

Looking at Japanese Causatives from a French Perspective

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We offer evidence that the universally accepted view that Japanese has two homophonous causative morphemes (s)ase, which differ in their interpretation ('let' vs. 'make') and in the case pattern they induce (Dative Causee with 'let' (s)ase, vs. Accusative Causee with 'make' (s)ase) is inadequate. We observe that the assignment of the Dative to the Causee is only possible with embedded verbs selecting internal arguments, and that all Dative Causees are subject to an animacy restriction: Japanese shares these two features with French, which has only one causative morpheme faire, and in which Dativization is an effect of transitivity.