1 Introduction

• I will be concerned with loose (i.e., non-restrictive) adnominal appositions containing a single NP (the appositive NP), called NOMINAL APPOSITIVES by Potts (2005, p. 15), as illustrated in (1a), and I will not study close appositions (cf. (1b)).

(1)   a. JOHN MCCARTHY, the father of AI and Lisp, died on Monday at the age of 84.
     b. Professor John McCarthy, the number eight, my brother John, . . .

• A bit of terminology (following Heringa (2011), and Huddleston and Pullum, 2002):
  – “John McCarthy” = the anchor
  – “the father of AI and Lisp” = the apposition
  – “John McCarthy, the father of AI and Lisp” = appositive construction

⇒ I tentatively adopt the hypothesis that anchor and appositive NP form a constituent (more on this issue below)

• In loose appositions, the apposition is separated by intonation from the anchor and the rest of the sentence, and forms an independent intonation phrase.

∗ I would like to thank Kathleen O’Connor and Anne Carlier for their help while preparing this talk. I would also like to thank the participants of the conference for their comments (and their talks!), some of which I have integrated into the handout — as well as I could. Nobody should be assumed to agree with anything I affirm here. All errors are mine.
1.1 Why study loose appositions?

- The syntax and semantics of articles are rather well-studied (and especially for languages like French/German/English etc).

- There is a gap between analysis of articles in predicative NPs vs. argument positions:
  - argument NPs: discusses the article’s discourse properties, presuppositions, scope, etc.
  - predicative NPs: discusses the article’s properties as a type shifter

- Is there any common ground? Or are articles functionally very different, depending on the (grammatical) context they appear in?

- Suggestion by Mari and Martin, 2008 (w.r.t. indefinite articles): dynamic properties are maintained in predicative contexts.

- What about the distribution? (I will concentrate on French, but the fact of more liberty of article use in non-argumental positions applies to other languages as well)

(2) a. Jean a frappé *(un) boulanger. [argument: article obligatory]
    J. has hit a baker.

b. Jean est (un) boulanger. [predicative position: article optional]
    J. is a baker.

c. Jean, (un) boulanger, nous montre ses croissants. [appositive: optional]
    J. a baker us shows his croissants.

- Are articles in predicative and appositive contexts special, representing “living fossils” of anterior states of article use and grammar? This is extremely unlikely, given at least data from earlier stages of German, see 3.3, p. 8.

- What is the semantic contribution of an article in loose appositives? By definitions, it should not be about assignment of reference (otherwise the apposition would be close/restrictive).

- **Working Hypothesis**: articles have a unified semantics and syntax, and obey basic principles familiar from dynamic semantic literature (e.g., DRT) everywhere.

1.2 A Brief Note on Syntax

- I will look at appositions that *are* NPs, and appositions that *contain* a single NP. Syntactically, these constructions do not necessarily form a homogeneous class.

- Heringa (2011) has argued (following O’Connor, 2008), based on oppositions like (3), that the apposition may contain (at least) in some cases (phrastic) functional structure:

    I have the.DAT K., { a.DAT junky, a.NOM junky }, helped.

b. Ich hab dem KEVIN, früher { * ein Junky, ✓ ein Junky }, geholfen.
    I have the.DAT K., earlier { a.DAT junky, a.NOM junky }, helped.
• In (3a), the appositive NP shows (dative) case congruence with the anchor; in (3b), the appositive NP must be in nominative case.

• Heringa argues that in (3b), though not in (3a), the apposition is at least a TP, and not a mere nominal constituent (assuming that Nominative case is assigned by TP).

• I will not commit with respect to this — it does not seem to matter w.r.t. article choice. But I think (like Potts (2005, p. 107f.)) that it will be difficult to account for case agreement if one does not assume that the appositive construction is a constituent, as the following, see McCawley, 1988; Schlenker, 2009 (about appositive relatives, not about appositive NPs):

(4) S
   /|
  S
 NP
   /|
  /|
 John McCarthy
 XP
   /|
 the father of AI and Lisp
 VP
   /|
 died on Monday at the age of 84.

