

THE CASE OF CLOSE APPPOSITION

Symposium "(Ap)positive thinking in linguistics", Groningen, January 20, 2012

1. CLOSE APPPOSITION

Close apposition involves apparent juxtaposition of two noun phrases **with no intervening pause**:

- (1) a. the element engoopium [examples from Jackendoff 1984]
b. the material polyacrynilate
c. the actor John Gielgud
- (2) a. the name Harry
b. the color red
c. the letter A
d. the number 14
e. the play/opera/novel/movie *Death in Venice*

Jackendoff 1984: categorized mentions (*the N-E* construction):

- (3) a. the phrase *the phrase*
b. the word/verb *run*
c. the pattern *da-dum da-dum da-dum*
d. the symbol \$

Standard assumption: all cases of close apposition have the same syntax and semantics; in a pinch, categorized mentions should be special.

Present work: case-marking in close apposition in Russian permits two options: case-marking failure (N_2 bears the default nominative case) and case-agreement (N_2 agrees in case with N_1)

Main empirical generalization: case-marking failure indicates a **secondary use of language**, when the name has a prior use as the name of something else or just a linguistic expression, as with names of railway stations, ships, books, etc.

1.1. Constituency

McCawley 1998: the proper name is not the complement as the common noun may have one:

- (4) the former president of the United States and one-time Hollywood star Ronald Reagan

However, the common NP cannot be pronominalized by *one*, though neither can the larger N-E combination (Jackendoff 1984):

- (5) a. *the (lovely) song *Entzweiflung* (by Schubert) and the (trite) one *Wiegenlied* (by Brahms)
b. *the song *Wer nur die Sehnsucht kennt* by Schubert and the one by Tchaikovsky

McCawley 1998: the modifying AP forms a constituent with the common noun:

- (6) a. the actor and political activist Vanessa Redgrave
b. the former president Ronald Reagan

The article cannot form a constituent with a common NP to the exclusion of the proper name:

- (7) The methods of **the famous detective Sherlock Holmes** differed from those of **the famous detective Nero Wolfe**.

Haugen 1953, Burton-Roberts 1975, Noailly 1991, Keizer 2005: the head in close apposition is N₂: close apposition is **nonrestrictive modification of the proper name**, which can also be achieved by APs, PPs, and relative clauses:

- (8) a. I dedicate this sentence to **the incomparable/late Maria Callas**.
 b. One of the speakers is **Noam Chomsky from MIT**.

Jackendoff 1984, Lasersohn 1986, McCawley 1996, 1998: the head in close apposition is N₁ and the common noun is not the modifier.

1.2. Headedness

Article agreement in French is with the common noun:

- (9) le brigadier-chef Marie Poumart
 the-M lance sergeant.M Marie Poumart
the lance sergeant Marie Poumart

Can this be a proximity effect?

Not likely. With categorized mentions only N₁ can be the head (since there is generally no N₂). Even if covert nominalization is assumed, it is not expected to have a gender:

- (10)
-
- ```

graph TD
 DP --> D["D°
the"]
 DP --> NP1_1[NP1]
 NP1_1 --> NP1_2[NP1]
 NP1_1 --> NP2[NP2]
 NP1_2 --> famous[famous]
 NP1_2 --> linguist[linguist]
 NP2 --> Noam[Noam]
 NP2 --> Chomsky[Chomsky]

```

Jackendoff 1984: the proper name/sound may be followed by a further restrictive modifier that doesn't appear with just the proper name:

- (11) a. the song cycle *I Hate Music* by Leonard Bernstein Jackendoff 1984  
 b. the banal phrase *in the house* that begins the poem

Potential counterexamples:

- (12) a. Our next number is *I Hate Music* by Leonard Bernstein.  
 b. His voice dropped on "perchance to sleep" which/\*that he almost whispered.

What case marking do we expect?

