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APPOSITIVE PREDICATES

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1. THE FUNCTION OF APPOSITIVE PREDICATION

Predicates, phrases which denote properties, may fulfill their predicative function with respect to their subject (external argument) from different structural positions, such as a main predicate of a clause, or secondary predicate (part of another, complex, predicate).¹ This paper will demonstrate that there exists a third structural position from which predication is attested, that of appositives.

Consider the example *a famous hero*, which functions as a main predicate in (1a), as a secondary predicate in (1b), and as an appositive in (1c):

- (1) (a) Ulysses was a famous hero.
- (b) Ulysses returned from his trip a famous hero.
- (c) Ulysses, a famous hero, returned from his trip.

The NP *a famous hero*, when it functions as a predicate, denotes the property of being a famous hero.² Applying this property to Ulysses in (1a) yields a truth value, 'true' or 'false', according to what may have been the case at the time denoted by the tense of the sentence.

In (1b), the same NP *a famous hero* functions as a secondary predicate. In this case, the property of being a famous hero is not directly applied to Ulysses, but combines with the property of returning from one's trip to derive a complex property. This complex property probably involves more than simple intersection. (1b) entails more than the fact that Ulysses returned from his trip and that Ulysses was a hero. There is clearly in the complex property a kind of causal relation between the trip and the fame, or at least something like a time overlap between the intervals at which the two properties are held. In other

examples, though, the property denoted by a complex predicate may be formed simply by the intersection of the properties denoted by the constituent predicates, as is the case for the complex predicate *a traveller who was a famous hero*.

I would like to show that (1c) illustrates a third, different function of the NP *a famous hero* as a predicate. In (1c), *a famous hero* does not function as a main predicate, since the expression *Ulysses, a famous hero* does not yield a truth value the way a main predicate typically does when combined with a subject.³ Nor is its function that of a secondary predicate; at least, it does not carry the various entailments of causality and overlap that it did when used as a secondary predicate in (1b).

One may doubt, at this point, whether the NP *a famous hero* in (1c) is used as a referring expression. After all, an indefinite NP can also be used as a referring expression. One may hold the view, as do many traditional grammar books, that *a famous hero* is used coreferentially with *Ulysses*, as an "alternate" subject of the sentence. Below, in section 3, I will argue that such a view cannot explain the properties of appositive NPs in general (but the analysis offered here does account for the "alternate subject" intuition). For now, I will only mention one problem with this view when we apply it to the specific example in (1c). Indefinite NPs, in general, cannot be marked as coreferential with any expression which precedes them (see for example the treatment of indefinite NPs in Heim 1982); this by itself precludes *a famous hero* from being used to corefer with *Ulysses*. But, technicalities aside, it is intuitively clear that there aren't two locutionary acts of reference in any use of (1c). Rather, it seems natural to say that the name *Ulysses* is used to refer, whereas *a famous hero* does not refer at all. Its use in (1c) is very different from its use as a referring expression in the sentence *A famous hero returned from his trip*, for example.

The view which will be maintained here is that *a famous hero* in (1c) is neither a main predicate nor a secondary predicate, but an appositive predicate. What an appositive predicate does is to provide felicity conditions for the use of its subject in the given sentence. The subject of the appositive can be used felicitously to refer to an individual only if that individual has the property denoted by the appositive. For an utterance of the sentence to make a claim about the subject of an appositive predicate, the subject must satisfy the predicate. If it doesn't, the utterance makes no claim about it. Therefore the sentence (1c) can be used to make a true or false claim about Ulysses only if Ulysses is a famous hero.

In most cases, the reference of an NP depends on the background against which it is evaluated. The felicity conditions set by an appositive determine the backgrounds against which the sentence can be used to perform a speech act. (1c), for example, can make an assertion only against backgrounds where the name *Ulysses* happens to refer to an individual who is a famous hero. It follows that if I try to use (1c) without any irony against the background of a conversation about my dog Ulysses, who has just returned from a trip, then my utterance of (1c) is not true but infelicitous, since, as it turns out, my dog Ulysses is not a famous hero.

Notice that unlike presuppositions, which also set felicity conditions for the use of certain parts of the sentence, the felicity conditions set by an appositive do not have to be entailed by the background, but are part of the content of the utterance. So, a felicitous utterance of (1c) will claim, not presuppose, that Ulysses is a famous hero.