• If there is no syntactically local relation between the anchor and the apposition, how can agreement (e.g., in case) be handled? This is one of the key arguments by both Potts (2005) and Heringa (2011) to defend the hypothesis that anchor and apposition form a constituent.

1.3 Introductory Note on Discourse Properties of Appositives: Conventional Implicatures

• Appositions do not provide at-issue content (see Potts, 2005; Heringa, 2011; Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet, 2000): (5abc) entail (5d), so negation or interrogation does not affect the content of the apposition.

(5) a. Jean Dujardin, a French actor, received an Oscar for The Artist.
    b. Jean Dujardin, a French actor, did not receive an Oscar for The Artist.
    c. Did Jean Dujardin, the French actor, receive an Oscar for The Artist?
    d. Jean Dujardin is a French actor.

• However, as pointed out by Potts (2005), appositions are not presuppositional, in the sense that they would be a part of the common ground between speaker and hearer ((6) and (7) from Heringa (2011, p. 71)).

(6) Tim has a brother and two sisters. Tim’s brother often helps me.

(7) Bach was a German composer in the baroque period. #BACH, a German composer, was influenced by his colleagues from Italy and France.

• Tim’s brother presupposes that Tim has a brother (which was asserted in the first sentence of (6)). It is felicitous to continue with Tim’s brother.
(7) provides a striking non-sequitur. It is infelicitous to re-mention an information already given before in an apposition; the content of the apposition must be new (or supposed to be new) for the hearer.

⇒ Appositions are CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURES (see Potts (2005) for a thorough definition and description).

• Appositions (as conventional implicatures) are speaker oriented (see Potts (2005, p. 115)):

(8) a. Sheila believes that the agency interviewed CHUCK, a confirmed psychopath, just after his release from prison. ≠

b. Sheila believes that Chuck is a confirmed psychopath and that the agency interviewed Chuck just after his release from prison.

c. Sheila believes that the agency interviewed CHUCK, a confirmed psychopath, just after his release form prison. #But I think Chuck is not a confirmed psychopath.

• But one can attribute the content of the apposition to another person, as pointed out by Heringa (2011, p. 66)1:

(9) The agency interviewed CHUCK, a psychopath, Sheila believes, just after his release from prison. [But I think Chuck is not a psychopath.]

Why French?

• Compared with Germanic languages like German or English, French has more obligatory contexts for articles (cf. (10a), think also of vocatives, cf. Schaden, 2010), while also allowing more easily for bare appositive NPs (cf. (10b)):

(10) a. Monsieur *(l’) inspecteur

Mister the inspector.

b. Astérix légionnaire

Asterix legonary

• In German, (10b) would exhibit a special kind of (article-less) als (‘as’)–apposition:

(11) a. Asterix als Legionär

A. as legionary

b. der Bauer als Millionär

the farmer as millionaire

2 Appositive vs. Predicative NPs

• Appositive NPs and predicative NPs share many properties.

1. Heringa assumes that this contradicts Potts (2005, p. 42) (“a CI has always widest scope”). It is not clear that it actually does: by the very definition of conventional implicatures, in (9) the CI is not Chuck is a psychopath, but Sheila believes Chuck is a psychopath. Therefore, the appositive NP, while being part of a conventional implicature, is not the entire CI.
• Under the simplest hypothesis, both cases involve only type-shifting, with an eventual covert copula, and the result of that operation is then predicated onto the anchor (or the subject, in case of the predicative NP).²

(12)  
  a.  \[[ \text{Anchor} \left[ \text{copula NP} \right] \text{VP} \right] \text{Appositive}^3\]  
  b.  \[[ \text{Subject} \left[ \text{copula NP} \right] \text{VP} \right] \text{Predicative}\]  

• Under such a hypothesis, both constructions should have roughly identical restrictions with respect to the admissibility of articles.⁴ However, this is clearly not the case.

• In French, bare NPs are acceptable in appositive positions where they would be ungrammatical in predicative positions. Generally, it appears that any NP acceptable in predicative position is acceptable in an apposition, whereas the inverse is not true (cf. (13) from Riegel, Pellat, and Rioul, 2004, p. 190).

