

**Only one (s)ase:  
Looking at Japanese causatives from a French perspective**

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## **1 Introduction**

Analytic Japanese causative constructions contain a specific morpheme, *-(s)ase*, which attaches to a verbal stem.<sup>1</sup> It is generally assumed (Harley 1996, 2005, Kuno 1973, Kuroda 1965, 1978, Miyagawa 1999, Shibatani 1973, 1990) that Japanese has two homophonous *-(s)ase* morphemes, and that this dualism explains why subjects of intransitive stems affixed with *-(s)ase* can be either Dative or Accusative-marked; moreover, this received view holds that the two *-(s)ase* not only induce different Case patterns, but also have a different meaning, i.e. one denotes permissive causation or lack of obstruction (it is thus an approximate equivalent of English ‘*let*’), while the other denotes inducing or coercive causation (an equivalent of ‘*make*’). In this paper, we challenge this dichotomy, and propose that Dativization in Japanese is an effect of the presence of an Accusative object of the stem, just like it is in Romance. Our ultimate goal, besides downsizing the set of entities postulated in Japanese, is thus to pave the way for a unified account of causatives across languages.

In section 2, we present the main tenets of the (dualistic) received view; in section 3, we detail our (monistic) account; in section 4, we propose empirical generalizations which refute the predictions of the received view; section 5 draws a parallel with French; section 6 deals with the exceptional behavior of directed motion verbs.

## **2 The received view**

Let us first present the consensus that past researchers have reached on the topic of Japanese causative constructions. The received view distinguishes two cases, which we will consider in turn, namely intransitive and transitive verbal stems.

### **2.1 The case-meaning correlation**

1. First, the received view holds that when the stem is intransitive (in the sense that it doesn’t have an overt object), the two Cases that the subject-DP of the stem (henceforth the Causee) can receive, *viz* Dative and Accusative, map onto two different interpretations of *-(s)ase*, namely a permissive one and a coercive one (approximately equivalent to the interpretation of ‘*let*’ and ‘*make*’ causatives in English). The Case alternation associated with a meaning difference has led past researchers

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<sup>1</sup>In this paper, we do not discuss the so-called lexical causative, cf. Harley (1996).

to postulate the existence of two homophonous *-(s)ase* morphemes or two subcategorization frames of a single *-(s)ase*.

The received view produces examples like (1) to support the claim that with intransitive stems, there is a bijective relation between the two interpretations and the two Cases on the Causee-DP:

- (1) *Ken-ga Naomi-{ni/o} ik-ase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC go-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken let/made Naomi to go.’

2. Second, when the stem is transitive (i.e. has an overt Accusative object), the Causee-DP is obligatorily Dative-marked:

- (2) *Ken-ga Naomi-{ni/\*o} hon-o yom-ase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC book-ACC read-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken made/let Naomi read a book.’

This is not to say that the ‘*make*’ *-(s)ase* becomes unavailable, but rather that some extraneous factor blocks the Accusative marking which it normally induces, thus making the two constructions string identical. This new factor is the so-called Double-O Constraint (for a detailed discussion of the constraint, see Poser 2002).

- (3) **Double-O Constraint:** A derivation is marked as ill-formed if it terminates in a surface structure which contains two occurrences of NPs marked with *o* both of which are immediately dominated by the same VP node (Harada 1973).

In sum, for the received view, there are two sources for the obligatory Dative marking observed with transitive stems: one is the idiosyncratic property of the ‘*let*’ *-(s)ase*, and the other is a ban on the co-occurrence of an Accusative object and of the Accusative Causee normally imposed by the ‘*make*’ *-(s)ase*. Sentence (2), in which the Case difference is neutralized, is ambiguous between the ‘*let*’ and the ‘*make*’ interpretations.

Table (1) below summarizes the relation between Case marking and interpretation from the perspective of the received view.

	‘ <i>Let</i> ’ <i>(s)ase</i>		‘ <i>Make</i> ’ <i>(s)ase</i>	
	Causee-DP	DO	Causee-DP	DO
Intransitive stem	<b>Dative</b>	—	<b>Accusative</b>	—
Transitive stem	<b>Dative</b>	Accusative	<del><b>Accusative</b></del> <b>Dative</b>	Accusative

**Table 1:** How the Received View Cuts the Causative Pie

## 2.2 Two predictions

Two main predictions follow, which we will use as a touchstone to determine the empirical adequacy of the received view.