- ✓ case agreement: the proper name/sound gets the case assigned to the entire NP
- ✗ case assignment: the proper name/sound is assigned case by the head
- ✓ no case: the proper name/sound is unmarked for case

Not expected: a mixed pattern

note: Even less expected is a mixed pattern that does not juxtapose modified quotations and everything else

## 2. CASE-MARKING IN CLOSE APPPOSITION IN RUSSIAN

[+ animate] close apposition shows obligatory case agreement.

- (13) a. My govorili o russkom poète \*Cvetaeva/✓Cvetaevoj.  
 we spoke about Russian-MSG-LOC poet-MSG-LOC Tsvetaeva.FSG-LOC  
*We spoke about the Russian poet Tsvetaeva.*
- b. o kosmonavtax Tereškovoj/\*Tereškova i Gagarine/\*Gagarin  
 about astronauts-LOC Tereshkova.FSG-LOC/NOM and Gagarin.MSG-LOC/NOM  
*about the astronauts Tereshkova and Gagarin*

**Kind names** behave like [+animate] names:

- (14) a. o ximičeskom èlemente \*radij/✓radie  
 about chemical-LOC element.MSG-LOC radium.MSG-NOM/LOC  
*about the chemical element radium*
- b. o ximičeskom èlemente \*sera/✓sere  
 about chemical-LOC element.MSG-LOC sulfur.FSG-NOM/LOC  
*about the chemical element sulfur*

The situation is more intricate in **toponyms**.

Without a categorizing noun case-marking is obligatory:

- (15) a. My govorili o \*Moskva/Moskve.  
 we spoke about Moscow.FSG-NOM/LOC  
*We spoke about Moscow.*
- b. My doexali do \*Popovka/Popovki.  
 we reached until Popovka.FSG-NOM/GEN  
*We have reached Popovka.*
- c. My govorili o \*Francija/✓Francii.  
 we spoke about France.FSG-NOM/LOC  
*We spoke about France.*

Otherwise the case-marking on the toponym depends on the categorizing noun:

- (16) a. My govorili o velikom gorode Moskva/Moskve.  
 we spoke about great-MSG-LOC city-MSG-LOC Moscow.FSG-NOM/LOC  
*We spoke about the great city of Moscow.*
- b. My doexali do stancii Popovka/\*Popovki.  
 we reached until station.FSG-GEN Popovka.FSG-NOM/GEN  
*We have reached the station Popovka.*
- c. My govorili o velikoj strane \*Francija/✓Francii.  
 we spoke about great-FSG-LOC country.FSG-LOC France.FSG-NOM/LOC  
*We spoke about the great country France.*

Prescriptive view (e.g., Golub 2010): toponyms must agree in case unless the proper name is plural, is itself a complex NP or is both foreign and unfamiliar.

Optionality is conditioned by gender/number congruence, though in subtly different ways for different toponyms (Graudina, Icković and Katlinskaja 2001).

**Foreign toponyms**, even if  $\phi$ -congruent, tend to resist case-agreement: the less familiar they are, the more likely they are to retain the nominative form.

- (17) a. v šstate Nebraska/\*Nebraske  
 in state.M-LOC Nebraska.F-NOM/-LOC  
*in the state of Nebraska*
- b. v šstate Texas/\*Texase  
 in state.M-LOC Texas.M-NOM/-LOC  
*in the state of Texas*

For **morphologically simplex city names**, number congruence is an obligatory condition for case agreement but gender congruence is not:

- (18) a. v gorode Gagry/\*Gagrax  
 in town.MSG-LOC Gagry.PL-NOM/LOC  
*in the city of Gagry*

- b. v gorode ? Tallinn/Tallinne  
 in town.MSG-LOC Tallinn.MSG-NOM/LOC  
*in the city of Tallinn*
- c. v gorode Moskva/Moskve  
 in city.MSG-LOC Moscow.FSG-NOM/LOC  
*in the city of Moscow*

With syntactically complex city names (as well as with street names) both gender and number congruence is obligatory for case agreement:

- (19) a. v gorode Santa Barbara/\*Santa Barbare  
 in town.MSG-LOC Santa Barbara.FSG-NOM/LOC  
*in the town of Santa Barbara*
- b. v gorode Frankfurte na Majne/Frankfurt na Majne  
 in town.MSG-LOC Frankfurt am Main.MSG-NOM/LOC  
*in the city of Frankfurt am Main*
- c. v gorode Velikie Luki/\*Velikix Lukax  
 in town.MSG-LOC Velikie Luki.PL-NOM/LOC  
*in the city of Velikie Luki*

For port names, station names, lake names, village names and some others case agreement is possible only with **morphologically adjectival** toponyms on the condition of both gender and number congruence:

- (20) a. do stancii Bologoe/\*Bologogo  
 until station.FSG-GEN Bologoe.NSG-NOM/GEN  
*until the station Bologoe*
- b. na stancii Moskva/\*Moskvy  
 on station.FSG-GEN Moscow.FSG-NOM/GEN  
*on the station Moscow*
- c. na stancii Tixoreckaja/Tixoreckoj  
 on station.FSG-GEN Tixoreckaja.FSG-NOM/GEN  
*on the station Tixoreckaja*

Toponyms preceded by the common nouns *aul* 'a village in the Caucasus and Central Asia' and *kishlak* 'a village in Central Asia' are claimed to never agree for case, but this most likely results from the fact that the names of such villages are extremely unlikely to be adjectival:

- (21) v kišlake/aule Severnom/Severnyj  
 in kishlak/aul.MSG-LOC Northern.MSG-LOC/NOM  
*in the kishlak/aul Severnyj*

**Titles** preceded by a categorizing NP may not be case-marked; neither can names of ships, malls, hotels, restaurants, trademarks, etc.:

- (22) a. Èto kniga o romane "Nepobedimyj/\*Nepobedimom".  
 this book about novel.MSG-LOC Invincible.MSG-NOM/\*LOC  
*This is a book about the novel The Invincible.*
- b. Èto kniga o paroxode "Titanik/\*Titanike".  
 this book about steamer.MSG-LOC Titanic.MSG-NOM/\*LOC  
*This is a book about the steamer Titanic.*
- c. Èto kniga o restorane "Pariž/\*Pariže".  
 this book about restaurant.MSG-LOC Paris.MSG-NOM/\*LOC  
*This is a book about the restaurant Paris.*

Without a categorizing NP titles are obligatorily marked for case:

NB In the accusative case titles corresponding to animate masculine NPs may appear in the surface nominative (as do inanimate NPs) or in the surface genitive (as do animate NPs)

- (23) a. Do "Vlastelina kolec" ja ničego ne čitala.  
 before [The Lord of the Rings]-GEN I nothing-GEN NEG read-PAST-FSG  
*Before The Lord of the Rings I read nothing.*
- b. Do "Anny Kareninoj" ja ničego ne čitala.  
 before [Anna Karenina]-GEN I nothing-GEN NEG read-PAST-FSG  
*Before Anna Karenina I read nothing.*
- c. Do "Jarko-alogo" ja ničego ne čitala.  
 before [Bright Red].NSG-GEN I nothing-GENNEG read-PAST-FSG  
*Before The Bright Red I read nothing.*

Finally, **numbers** behave like titles:

- (24) a. o čisle tysjača/\*tysjače  
 about number.N-LOC thousand.F-NOM/LOC  
*about the number 1000*
- b. o čisle sto/\*sta  
 about number.N-LOC hundred.N-NOM/LOC  
*about the number hundred*
- (25) a. Pribav' k dvum tysjaču.  
 add-IMP towards two-DAT thousand.F-ACC  
*Add a thousand to two.*
- b. Otnimi ot sta dva.  
 subtract-IMP from hundred-GEN two-ACC  
*Subtract two from a hundred.*

**Summary:** case agreement can be

- ❖ obligatory: [+ animate] and kind-denoting common nouns
- ❖  $\phi$ - and/or lexical category-conditioned: toponymic common nouns
- ❖ impossible: titles and man-made objects (ships, hotels...), as well as numbers

Two questions arise:

- What semantic or lexical property determines the possibility or impossibility of case agreement?
- How is this achieved syntactically?