(13)  
  a.  le lion, (la) terreur des forêts  
      the lion, (the) terror of the forests  
  b.  Le lion est *(la) terreur des forêts.  
      the lion is the terror of the forests  

• The usual French pattern of obligatory marking of uniqueness with a definite article does not apply to appositive NPs, since at least some superlatives without definite article are perfectly acceptable in such a position (cf. (14a) from the internet):

(14)  
  a.  Afin de garantir santé et énergie aux français qui travailleront plus pour rembourser leur emprunt, LE PRÉSIDENT SARKOZY, meilleur ami des français, va tout faire pour que ceux-ci consomment plus de protéines. C’est pourquoi, dès la rentrée de septembre, la viande rouge sera défiscalisée.  
      In order to guarantee health and energy for the French who will work more to pay back their debt, PRESIDENT SARKOZY, best friend of the French, will do anything to make the French eat more proteins. Therefore, starting in September, red meat will be exempt from taxes.

2. As pointed out to me by Patricia Cabredo Hofherr (and somebody else, I guess), I operate under the assumption that appositive NPs provide predications over the anchor. However, this might not be the case. It has been argued by Higgins (1979), and in various papers concerning what I call “predicative NPs”, that some uses are actually identificational, and not predicable.

3. (12a) might need further complexification, if what O’Connor, 2008 calls complex appositives have the same syntactic structure as the simple appositives I am focusing on:

(i)  
  a.  I had \textit{SEASON-TICKET HOLDERS, many of them my friends}, call me for tickets. [O’Connor (2008, p. 177)]  
  b.  . . . \left[ \text{Anchor} \left[ \text{partitive} \left[ \text{copula NP} \right] \text{VP} \right] \right] . . .

The main issue is that it is not obvious to assume that the appositive NP is predicated upon the anchor, but that it might be a predication onto a null pronominal element in the subject position of the apposition, which is co-referential to (parts of) the anchor.

4. They might not be entirely identical, since the result of the predication in (12a) should probably be of type \langle e \rangle (or of type \langle (e, t), t \rangle), whereas in (12b), we should have a proposition (i.e., of type \langle t \rangle).

   However, these issues depend in part also on the syntactic assumptions one makes for the analysis of the apposition.
Gerhard Schaden

Article Choice in Appositive NPs

b. Le président Sarkozy est *(le) meilleur ami des français.
The president S. is the best friend of the French.

• (14a) is a real superlative; it cannot be interpreted away as elative. In predicative positions, the absence of an article is ungrammatical (cf. (14b)).

• Not all superlatives do equally well: meilleur (best) and pire (worst) are acceptable without problem; other article-less superlatives give rise to more mixed judgments.5

(15) a. %On fête les cinquante ans de CÉLINE, plus grand écrivain et poète français du siècle dernier [...] (We celebrate the 50th anniversary of C., greatest French writer and poet of the last century)
b. Et PICASSO, plus grand artiste du siècle, que devient-il dans cet habitat haut de gamme? Il doit être en train de festoyer quelque part.
And Picasso, greatest artist of the century, what does he do in this luxurious habitat? He must be feasting somewhere.

• Note that both in (14a) and in (15), the presence of the definite article is optional; it might have been present just as well.

• The definite article seems to be obligatory with post-posed adjectives (the vast majority in French). But these are definite article doubling constructions:

(16) OSS 177, *(l’) agent *(le) plus con du monde, sévit maintenant au Brésil.
OSS 117, the agent the most stupid of the world, ravages now at the Brazil.

• Indefinite articles in appositions are less picky than their predicative equivalent, too:

(17) a. Kadhafi, { un, le, Ø } tyran sans scrupules, a été tué par son propre K., { a, the, Ø } tyrant without qualms, has been killed by his own people.
b. Kadhafi est *(un) tyran sans scrupules
K. is a tyrant without qualms.

• What is the purpose of the alternation with or without article?
  – Should not be about establishing reference — proper names are either directly referential, or narrow down the set of possible extensions to a single entity (see Heller and Wolter, 2010, and cf. below)

• What about definite vs. indefinite articles?

