.74) and Chaer (2012, p. 234) state that some *-kan* affixes have a causative function and can be derived from base verbs, adjectives, or nouns.

Examples:

- His behavior embarrassed his mother. (*Perilakunya mempermalukan ibunya*)  
→ *Embarrassed* means "to make ashamed." (*mempermalukan*)
- Siti has cleaned the room. (*Siti telah membersihkan kamar*)  
→ *Cleaned* means "to make clean." (*membersihkan*)
- The government will reforest the area. (*Pemerintah akan menghijaukan kembali daerah itu*)  
→ *Reforest* means "to make into a forest." (*menghutan-kan/menhijaukan kembali*)

The formation of causative verbs in Indonesian can thus be derived from verbs, adjectives, or nouns, using affixes such as *me-kan*, *memper-kan*, and *-kan* with causative meaning. Kridalaksana (1996, p.53) gives examples:

- The pilot flew a state-of-the-art model aircraft made in America. (*Pilot itu menerbangkan pesawat model canggih buatan Amerika*)
- With great difficulty she raised her five children. (*Dengan susah payah ia membesarkan kelima anaknya*)
- We will record the results of the seminar. (*Kami akan mencatat/merekam hasil seminar tersebut*)

#### 4.3. Causative differences in the morphology of Japanese and Indonesian

There are differences found in sentence models causative verbs (*shieki*) in Japanese and Indonesian include:

1. In Japanese, causative verbs (*shieki*) are placed at the end of the sentence as predicates, preceded by the activity/event in causative form, marked with suffixes *-seru* (〜せる) or *-saseru* (〜させる). In Indonesian, causative verbs are



placed after the subject and act as the cause. In Japanese, they can be formed from either transitive or intransitive verbs, but in Indonesian, they can only be formed from transitive verbs.

2. Indonesian causative verbs can be accompanied by adverbs (e.g., necessity), but not in Japanese.
3. In Japanese, the subject (cause) is generally animate; in Indonesian, it can be inanimate without changing the causative meaning.
4. Japanese causative verbs can be combined with other sentence patterns (e.g., *te kudasai*, *ukemi*, *yarimorai*) without losing their causative meaning; this is not the case in Indonesian.
5. Japanese causative verbs from *tadoushi* have two objects, marked with "ni" and "wo", while those from *jidoushi* have only one object, marked with "wo"; in Indonesian, there is only one object.
6. In Japanese, causative verbs can only be formed from base verbs; in Indonesian, they can be formed from verbs, adjectives, or nouns.
7. Japanese causative sentences can combine with *ukemi* and *yarimorai* patterns; Indonesian causative sentences cannot.
8. Not all *me-kan* or *-kan* forms in Indonesian are causative, but in Japanese, causatives are always marked by *-seru* or *-saseru*.

#### 4.5. Morphological causative similarities in Japanese and Indonesian

The similarities obtained in the causative verb sentence model of Japanese and Indonesian include:

1. Both use affixes to form causative meaning (*shieki*), i.e., making someone do something.
2. Both can have the denotative meaning "to cause."
3. Both can express a situation involving a person's emotions or feelings.
4. Objects in sentences with causative verbs must be present in both languages.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the research conducted, it is known that the form of causative verbs in Japanese can be divided into two types, namely morphological causative and lexical causative. Meanwhile, Indonesian causative verbs are categorised into three types: analytical causative, morphological causative, and lexical causative. The construction of causative sentences in Japanese and Indonesian is derived from non-causative sentences by changing the predicate into a causative form of the verb. Morphological causative constructions can be divided into three patterns: the subject *ga* direct object pattern *ni* V-*aseru*/V-*saseru*, the subject *ga* direct object pattern *ni* V-*aseru*/V-*saseru* and the subject *ga* direct object pattern *o* V-*aseru*/V-*saseru* for the intransitive basis, and the subject *ga* indirect object *ni* direct object pattern *o* V-*aseru*/V-*saseru* for the transitive basis.

The lexical causative construction pattern is subject to a direct object or causative verb. In contrast to Japanese, the construction of causative sentences in Indonesian is divided into three categories: first, analytical causative sentence construction, second, morphological causative sentence construction, and third, lexical causative sentence construction.

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