

Anticausativization in the Hokkaido dialect of Japanese

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The Hokkaido dialect of Japanese was formed through the heavy influence of the dialects spoken in the northern part of the main island of Japan. One of the outstanding traits of the Hokkaido dialect is the anticausativization using the spontaneous suffix /rasar/. Due to this intransitivization, the Hokkaido dialect differs from Standard Japanese concerning the transitivity alternation.

The transitive verbs with accomplishment aspectual property are the potential base for anticausativization. Semantic constraints on anticausativization are proposed in the literature. Haspelmath (1993) argues that there is a tendency for verbs not to be a base for anticausativization when their agent-oriented component is specified.

Koontz-Garboden (2009) argues that a verb selecting only agent as its external argument cannot be the base for anticausativization. These constraints are claimed to be crosslinguistically valid. The range of anticausativization in the Hokkaido dialect extends beyond these constraints. Although anticausativization in this dialect is more productive than in the languages previously studied, not all the accomplishment verbs undergo anticausativization even in this dialect.

This presentation argues that a certain type of relation among event participants is relevant for the limitation of the range of anticausativization in the Hokkaido dialect.