5. Examples from the internet, (15b) from www.liberation.fr. I have not found any attestation in better checked corpora, as, e.g., FRANTEXT.
3 Article Choice and Discourse Properties

3.1 Potts’ Generalization

- NB: article choice is clearly not anywhere close to being Potts (2005) main preoccupation.

(18) a. If a speaker chooses a definite article to head an NA’s appositive, then the proposition expressed by that NA [nominal appositive, GS] is deemed essential by the speaker to determining the referent of the anchor.

b. If a speaker chooses an indefinite article to head an NA’s appositive, then the proposition expressed by that NA is deemed essential by the speaker to the narrative.6

The basic idea is that a speaker’s use of Lance Armstrong, the cyclist, indicates that the property of being a cyclist helps the hearer to better understand what entity Lance Armstrong picks out. It is possible that the information that Lance is a cyclist plays no other role in the current narrative. For instance, in a story about famous people who have survived cancer, Lance Armstrong, the cyclist might appear, even though Armstrong’s cycling has little if anything to do with his bout with cancer. In this case, the appositive helps the reader to understand something about the individual under discussion. It is unlikely that Lance Armstrong, a cyclist would be used in this context, since cycling is not directly relevant to the narrative.

In contrast, if we find the indefinite article, then the NA’s content is essential to the narrative. In the above context, Lance Armstrong, a survivor of testicular cancer is far more likely than the version with the definite article, because the appositive provides essential information about why Armstrong is relevant to the story.7

- These generalizations seem to be roughly appropriate (if you specify in what way this is “essential”, and generalize from narration to other possible rhetorical relations, in languages like contemporary German or English), but . . .

  – what about bare NPs in appositions?

  – these are clearly effects of article use. How can these be derived from known dynamic properties of definite or indefinite articles (or the absence thereof)?

  * novelty condition (for indefinites, see Heim (1988), and however this may come about)

  * determined reference (for definites, see Farkas (2002))

3.2 The Basic Idea

- Article choice in appositive NPs is governed (at least partly) by the way the entity is discursively retrieved, or identified.

- The identification of the entities talked about could in principle be achieved either via

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6. Potts (2005, p. 119); emphasis added.
7. Potts (2005, p. 119f.)
– the content of the anchor alone;
– the content of the appositive NP alone;\(^8\)
– the content of the anchor conjointly with the content of the appositive NP

• With a bare NP in the apposition, retrieval has to rely on the description of the anchor, an idea that is compatible with the hypothesis that bare singulars in French cannot be referential (cf. Neveu, 1998).

• With a definite article in the appositive NP, the identification is achieved conjointly through the content of the anchor and the content of the apposition. To restate the same in the familiar opposition between familiarity and uniqueness conveyed by a definite article:
  – Uniqueness does not obligatorily trigger the presence of a definite article in appositive NPs (as attested by examples like (15a)), but familiarity still plays a role.
  – Unique identifiability is no longer obligatorily an issue, because identifiability may have been established via the anchor.

• With an indefinite article in the appositive NP, one newly introduces the referent of the anchor as an individual satisfying the content of the appositive NP (see Mari and Martin (2008) on indefinite predicative NPs).

3.3 Motivation of this Idea (and Why Articles in Appositive NPs are Not Special)

A Brief Look to Middle High German

• Middle High German (≈ 1050–1350) features quite strange article use, and appositions are no exceptions to this ((19) from Nibelungen, 7, 389–391):\(^9\)

(19) In der selben zîte dô was ir scif gegân
der bûrge alsô nâhen, dô sah der kûnec [=Gunther] stân
oben in den venstern vil manege scœne meit.
daz er ir niht erkande, daz was Gunthere leit.
Er vrâgte Sîvride, den gesellen sîn:
“ist iu daz iht künde umb disiu magedîn,
die dort her nider scouwent gein uns üf die vluot
swie ir herre heize, si sint vil hôhe gemuot.”
Dô sprach der herre Sîvrit: “nu sult ir tougen spehen
ünder den jûncfrouwen, und sult mir danne jehen,

\(^8\) This theoretical possibility can be ruled out; it would mean that the at-issue content lacks reference.

\(^9\) According to Anne Carlier (p.c.), older varieties of French do not seem to have had such indefinites.