NB: Case-agreement failure in close apposition provides a further argument in favor of the hypothesis that the common noun is the head

### 3. USE VS. MENTION

Categorized mentions never agree for case:

NB To the extent that uncategorized quotations are possible in case positions, they aren't case-marked there

- (26) a. s imenem Ruslan/\*Ruslanom  
 with name-INSTR Ruslan-NOM/INSTR  
*with the name Ruslan*
- b. My govorili o russkom slove "teplo"/\*"teplom".  
 we spoke about Russian-NSG-LOC word-NSG-LOC "heat".NSG-NOM/\*LOC  
*We spoke about the Russian word "heat".*

The same effect is observed with verbs of naming (Matushansky 2008):

- (27) a. Moju sestru zovut Nina/Ninoj.  
 my sister-ACC call-3PL Nina-NOM/INSTR  
*My sister is called Nina.*
- b. Septimija prozvali Sever/Severom.  
 Septimius-ACC nicknamed-PL Severus-NOM/INSTR  
*Septimius was nicknamed Severus.*
- c. Ego obozvali \*plaksa/✓plaksoj.  
 3MSG-ACC dubbed-PL crybaby-NOM/INSTR  
*He was stigmatized as a crybaby.*

Support for nominative case-marking with verbs of naming as mention (David Pesetsky, pc):

- (28) Liza nazyvaet svoju sestru moja radost'/\*mojej radost'ju.  
 Lisa calls self's sister my joy-NOM/INSTR  
*Lisa calls her sister "my joy".*

Hypothesis: case-agreement failure is indicative of **mention rather than use**.

Incorrect prediction: non-agreeing toponyms:

- (29) a. v gorode Gagry/\*Gagrax  
 in town.MSG-LOC Gagry.PL-NOM/LOC  
*in the city of Gagry*
- b. v gorode Velikie Luki/\*Velikix Lukax  
 in town.MSG-LOC Velikie Luki.PL-NOM/LOC  
*in the city of Velikie Luki*

Hypothesis 2: animate and inanimate proper names behave differently; some additional factor is involved in case-agreement failure with inanimate names.

Alternative hypothesis: **case-agreement failure marks the secondary use of language**:

- Books, restaurants, ships, etc., don't have dedicated names the way people and landmarks do, but instead reuse expressions of natural language, including proper names.
- The divergent behavior of city names and railway station names comes from the fact that the latter are considerably less likely to have dedicated names; the same is true for lake names, mountain names, etc. -- although the distinction itself is linguistic (more precisely, lexical-semantic), its roots are functional

Why do **categorized numbers** behave as if they involved mention?

Relevant fact: cardinals have been argued **to not denote entities** (Landman 2003, Hofweber 2005, Ionin and Matushansky 2006, Moltmann to appear)

The fact that the semantics of the cardinal is evoked in the expression *the number 50* seems to argue against the hypothesis that it might be mentioned rather than used.

On the other hand:

- (30) a. The word *vase* in Chinese sounds much like the word for 'peace'.  
 b. The Word for World Is Forest.

Mention appears to allow access to semantics!

To be continued...

#### 4. SUMMARY AND FURTHER ISSUES

Case-marking in Russian close apposition provides further evidence that the proper name is not the head.

Case-agreement failure correlates with secondary use of language, including mention.

The difference in case-marking of [-animate] proper names in argument positions vs. in close apposition suggests that the different mechanisms are used to achieve case-marking: concord vs. assignment.

Alternatively, secondary use of language might be prohibited in argument positions, but (a) there is no independent evidence for it (on the opposite, quotations can combine with verbs of saying) and (b) why should this be the case?

