

Ryuichi Washio : *Interpreting Voice : A Case Study in  
Lexical Semantics*

Kaitakusha, 1995. xi + 286

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1.

This book comprises a typological study of the causative and the direct and indirect passive constructions, focusing on the passive reading of the causative construction. In many languages the causative construction can express a passive meaning under certain conditions. Thus, the question is how it is possible for the causative construction to have both causative and passive interpretations. The proposed analysis of this phenomenon is that the passive and causative senses share a basic conceptual structure, from which the full representations of the two senses are derived by a set of general principles interpreting the affectedness relations between Participants and Events. One of the very interesting theoretical points about this proposal is that one conceptual structure can be mapped onto another by some general principles: the theory of lexical conceptual structure is not static as it is generally assumed to be, but dynamic. I quite agree with him on this point: semantics is generative, not static or interpretive.

2.

The main topic of this book is a cross-linguistic study of the causative / passive ambiguity of the causative construction with special reference to the indirect passive in Japanese. The following English example in (1) shows the passive / causative ambiguity, which corresponds to two different constructions in Japanese as shown in (2):

(1) John had his watch stolen by Mary.

- (2) a. John-ga Mary-ni tokei-o nusum-ase-ta.  
John-Nom Mary-Dat watch-Acc steal-Cause-Past  
'John had Mary steal a watch.'  
b. John-ga Mary-ni tokei-o nusum-are-ta.  
John-Nom Mary-BY watch-Acc steal-Pass-Past  
'John had a watch stolen by Mary.'

This sort of ambiguity observed in (1) is a highly general cross-linguistic phenomenon, being observed in Korean, Mongolian, and Chinese as well as in Indo-European languages such as English and French. This fact suggests that the

causative / passive ambiguity observed in the causative construction reflects some general properties of natural language. Therefore the present study focuses on the question how it is possible for one and the same syntactic form, namely, a causative form to express both a causative and a passive interpretation.

As shown in (2b), the interpretation that is expressed by the causative construction in English and other languages is expressed by the passive construction in Japanese. The author calls this phenomenon a constructional mismatch. Then, another question is: how the constructional mismatch occurs.

Before going into these two questions, let us look at the syntactic and semantic properties of the indirect passive construction in Japanese and the causative construction in English.

The author assumes that the passive morpheme in indirect passive has its own subject and induces suppression of the external theta-role of the embedded clause. Under this assumption, the indirect passive sentence like (3) is assigned the S-structure shown in (4):

- (3) sensei-ga            seito-ni            kuruma-o ker-are-ta.  
       The teacher-Nom his student-BY car-Acc    kick-Pass-Past  
       'The teacher had his car kicked by his student.'
- (4) [<sub>S</sub> sensei-ga [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>S</sub> seito-ni [<sub>VR</sub> *e* [<sub>VP</sub> kuruma-o ker- ]]] -rare-ta ]]

This structure shows that the Japanese indirect passive is a bi-clausal construction whose matrix subject is interpreted as being affected by the embedded clause.

The English causative construction in (5) has much the same structural properties as the Japanese indirect passive, as shown in (6):

- (5) Mary had her camera confiscated by the police.
- (6) [<sub>S</sub> Mary [<sub>VP</sub> had [<sub>S</sub> her camera [<sub>VP</sub> confiscated *e* by the police ]]]]

Comparing the indirect passive morpheme *-rare-* in (4) and the causative *have* in (5), we find that *-rare-* both assigns an "extra" subject and suppresses the external theta-role of the embedded clause while *have* does the former job and *-en* does the latter one in (5). Just like (1), (5) has the passive / causative ambiguity.

The author claims that the notions Exclusion and Inclusion play a crucial role in accounting for a passive interpretation of the causative construction. To clarify these two notions, consider the following sentence:

- (7) John-ga    Mary-ni    zibun-no kodomo-o home-rare-ta.  
       John-Nom Mary-BY self-Poss child-Acc    admire-Pass-Past  
       'John had his child admired by Mary.'

When *kodomo* is John's child, the author says that this sentence has a neutral non-adversative interpretation, whereas when *kodomo* is Mary's child, it has an adversative reading. In the former case, the subject is "included" in the event described by the VP by having a binding relation with the object. However, in the latter case, since the subject has nothing to do with the object, it is "excluded" from the event described by the VP: In this Exclusion case the Japanese indirect passive has an adversative interpretation.

The Exclusion / Inclusion distinction can provide an account of the difference between the following Japanese and Korean examples:

- (8) a. John-ga Mary-ni kami-o kir-are-ta.  
       John-Nom Mary-BY hair-Acc cut-Pass-Past  
       'John had his hair cut by Mary.'
- b. John-i Mary-eykey melithel-ul kkakk-i-ess-ta.  
       John-Nom Mary-BY hair-Acc cut-Pass-Past-Plain  
       'John had his hair cut by Mary.'

