

RELATIVE CLAUSES IN BASQUE: A GUIDED TOUR*

A relative clause is a sentence modifying a noun phrase, such that the deep structure of the sentence contains a noun phrase identical to the noun phrase it modifies. The concept of linguistic identity needed here is not mere identity in form but also includes identity of reference. The whole construction consisting of the sentence together with the noun phrase acts again as a noun phrase: it is an endocentric construction with a noun phrase as its head.

In Basque, the relative clause precedes its head, and there are no relative pronouns. As a start, I will take an easy example. From the matrix sentence (1)a and the constituent sentence (1)b, we can form the relative clause construction (1):

(1)a Aitak irakurri nai du liburua. "Father wants to read the book."

(1)b Amak liburua erre du. "Mother has burned the book."

(1) Aitak irakurri nai du amak erre duen liburua.
"Father wants to read the book that Mother has burned."

(All examples in this paper are taken from the Guipúzcoan dialect.)

The shared noun phrase *liburua* "the book" has been deleted from the constituent sentence, which serves as a prenominal modifier of the head *liburua* in the main clause. The finite verb form *du* "has" of the relative clause carries a relativizing suffix, whose shape seems to be *-en*. Actually, its shape is *-n*, the underlying form of *du* being *due*: the *e* disappears in suffixless forms by the effects of an independently motivated Final Vowel Truncation rule. Past tense forms always end in *-n*; accordingly, there is then no difference between the relativized and the non-relativized forms of the verb:

(2) Aitak irakurri zuen liburua

(2) can be either a sentence a) "Father read the book", or a noun phrase b) "The book that Father read".

Thus we see that *zuen* + *n* gives *zuen*. Stress rules must be sensitive to the underlying double consonant of such forms, since with polysyllabic auxiliaries we find a difference in accentuation:

* *The Chicago which hunt*, (Chicago, 1972), 115-135.

- (3)a Gurasoak irakurri zúten liburua. "The parents read the book."
 (3)b Gurasoak irakurri zutén liburua "The book that the parents read"

It is important to note that the relative marker shows no agreement with any noun phrase in the sentence. Its shape is absolutely invariable. It is therefore quite different from the relative pronouns found in most Indo-European languages.

Henri Gavel (Gavel 1929: 8-9), Ignacio Omaechevarria (Omaechevarria 1959: 11) and several other grammarians have declared the relativizer to be identical to the genitive suffix *-(r)en*. While there are many syntactic and semantic similarities between the relative clause construction and the genitive construction, the different shapes of the morphemes preclude a complete identification of the constructions. (Cf. Lafon 1943: 457-8).

There is complete identity in form, however, between the relative marker *-n* and the Wh-complementizer *-n* appearing in indirect question. Whether this reveals a deep syntactic correlation between relatives and interrogatives, or, on the contrary, represents a mere coincidence, cannot be decided on the basis of the Basque facts alone. It seems clear, however, that interrogatives cannot be derived from relatives, as arguments similar to those C. Leroy Baker gave for English (Baker 1970: 198-200) can also be set up for Basque.

Although, in general, a finite verb need not be last in a sentence (witness (1)a), in a relative clause it always is. We may therefore visualize the relative clause construction as $[_{NP}S \text{ } -n \text{ } NP_{NP}]$, where the relativizer *-n* functions as a link between the clause and the head noun phrase. A more detailed diagram of a sentence containing a relative clause is shown below:

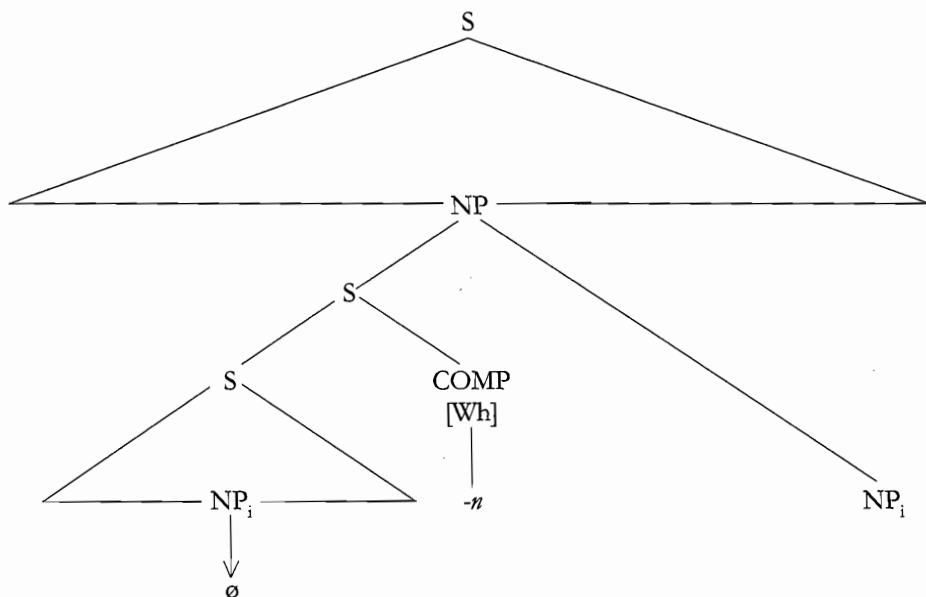


Diagram (1)

While one difference between Basque and English resides in the choice of the complementizer used as relativizer and does not seem to be predictable from more general characteristics of Basque grammar, another difference, the fact that Basque relative clauses show no movement but rather deletion of the lower coreferential noun phrase, can be plausibly considered to fall under the range of an implicational universal. What remains unclear, however, is just what the implicans of this universal is to be. Different authors differ indeed as to what other feature of grammatical structure they deem the lack of such a movement rule to be most closely connected with. For Leroy Baker, the absence of a rule moving relativized constituents is correlated with the position of the clause in front of the modified noun phrase (See Baker 1970: 209). For Bresnan, the lack of movement follows from the clause-final position of the complementizer (Bresnan 1970: 317ff). For Schwartz, the absence of a movement rule for relativized constituents follows from the absence of a rule moving Wh elements in questions, this itself being a necessary property of verb-final languages (Schwartz 1971). None of the authors offer a convincing argument in favor of their respective claims. Basque, having all three of the properties that are claimed to be relevant, cannot serve as a test case. Some language other than Basque, but sharing some of its characteristics, will have to provide the crucial evidence needed to settle the issue.

Relativization wipes out whatever postposition the lower coreferential noun phrase may have had, thus making it impossible for the surface structure to indicate the syntactic function of this noun phrase in the constituent sentence. To make things worse, unstressed personal pronouns that are in an agreement relation with the verb are normally deleted. Therefore, ambiguity results:

- (3) Eman dion aurra gaixtoa da.
Given he-has-it-to-him-Rel child-the bad-the he-is.
- a) "The child whom he has given to him is bad."
From (3)a Aurra eman dio. «He has given the (or a) child to him.»
- b) «The child who has given it to him is bad.»
From (3)b Aurrak eman dio. "The child has given it to him."
- c) «The child whom he has given it to is bad.»
From (3)c Aurrari eman dio. "He has given it to the child."

Since there are limits on the amount of ambiguity that a language can tolerate, we expect relativization to be more heavily constrained in Basque than it is in English. This will indeed turn out to be correct.

Let us ask, then, what the syntactic functions are that the lower coreferential noun phrase can assume in the constituent sentence, such that the resulting relative clause is grammatical. With respect to this question, there are two dialects (i.e. two sets of idiolects): A) A Restricted Dialect; B) The Main Dialect.

A) The restricted dialect. Only those relative clauses are possible in which there is morphological agreement between the lower coreferential noun phrase and the verb. This leaves five possibilities. The deleted noun phrase can be:

- a) Subject of an intransitive predicate. (Postposition \emptyset)
b) Subject of a transitive predicate. (Postposition $-\kappa$)

- c) Object of a transitive predicate. (Postposition \emptyset)
 d) Indirect object of an intransitive predicate. (Postp. $-ri$)
 e) Indirect object of a transitive predicate. (Postp. $-ri$)
- B) The main dialect. All the functions above and also:
 f) Locative. (Postposition $-n$) h) Ablative. (Postposition $-tik$).
 g) Directional. (Postposition $-ra$) i) Instrumental. (Postposition $-z$)

All other syntactic functions are non-relativizable. These are the functions indicated by the following postpositions:

- $-rentzat$, "for".
 $-(ren)gatik$, "because of".
 $-(re)kin$, "with".
 $-(ren)gan$, "in" (for +Animate noun phrases).
 $-(ren)gana$, "to" (for +Animate noun phrases).
 $-(ren)ganontz$, "towards" (for +Animate noun phrases).
 $-(ren)ganaiño$, "as far as" (for +Animate noun phrases).
 $-rontz$, "towards" (for -Animate noun phrases).
 $-raiño$, "as far as" (for -Animate noun phrases).

