

An Event-Reporting Relative Construction in Japanese

Author(s): Kyoko Hirose Ohara

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An event-reporting relative construction in Japanese

Kyoko Hirose Ohara*

University of California at Berkeley

1. Introduction

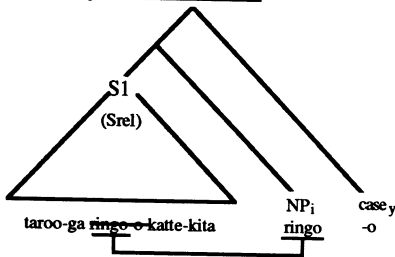
This paper discusses a biclausal construction in Japanese, which has been categorized as an internally headed relativization (Kuroda 1974-77, 1976, Itô 1986, Ishii 1989, Hirose and Ohori 1992, Ohara 1992). I have argued elsewhere that various structural and semantic properties of the construction do not perfectly fit the definitions of internally headed relativization proposed by Keenan 1985 and Culy 1990 (Ohara 1994). I will thus call it the *no*-relative construction since the relative clause is always followed by the bound morpheme *no*.

The *no*-relative construction has been regarded as a secondary relativization strategy in the language, similar in function to externally headed relativization. I will argue on the contrary that unlike externally headed relatives, the function of the *no*-relative is event reporting and that its form is motivated by this function.

In order to help clarify the problems regarding *no*-relatives, I will start the discussion by contrasting their structure with that of externally headed relatives, which is the primary means of relativization in Japanese. Schematic representations of an externally headed relative and a *no*-relative are given in (1) below:

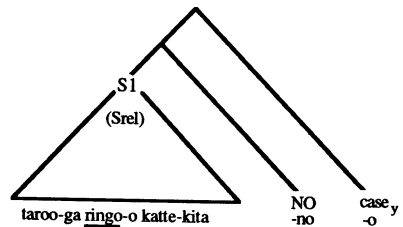
(1) a.

Externally headed relative



(1) b.

no-relative



At first glance, the structures in (1a) and (1b) seem parallel to each other. However, they are crucially different from each other in two respects: (i) in whether or not the target of relativization appears inside the relative clause; and (ii) in what kind of constituent can follow the relative clause. With externally headed relatives, the target of relativization and its case marker are phonetically missing inside the relative clause S_{rel} , as the strikethrough in (1a) shows. Inside a *no*-relative clause, however, the target is present, as indicated by the underline in (1b). Secondly, in the case of externally headed relatives, the head noun, shown as NP_i in (1a) follows the relative clause. In contrast, it is the bound morpheme *no* that always follows a *no*-relative.

(2) is a structural description of the externally headed relative. Here, the crossed out NP_i - $case_x$ represents the phonetically missing target of relativization and its case marker, or a 'gap' in the relative clause.¹ The relative clause represented as S_1 is followed by the head noun, or NP_i . NP_i is coindexed with the

target of relativization. $Case_y$, which is attached to the NP as a whole indicates the role of the target in the main clause.

The externally headed relative construction

- (2) [[... NP_i - $case_x$... V_1] S_1 NP_i]- $case_y$
 where NP_i - $case_x$: the target (a gap)
 $case_x$: a case marker
 V_1 : the predicate of the relative clause
 S_1 : the relative clause
 NP_i : the head NP
 $case_y$: a case marker

A sentence containing an externally headed relative is given in (3):

Externally headed relative

- (3) [[taroo-ga ~~ringo_i-o~~ katte-kita] S_1 ringo_i]-o hanako-ga tabeta.
 Taro NOM apple ACC buy-came apple ACC Hanako NOM ate
 'Hanako ate the apple which Taro bought.'

Here, the crossed out ~~ringo_i-o~~ 'apple-ACC' is the phonetically missing target of relativization. *Ringo_i* which follows the relative clause S_1 is the head noun coreferential with the target.

A structural description of the *no*-relative construction is given in (4). A *no*-relative, shown as S_1 , is a gapless clause followed by the bound morpheme *no* instead of by a lexical noun.² NP_i - $case_x$ is phonetically present in S_1 ; it represents the target and its case marker appropriate for the role of the target within S_1 .³ $Case_y$ after the morpheme *no* indicates the role of the target in the main clause S_2 .