- Prediction 1: The availability of Dative Causees is not contingent on the presence of an Accusative object: this is because the ‘*let*’ morpheme *-(s)ase* correlates with the Dative Case, regardless of the transitivity of the stem;
- Prediction 2: Accusative Causees are incompatible with a ‘*let*’ interpretation: in effect, there is only one source of the Accusative Case, viz the coercive interpretation.

In the following section, we offer our own account, which is simpler and does not endorse the case-meaning correlation.

## 3 The proposal

In this paper, we argue that it is not necessary to posit, as is actually done in all the literature on the topic, two homophonous causative morphemes *-(s)ase*. The traditional dualism capitalizes on apparent differences in the interpretation of sentences, which seem to correlate with the Case of the Causee. Our goal is to show that this purported semantic difference is not grounded and that there is no case-meaning correlation (see section 4). We argue instead that Dativization in causative constructions is (almost) always triggered by the presence of a (possibly covert) Accusative object.<sup>2</sup> Our most contentious claim is thus that although Dative Causees may seem to appear in the absence of an Accusative object, in a vast majority of cases this object is in fact present albeit silent. We admit the existence of a small number of intransitive (i.e. objectless) stems that do co-occur with Dative Causees, to wit *ik-u* ‘go’ and *ku-ru* ‘come’, and claim that these have a special behavior (see section 6).

1. The first step in the reasoning relates to intransitive stems: by definition, these are unable to assign Accusative; however when the stem is intransitive, the Causee-DP can (and in fact must, except with *ku-ru* ‘come’ and *ik-u* ‘go’) receive Accusative. We conclude from this that *-(s)ase* itself is responsible for assigning Accusative to the subject of the stem by Agree (no movement is needed, we assume that the probe has no EPP feature).

- (5) *John-ga Mary-{\*ni/o} nek-ase-ta.*  
John-NOM Mary-DAT/ACC sleep-CAUS-PAST

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<sup>2</sup>We therefore admit that phonologically non realized DPs can be Case-marked. In the following Latin example cited in Alboiu (2008), PRO is controlled by a Dative DP and is Accusative-marked, as shown by the agreement on the adjective predicated of it.

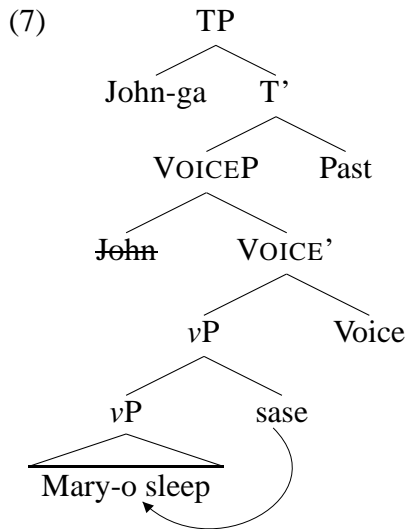
- (4) *Civi Romano licet PRO esse Gaditanum*  
Citizen Roman-DAT it-is-permitted to-be Gadian-ACC  
‘A Roman citizen is allowed to be a citizen of Gades.’

‘John caused Mary to sleep.’

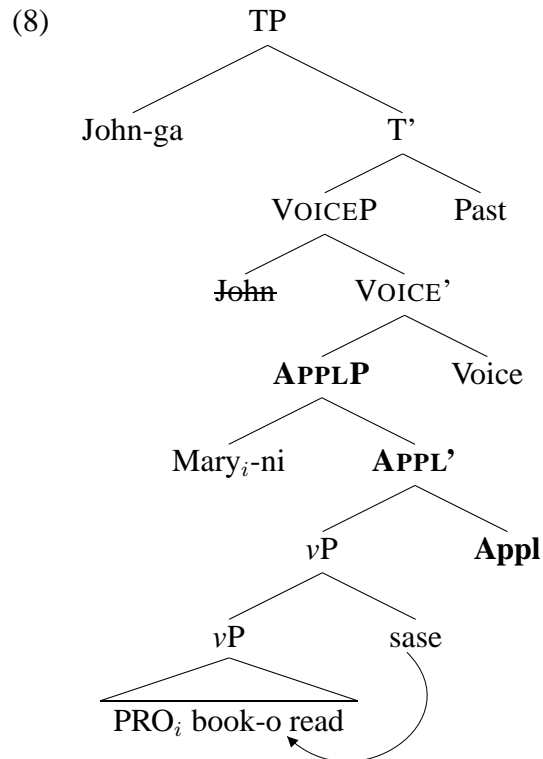
2. When the stem is transitive, the Causee-DP is obligatorily Dative-marked. We make the assumption that the stem cannot assign Accusative (i.e. *-(s)ase* selects for a relatively small constituent which does not encompass an Accusative probe: the Accusative probe is thus not *v* itself but some higher head, to wit AgrO, cf. Belletti 2001, 2004); consequently, the derivation is bound to crash (two DPs need Case, and the object of the stem consumes the Accusative that *-(s)ase* discharges; no other Case assigner is available) unless some last resort measure saves the day. Merging a high Applicative head (this high APPL denotes a thematic relation between the event described by the verb and the applied argument, cf. Pylkkänen 2008) in the *-(s)ase* shell solves the problem: APPL assigns inherent (Dative) Case to the Causee, and also imposes an animacy restriction on it (see section 5.1). The argument of APPL controls the subject of the stem (see Ippolito 2000 and Homer & Sportiche 2009 for similar proposals about Romance).