Apposition is typically taken to be non-restrictive.⁴ Compare the non-restrictive appositives in (2) with their restrictive modifier counterparts in (3):

- (2) (a) Her brother, the president of the club, doesn't speak to her.
 (b) I finally saw the new number, whom nobody had met yet.
- (3) (a) Her brother the president of the club doesn't speak to her.
 (b) I finally saw the new member whom nobody had met yet.

The use of the restrictive phrases in (3) does not involve any uniqueness presuppositions for the denotations of the phrases *her brother* and *the new member* with which they combine. On the contrary, they serve to restrict the denotations, in this case by the intersection of two properties.

The appositives in (2) are actually also used to restrict, but very differently. Here the restriction applies to the appropriate backgrounds. The appropriate backgrounds for (2) are such that they contain a unique referent for *her brother* and *the new member*. The appositives in (2) restrict these backgrounds even further, and only allow the backgrounds where the referents have the property denoted by the appositive. The point is that in different backgrounds which contain unique brothers of hers, or unique new members, the individuals will be different. It is well known that the expression *her brother* can be used even if the woman in question has more than one brother, on the condition that the particular background where the expression is used contains a unique brother. What the appositive does is to eliminate those backgrounds

where the unique brother in question does not satisfy the appositive predicate. In this way it restricts the use of *her brother* or *the new member* as referring expressions.

Appositive predication therefore does not function like secondary predication, in that the property denoted by the predicate is not combined with some other predicate. An appositive predicate applies directly to an individual. But appositive predication is also different from main predication in that it does not serve to provide a truth value but to filter out those backgrounds where the individuals referred to do not satisfy the predicate.

The present account of apposition follows other semantic accounts (see for example Sells 1985) in viewing apposition as a discourse phenomenon. But it is based on the notion of predication, whereas Sells' account is based on the notion of anaphora. Under Sells' account, the truth conditions of (4a) reduce to those of (4b) :

- (4) (a) James Baker, the President of the Union, walked in.
(b) James Baker walked in. He is the President of the Union.

Consider, however, a state of affairs where James Baker alone walks in. Then, there is a difference in truth value between the two examples. (4a) is infelicitous rather than either true or false, since James Baker, the referent picked up by the name, is not President of the Union but Secretary of State. Therefore, the felicity condition set by the appositive for the use of the name is not met. Example (4b) is very different. The name is used without any difficulty to refer to James Baker, but since he is not President, the second sentence is false, which perhaps makes false the whole discourse (i.e. the conjunction of the two sentences in (4b)).

Given the same state of affairs, compare (5a) to (5b) :

- (5) (a) George Bush, who just walked in, is the President of the Union.
(b) George Bush is President of the Union. He just walked in.

Again, the (b) discourse is felicitous. It contains one utterance which is true, that George Bush is President of the Union, and one which is false, since in the state of affairs described George Bush did not just walk in, only Jim Baker did. In contrast, the utterance of (5a) does not have a truth value at all. It is infelicitous, since George Bush fails the reference-check set by the appositive.

Apposition is different from discourse anaphora in yet another respect. Unlike an appositive, which can only predicate of the referent

provided by its subject, discourse anaphora does not necessarily depend upon a referent provided by the antecedent. A discourse anaphor may function instead as a bound variable if it can be brought under the scope of the quantifier which binds its antecedent. Compare the following examples :

- (6) (a) If a man wants to surprise his daughter, he buys her a record.
(b) ? If a man wants to surprise his daughter, a lover of classical music, he buys her a record.

The NP *his daughter* licenses the discourse pronoun *her* even when *a man* is understood as universally quantified. But it does not license an appositive in the same construction. Thus the only possible reading for (6b) is one, not very natural, where *a man* refers to a specific man, and where *his daughter* functions as a referring expression as well.

The same point can be made with variables bound by λ -operators, i.e. non-referring pronouns which give rise to a sloppy identity reading of a missing VP. Such variables license discourse anaphora, as can be seen in (7a), but preclude apposition :

- (7) (a) If an Englishman wants to surprise his daughter, he buys her a record, but if a Frenchman does, he buys her a book.
(b) John bought his daughter, a lover of classical music, a record, and so did Bill.

The second *her* in (7a) has an antecedent which is missing as part of VP-ellipsis with sloppy identity, namely *his [the Frenchman's] daughter*. Discourse anaphora is therefore licensed by variables bound by a λ -operator. But these variables preclude appositives, as can be seen from the fact that (7b) only has a strict reading. (7b), because of the appositive, lacks the sloppy identity reading, where Bill buys a record for his own daughter. The appositive forces *his daughter* to refer (by requiring reference to a music lover). The referent, probably John's daughter, is therefore part of the missing VP, and yields the strict reading, according to which Bill buys a record for John's daughter.

