

Revisiting the typology of relative clauses

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At least since the publication of Yoshiko Matsumoto's *Noun-Modifying Constructions in Japanese* (1997), the so-called Japanese-type relative clause has intrigued typologists and other linguists because of its apparent departure from the expectations gained from the study of "European-type" relative clauses. In particular, the Japanese construction seems to involve a modifying clause attached to a head noun without any more detailed specification of its semantic relation thereto, thus allowing not only relative-clause, but also *fact-S* and other interpretations; the Japanese construction seems to involve no "extraction" and therefore to be immune to syntactic constraints on extraction.

The present lecture aims to investigate repercussions of this analysis from the perspective of the general typology of relative clauses. First, attention is paid to the differing degrees of acceptability of Japanese-type relative clauses that should be grammatical according to the above characterization but that are judged unacceptable or questionable; some of these involve general semantic and pragmatic factors, but others involve interaction with specific features of Japanese and therefore call for comparison with other languages of the Japanese type. Secondly, a discussion is opened on constructions that seem to be intermediate between the Japanese and European types and therefore call into question the existence of a clear dividing line, such as English *Dickens is one of the few authors where I'd rather watch the video.*