- (6) *John-ga Mary-{ni/\*o} hon-o yom-ase-ta.*  
 John-NOM Mary-DAT/ACC book-ACC read-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘John caused Mary to read the book.’

The following trees summarize our proposal:



**Tree 1:** Representation of (5)



**Tree 2:** Representation of (6)

Our account makes a prediction: the Accusative Causee is structurally lower than the Dative one. This prediction is borne out (see also Miyagawa 1999), as

shown by the following pair of sentences:

- (9) a. *Mary-ga warutu-o odot-ta-node, boku-mo Naomi-ni*  
 Mary-NOM waltz-ACC dance-PAST-BECAUSE, I-also Naomi-DAT  
*soo s-ase-ta.*  
 so do-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Mary danced a waltz, so I caused Naomi to do so too.’
- b. \**Mary-ga odot-ta-node, boku-mo Naomi-o soo*  
 Mary-NOM dance-PAST-BECAUSE, I-also Naomi-ACC so  
*s-ase-ta.*  
 do-CAUS-PAST  
 Intended: ‘Mary danced, so I caused Naomi to do so too.’

VP-Ellipsis targets a constituent which encompasses the position occupied by the Accusative Causee (hence the ungrammaticality of 9b) but does not contain the position occupied by the Dative Causee.

In the next section, we substantiate our proposal by showing that it captures the data while the two main predictions of the received view prove to be inaccurate. In subsection 4.2.1, we show that verbal stems that do not assign Accusative Case to their objects are incompatible with a Dative-marked Causee, thus falsifying Prediction 1 of the received view, and in subsection 4.2.2, we show that Accusative Causees can be used to convey permissive causation or lack of obstruction, thus refuting Prediction 2.

## 4 Verifying the two predictions

### 4.1 Typology of verbal stems

Using Case marking of the Causee as a classifying criterion, there are three main types of verbal stems in causative constructions: verbs that co-occur obligatorily with an Accusative Causee, verbs that co-occur with an obligatory Dative Causee, and verbs that co-occur with both Cases. In table (2), the second column gives the extension of the set of verbs picked by the criteria in the first column: as it turns out, Type I verbs are intransitives which can never select for an Accusative object (hence our label ‘pure intransitive stems’), and Type II verbs coincide with verbs which always select for an Accusative object (these verbs can have silent objects, provided they are *specific*; but crucially they do not allow what Levin 1993 calls the unspecified object alternation, unlike *write* in English).

### 4.2 Type I: obligatory accusative causee

#### 4.2.1 Verifying prediction 1

Starting our investigation of the typology of verbal stems, we observe that a number of verbs, e.g. *ne-ru* ‘sleep’ and *waraw-u* ‘laugh’, impose the Accusative Case on the Causee-DP.