The *no*-relative construction

- (4) [[... NP_i - $case_x$... V_1] S_1 -*no*]- $case_y$... V_2] S_2
 where NP_i : the target
 $case_x$: a case marker
 V_1 : the predicate of the *no*-relative
 S_1 : the *no*-relative
no: nominalizer (NO)
 $case_y$: a case marker
 V_2 : the main predicate
 S_2 : the main clause

A *no*-relative sentence is illustrated in (5):

- (5) *no*-relative
 [[taroo-ga ringo_i-o katte-kita] S_1 -no]-o hanako-ga tabeta.
 Taro NOM apple ACC buy-came NO ACC Hanako NOM ate
 a. *Literal translation*:
 'Hanako ate that Taro bought an apple.'
 b. *Intended meaning*:
 'Taro bought an apple, and Hanako ate (it).'

Here, the target is *ringo_i* 'apple' and is present in the *no*-relative S_1 . *Ringo_i* is also an argument of the main verb *tabeta* 'ate'. The accusative case marker *o*, which is appropriate for the role of *ringo_i* in the main clause S_2 , appears after the morpheme *no*. This bound morpheme *no* after a 'gapless' clause is usually construed as a nominalizing complementizer roughly translated into English as 'that'. This particular use of *no* is suggested by the literal translation in (5a). However, *no* cannot be understood as a complementizer in this construction: in (5), for example, the main verb *tabeta* 'ate' does not take a complement but an argument, and thus the main verb is construed as taking the NP *ringo* 'apple' inside S_1 as one of its valence requirements. Thus, instead of (5a), what the sentence conveys can be better translated as (5b). I will only provide the intended meaning and not the literal translation for the rest of the sentences in the paper. In the following discussion, I will continue to use S_1 to refer to the preceding clause, and S_2 to refer to the second clause.

In spite of the structural markedness discussed above, the *no*-relative construction can still be regarded as a relative construction, since: (i) an NP inside S_1 satisfies a valence requirement of the main verb V_2 ; and (ii) the proposition expressed in S_1 conveys some information regarding the referent of the target NP. There are, however, semantic constraints on this construction which are absent in externally headed relativization, as I will show below.

The goal of this paper is to answer the following questions: What are the constraints on the *no*-relative construction? What is the function of the construction? How does the function relate to the constraints?

In characterizing the construction, I will view as central the notion of grammatical construction as used by Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor 1988, 1992 and Lambrecht 1987, 1988a. That is, a grammatical construction is regarded as a pairing of syntax with semantics and pragmatics. This approach claims that a grammatical construction can be dedicated to certain semantic and/or pragmatic functions and that constraints on a construction can be seen as motivated by such functions. I will argue that unlike restrictive and appositive relative clauses, the primary function of *no*-relatives is event reporting and that otherwise puzzling properties of the construction are seen as motivated by its functions.

The organization of the rest of the paper is as follows: I will describe the semantic constraints on the *no*-relative construction (Section 2), followed by a discussion of the pragmatic functions which underlie these semantic constraints (Section 3). I will then proceed to compare the construction to a construction in English which has a similar function (Section 4), and finally Section 5 concludes the analysis.

2. Semantic properties of the *no*-relative construction

2.1. Constraints on the *no*-relative

The most striking semantic difference between externally headed relativization and the *no*-relative construction is that a *no*-relative followed by the so-called nominalizer *no* cannot be used in isolation as a simple referring expression. In contrast, an externally headed relative and its head noun can refer to an entity. This is illustrated in (6):

- (6) a. Q: dare-ga kawa-ni otimasitaka?
 who NOM river LOC fall-off-POLITE-PAST-Q
 'Who fell into the river?'

- b. Lexical noun
A: keekan.
policeman
'A policeman'
- c. Externally headed relative + head noun
A: [[doroboo-o oikaketeita] keekan].
thief ACC was-chasing policeman
'The policeman who was pursuing a thief.'
- d. no-relative + no
A: * [[keekan -ga doroboo-o oikaketeita] -no].
policeman NOM thief ACC was-chasing NO
Intended meaning:
'The policeman who was pursuing a thief.'

Just as I can refer to a person using a lexical noun *keekan* 'policeman' as shown in (6b), I can also use an externally headed relative and its head noun as in (6c) to refer to him. However, a *no*-relative which accompanies *no* as in (6d) cannot be used alone as a referring expression. This shows that a *no*-relative is part of a biclausal construction which must be used in combination with another clause.