What I have just given amounts to the worst possible characterisation of relativizability: a mere list of cases. Are there no generalisations here waiting to be captured? Is there no better way of characterising relativizability? I will make four attempts to this effect:

Characterization I):

Phonologically light postpositions —that is, postpositions consisting of not more than three segments— are relativizable, but phonologically heavy postpositions (four or more segments) are non-relativizable.

The optional elements $-re-$ in $-(re)kin$ and $-ren-$ in $-(ren)gan$, etc., have to be counted as part of the underlying form of the postposition, deletable by a late morphophonemic rule of Possessive Deletion.

Though valid, characterization I) seems somehow to miss the point, as it provides preciously little insight into the phenomenon that we are studying.

Characterization II):

Morphologically simple postpositions are relativizable. Morphologically complex postpositions are non-relativizable.

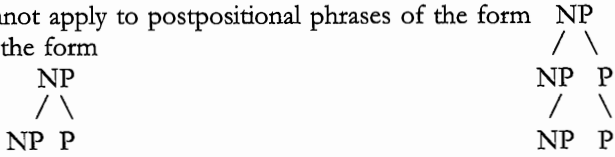
Characterization III):

Postpositions morphologically based on the genitive are non-relativizable. Postpositions based on the directional (to wit: $-rontz$ "towards", $-raiño$ "as far as") are

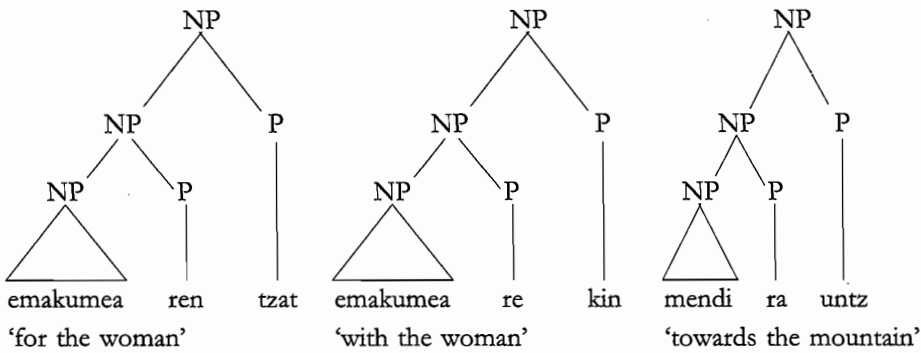
also non-relativizable. All other postpositions, including the directional *-ra* “to” itself, are relativizable.

Characterization IV):

Relativization cannot apply to postpositional phrases of the form NP but only to those of the form



Here, at last, we have a characterisation of relativizability in terms of structure. We now see why e.g. *-rentzat*, *-rekin* and *-rontz* are non-relativizable:



Diagram

There are two special cases that our characterization does not cover:

A) When the postposition on the head noun phrase is the same as the underlying postposition on the deleted lower noun phrase, relativization is always possible, even when that postposition is otherwise non-relativizable.

We saw that *-rekin* “with” is a non-relativizable postposition; hence (4)a is impossible. Unexpectedly, however, (4)b is grammatical:

- (4)a *Mendian ibili naizen emakumea ederra da.
“The woman with whom I have walked in the mountains is beautiful.»
- (4)b Mendian ibili naizen emakumearekin ezkondu nai det.
“I want to marry [with] the woman with whom I have walked in the mountains.”

Likewise with the non-relativizable postposition *-(ren)gatik* "because of":

- (5)a *Pello'k bere burua il zuen emakumea ederra da.
 "The woman because of whom Pello killed himself is beautiful."
- (5)b Pello'k bere burua il zuen emakumearengatik Andres'ek ere bere burua il nai du,
 "Andres too wants to kill himself because of the woman because of whom Pello killed himself."

This fact provides an argument for deriving relative clauses from coordinate sentences. To see why, let us consider (5)c.

- (5)c Pello'k emakumearengatik bere burua il zuen eta Andres'ek ere emakumearengatik bere burua il nai du.
 Pello killed himself because of the woman and Andres too wants to kill himself because of the woman."