Case	Extension	Examples
I. *Dat/Acc	Pure Intransitive	<i>hatarak-u</i> ‘work’, <i>nak-u</i> ‘cry’, <i>ne-ru</i> ‘sleep’, <i>waraw-u</i> ‘laugh’, <i>aw-u</i> ‘meet’, <i>komar-u</i> ‘be.annoyed’, <i>sin-u</i> ‘die’, <i>sak-u</i> ‘bloom’
II. Dat/*Acc	Pure Transitive	<i>ake-ru</i> ‘open’, <i>ka-u</i> ‘buy’, <i>home-ru</i> ‘praise’, <i>kak-u</i> ‘write’, <i>yom-u</i> ‘read’, <i>ara-u</i> ‘wash’
III. Dat/Acc	Mixed (optional object)	<i>tabe-ru</i> ‘eat’, <i>oyog-u</i> ‘swim’, <i>nobor-u</i> ‘climb’, <i>hashir-u</i> ‘run’, <i>aruk-u</i> ‘walk’, <i>odor-u</i> ‘dance’

**Table 2:** Typology

- (10) a. *Ken-wa Naomi-[\*ni/o] nek-ase-ta.* [DAT: 1.35/ACC: 4.76]  
Ken-TOP N-DAT/ACC sleep-CAUS-PAST  
‘Ken caused Naomi to sleep.’  
b. *Ken-wa Naomi-[\*ni/o] waraw-ase-ta.* [DAT: 1.52/ACC: 4.96]  
Ken-TOP N-DAT/ACC laugh-CAUS-PAST  
‘Ken caused Naomi to laugh.’  
c. *Ken-ga Naomi-[\*ni/o] nak-ase-ta.*  
Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC cry-CAUS-PAST  
‘Ken caused Naomi to cry.’

The bracketed figures are scores (out of 5) of the Dative and the Accusative versions of the sentence: having observed speaker variability w.r.t. causative sentences, we decided to design a written questionnaire; during the summer of 2008, T. Ishizuka conducted a grammaticality judgment task based on this questionnaire: 54 native speakers were asked to judge sentences on a 5 point scale with 1 being completely unnatural and 5 being completely natural (the items were used as filler items in another questionnaire, see Ishizuka 2009 for the methodology).

Notice that favoring a permissive interpretation does not rescue the sentences (compare the average ratings of 10a and 11): this is unexpected from the perspective of the standard analysis which holds that the Dative-marking correlates with a ‘let’ interpretation.

- (11) *Nemui-to-iu-node, Ken-wa Naomi-[\*ni/o] nek-ase-ta.*  
Sleepy-that-say-because, Ken-TOP Naomi-DAT/ACC sleep-CAUS-PAST  
Intended: ‘Since (she) said that (she) is sleepy, Ken let Naomi sleep.’  
[DAT: 1.94/ACC: 4.67]

This type of verbs is coextensive with a natural class, namely *unergatives* (the above verbs do not show alternation in their argument structure: they never select

an Accusative object).<sup>3</sup> All unergatives are incompatible with a Dative Causee; turning to *unaccusative* verbs (with the exception of *ku-ru* ‘come’ and *ik-u* ‘go’), exemplified in (13), the same incompatibility appears:

- (13) a. *Ken-ga Naomi-{\*ni/o} sin-ase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC die-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken caused Naomi to die.’  
 b. *Ken-ga Naomi-{\*ni/o} komar-ase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC be.annoyed-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken caused Naomi to be annoyed.’

Conversely, when the stem selects an Accusative object, the Dative is possible, and in fact mandatory:

- (14) *Ken-ga Naomi-{ni/\*o} hon-o yom-ase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC book-ACC read-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken made/let Naomi read a book.’

Putting these observations together, we arrive at the following generalization.

- (15) Generalization 1: Verbal stems that do not assign Accusative are incompatible with a Dative Causee.

It bears saying that the above facts have not gone unnoticed in the rich literature on Japanese causatives. However what is new is our Generalization (15), which makes reference to the argument structure of the stem, not to semantic features of the Causee. What is standardly assumed is that the permissive interpretation (hence the Dative Causee) requires a verb whose subject is an agent in some way. This intuition traces back to Shibatani (1973) who holds that *-ni* is an agentive marker, akin or identical to the *-ni* that marks the Agent of a passive clause (what Shibatani 1990 p. 309 calls a ‘volitional entity’ is required); he dwells on a previous account by Kuroda who, in his seminal work (Kuroda 1965) had proposed to distinguish *-o* and *-ni* along the distinction between direct and indirect causation. Shibatani

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<sup>3</sup>This statement needs a qualification: *waraw-u* ‘laugh’ can select an inanimate Accusative object, and then means *laugh at*: but this transitive *waraw-u* is in fact unavailable when the verb combines with *-(s)ase*:

- (12) a. *Ken-ga Naomi-no kao-o warat-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM Naomi-GEN face-ACC laugh-PAST  
 ‘Ken laughed at Naomi’s face.’  
 b. *John-ga Ken-ni Naomi-o waraw-ase-ta.*  
 John-NOM Ken-DAT Naomi-ACC laugh-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘John caused Ken to cause Naomi to laugh.’ Not: ‘John caused Ken to laugh at Naomi.’  
 c. *\*John-ga Ken-ni Naomi-no kao-o waraw-ase-ta.*  
 John-NOM Ken-DAT Naomi-GEN face-ACC laugh-CAUS-PAST  
 Intended: ‘John caused Ken to laugh at Naomi’s face.’

puts forth examples containing verbs such as *kusar-u* ‘rot’ and *sak-u* ‘bloom’ (see our own examples 16a-16b) and rightly says about them that their subjects are not the agents of the described event, but rather are patients who undergo a change of state.<sup>4</sup>

- (16) a. *Naomi-ga hana-{\*ni/o} migoto-ni sak-ase-ta.*  
 Naomi-NOM flower-DAT/ACC beautifully bloom-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Naomi caused the flowers to bloom beautifully.’  
 b. *Kuuhuku/Ken-ga Naomi-{\*ni/o} kizetsu-sase-ta.*  
 Hunger/Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC faint-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Hunger/Ken caused Naomi to faint.’

The verbs upon which Shibatani based his claim, the *bloom* type verbs, do form a natural class: they are *unaccusative*. Together with unergatives, they have the distinctive feature of lacking an Accusative object. We think that the hypothesis that Type I verbs share a structural characteristic is on the right track, and should supersede the idea that Case markers are intrinsically tied to semantic relations (which is in essence the case-meaning correlation we are discussing), an idea whose shortcomings are apparent in (17a)-(17b). For in these two sentences, the unergative verbs *hatarak-u* ‘work’ and *aw-u* ‘meet’ are also incompatible with a Dative Causee, although their subjects are clearly not patients.

- (17) a. *Ken-ga Naomi-{\*ni/o} hatarak-ase-ta.*<sup>5</sup>  
 Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC work-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken caused Naomi to work.’  
 b. *Ken-ga Naomi-{\*ni/o} Mary-to aw-ase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC Mary-COM meet-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken caused Naomi to meet with Mary.’

We are now in a position to reject Prediction 1 of the received view: the availability of the Dative Causee is indeed contingent on the presence of an Accusative object.

#### 4.2.2 Verifying prediction 2

Turning to Prediction 2 of the received view, we now focus on the *interpretation* of sentences where *-(s)ase* attaches to a Type I verb. Is it really the case that *-o* marks the Causee only when the causation is inducing or coercive? The following example is from Kitagawa (1974) (see also Wierzbicka 1988): the verb is *sin-u* ‘die’ (it is unaccusative, hence requires an Accusative Causee) and the sentence is felicitous in a variety of contexts of utterance.

<sup>4</sup>Harley (1996), p. 2 notices that unaccusative stems are incompatible with Dative Causees in Japanese, but ignores the fact that this generalization conflicts with the paradigm cases that she dwells on, namely *ku-ru* ‘come’ and *ik-u* ‘go’. See section 6.

<sup>5</sup>There seems to be some speaker variability w.r.t. the verb *hatarak-u*. Unfortunately, this sentence was not included in the questionnaire, and this variability calls for further investigation. The contrast between the *-ni* and the *-o* versions is sharp to the native speaker among us, viz T. Ishizuka.



- (18) *Omoiyari-ga aru isya-ga kurusin-deiru byoonin-{\*ni/o}*  
 Considerate-NOM have doctor-NOM suffer-ASP patient-DAT/ACC  
*sin-ase-ta.*  
 die-CAUS-PAST

*Context (i): The doctor deliberately injected an overdose of morphine.*

‘The sympathetic doctor made the suffering patient die.’

*Context (ii): The doctor decided not to give useless medicine any further.*

‘The sympathetic doctor let the suffering patient die.’

*Context (iii): The doctor inadvertently gave the wrong medicine.*

‘The sympathetic doctor made the suffering patient die.’

Strikingly, the nature of the causation described by the sentence is not determined by the Case that marks the Causee-DP (cf. 11 above): for without tampering with Case, the English translation of *-(s)ase* must be *make* in two of the three contexts, and it must be *let* in the remaining one.

The following example, also from Kitagawa (1974) makes the same point:

- (19) (Context: The time had come to take the horse back, but, because the horse was running so joyously in the arena. . . )  
*Taroo-wa sono mama moo shibaraku uma-o hashir-ase-ta.*  
 Taro-TOP that way little a.while horse-ACC run-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Taro let (\*made) the horse run for a little while more.’