##### 4.1. The appositive oblique

The appositive oblique is distinguished from close apposition by the preposition *of*:

- (31) a. the city of New York  
b. the country of Russia

McCawley 1998: the distribution of the appositive oblique is idiosyncratic:

- (32) a. *the city ?(of) Toledo vs. the city \*(of) New York*  
b. *the country (of) Canada vs. the country \*(of) the Soviet Union*  
c. *the vowel \*(of) /a/ vs. the feature (of) stridency*

Hypothesis: appositive obliques in English are impossible with categorized mentions:

- (33) a. the city of New York  
b. the word/noun/monosyllable (\*of) *pear*

Names and titles present apparent counterexamples:

- (34) a. He became famous under **the pseudonym of David Bowie**.  
b. In the States, *The Chrysalids* was published under **the title of Re-Birth**.

Hypothesis: this is because names and titles in English are ambiguous between a predicative meaning (*the entity named X*) and a name meaning (*the name/title X*). The appositive oblique use of names and titles corresponds to the latter, but when a proper name is used as a simple phonological string, *of* is impossible.

##### 4.2. The semantics of close apposition

If the common noun is the head, the proper name/kind name cannot denote an entity.

- (i) the proper name may turn into a semantic predicate as a result of the IDENT type-shifting rule (Bach and Partee 1980, Partee and Bach 1984, Partee 1986)
- (ii) the proper name may be a semantic predicate converted into a definite description by the addition of the definite article (Geurts 1997, Elbourne 2002, Matushansky 2008)

Only the former solution appears to extend to categorized mentions:

- (35) a. the not infrequent name *Robert Burns*  
b. the famous poet Robert Burns

Presupposition: prior to IDENT, the PF token (*Robert Burns*) must be coerced to mean the type that it is a token of.

Question: is this possible outside close apposition?

- (36) a. "The Demolished Man" is my favorite among Bester's books.  
 b. "Apple" rhymes with "dapple".

Apparent generalization: The categorizing noun must be salient or only "linguistic predicates" can be used (cf. Moltmann to appear for a similar generalization for numbers).

### 4.3. Miscellanea

Molitor 1979 as cited in Heringa 2011: the proper name may not be preceded by either an AP or a determiner:

- (37) a. \*the famous river the (mighty) Nile  
 b. \*the brilliant singer (the) incomparable Maria Callas

Potential exceptions:

- (38) a. those bastards the Lancasters  
 b. my friends the Miss Boyds
- expressives  
kinship terms

The **expressive** *that* is equally compatible with common nouns:

- (39) a. that difficult instrument the tongue (George Eliot, *Silas Marner*)  
 b. that famous politician our president

NP<sub>2</sub> is an appositive cataphoric on the demonstrative; the presupposition is accommodated

**Kinship terms** (taken broadly) are also compatible with a common noun N<sub>2</sub>:

- (40) a. my brother the poet  
 b. my friends the Russians

This is why kinship terms are also the only common nouns that allow close apposition to be stacked (though only once):

- (41) my friend the famous detective Sherlock Holmes

Jackendoff 1984, Acuña Fariña 1996, McCawley 1998: the common noun can't be followed by a PP or a relative clause

- (42) a. \*the word you mentioned *apple*  
 b. \*the author of this book Georgette Heyer

McCawley 1998:473 provides a (journalese) counterexample:

- (43) the former president of the United States and one-time Hollywood star Ronald Reagan

Lasersohn 1986: in close apposition (unlike in loose apposition) **an AP can also take scope over both nouns**:

- (44) a. My one cousin Bill is rich, but my other cousin Bill hardly has a penny to his name.  
 b. ?My one cousin Bill is rich, but my other cousin John hardly has a penny to his name.

The fact that this is not nonrestrictive is probably irrelevant.

Molitor 1979: in German, in loose apposition subordinative apposition (hypothesized to stem from an underlying parenthetical clause) differs from coordinative apposition (argued to be derived from an underlying coordinate structure) in case-marking: the latter requires case agreement, while the former appears with the default nominative case (examples and glosses from Heringa 2011):



- (45) a. Ich habe Peter, früher mein bester Freund, sehr enttäuscht.  
 I have Peter-ACC formerly my-NOM best-NOM friend highly disappointed  
*I have greatly disappointed Peter, formerly my best friend.*
- b. \*Ich habe Peter, früher meinen besten Freund, sehr enttäuscht.  
 I have Peter-ACC formerly my-ACC best-ACC friend highly disappointed

A formal connection is, however, extremely unlikely.

## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acuña Fariña, Juan Carlos. 1996. *The Puzzle of Apposition: On so-called appositive structures in English*. Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.
- Bach, Emmon, and Barbara H. Partee. 1980. Anaphora and semantic structure. In *Papers from the Parasession on Pronouns and Anaphora*, ed. by Jody Kreiman and Almerindo E. Ojeda *Chicago Linguistics Society 16*, 1-28. Chicago: Chicago Linguistics Society.
- Burton-Roberts, N. 1975. Nominal apposition. *Foundations of Language* 13, 391-419.
- Elbourne, Paul. 2002. Situations and Individuals, Doctoral dissertation, MIT.
- Geurts, Bart. 1997. Good news about the description theory of names. *Journal of Semantics* 14, 319-348.
- Golub, I.B. 2010. *Stilistika russkogo jazyka*. Moscow: Airis Press.
- Graudina, L.K., V.A. Ickovič, and L.P. Katlinskaja. 2001. *Grammatičeskaja pravil'nost' russkoj reči. Stilističeskij slovar' variantov*. Moscow: ACT.
- Haugen, Einar. 1953. On resolving the close apposition. *American Speech* 28.
- Heringa, Herman. 2011. Appositional constructions, Doctoral dissertation, University of Groningen.
- Hofweber, Thomas. 2005. Number determiners, numbers, and arithmetic. *The Philosophical Review* 114, 179-225.
- Ionin, Tania, and Ora Matushansky. 2006. The composition of complex cardinals. *Journal of Semantics* 23, 315-360.
- Jackendoff, Ray. 1984. On the phrase *the phrase 'the phrase'*. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 2, 25-37.
- Keizer, Evelien. 2005. The discourse function of close appositions. *Neophilologus* 89, 447-467.
- Landman, Fred. 2003. Predicate-argument mismatches and the adjectival theory of indefinites. In *The syntax and semantics of noun phrases*, ed. by Martine Coene and Yves D'hulst. *Linguistics Today*, 211-237. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Lasnik, Peter. 1986. The semantics of appositive and pseudo-appositive NPs. In *Proceedings of the Eastern States Conference on Linguistics 3* ed. by Fred Marshall, Ann Miller and Zheng-sheng Zhang, 311-322. Columbus, Ohio: Dept. of Linguistics, the Ohio State University.
- Matushansky, Ora. 2008. On the linguistic complexity of proper names. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 31, 573-627.
- McCawley, James D. 1996. An overview of 'appositive' constructions in English. In *Proceedings of Eastern States Conference in Linguistics '95*, ed. by Marek Przewdzicki and Lindsay J. Whaley, 195-211. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University.
- McCawley, James D. 1998. *The Syntactic Phenomena of English*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.
- Molitor, Friedhelm. 1979. Zur Apposition im heutigen Deutsch. Eine Vorstudie, Doctoral dissertation, University of Cologne.

- Moltmann, Friederike. to appear. Reference to numbers in natural language. *Philosophical Studies*.
- Noailly, Michèle. 1991. "L'énigmatique Tombouctou": Nom propre et la position de l'épithète. *Langue Française* 92, 104-113.
- Partee, Barbara H. 1986. Noun phrase interpretation and type-shifting principles. In *Studies in Discourse Representation Theory and the Theory of Generalized Quantifiers*, ed. by Jeroen Groenendijk, Dick de Jongh and Martin Stokhof. *GRASS*, 115-143. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Partee, Barbara H., and Emmon Bach. 1984. Quantification, pronouns, and VP anaphora. In *Formal Methods in the Study of Language, Third Amsterdam Colloquium*, ed. by Jeroen Groenendijk, Theo M. V. Janssen and Martin Stokhof. Amsterdam: Mathematisch Centrum.