In this sentence, there is complete identity in structure between the two occurrences of the noun phrase *emakumearengatik* "because of the woman". If something like (5)c underlies (5)b, and if the Structural Description of Relative NP Deletion is able to refer to a sufficiently early stage in the derivation, then the complete identity between the two occurrences of *emakumearengatik* will allow the transformation to apply, taking for the identical noun phrases in its Structural Description the noun phrases *emakumea* together with their postpositions *-rengatik*.

In a structure like that of diagram (1), however, there can be no structural identity between the two occurrences of *emakumearengatik*, since the postposition *-rengatik* on the second occurrence of *emakumea* will modify the whole relative clause construction *Pello'k (emakumearengatik) bere burua il zuen emakumea* rather than just the noun phrase *emakumea*. In other words, in the structure given in diagram (1) the topmost NP may have a postposition associated with it, but the two NP_i must be noun phrases that do not immediately dominate a non-zero postposition, for, otherwise, they could not be structurally identical.

As this is the only argument specific to Basque that I have been able to find for deriving relative clauses from conjoined sentences, and as the details of such a derivation are rather unclear, I will not pursue this matter any further.

B) When the head noun of a relative clause is "semantically related" to a non-relativizable postposition, relativization on this postposition is possible:

- (6)a Arrazoi onengatik nere burua il nai det.
 "For this reason I want to kill myself."
- (6)b Nere burua il nai nuen arrazoi az ez naiz gogoratzen.
 "I don't remember the reason why I wanted to kill myself."

(6)b is a good sentence, although (6)a shows that the lower coreferential noun phrase *arrazoi* must have had the non-relativizable postposition *-(ren)gatik* in the constituent sentence. I have no explanation to offer for this fact.

Ignoring those two complications, we can state the transformation of Relative NP Deletion as follows:

W	—	[_{NP}	[_S	X	—	NP	—	(P)	—	Y	—	V] _S	—	COMP	—	NP	—	(P)] _{NP}	—	Z
1		2	3	4	5	6		7		8	9	10	⇒				7	8	9	10	
1		2	Ø	Ø	5	6		7		8	9	10					7	8	9	10	

Conditions: 3 = 8
 3 does not immediately dominate a P.
 5 does not begin with a P.

The variable Y in the Structural Description is an essential variable. Relativization in Basque, like in English, can go indefinitely far down in the tree:

- (7) Zoroa dala guztiak dakitela esan zizutela idatzi zenidala uste dedan ijitoak musu eman zidan.
 “The gypsy I believe you wrote me they told you everybody knows is crazy kissed me.”

The suffix *-la* that we find here added to the finite verb forms *da* “(he) is”, *dakite* “(they) know”, *zizuten* “(they) had (to you)” and *zenidan* “(you) had (to me)” is comparable in function to the English complementizer *that*. Unlike its English counterpart, however, *-la* never occurs in the function of a relative marker. The relativizer is always *-n*, as in *uste dedan* “whom I believe”, or *-neko*, an extended version of *-n*.

The Complex Noun Phrase Constraint and the Coordinate Structure Constraint (See Ross 1967: § 4.1 and § 4.2) hold, but the Sentential Subject Constraint (Ross 1967: § 4.41) does not:

- (8) Amorratuak dirala bixtan dagon zakur oiekin ez det ibili nai.
 “I don’t want to walk with those dogs that it is obvious are rabid.”

Stacked Relatives

When the noun phrase relativized is itself a relative clause construction, the result is a stacked relative clause. Native speakers differ in their judgements on the acceptability of some of these sentences. Spontaneous examples are occasionally heard and can be found in texts as well. This example is probably acceptable to everyone:

- (9) Irakurri ditugun idatzi zituen liburu batzuek oso interesgarriak dire.
 “Some books that he wrote that we have read are very interesting.”

An example with the same syntax as (10) occurred in the speech of a Basque academician (See *Euskera* 5 (1960), 140). It clearly shows the difficulty of understanding that some of these sentences present.

- (10) Askotan arkitu naiz baserritarrak diran eta baserritarrak ez diran beientzako Fanderiko pentsuak onenak dirala dioten gizonekin.
 “I have often met men who say that Fanderi’s fodder is the best for cows, who are farmers and who are not farmers.”