This conclusion is a fatal blow to the hypothesis that Accusative Causees are incompatible with a ‘*let*’ interpretation: Prediction 2 of the received view is thus falsified. In sum, the case-meaning correlation is not warranted.

Our next goal is to establish that Dative Causees are only possible in the presence of an Accusative object (with the proviso that *ku-ru* ‘come’ and *ik-u* ‘go’ show an exceptional behavior). In the next section, we verify that when Dative Causees co-occur with verbs which do not take overt Accusative objects, the objects are in fact covertly present (and *specific*).

### 4.3 Type II: obligatory dative causee

Verbs of Type II, such as *ake-ru* ‘open’ and *ka-u* ‘buy’ (20)-(21) never accept Accusative Causees: interestingly, the extension of Type II coincides with transitives which do not allow the silent unspecified object alternation. They are ‘pure transitives’ in our sense.

- (20) a. *Ken-ga (muriyari) Naomi-{ni/\*o} hako-o ake-sase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM forcefully Naomi-DAT/ACC box-ACC open-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken (forcefully) caused Naomi to open the box.’  
 b. *Ken-ga (muriyari) Naomi-{ni/\*o} ake-sase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM forcefully Naomi-DAT/ACC open-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken (forcefully) caused Naomi to open it.’

- (21) a. *Ken-ga (muriyari) Naomi-{ni/\*o} hon-o kaw-ase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM forcefully Naomi-DAT/ACC book-ACC buy-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken (forcefully) caused Naomi to buy a book.’  
 b. *Ken-ga (muriyari) Naomi-{ni/\*o} kaw-ase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM forcefully Naomi-DAT/ACC buy-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken (forcefully) caused Naomi to buy it.’

Notice that in sentences such as (20b) and (21b), the verbs have a direct object, albeit a silent one: this object is necessarily interpreted specifically. This fact is important, as it suggests that an Accusative object need not be overt to trigger Dativization. The presence of objects will be granted to us even by readers who are still at this point faithful to the received view: for the adverb *muriyari* ‘forcefully’ rules out a permissive interpretation of *-(s)ase* and thus indicates that the Dative is an artifact of the presence of an object (i.e. is an effect of the Double-O Constraint). Incidentally, the facts presented here and the connection between silent specific objects and Dativization they support, will prove useful when we discuss in the next section other verbs which at first sight look intransitive but really aren’t.

We thus propose a second generalization:

- (22) Generalization 2: The Causee of Pure Transitive stems must be Dative regardless of interpretation.

#### 4.4 Type III: alternating case

Some verbs are compatible with an Accusative or a Dative Causee. *Yame-ru* ‘quit’ offers a clear example of an alternation in meaning, depending on whether the verb has an object or not: the meaning shift is thus a reliable indication of a change in argument structure. Now, when *-(s)ase* attaches to the verbal stem as in (23a) and (23b) below, the Causee is Dative-marked if and only if the stem means ‘quit something’, i.e. has an object, which need not be overt.

- (23) a. *Ken-ga kaseihu-{\*ni/o} yame-sase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM housekeeper-DAT/ACC quit-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken let the housekeeper leave/fired the housekeeper.’  
 b. *Ken-ga kaseihu-{ni/\*o} yame-sase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM housekeeper-{DAT/ACC} quit-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken caused the housekeeper to quit it (e.g. smoking, stealing, etc.).’

The same alternation is seen with *odor-u* ‘dance’:

- (24) a. (Context: Naomi wanted to dance, so John let her dance.)  
*John-ga Naomi-{\*ni/o} odor-ase-ta.*  
 John-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC dance-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘John caused Naomi to dance.’  
 b. (Context: John is putting on a show, which contains a variety of ballroom dances, and has to decide which dance is going to be danced by who. Q: ‘What did he decide about the waltz?’)

*John-ga Naomi-{ni/\*o} odor-ase-ta.*  
 John-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC dance-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘John caused Naomi to dance it.’

Notice that the silent objects in (23b) and (24b) must be specific: this is consonant with the conclusion we reached in the previous section, to the effect that when a silent object triggers Dativization, it is necessarily specific; this suggests that the silent Accusative object is in fact a topicalized (and dropped) argument, rather than a *pro*.<sup>6</sup> The verb *odor-u* ‘dance’ used as unergative (or with a silent unspecified object) does not co-occur with a Dative Causee, even under a permissive interpretation (24a), which is surprising from the perspective of the received view.