Secondly, the predicate of a *no*-relative is typically used in the affirmative form, not in the negative as shown in (7):

- (7) no-relative
[zyunko-ga hurimukanakatta]-no]-o unno -ga osaeta.
Junko NOM did-not-turn-around NO ACC Unno NOM seized
Intended meaning:
'Junko did not turn her face, and Unno seized (her).'

In order for (7) to be acceptable, we need a special context in which Junko's not turning her face is a surprising or unexpected piece of information.

Thirdly, a *no*-relative cannot describe an intrinsic property of an entity, as illustrated in (8) below:

- (8) no-relative
[sono gakusei-ga kasikoi]-no]-o watasi-wa
that student NOM smart NO ACC I -TOP
kenkyuu-situ ni yonda.
office DAT invited
Intended meaning:
'The student is smart, and I invited (him) to my office.'

Being smart is an intrinsic property of the student, and the sentence is unacceptable.

2.2. A temporal constraint between the two clauses

As for the relation between the two clauses, the situation described in S_1 cannot be later than the S_2 event (Ohara 1992). Put differently, in this construction, the clause order is iconic to the order of situations described in the two clauses. Externally headed relatives obviously do not have such a constraint. Thus, (9) with an externally headed relative is acceptable:

(9) Externally headed relative

[[kinoo takarakuzi-ni atatta] otoko]-o
yesterday lottery DAT won man ACC
hanako -wa sensyuu deeto-ni sasotteita.
Hanako TOP last-week date DAT had-asked
'Hanako had asked the guy who won the lottery yesterday out for a date
last week.'

The same situation cannot be expressed by a *no*-relative since the clause order would not be iconic to the order of situations as shown in (10):

(10) *no*-relative

#[[kinoo sono otoko-ga takarakuzi-ni atatta]-no]-o
yesterday that man NOM lottery DAT won NO ACC
hanako -wa sensyuu deeto-ni sasotteita.
Hanako TOP last-week date DAT had-asked
Intended meaning:
'The guy won the lottery yesterday, and Hanako had asked (him) out
for a date last week.'

Related to this temporal constraint is the fact that in this construction, both V_1 (the predicate of the *no*-relative) and V_2 (the main predicate) must be stage level predicates in Carlson's sense (Dowty 1979). We have already seen in (8), repeated below, that a *no*-relative cannot describe an intrinsic property of an individual. Thus, V_1 cannot be an individual level predicate (e.g. *kasikoi* 'smart'). Sentences in (11) below show that V_2 must also be a stage level predicate such as *osaeta* 'seized' and that it cannot be an individual level predicate such as *nikunda* 'hated':

(8) *no*-relative

#[[sono gakusei-ga kasikoi]-no]-o watasi-wa
that student NOM smart NO ACC I -TOP
kenkyuu-situ ni yonda.
office DAT invited
Intended meaning:

'The student is smart, and I invited (him) to my office.'

(11) *no*-relative

a. [[zyunko-ga suutu-o orosi-kaketa] -no]-o
Junko NOM suit ACC was-about-to-pull-down NO ACC
unno -ga **osaeta**.
Unno NOM seized
'Junko was about to pull her suit off, and Unno seized (her).'

b. #[[zyunko-ga suutu-o orosi-kaketa] -no]-o
Junko NOM suit ACC was-about-to-pull-down NO ACC
unno -ga **nikunda**.

Unno NOM hated

Intended meaning:

'Junko was about to pull her suit off, and Unno hated (her).'

3. Pragmatic functions of the *no*-relative construction

I characterize the pragmatic functions of the *no*-relative construction as follows: the *no*-relative, that is, S_1 , functions to report a situation, and the

construction as a whole advances a narrative.⁴ These functions are seen as motivating the semantic properties pointed out in the previous section. I will first discuss the function of the *no*-relative and then that of the construction as a whole.