The analysis of apposition as predication may seem problematic in view of the observation that proper names often serve as appositives :

- (8) A famous hero, Ulysses, returned from his trip

Though it is true that proper names are usually used to refer, proper names are also used in predication ; see, e.g., *Mary Jones* in the following examples :

- (9) (a) After her marriage, Mary Smith became Mary Jones.
 (b) She entered the room Mary Smith and left it Mary Jones.

To appreciate the difference between a name in apposition and a name in argument position, consider the following example, from Quirk et al. (1972 : 628) :

- (10) We, John and I, intend to resign.

Since the name *John* is an appositive in (10), the use of the sentence (10) may be felicitous against a background that does not contain the information that John's name is *John*. This is so because reference to John is secured by the indexical *we*, and as long as it is true that *John* is John's name, the utterance of (10) is felicitous, and moreover contains the information that the speaker is referring to someone called John. On the other hand, a felicitous utterance of (11) :

- (11) John and I intend to resign

assumes a background which contains the information that John's name is *John*, since this would normally be the way to secure reference to him with the use of the name. Of course, if an utterance of (11) is accompanied by an act of pointing to John, then again the name *John* plays no role in securing reference, but functions very much like an appositive.

Notice that when the NPs *Ulysses* and *John and I* in (8) and (11) are dislocated, their discourse function changes completely :

- (12) (a) A famous hero returned from his trip, Ulysses.
 (b) We intend to resign, John and I.

In (12), unlike the examples with appositives, the main function of the dislocated phrases is to refer. Intonation shows that *we* in (12b) is cataphoric, not indexical. Both *we* and *a famous hero* function as free variables bound by referring dislocated NPs.

2. THE SYNTAX OF APPPOSITION

If we accept the view of appositives as predicates, it is natural to accept a syntactic analysis of the kind which appears in Jackendoff (1977), where the subject and the appositive form a constituent. Such a structure is exemplified in (13). Notice that this structure meets the mutual c-command requirement on predication suggested in Williams (1980).

- (13) [_{NP} Ulysses]_i [_{NP} a famous hero]_j returned from his trip.

One thing that led Ermonds (1979) and McCawley (1982) to abandon this structure was the observation, due to Ross (1967), that appositives are not "in the scope of" their subjects :

- (14) One/*Every/*No friend of mine, the owner of a Cadillac, is coming for a visit.

Actually, as noted by Jackendoff (1977), appositives are not in the scope of any quantifier in the sentence :

- (15) One/*Every/*No friend of mine owns a Cadillac, his favourite car.

The immunity from the scope of quantification follows from the discourse function of apposition, and therefore does not undermine the structure in (13), where the appositive is adjoined to its subject. As suggested above, the discourse function of an appositive is to restrict the possible referents of its subject, by denoting a predicate which must be satisfied by any such referent. It is the hallmark of the referential use of definite descriptions that the predicate provided must hold of referents that are introduced independently of this predicate.⁵ Appositives fulfill this function with referents provided by their subjects, since they themselves do not refer. Yet both referential definite descriptions and appositives apply to referents that are introduced in the discourse at a non-clausal level, i.e. outside the scope of quantifiers.

Notice that immunity to quantification does not hold under modal subordination. Examples can be constructed, as in (16), adapted from Sells (1985), where modal operators, hidden (as in (16a,b) or explicit (16c), can take scope over the referents that appositives predicate of. I refer the reader to treatments of modal subordination such as Roberts (1986).

- (16) (a) Every chess set comes with a spare piece, a pawn.
 (b) Every new student is assigned a tutor, an older undergraduate.
 (c) Every rice farmer in Korea owns a wooden cart, usually a rickety old thing.

3. APPositIVES AS PREDICATES

I finally wish to provide arguments in favour of the view that NPs in apposition, rather than functioning as referring expressions, stand in a predication relation to their subject NPs. NPs in apposition are subject to restrictions that apply to predicate nominals, not to referring NPs.

Firstly, the prohibition against quantification over individuals, which applies to predicate nominals, applies to appositives as well. The example in (17a) is from Williams (1983), who claims that 'grow into a tree' is a predicative position, and therefore does not allow quantification over individuals. Quantification is not allowed in the appositive in (17b) either, which is accounted for if appositive positions are predicative positions.

- (17) (a) An acorn grows into a tree/*every tree.
- (b) The picture on the wall, a tree/*every tree, was made by Mary.