- (26) Generalization 3: A Dative Causee is not compatible with a non specific silent object.

#### 4.5 Interim conclusion

Summarizing, (i.) the choice of the case on the Causee-DP is not associated with the ‘let’ vs ‘make’ interpretational difference: it depends on whether the verb stem assigns Accusative or not; (ii.) verbs that are compatible with both Dative and Accusative Causees allow optional objects, which can remain silent; if the Causee is Dative, then the silent object is specific.

### 5 French causatives

Support for our argument against the received view comes from Romance causatives. In this section, we highlight some crucial similarities between French and Japanese w.r.t. causative constructions. Unlike Japanese, French has two distinct lexical verbs to encode permissive and coercive causations, i.e. *laisser* ‘let’ and *faire* ‘make’ respectively. But just like in Japanese, the Causee-DP in the French *Faire infinitive* construction can be either Accusative or Dative marked (Kayne 1975, Burzio 1986 a.o.; the Dative marker in French is the preposition *à*, ‘to’). Dativization requires the presence of an Accusative object,<sup>7</sup> and importantly, there is no case-meaning correlation.

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<sup>6</sup>The following example supports this claim, see Miyagawa (1999), p. 246:

- (25) *Waltz-wa Hanako-ga Taro-ni/\*o odor-ase-ta.*  
 Waltz-TOP Hanako-NOM Taro-DAT dance-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘As for the waltz, Hanako caused Taro to dance.’

<sup>7</sup>There is an exception to this generalization: with verbs that subcategorize a Dative object, it is possible to have either a Dative Causee following the internal argument or an Accusative Causee preceding it (Homer & Sportiche 2009).

- (27) *Cela a fait penser Jean à sa mère/ à sa mère à Jean.*  
 This has made think Jean about his mother/ about his mother to Jean  
 ‘This made Jean think about his mother.’

- (28) a. *Jean fait/laisse rire (\*à) Marie.*  
 Jean makes/lets laugh to Marie  
 ‘Jean makes/lets Marie laugh.’  
 b. *Jean fait/laisse examiner le livre \*(à) Marie.*  
 Jean makes/lets examine the book to Marie  
 ‘Jean makes/lets Marie examine the book.’<sup>8</sup>

So the mechanics of the Dativization process are similar in both languages: it depends on the assignment of the Accusative Case by the stem (the embedded verb in French). Besides, while French allows very rare cases of silent arguments, objects can be dropped provided they are specific and contextually salient. A silent specific object triggers obligatory Dativization; just like in Japanese (cf. Generalization 3), a Dative Causee is not compatible with a non specific silent object.

- (30) a. (Context: Pierre has gone blind, but a doctor can treat him. Pierre’s wife begs the doctor.)  
*Faites \*lui/le voir à nouveau, docteur !*  
 Make him-DAT/ACC see again , doctor  
 ‘Make him see again, doctor!’  
 b. (Context: The doctor has a new car; Pierre will be very interested to see it. Pierre’s wife begs the doctor.)  
*Faites lui/\*le voir, docteur !*  
 Make him-DAT/ACC see, doctor  
 ‘Make him see, doctor!’

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<sup>8</sup>For a number of speakers of Italian and French, it is possible to have an Accusative Causee, even in the presence of an Accusative object, but only if the Causee is a clitic, i.e. a weak pronoun, not if it is a lexical DP. Speakers report that they feel some semantic difference between the Accusative and the Dative clitic, the former being more direct or more coercive than the latter.

- (29) *Pierre l’/lui a fait manger la soupe.*  
 Pierre her-ACC/DAT has made eat the soup  
 ‘Pierre made her eat the soup.’

This of course bears some intriguing resemblance to the case-meaning correlation of the received view, and is a potential threat to our own account. In all fairness, the phenomenon is poorly understood (see however Authier & Reed 1991); but some aspects of this exceptional Case alternation in Romance should discourage attempts at comparing it with the purported case-meaning correlation in Japanese. First, the alternation occurs with a verb that has an overt Accusative object, which is impossible in Japanese; second, even for those speakers who accept an Accusative clitic, a Dative Causee is impossible with an intransitive stem (while this is possible in Japanese according to the received view); third, the verb *faire*, at least in French, is not used to convey permissive causation, so that the use of a Dative clitic does not result in a ‘let’ reading.