3.1. The event-reporting function of the *no*-relative

The primary function of the *no*-relative is to assert or report a scene. That is, although the *no*-relative presents a target NP referent that also participates in the following S₂ event, its main function is not to describe a property of the target NP referent, but rather to report a scene in which the referent is included.^{5, 6} In this sense, the event-reporting function of the *no*-relative is distinct from the restrictive and appositive functions that ordinary relative clauses are associated with. Restrictive relatives restrict the set of possible referents; appositive relatives add a piece of parenthetical information about an NP referent. They both describe a property of a target NP referent. In Japanese, externally headed relatives are used either restrictively or appositively as shown in (12) and (13):

- (12) Externally headed relative - Restrictive
 [[nihon-kai-ni sundeiru] kuzira]-wa ooki.
 Japan-Sea LOC living whale TOP large
 'Whales that live in the Japan Sea are large.'
- (13) Externally headed relative - Appositive
 [[honyuurui de-arui] kuzira]-wa sakana-to-wa kotonaru.
 mammal COP whale TOP fish-COM-TOP different
 'Whales, which are mammals, are different from fish.'

Event-reporting sentences report a scene from the point of view of the speaker (Teramura 1992, Morita 1990). The unacceptability of (8) may be seen as motivated by the event-reporting function of the *no*-relative, since intrinsic or static properties do not qualify as scenes to be reported.

Furthermore, it has been noted that unlike topic-comment sentences, event-reporting sentences are typically used in the affirmative, unless the speaker wants to depict an unexpected situation worthy of reporting by the use of the negative form (Teramura 1992: 65-73). We have seen in sentence (7), repeated below, that the predicate of a *no*-relative is usually used in the affirmative form. Again, this seems to be due to the event-reporting function of the *no*-relative.

- (7) *no*-relative
 # [[zyunko-ga hurimukanakatta]-no]-o unno -ga osaeta.
 Junko NOM did-not-turn-around NO ACC Unno NOM seized
Intended meaning:
 'Junko did not turn her face, and Unno seized (her).'

3.2. The narrative advancing function of the *no*-relative construction

The *no*-relative construction as a whole advances a narrative, linking two situations. Thus, the sentences are paraphrasable using the so-called 'coordinate' conjunction *ga* 'and' as shown in (14) and (15):

- (14) no-relative
 [[kare-ga hon go -roku-satu -o sasidasita]-no]-o
 he NOM books five six CLASS ACC held-out NO ACC
 watasi-wa uketotta.
 I TOP received
 'He held out five or six books to me, and I took (them).'
- (15) ga-conjunction
 [kare-ga hon go-roku-satu -o sasidasita] -ga
 he NOM books five six CLASS ACC held-out and
sorera-o watasi-wa uketotta.
 them ACC I TOP received
 'He held out five or six books to me, and I took them.'

In (15), the conjunction *ga* immediately follows S_1 , and a valence requirement of V_2 is explicitly realized in the form of a pronoun and a case marker, as indicated by the bold type. This paraphrasability by *ga*-conjunction suggests that the propositions described in the two clauses of a *no*-relative sentence are semantically and pragmatically on the same level in the sense that each of them equally makes an assertion. It is known that in Japanese coordinate sentences, in contrast to subordinate sentences, it is impossible to question a constituent of the first clause. Thus, *ga*-conjunction prevents an NP inside its S_1 from being replaced by a *wh*-word as shown in (16):

- (16) ga-conjunction
 *[dare-ga ringo-o katte-kita] -ga hanako-ga
 who NOM apple ACC came-buying and Hanako NOM
 tabemasitaka?
 eat-POLITE-PAST-Q
 'Who bought the apple and Hanako ate it?'

The *no*-relative construction is also subject to this restriction as (17) shows:

- (17) no-relative
 *[[dare-ga ringo-o katte-kita]-no]-o hanako-ga
 who NOM apple ACC buy-came NO ACC Hanako NOM
 tabemasitaka?
 eat-POLITE-PAST-Q
 'Who bought the apple and Hanako ate (it)?'

The inability to question a constituent of S_1 suggests that each of the two clauses in the construction makes an assertion, as coordinated clauses do. Thus, this syntactic behavior of the *no*-relative construction may be seen as a syntactic correlate of its pragmatic function of reporting two situations.

I have discussed in Section 2.2. that both V_1 and V_2 must be stage level predicates ((8) and (11)). This constraint may be seen as due to the function of the construction to advance a narrative.

We have seen that the function of the *no*-relative is neither restrictive or appositive but event reporting. It is thus misleading to refer to the *no*-relative construction as internally headed relativization since the term implies that the *no*-relative can have either restrictive or appositive function just like externally headed relativization. Rather, the *no*-relative construction should be characterized as an

(22) English continuative relative construction

I took it to my house, **which then burned down.**

(23) Japanese event-reporting relative construction

[[tukue-no ue-ni kaado-ga tunde-aru] -no]-o

desk- GEN top LOC cards NOM are-piled-up NO ACC
eriko-wa yondemita.