As Henriëtte de Swart (p.c.) pointed out to me, the phenomenon in (19) appeared also in older varieties of Dutch, where stereotypical descriptions could appear with indefinite articles. This required a relatively heavy appositive NP, and postposition of the adjective. Therefore, HdS does not find that (19) is conclusive evidence that the indefinite article has changed from Middle High German to contemporary German.

Sebastian Löbner (p.c.) pointed out that the apposition in (19) does not have any discourse function. Not sure about that.
Meanwhile their bark had come so near the castle that the king [i.e., Gunther, GS] saw many a comely maiden standing at the casements. Much it irked King Gunther that he knew them not. He asked his comrade Siegfried: "Hast thou no knowledge of these maidens, who yonder are gazing downward towards us on the flood? Whoever be their lord, they are of lofty mood." At this Sir Siegfried spake: "I pray you, spy secretly among the high-born maids and tell me then whom ye would choose, and ye had the power." "That will I," spake GUNTHER, the bold and valiant knight.10

- In contemporary English, French or German, the indefinite article in appositive NPs is felicitous only in contexts where
  - the referent of the anchor is newly introduced into discourse (which is not the case in (19)), see (20a) at the beginning of a story.
  - the apposition introduces the referent of the anchor in a new light/situation (which is not the case in (19), containing a stereotypical description of Gunther), see (20b) in the middle of a narration.

(20) a. Gunther, a bold and valiant knight, ruled once upon a time in Burgundy.
b. Gunther, a fine connoisseur of Byzantine silverware (by the way), was very happy about the gift.

- What makes (20b) acceptable in the middle of a discourse?
  - It is not that the character of Gunther as such would be discourse-new (it is not).
  - It is the fact that one has not yet encountered Gunther qua him being a fine connoisseur of Byzantine silverware (which introduces a new, previously not-mentioned part of his character), which is here in some relation to his reaction upon receiving a gift.

- Summing up:
  - At least in German, the article use has changed as well in appositive NPs
  - Article use in appositive NPs depends on discursive properties (which may change over time)

3.4 Naturally Constrained Contexts

- Discursive phenomena are difficult to deal with if we have always to check for entire discourses.

- Can we make life easier, and find contexts where we do not have to worry about the 120 pages preceding the relevant occurrence of “Gunther, the noble and brave knight”?

First and Second Person Contexts

- First-person contexts of apposition are rare, and rather formulaic. But in French, they do not admit any articles in the appositive NP.\textsuperscript{11}

> (21) a. Je, soussigné N. N., \{\textastile le, \textastile un, $\varnothing$\} locataire au 12 rue Machin, . . .
> I, undersigned N. N., \{the, a, $\varnothing$\} charterer at the 12 street Machin . . .

> b. Nous, Louis, \{\textastile le\ roi de France, et nous, Henri, \{\textastile le\ roi d'Angleterre, We, L., the king of France, and we, H., the king of England, voulons qu'il vienne à la connaissance de tous que . . .
> want that it come at the knowledge of everybody that . . .

(\textit{We, Louis, king of France, and we, Henri, king of England, want to make known to everybody that . . .})

- With the speaker(s) — as with hearer(s) —, discursive identifiability should be guaranteed, and in such contexts, one cannot add a definite determiner.

- Idea:
  - With the definite determiner in the appositive NP: discourse retrieval is established conjointly by the content of the anchor and of the appositive NP.
  - With a bare appositive NP: discourse retrieval depends only on the content of the anchor.

- Why the contrast with proper names? Why aren't they incompatible with definitely determined appositive NPs?

  Idea by Heller and Wolter (2010): using a proper name presupposes that there is exactly one entity corresponding to that name in a discourse. But it does not guarantee \textit{identifiability} of that person: merely knowing that a person’s name is \textit{Jean Dupont} does not allow one to single him out in a group (in the terms of Heller and Wolter (2010): a proper name may be a definite description, but it is not a perceptually grounded description).