Since, normally, relatives cannot be separated from their heads (there is no extraposition of relative clauses in Basque), there is a strong tendency to interpret the clause *baserritarrak diran eta baserritarrak ez diran* "who are farmers and who are not farmers" as a relative clause on *bei* "cow". A heavy pause between ...*ez diran* and *beientzako* will help arrive at the correct interpretation.

The upshot of this seems to be that stacked relative clauses are grammatical in Basque, but that many speakers have a surface structure constraint that rules out as unacceptable any sentence containing a relative clause that immediately precedes a noun phrase that is not its head. For such speakers, (9) is acceptable, but (10) is not.

Pronominal Heads

Demonstrative pronouns (*au* "this", *ori* "that", *ura* "yon") can function as surface structure heads of relative clauses:

- (11) Eskuan ikusten dizudan ori zer da?
 "What is that, which I see in your hand?"
- (12) Eskuan ikusten didazun au bonba da.
 "This, which you see in my hand, is a bomb."
- (13) Arantza'ri eskuan ikusten diogun ura bonba al da?
 "Is that, which we see in Arantza's hand, a bomb?"

Demonstrative pronouns can also have human referents. Thus we get, e.g.:

- (14) Berandu etorri dan $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{au} \\ \text{ori} \\ \text{ura} \end{array} \right\}$ goseak dago.

"He $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{here} \\ \text{there} \\ \text{yon} \end{array} \right\}$, who has come late, is hungry."

Personal pronouns cannot function as heads of relative clauses in surface structure. For example, with *ni* "I" *zu* "you" we do not get:

- (15)a *Berandu etorri naizen ni goseak nago.
 "I, who have come late, am hungry."
- (15)b *Berandu etorri zeran zu goseak al zaude?
 "Are you, who have come late, hungry?"

Instead of the expected personal pronouns we get the demonstrative ones:

- (16)a Berandu etorri naizen au goseak nago.
 "I, who have come late, am hungry."
- (16)b Berandu etorri zeran ori goseak al zaude?
 "Are you, who have come late, hungry?"

Yet, in general, demonstrative pronouns only allow third person verb forms: (17)a and (17)b are ungrammatical:

(17)a *Au goseak nago. “*This one am hungry.”

(17)b *Ori goseak al zaude? “*Are that one hungry?”

But we do get (18)a and (18)b with the intensive personal pronouns *nerau* (cf. *nera* “my”) “I myself” and *zerori* (cf. *zere*, *zeure* “your own”) “you yourself”:

(18)a *Nerau* goseak nago. “I am hungry myself.”

(18)b *Zerori* goseak al zaude? “Are you hungry yourself?”

Therefore, the demonstrative pronouns in (16)ab seem to be reductions of the intensive personal pronouns of (18)ab.

According to I. M. Echaide (1912: 32), the intensive personal pronouns appear on the surface just in case the relative clause is based (by virtue of special case A) on a non-relativizable postposition. (Recall that for animate noun phrases, hence for personal pronouns, the only relativizable functions are the absolutive, the ergative and the dative). His examples are (page 55):

(19)a *Malkoak arkitu dituzuten neronengan parrak ere izandu dire.*
 “In me, in whom you have found tears, there have been laughs too.”

(19)b *Malkoak arkitu diran zerorrenagan parrak ere izandu dire.*
 “In you, in whom tears have been found, there have been laughs too.”

The occurrence of the intensive personal pronouns as heads is explained by the assumption that the lower coreferential noun phrase must be focus in the constituent sentence, since the intensive forms are the forms pronouns take when they are focussed upon.

Not just demonstratives, but any determiner can serve as the head of a relative clause in surface structure. In particular, *bat* “one, a” and *-a* “the”. E.g.:

(20) *Berandu etorri den bat goseak dago.*

(20)a “One, who has come late, is hungry.” (+Specific)

(20)b “One who has come late is hungry.” (–Specific)

(21) *Berandu etorri dana goseak dago.*

(21)a “The one who has come late is hungry.” (+Specific)

(21)b “Who has come late is hungry.” (–Specific)

(21)b is called a free relative in English grammar.

I will call the Basque sentence (21) a free relative, regardless of whether it has a specific or a non-specific reference, Free relatives should not be confused with indirect questions, as C. Leroy Baker has so aptly warned us (Baker 1970). In Basque, there is little danger of confusing the two: the surface structures are quite different:

(22)a *Ez dakit zuk dakizuna.* “I don’t know what you know.”