In the Korean sentence, the object 'hair' can be only John's, but in the Japanese example, it can also be Mary's. In order to account for this difference, the author suggests that in Korean (indirect) passives the subject be related to the object either by binding some part of it or being in some pragmatic relation to it. Then these observations lead to the following descriptive generalization:

- (9) If the subject is "excluded" in a passive structure, then
- the subject (or the entire structure) fails to be licensed in Korean;
  - the subject receives an adversative interpretation in Japanese.

This generalization makes the correct prediction that Korean has no intransitive passive like (10a), whose Japanese counterpart is completely acceptable as in (10b):

- (10) a. \*haksayng-i ai-eykey wul-li-ess-ta.  
       b. gakusei-ga kodomo-ni nak-are-ta.  
       The student-Nom child-BY cry-Pass-Past  
       'The child cried, which affected the student.'

Though the subject of Korean passives must have some binding or pragmatic relation with the object, since intransitive verbs have no object, condition (9a) cannot be satisfied in (10a). Then the Exclusion / Inclusion distinction plays a crucial role in interpreting Korean and Japanese indirect passives.

This distinction is also crucial in accounting for a passive reading of the

French causative construction:

- (11) a. Marie s'est fait arrêter par la police.  
           'Mary had herself arrested by the police.'  
       b. Marie le faire arrêter par la police.  
           'Mary had him arrested by the police.'

(11a) has as the embedded subject a reflexive pronoun bound by the matrix subject, and then the matrix subject is "included" in the event by having a binding relation with the reflexive pronoun. On the other hand, (11b) has a pronoun as the embedded subject which has no binding relation with the matrix subject, and then the matrix subject is "excluded" from the embedded event. (11a) allows a passive reading while (11b) does not. Thus, the generalization for the French causative construction would be like the following:

- (12) a. The causative construction can potentially express both passive and causative senses;  
       b. if the subject is excluded from the event, then only a causative sense is possible;  
       c. if the subject is included in the event, then a passive sense is possible.

Since this generalization applies to such languages as Chinese, Korean, Mongolian, etc., in addition to French, it can be considered to reflect some universal properties of natural language. Then, the question is why (12) holds in natural language.

The author proposes a lexical-semantics approach to this question: The basic idea is that both causative and passive readings (including those of the indirect passive) are derived from the same basic lexical conceptual structure by some general principles, and thus the ambiguity of the causative construction follows. The difference between causative and passive readings lies in the direction of affectedness, as is clear from the following sentence:

- (13) Jean s'est fait broyer sa voiture par un camion.  
       'Jean had his car smashed by a truck.'

In the causative reading, the subject is in an affecting relation to the embedded event, namely, has a causative relation, whereas in the passive reading, the subject is in a relation of "being affected" to the event. (13) has a basic conceptual structure like (14a) from which (14c) is derived via (14b); (14c) is a conceptual structure for the causative reading. (15b), which is a passive reading for (13), is also derived from (14a) via (15a):

(14) Causative reading:

- a. 
$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} \dots \\ \text{AFF} ([\text{TRUCK}], [\text{CAR}]) \\ \text{AFF} ([\text{JEAN}]) \end{array} \right]$$
- b. 
$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} \dots \\ \text{AFF} ([\text{TRUCK}], [\text{CAR}]) \\ \text{AFF} ([\text{JEAN}], \ ) \end{array} \right]$$
- c. 
$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} \text{CAUSE} ([\alpha], \left[ \begin{array}{c} \dots \\ \text{AFF} ([\text{TRUCK}], [\text{CAR}]) \end{array} \right]) \\ \text{AFF} ([\text{JEAN}]^\alpha, \ ) \end{array} \right]$$

(15) Passive reading:

- a. 
$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} \dots \\ \text{AFF} ([\text{TRUCK}], [\text{CAR}]) \\ \text{AFF} ( \ , [\text{JEAN}]) \end{array} \right]$$
- b. 
$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} \dots \\ \text{AFF} ([\text{TRUCK}], [\text{CAR}]^\beta) \\ \text{AFF} ([\beta], [\text{JEAN}]) \end{array} \right]$$

The basic conceptual structure in (14a) is converted to either (14b) in which JEAN has the status of Actor or (15a) in which JEAN receives the status of Affectee. To these derived conceptual structures the following principles apply depending on the status of JEAN:

(16) If X is an argument of the main AFF function and its relation to a subordinate Event (= E) is not specified, then

Actor Principle : (a) relate X to E as the Instigator of E, if X is Actor

Affectee Principle : (b) relate X to the Affectee of E, if X is Affectee.

Since JEAN in (14b) is an actor, (16a) derives (14c) from (14b). On the other hand, since JEAN in (15a) is an affectee, (16b) derives (15b) from (15a). Since the Affectee Principle assigns the  $\beta$ -binding, as shown in (15b), which indicates the inclusion relation, it can account for the fact that the passive meaning of the causative construction is induced by the inclusion relation.