Eriko top tried-to-read

'The cards were piled up on the desk, and Eriko tried to read (them).'

In spite of the contrast, the clause order is iconic to the order of situations in either of the constructions.

ii) Target-identifying mechanisms

Target identifying mechanisms differ in the two constructions in question. In the English construction, the target is structurally marked by its position *inside* S₁: it occurs at the end of S₁ (i.e. the main clause) irrespective of the role it plays in S₁. The targets are shown in bold in the sentences in (24):

(24) English continuative relative construction

a. 'I see!' said **the Queen**, who then turned to Alice.

b. I punched **John**, who instantly fell down.

c. I gave the ticket to **the ticket-taker**, who then punched a hole in it.

In contrast, in the Japanese construction, the target is not marked by its position in S₁. Furthermore, there is no morphosyntactic marking on the target inside S₁ to help identify it. It is the semantics of the main verb and of the two clauses that help the hearer construe the target. Sentences in (25) exemplify this. Again, the targets are indicated in bold:

(25) Japanese event-reporting relative construction

a. [[**ringo-ga** ki -kara otita]-no]-o hanako-ga tabeta.
apple NOM tree-ABL fell NO ACC Hanako NOM ate

'An apple fell down from a tree, and Hanako ate (it).'

b. [[taroo-ga **ringo-o** kureta]-no]-o hanako-ga tabeta.

Taro NOM apple ACC gave NO ACC Hanako NOM ate
'Taro gave (me) an apple, and Hanako ate (it).'

In both of the sentences in (25), there are two NPs in the relative clause, but the semantics of the main verb *tabeta* 'ate' helps construe the target to be *ringo* 'apple'. Note that the target *ringo* appears sentence-initially as the subject of S₁ in (25a), while it appears sentence-medially as the direct object in (25b). Although the target-identifying mechanisms differ in the Japanese and English constructions, in either of them the two states of affairs are related to each other by sharing a participant, namely, the target NP referent.

iii) Narrative-advancing patterns

Whereas each of the two clauses describes an event in the English construction, S₁ may describe a state rather than an event in the Japanese construction. This is illustrated in (26):

(26) *no*-relative

[*ringo-ga teeburu-no ue -ni atta*]_{S₁} -no] -o hanako -ga tabeta.
 apple NOM table GEN top LOC existed NO ACC Hanako NOM ate
 'An apple was on the table, and Hanako ate (it).'

An apple being on the table is a state, but this sentence advances a narrative in the sense that the state described in S₁ changes in the S₂ event. It has been noted that compared to English, Japanese tends toward lower transitivity. Especially, Ikegami 1991 and Ohori 1991 discuss the tendency in terms of different event realization patterns in the two languages. Further study is needed before I can say anything conclusive, but the fact that the Japanese construction allows its S₁ to describe a state rather than an event may perhaps be related to the general tendency toward lower transitivity in Japanese.

5. Conclusion

I have discussed the event-reporting relative construction or the *no*-relative construction in Japanese. In naming it the *no*-relative construction, which crucially involves *no*-relatives, I have rejected Charles J. Fillmore's suggestion to call it the *orphan* construction (Someone who has 'no relatives' is an orphan). I have claimed in this paper that the construction is conventionally associated with the pragmatic function of advancing a narrative, with the relative clause reporting the first situation. I have demonstrated that what seems like an arbitrary set of constraints, such as the constraints on the semantic content of the relative clause and the temporal constraint between the two clauses, can be understood as coherent when the pragmatic motivations are shown. Finally, the construction has been compared with the English continuative relative construction. Although the two constructions have the function of advancing a narrative, they differ in their clause-linking mechanisms, target-identifying mechanisms, and narrative-advancing patterns. These differences reflect the profound structural differences between the two languages, which seems to support the claim that the form of a grammatical construction is not determined solely by its functions but also by structures seated deep within the language in question.

NOTES

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¹ In frame-semantic terms, the existence of a 'gap' in a relative clause would be described as a situation 'in which a member of the category denoted by the head noun participates in a frame evoked by the linguistic elements in the modifying clause' (Matsumoto 1988:56a). See Fillmore 1992 and 1994ms for the framework and for a lexical semantic analyses of *risk*, *home* and English visual perception verbs and nouns using the framework.