(22)a contains a free relative: *zuk dakizuna* “what you know”. Its meaning can be paraphrased as “my knowledge does not include yours”.

(22)b Ez dakit zuk zer dakizun. "I don't know what you know."

(22)b is an indirect question: *zer* is the interrogative pronoun "what", and the *-n* of *dakizun* is the Wh-complementizer; the sentence can be paraphrased as "I have no idea what you know".

Just in case the surface head of a relative clause is the determiner *-a*, the Complex Noun Phrase Constraint does not hold. Of course, according to Haj Ross's original formulation of the constraint, we should not expect it to hold here: "No element contained in a sentence dominated by a noun phrase with a lexical head noun may be moved out of that noun phrase by a transformation" (Ross 1967). Certainly, the Basque article *-a* is not a lexical noun. Compare now sentence (23)a with sentence (23)b:

(23)a Beartsuari dirua ematen diona luzaro biziko da.
"Who gives money to the poor will live long."

(23)b Dirua ematen diona beartsuari luzaro biziko da.
Same meaning as (23)a.

In (23)b, the indirect object noun phrase *beartsuari* "to the poor" has been scrambled out of the relative clause.

This is not possible when the head of the relative clause is a full noun, as in (24)a, a demonstrative pronoun, as in (25)a, or an intensive personal pronoun, as in (26)a:

(24)a Beartsuari dirua ematen dion gizona luzaro biziko da.
"The man who gives money to the poor will live long."

(24)b *Dirua ematen dion gizona beartsuari luzaro biziko da.

(25)a Beartsuari dirua ematen dion ori luzaro biziko da.
"That one there, who gives money to the poor, will live long."

(25)b *Dirua ematen dion ori beartsuari luzaro biziko da.

(26)a Beartsuari dirua ematen diozun ori luzaro biziko zera.
"You, who give money to the poor, will live long."

(26)b *Dirua ematen diozun ori beartsuari luzaro biziko zera.

The presence of a case postposition on the determiner *-a* does not interfere with the scrambling process. We have, e.g., with the ergative postposition *-k*:

(27)a Beartsuari dirua ematen dionak bere saria artuko du.
"Who gives money to the poor will receive his reward."

(27)b Dirua ematen dionak beartsuari bere saria artuko du.
Same meaning as (27)a.

In all the preceding examples, the reference of the free relative clause was generic, or, at least, non-specific. However, this is not a necessary condition for scrambling something out of a free relative clause. An example that I found in a

book by the Basque writer B. Iraola Aristiguieta (published in 1962, but written decades earlier) shows this:

- (28) Ala, batian, nere gantzontzilluak jartzera dijuela, esan zion erdiko gelan dagon Meltxorrek, egunian bi peseta pagatzen dituenak ardorik gabe: Bañura al zuaz?
 “So, one time, while he was going to put on my underpants, Melchior, who lives in the room in the middle, the one who pays two pesetas a day, not including wine, said to him: Are you going to the bathroom?”

Here the free relative clause is *egunian bi peseta pagatzen dituenak* “who pays two pesetas a day”. The adverbial *ardorik gabe* “not including wine” (literally: “without wine”) originates as part of this free relative clause. In the surface structure it has been scrambled to the right of *pagatzen dituenak* “he who pays” and hence out of the relative clause. The *-k* of *dituenak* is the ergative postposition, required by the verb *esan* “say”. The reference of the free relative clause is specific, namely “Melchior”.

It is therefore immaterial whether the reference of a free relative clause is specific or non-specific, as far as scrambling constituents out of it is concerned.

Pseudo-extrapolation:

Free relative clauses are quite frequent in Basque texts because they provide a substitute for extraposition. Extraposition of relative clauses is not possible in Basque but the existence of free relatives allows one to put sentential and other modifiers after their head nouns. In this way, one achieves the effect of extraposition. An example will make this clear:

- (29)a Bein ba zan zazpi seme-alaba zituen errege bat.
 “Once upon a time, there was a king who had seven sons and daughters.”

(29)a shows the normal form. The noun phrase *errege bat* “a king” is modified directly by the relative clause *zazpi seme-alaba zituen* “who had seven sons and daughters”. Now the pseudo-extraposed form (29)b:

- (29)b Bein ba zan errege bat, zazpi seme-alaba zituena.
 “Once upon a time there was a king, one who had seven sons and daughters.”