- Why is the indefinite determiner unacceptable in first-person contexts? What would be wrong about that?
  - Assume with Mari and Martin (2008, p. 124) that (in predicative constructions) indefinite articles introduce an individual in a new situation. There are in principle two versions of introducing an individual in a new situation: first, the individual may be newly introduced at all, or second, an already introduced individual may be introduced under a new property.

\textsuperscript{11} This is too strong an affirmation. Anne Zribi-Hertz and Claire Beyssade pointed out to me that one can in fact have appositions with articles in first-person contexts:

(i) a. Moi, la directrice du département, . . .
> Me, the head of the department, . . .

b. Moi, une française de souche, . . .
> Me, a French of snag, . . . [\approx \text{French equivalent of a WASP}]

Furthermore, Anne Zribi-Hertz noticed that appositions that do not allow for articles are precisely those that you would put below your signature on a document.
both (21a) and (21b) with an indefinite article convey that there are i) several charterers at the 12 M. Street, or ii) more than one king of France (or of England).

Let us start with (ii). If this is an assertion about a topic situation (see Barwise and Perry (1999); Klein (1994)) that is not extended, it will contain only one king of France and of England, respectively. Therefore, we would get a presupposition failure.

Consider now (i): it simply does not matter if there are or are not other charterers at this place (which might be true or not); this is completely unnecessary information for the issue at hand.

Similar considerations apply to appositions on vocatives (= second person contexts):

(22) Kadhafi, dictateur, démogogue, profiteur et assassin, dégage, dégage!!!

Let us consider now (i) and start with (21a) and (21b) with an indefinite article convey that there are i) several charterers at the 12 M. Street, or ii) more than one king of France (or of England).

Let us start with (ii). If this is an assertion about a topic situation (see Barwise and Perry (1999); Klein (1994)) that is not extended, it will contain only one king of France and of England, respectively. Therefore, we would get a presupposition failure.

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• Similar considerations apply to appositions on vocatives (= second person contexts):

(22) Kadhafi, dictateur, démogogue, profiteur et assassin, dégage, dégage!!!

K., dictator, demagogue, exploiter and murderer, piss off, piss off!!!

Appositives in Questions

• Forsgren (1988) made the observation that in questions like (23), only the definite article is felicitous:

(23) Asterix, { le, un } légionnaire, a-t-il eu son sanglier?

Asterix, { the, a } legionary, did-he have his boar?

• Answering a question like (23) normally requires that the answerer can identify who is Asterix.

• Appositives are conventional implicatures, and therefore, have to provide new information (or at least: refresh known information, see Heringa, 2011). Furthermore, the apposition must be relevant in order to be felicitous.

• If the speaker doubts whether the hearer is able to identify Asterix based on the name alone, the use of the definite article is a possible choice, giving the hearer more clues to identify the person.

• Apposition without article: means that the speaker assumes that hearer can identify Asterix based on the proper name, but then, it would be strange to add an information about his profession: in what way could it make sense to the question that Asterix obtained his boar qua being a legionary vs. qua something else?

Infelicity of the indefinite article: because the indefinite comes with a novelty condition, either Asterix is newly introduced into the discourse, in which case retrievability is bound to fail, or, if the reference of the anchor is known, but is only introduced in a new situation as having the property specified in the appositive NP, the newly indicated property is not obviously relevant to the question, and therefore pragmatically odd.

12. Web example.
13. Contexts where this requirement fails to hold can be constructed: assume that the answerer does know that everybody (or nobody) has had a boar, and that Asterix is one person in the lot. Then, one can answer positively (or negatively), without knowing who exactly Asterix is.
• In both cases, the blocking principle is pragmatic in nature and context dependent, which explains why in some question contexts, indefinites or bare NPs in appositions may be admissible (see Neveu, 1998, p. 73).

3.5 Translation into Dynamic Semantics

• Is left as an exercise to the reader.

4 Conclusion

• I have tried to present arguments that article choice in appositive NPs obeys similar rules as article choice in argument position.

• Article choice in French (as in other languages) should be considered as a single problem with similar underlying parameters in appositive, predicative, and argumental positions.

• What are further contexts that allow to study discourse properties of articles in appositions without having much context to worry about?

• How exactly can one model dynamic properties of articles in appositive contexts?
References