## 5.1 Animacy

Another important commonality between French and Japanese relates to the Dative Causee. In French, all Dative Causees have to be animate (31b), while Accusative Causees need not be (31c) (Homer & Sportiche 2009).

- (31) a. *Une bombe/les soldats a/ont détruit l' église.*  
A bomb/the soldiers have destroyed the church  
'A bomb/the soldiers destroyed the church.'
- b. *Le général a fait détruire l' église à ses soldats/\*à une bombe.*  
The general has made destroy the church to his soldiers/to a bomb  
'The general had his soldiers/a bomb destroy the church.'
- c. *Le général a fait sauter une bombe.*  
The general has made blow-up a bomb  
'The general made a bomb explode.'

Japanese Dative Causees exhibit the same semantic restriction:

- (32) a. *Densya-ga hashit-ta.*  
train-NOM run-PAST  
'The train ran.'
- b. *Ken-ga {Naomi/densya}-o hashir-ase-ta.*  
Ken-NOM Naomi/train-ACC run-CAUS-PAST  
'Ken caused Naomi/the train to run.'
- c. *Ken-ga Naomi/\*densya-ni (senro-o) hashir-ase-ta.*  
Ken-NOM Naomi/train-DAT railway-ACC run-CAUS-PAST  
'Ken caused Naomi/the train to run the railway.'

Positing a high Applicative (for both Japanese and French) allows us to account for this restriction, for it is this APPL head which selects the Causee, and imposes a selectional restriction on its argument. We assume that the merger of the Applicative is a last resort operation, and that it does not occur when it is not necessary: therefore Accusative Causees are not selected by the APPL head.

## 6 Motion verbs

In light of our previous generalizations, the unaccusative verbs *ku-ru* 'come' and *ik-u* 'go' are expected to be incompatible with a Dative Causee. This however is not the case:

- (33) *Ken-ga Naomi-{ni/o} ik-ase-ta.* [DAT: 3.87/ ACC: 4.77]  
Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC go-CAUS-PAST  
'Ken let/made Naomi to go.'

We think that taking these motion verbs as representative is misleading (most if not all discussions on the topic consistently revolve around these very verbs). They should instead be considered as exceptions. Explaining their behavior is a necessary task, but a difficult one. We have no final account to offer, but our research program is to pursue the following hypothesis. These are verbs of inherently directed motion; so their core meaning can be paraphrased as ‘lead oneself’. Although they exhibit no special morphology, we hypothesize that they might in fact be optionally reflexive. This claim gains some (indirect) support from the behavior of their French counterparts: in French too, the unaccusative verbs *aller* ‘go’ and *venir* ‘come’ can be constructed with the reflexive marker *se* (and a pronominal locative *en* ‘from there’), which is normally impossible for intransitives:

- (34) *Jean s’ en est allé/ s’ en est venu.*<sup>9</sup>  
 Jean REFL from-there is gone/ REFL from-there is come  
 ‘Jean has gone/has come.’

This proposal bears some connection to the idea developed in Jacobsen (1992) that some verbs, although intransitive, are inherently reflexive, e.g. *kagam-u* ‘bend over’. The Dative is indeed possible with this stem:

- (35) *Ken-ga Naomi-{ni/o} kagam-ase-ta.*  
 Ken-NOM Naomi-DAT/ACC bend-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ken caused Naomi to bend over.’

An advantage of this line of reasoning is that reflexivity might explain the intuition that the presence of a Dative Causee yields a permissive interpretation or conveys that the Causee is an agent in (33).

## 7 Conclusion

Applying Occam’s razor, this paper proposes that Japanese has only one *-(s)ase* morpheme. Dativization is an effect of the presence of an Accusative object of the stem, not primarily the expression of a semantic relation; the case-meaning correlation does not hold. We submit that the analysis of French causatives opens up a new avenue of research in the analysis of their Japanese counterparts: the mechanics of Dativization and a semantic restriction are shared by the two languages. This paper is thus a step towards unifying the theory of causatives across languages.

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<sup>9</sup>It is impossible to verify whether ‘*s’en aller*’ and ‘*s’en venir*’ trigger Dativization in a causative construction: reflexives are incompatible with Dative Causees for independent reasons (Kayne 1975, Rouveret & Vergnaud 1980, Burzio 1986, Calcagno & Pollard 1999, Homer & Sportiche 2009).

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