² Characterization of the bound morpheme *no* in this construction is problematic. It is different from the 'pronominal' use of *no*. In (5), for example, it cannot be replaced by the target *ringo* 'apple'. As will be mentioned later, it cannot be construed as a complementizer or a nominalizer either. However, following Kuroda, I call it 'nominalizer' here (cf. Kuroda 1976-77).

³ The target is usually the subject or the direct object of V₁, but can be both (Hirose and Ohori 1992: 12c).

⁴ One can think of the former (i.e. the function of reporting a situation) as the *internal function* of the *no*-relative, and the latter (i.e. the function of narrative-advancing) as the *external function* of the *no*-relative when it is combined with S₂ and when it is licensed by the construction.

⁵ Lambrecht calls the function of monoclausal sentences such as *My car broke down* or *A man just got run over by a car!* 'event reporting' (Lambrecht 1988b). By 'event reporting' sentences, he means sentences in which an NP referent is not a topic but only a necessary participant in an event. He seems to be restricting the use of the term to the function of a construction as a whole. Thus, he argues that a two-clause sequence such as *There was a ball of fire burst through the seats in front of me* is also event reporting since the sentence as a whole reports a situation 'a ball of fire burst through the seats in front of me'. In contrast, I use event reporting to refer to the function of a CLAUSE (specifically, that of the *no*-relative here) NOT to the function of a TWO-CLAUSE SEQUENCE as a whole. However, I believe my use of the term is basically compatible with that of Lambrecht since what I mean by event-reporting clauses are those in which an NP referent is not a topic but merely a participant in a scene. Furthermore, like Lambrecht, I use the term to contrast event-reporting clauses or sentences with topic-comment clauses or sentences (See Footnote 6 below. See Kuroda 1972 for a logical distinction between thetic and categorial judgments which parallels the contrast above). Japanese grammarians make use of a similar distinction, but they somewhat misleadingly use the terms *gensyoo-bun* 'phenomenon sentences' and *handan-bun* 'judgment sentences' corresponding to event-reporting and topic-comment sentences respectively (Teramura 1992, Morita 1990).

⁶ In the *no*-relative, the identity of the target NP referent is not as important as the reported event itself. Thus, the target can be an indefinite NP:

- (i) [[kare-ga hon go-roku-satu -o sasidasu] -no]-o watasi-wa uketotta.
 he NOM books five six CLASS ACC hold-out NO ACC I TOP received
 'He held out five or six books to me, and I took (them).'

That is, the target NP in *no*-relatives is not construed as a topic of the sentence. In this respect, *no*-relatives are in contrast with topic-comment sentences. It is also true that the event-reporting function may not be categorically distinct from the presentational function of introducing an NP referent to a scene (Lambrecht 1988b). However, I prefer to characterize the function of *no*-relatives as event reporting since in many cases the target NP referent is already identified; thus, the target can be a proper noun (ii) or a pronoun (iii):

- (ii) [[zyunko-ga suutu-o orosi-kaketa] -no]-o
 Junko NOM suit ACC was-about-to-pull-down NO ACC
 unno -ga osaeta.

Unno NOM seized

'Junko was about to pull her suit off, and then Unno seized (her).'

- (iii) [sore-o teeburu-no ue-ni oiteoita]-no]-ga nakunatteiru.
 that ACC table GEN top-LOC have-put NO NOM is-gone
 'I put it on top of the table, and (it) is gone.'

⁷ Fillmore calls these types of relative clauses 'narrative-advancing' relative clauses (Fillmore 1989).

⁸ The connective relative in Latin discussed in Robin Lakoff 1984 seems to be similar in function.

⁹ In defining the continuative relative construction, Lambrecht states that it is a construction which establishes a temporal *or* logical link between two states of affairs, thereby allowing the sentence below to be an instance of the construction:

- (iv) The cockroach was very arrogant, which is surprising, since cockroaches are know to be humble beings.

(Lambrecht 1988a: 328 (28b))

The crucial difference between the sentences in (19) above and (iv) is that in the latter the antecedent of the relative pronoun *which* is not an NP but the propositional content of the entire S_1 . I will thus regard (iv) as distinct from the continuative relative construction in which two states of affairs are temporally connected. I will only discuss sentences such as those in (19) in which the antecedent is an NP rather than the propositional content of the entire S_1 .

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