The author claims that in Japanese, the indirect passive has a neutral reading under the inclusion environments, while it receives an adversative reading under the exclusion environments:

- (17) a. boku-wa tuma-ni syorui-o moyas-are-ta.  
 I -Top wife-BY documents-Acc burn-Pass-Past  
 'I had the documents burned by my wife.'
- b. 
$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} \dots \\ \text{AFF} ([\text{TUMA}], [\text{SYORUI}]^{\beta}) \\ \text{AFF} ([\beta], [\text{BOKU}]) \end{array} \right]$$
- c. 
$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} \dots \\ \text{AFF} ([\text{TUMA}], [\text{SYORUI}]) \\ \text{AFF} ([\gamma], [\text{BOKU}]) \end{array} \right]^{\gamma}$$

The indirect passive in Japanese has the same basic conceptual structure as (14a), from which (17b) is derived by the Affectee Principle which assigns the  $\beta$ -binding. This structure shows a neutral interpretation. On the other hand, in (17c) the main AFF function has the first argument  $\gamma$ , which is bound to the whole embedded event: since the affectee is excluded from the event, (17c) shows an adversative reading. The  $\gamma$ -binding is accomplished by the following principle which is peculiar to Japanese:

- (18) If X is an affectee that is completely disconnected from the subordinate Event, E, then interpret it by relating it to E itself.

This principle accounts for the intransitive passive in Japanese. (19a), for example, is assigned the conceptual structure in (19b).

- (19) a. John-ga Mary-ni nak-are-ta.  
 John-Nom Mary-BY cry-Pass-Past  
 'Mary cried, which affected John.'
- b. 
$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} \text{CRY} ([\text{MARY}])^{\gamma} \\ \text{AFF} ([\gamma], [\text{JOHN}]) \end{array} \right]$$

Since principle (18) is not available to French and other languages, no counterpart of (19a) can be allowed in these languages.

Summarizing, the causative and passive readings of the causative construction in French and other languages are derived from a basic lexical conceptual structure of the causative construction by the Actor Principle and the Affectee Principle, respectively. The asymmetry in interpretation of the causative construction, i.e., that the causative reading is always possible, while the passive reading can be obtained under certain restricted circumstances, is accounted for by the inclusion restriction which is imposed only on the passive reading.

The Japanese indirect passive shares with the causative construction the struc-

ture like (15a), to which the Affectee Principle applies, deriving something like (15b). Thus, the constructional mismatch, namely, the fact that the causative construction in French and other languages sometimes corresponds to the passive construction in Japanese, can be accounted for. The Actor Principle and the Affectee Principle are responsible for the ambiguity of the causative construction and the constructional mismatch.

3.

Discussion: The author claims that the passive morpheme *-rare-* has its own external theta-role and presents three pieces of evidence to support this claim: the obligatoriness of the subject, the non-focal neutral interpretation, and the impossibility of “control into focus.” Of these I will examine only the last argument here.

The problem is the status of PRO in the following indirect passive embedded in a control structure:

- (20) Takao-ga [PRO sensei-ni musuko-o home-rare-yoo]-to si-ta.  
 Takao-Nom teacher-BY son-Acc admire-Pass COMP try-Past

If PRO is a focus subject (one of the multiple subjects), but not a subject assigned a theta-role, we would expect that the same type of control is also possible in such a focus construction as (21):

- (21) Takao-ga musuko-ga syussesesi-yoo to si-ta.  
 Takao-Nom son-Nom succeed-try to do-Past  
 ‘As to Takao, his son tried to succeed.’

Though this sentence is acceptable, its structure should be (22a), but not (22b) as would be expected if the control into focus is possible:

- (22) a. Takao-ga [musuko-ga [PRO syussesesi-yoo] -to si-ta].  
 b. \*Takao-ga [PRO [musuko-ga syussesesi-yoo] -to si-ta].

Thus, the author says, “Therefore, the PRO in (20) must be analyzed as having the status of a subject, to which some theta-role is assigned.” However, this argument does not work since the structure of (22b) itself is not legitimate as a structure of control whether control into focus is possible or not.

The author claims that the indirect passive in Japanese has a neutral reading under the inclusion environments, whereas it has an adversative reading under the exclusion environments. However, this distinction is not so clear to me and many other informants. I suspect that whether the indirect passive has a neutral reading or an adversative reading may largely depend upon pragmatic factors.

The author also points out that the intransitive passive in Japanese has only an adversative meaning, which is accounted for by  $\gamma$ -binding as shown in (17c). However, the following sentences do not seem to show any adversity.

- (23) a. kaze-ni fukar-ete, kimochi-ga ii.  
 The wind-BY breeze-Pass, feeling-Nom good  
 'It is breezing, which makes me feel good.'  
 b. akachan-ni hohoema-rete, ureshiku-natta.  
 The baby-BY smile-Pass, (I) happy-feel-Past  
 'The baby smiled on me, which made me feel happy.'

If his account of an adversative reading by (17c) is correct, it remains to be seen why an adversative reading can be obtained only when an Affectee is related to the entire Event and why this relation is not available to French and other languages.

4.

This book is carefully written and provides a large amount of information and a fair number of significant insights concerning voice systems. It also gives us a deeper understanding of the notion of "affectedness" of an entity as a principal determining factor in voice alternations. This book will surely make a great contribution to the future study of voice.

#### References

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