Here we have a free relative clause: *zazpi seme-alaba zituena* “one who had seven sons and daughters”.

If the relative clause is very long, the pseudo-extraposed form is more acceptable than the normal form.

The free relative clause, when used with an antecedent, must have the same case, i.e. the same postposition, as this antecedent:

- (30)a Ori errege batek, zazpi seme-alaba zituenak, esan zidan.
 “A king, one who had seven sons and daughters, told me that.”
 (30)b Ori errege bati, zazpi seme-alaba zituenari, egin nion.
 “I did that to a king, to one who had seven sons and daughters.”

- (30)c Ori errege batez, zazpi seme-alaba zituenaz, maitemindu zan.
 "She fell in love with a king, with one who had seven sons and daughters."
 (30)c Ori errege batentzat, zazpi seme-alaba zituenarentzat, oso erreza zan.
 "That was very easy for a king, for one who had seven sons and daughters."

In all these examples, the postpositions on the antecedent (ergative *-k*, dative *-ri*, instrumental *-z*, benefactive *-rentzat*) must be repeated on the free relative clause.

Pseudo-extraposition, i.e. the use of a free relative with a full lexical antecedent, is a welcome device that can serve to eliminate unacceptable stacking of relative clauses. We have already seen one example of this in (28). Without the use of pseudo-extraposition this sentence would have had to be:

- (31) Ala, batian, nere gantzontzilluak jartzera dijuela, esan zion ardorik gabe egunian bi peseta pagatzen dituen erdiko gelan dagon Meltxorrek: Bañura al zuaz?
 "So, one time, while he was going to put on my underpants, Melchior, who lives in the room in the middle, who pays two pesetas a day, not including wine, said to him: Are you going to the bathroom?"

(31) is much less elegant than (28), moreover, (31) will be unacceptable for those speakers who have the constraint on stacking mentioned earlier, since the relative clause *ardorik gabe egunian bi peseta pagatzen dituen* "who pays two pesetas a day not including wine", immediately precedes the noun phrase *erdiko gela* "the room in the middle", which is not the head of the relative clause.

A much more extreme example of the same situation can be found in a book by Pedro M. Urruzuno *Euskalerritik zerura*. There we read on page 13:

- (32) Ainbeste maite zuan amona, beretzat amarik onena izandu zana, ainbeste laztan gozo eman zizkana, zerurako bidea ain ondo erakutsi ziona, ill zan larogeita amaika urterekin,
 "Grandmother, whom he had loved so dearly, who had been for him the best of mothers, who had given him so many sweet embraces, who had shown him so well the road to heaven, had died at the age of ninety-one."

If the device of pseudo-extraposition were not available the sentence would take on this shape:

- (33) Zerurako bidea ain ondo erakutsi zion ainbeste laztan gozo eman zizkan beretzat amarik onena izandu zan ainbeste maite zuan amona ill zan larogeita amaika urterekin.

While (33) may be, strictly speaking, grammatical, it is utterly unintelligible to the native listener.

Diminutive free relatives

An interesting property of free relative clauses is that they admit the diminutive suffix *-txo* just like nouns and adjectives do:

Nouns:

<i>lan-a</i>	“the job”,	<i>lantxo-a</i>	“the little job”,
<i>liburu-a</i>	“the book”,	<i>liburutxo-a</i>	“the little book”,
<i>gizon-a</i>	“the man”,	<i>gizontxo-a</i>	“the little man”,
<i>aurr-a</i>	“the child”,	<i>aurtxo-a</i>	“the little child”.

Adjectives:

<i>zuri</i>	“white”,	diminutive form:	<i>zuritxo</i> ,
<i>txiki</i>	“small”,	diminutive form:	<i>txikitxo</i> ,
<i>apal</i>	“humble”,	diminutive form:	<i>apaltxo</i> .

In the same way, *-txo* (*tx* denotes a palatal affricate) can be added to free relative clauses:

<i>dakidan-a</i>	“what I know”,	<i>dakidantxo-a</i>	“what little I know”,
<i>degun-a</i>	“what we have”,	<i>deguntxo-a</i>	“what little we have”.