Secondly, as has been noted by Williams (1982), predicates allow *i*-within-*i*, which, according to Chomsky (1981), is not allowed within arguments. Relevant examples are shown in (18a,b). Again, appositives are like predicates and unlike arguments in allowing *i*-within-*i*, as shown by (18c):

- (18) (a) * [His_i own worst enemy]_i lost the election again
- (b) John_i is [his_i own worst enemy]_i
- (c) John_i [his_i own worst enemy]_i lost the election again

In (18a), the NP in subject position can have no coreferential proper subpart. In other words, since the NP has index *i*, no subpart of it, in particular the pronoun *his*, can have the same index. In (18b), the same NP in main-predicate position allows a subpart with the same index. The same is true when the predicate is appositive. (19) is an additional example of the same phenomenon:

- (19) (a) *The president met [representatives of themselves]_i
- (b) John and Mary are [representatives of themselves]_i
- (c) The president met John and Mary, [representatives of themselves]_i

Another argument for treating appositives as predicates is based on the possibility for some NPs in predicate position to appear without an article (see 20a). In argument position, the article is obligatory. Appositives allow the structure which is special to predicate position. (20c) is from Quirk et al (1972: 635):

- (20) (a) We elected him President of the Union/leader of the Democratic group.
- (b) George Washington, President of the Union, planted a cherry tree.
- (c) Robinson, leader of the Democratic group of the committee, refused to answer the questions.

An additional argument is based on examples, again from Quirk et al. (1972: 635), where the appositive is modified by adverbs, which normally modify predicates:

- (21) (a) Norman Jones, then a student, wrote several best sellers.
- (b) Your brother, obviously an expert on English grammar, is highly praised in the book I'm reading.
- (c) Someone, maybe his wife, killed Bill.
- (d) Maureen, normally a timid girl, spoke rudely to them at the party.
- (e) They elected as chairman Martin Jones, also a Cambridge graduate.
- (f) Many people, mostly women, like to dress up.

In that connection, a special class of modifiers should be noted, floated quantifiers, which are sometimes treated as adverbs (see Dowty 1986, Roberts 1986) and mark collectivity on predicates. Floated quantifiers appear with appositives, which again lends strength to the claim that these are predicates:

- (22) The men, both/some/all doctors/one a doctor, were awarded medals.

'Pointer' *that* was argued by Higgins (1973) not to refer to animate beings; therefore in sentences such as (23a), what secures reference is the predicate. (23b) is ungrammatical, in accordance with our claim that appositive NPs do not refer:

- (23) (a) That is John Smith
- (b) *That_i John Smith_i is standing in the corner.

Bare plurals in argument position may refer to a kind as an individual (see Carlson 1979), but in predicate position they denote the extension of the kind. In appositive position, the denotation is not to the individual, hence the difference in meaning between (24a) and (24b):

- (24) (a) John and Bill, students from abroad, do not like poetry.
- (b) Students from abroad do not like poetry.

Finally, appositives may be property-denoting phrases other than NPs, such as VPs, APs, PPs and CPs:

- (25) (a) Many people, including my sister, won't forgive him for that.
 (b) John, drowsy with drugs, immediately fell asleep.
 (c) John, in a state of stupor, could not answer any of the questions.
 (d) John, who was standing on a stool, reached the upper shelf.

To conclude, appositives show characteristics of those phrases that function in predication. It is important not to ignore these characteristics, since they serve as the basis of an analysis of appositives which incorporates them into sentence grammar.

NOTES

- (1) I am grateful to Anita Mitwooch for helpful discussions related to this work.
 (2) Partee (1987) has shown how to derive compositionally, by type-shifting, the predicative meaning of a *famous hero* from its meaning as a generalized quantifier.
 (3) Notice that the notion 'subject of a predicate', 'subject' for short, which is the relevant one throughout this article, does not coincide with the structural notion of 'subject of a sentence'. In the following examples, the italicized NPs are subjects of predicates, but not structural subjects:
 (i) (a) I consider *Ulysses* a famous hero.
 (b) John ate *the meat raw*.
 (c) He wrote about *Ulysses*, a famous hero.
 (4) The present discussion is not meant to include non-parenthetical phrases sometimes referred to in the literature as 'appositive'. The non-parentheticals include restrictive titles, as in *President George Bush*, and non-restrictive adjectives.
 (5) The distinction between referential and attributive uses of definite descriptions was made by Donnellan (1966). A useful explanation is provided in Barwise and Perry (1983).
 (6) Partee (1987) offers a semantic explanation, involving type shifting, for the impossibility of quantification in predicate positions.

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