- (34) Ez dakit ondo zer gertatu zan, baina dakidantxoa esango dizut.
 “I don’t know very well what happened, but what little I know I will tell you.”
- (35) Deguntxo pixkaren lotsa gera.
 “We are ashamed of the little bit that we have.”

Example (35) is doubly diminutive: it also contains the word *pixka* “a little bit”, cf. *esne pixka bat* “a little milk”.

Repetition:

Another interesting fact about free (and also ordinary) relative clauses is that they can be repeated for expressive purposes. In Basque, repetition is a systematically used device to increase the force of an expression, or its preciseness. Examples:

<i>arro</i>	“proud”,	<i>arro-arro</i>	“real proud”,
<i>bete</i>	“full”,	<i>bete-bete</i>	“brimfull”,
<i>goiz-ean</i>	“in the morning”,	<i>goiz-goizean</i>	“early in the morning”,
<i>gau-an</i>	“at night”,	<i>gau-gauan</i>	“late at night”,
<i>alde-an</i>	“near”,	<i>alde-aldean</i>	“right near”.

Consider also the following examples:

- (36)a *Etxeraño etorri ziran ijitoak.* “The gypsies came up to the house.”
- (36)b *Etxe-etxeraño etorri ziran ijitoak.* “The gypsies came right up to the house.”
- (37)a *Lautan etorri ziran.* “They came at four o’clock.”
- (37)b *Lau-lautan etorri ziran.* “They came at four o’clock sharp.”

Relative clauses too can undergo this process:

(38)a Zerana zeralako maite zaitut. "I love you because you are the one you are."
(*zera* "you are", hence *zerana* "who/what/the one you are").

(38)b Zerana-zerana zeralako maite zaitut.
"I love you because you are just the one you are."

In the oldest Basque book, Etxepare's *Linguae vasconum primitiae* (1545), we find an example very similar to (38)b. The language of the book is the Low-Navarrese of the region of St. Jean Pied de Port. The example occurs in the poem *Potaren Galdatzia*, line 10:

(39) Ziren-zirena baitzira, zutzaz pena dizit nik.
"I am aching for you because you are just the one you are."

Examples (38)b and (39) contain free relatives; it is also possible to have a lexical head noun here:

(40)a Zerana emakumea zeralako maite zaitut.
"I love you because you are the woman you are."

(40)b Zerana-zerana emakumea zeralako maite zaitut.
"I love you because you are just the woman you are."

Relatives on Proper Nouns:

Several Basque grammar books (e.g. Lardizabal, Echaide) contain statements to the effect that relative clauses are not allowed on proper nouns referring to persons. However, none of my informants objected to (41):

(41) Egunero kilo erdi bat txokolate jaten duen Beobide'tar Pantxika ez da bat ere gizentzen.
"Francisca Beobide, who eats a pound of chocolate every day, does not get fat in the least."

Sentence (28), which we considered earlier, also contains a relative clause on a proper noun: *erdiko gelan dagon Meltxorrek* "Melchior, who lives in the room in the middle". Moreover, a very reputable textbook (Lopez-Mendizabal) contains the expression: *Nik asko maite zaitudan Andone* (p. 222) "Antonia, whom I love very much".

Relative clauses on proper nouns are, of course, generally non-restrictive. I may mention here that I am unaware of any syntactic differences in Basque between these two types of relative clauses, except for the obvious universal cooccurrence restrictions between either type of relative and certain types of head noun phrases. In Basque, like everywhere else, a relative clause that modifies a noun phrase with an underlying (i.e. deictic) demonstrative element must be non-restrictive. When certain quantifiers, like *guzti* "all" and *bakoitz* "each" occur associated with the head noun phrase, the relative clause can only be restrictive. Apart from this, however, my investigations have failed to show any differences in syntactic behavior between the two. In particular, there is no difference in intonation between restrictive and appositive relative clauses in Basque.

Sentential relatives:

There are no sentential relatives in Basque. The closest equivalent to the English sentence (42) is not the ungrammatical (42)a, but (42)b:

(42) Jim called me a lexicalist, which made me cry.

(42)a *Iztegizalea deitu ninduen Xanti'k, negar eragin zidana.

(42)b Iztegizalea deitu ninduen Xanti'k, onek negar eragin zidan.
 "Jim called me a lexicalist, this made me cry."

Japanese, Tamil and Turkish do not allow sentential relatives either. I therefore conjecture that the absence of sentential relatives is a general property of S.O.V. languages.

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