

# Restrictive Modifiers in Parenthetical Positions<sup>1</sup>

Eli Sharf, UCSC  
NELS 54 @ MIT

## I. Overview

**Goal:** Linguistic analysis of a class of prepositional and adverbial modifiers of referring expressions, which I call *identificational appositives*.

1. a. Mia **here** is my best friend.
- b. Joan's mother, **with the white hair**, is coming over tomorrow.
- c. I just got a text from the accountant, **from the party yesterday**.

**Why they're interesting:** They allow us to distinguish between *restrictivity*, the use of a modifier to clarify the reference of the modified noun (the ANCHOR), from *subsectivity*, whether a modifier shrinks the extension of the anchor.

### Analysis:

- They are grammatical appositives.
- They serve as fragment answers to implicit Questions of Identification (QoIs) – e.g., *Who is Mia?* – licensed by the anchor.

This analysis extends and broadens the analysis of *nominal* appositives as fragment answers to implicit questions put forward in Onea & Ott (2022), as well as precursors in Onea (2016), AnderBois & Jacobson (2018)

- It extends the analysis to prepositional and adverbial modifiers.
- It broadens the analysis by characterizing a new kind of implicit question the appositives answer and adds a theory of how it is licensed to be answered in the context.

**Upshot:** Speakers can use multiple grammatical mechanisms to clarify reference, with the ultimate goal of referring being hearer identification of a (weakly) familiar discourse referent, rather than uniqueness (Roberts 2003).

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## II. Clarifying speaker reference

### Integrated Restrictive Modifiers

- The relative clause in (2a) is used to distinguish between the two men in the context.
  - The infelicity of the relative clause in (2b) is tied to its inability to serve this function.
2. *Two men stand outside a room. One has white hair, the other black.*
- a. The man **who has the white hair** entered.
  - b. #The man, **who has the white hair**, entered.
- Because of examples like (2), there is a standard connection made between the modifier's use to clarify reference (*restrictivity*), and the modifier's use to meet uniqueness (*subsectivity*).
  - The literature has been mostly concerned with how modifiers seemingly positioned in the core DP are able to be used *non-restrictively* (Schlenker 2005, Morzycki 2008, Leffel 2014)

Can modifiers <i>outside of</i> the core DP be used restrictively?
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### Identificational Appositives

- Can be necessary for speakers to successfully refer at all (Context I)
  - Redundant if speakers can successfully refer using just anchor (Context II)
3. *Ana and Joe just got home from a party where they spoke to Mia, among others.* Ana: Guess what? ...
- a. ... Mia is coming over tomorrow.
  - b. ... Mia, with the blue hair, is coming over tomorrow.

Context	(3a)	(3b)
I. <i>Ana knows it was the first time Joe met Mia, and Joe didn't learn her name.</i>	#	✓
II. <i>Ana knows Joe has known Mia for a while, and thus knows her name.</i>	✓	#

- These empirical facts don't just apply to names, but also descriptions in certain contexts:
4. *Ana and Joe just got home from a party where they spoke to Ana's father, among others.*
- a. Ana: Did you like my dad?
  - b. Ana: Did you like my dad, with the greyish hair?

Context	(4a)	(4b)
I. <i>Ana knows it was the first time Joe met her dad, and Joe didn't learn that he was her dad.</i>	#	✓
II. <i>Ana knows Joe has known her dad for a while, and thus knows what he looks like.</i>	✓	#

- These serve the same function – clarifying speaker reference – that the restrictive relative clause does in (2a). This, I claim, is the operative notion of 'restrictivity' in the literature.

### III. The Modifiers are Appositives

#### A. They Lack Uniqueness Implications

- Unlike the integrated restrictive modifier in (5a), the modifiers in (5b)/(5c) don't imply that there has been more than one president of South Sudan.
5. a. In 2012, I met the president of South Sudan **with the huge hat**.  
b. In 2012, I met the president of South Sudan, **with the huge hat**.  
c. [*The speaker points at a man.*] In 2012, I met the president of South Sudan **here**.
- One can explain this implication using Gricean reasoning justifying the use of the modifier in a position within the core DP (Schlenker 2005).
  - Since they do not trigger the same implication, the modifiers must lie outside of the core DP (outside the scope of the uniqueness operator *t*).

#### B. They Are Invisible to NP-Ellipsis/One-Anaphora

- There's a reading of (6a) but not (6b) where Bill caught the second train with a particular kind of big engine.
6. a. Sam caught the first train **with the big engine**, and Bill caught the second (one).  
b. Sam caught the first train, **with the big engine**, and Bill caught the second (one).
- NP-ellipsis and one-anaphora have been shown to target the material in the restriction of the determiner – e.g., NP or NumP (Llombart-Huesca 2002).
  - The fact that the PP modifier in (4b) is invisible to these processes provides more evidence that it lies outside of the scope of the anchor's determiner.

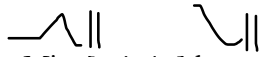
#### C. They Are Subject to an Anti-Backgrounding Requirement

- Although it is somewhat redundant for B to use trivial material in an integrated position in (7a), it is not nearly as bad as the use of trivial material in a non-integrated position (7b).
7. A: You see the dog with the blue eyes? Do you like him?  
a. B: Yes, I like the dog with the blue eyes.  
b. B: #Yes, I like the dog, with the blue eyes.
- Unlike presuppositional material (e.g., integrated nominal modifiers), appositives cannot be backgrounded, or trivial in a context (Potts 2004).
  - The fact that the PP modifier in (7b) is so clearly disallowed to be trivial provides more evidence that it is an appositive.

**How can an appositive analysis explain the integrated prosody of *here*/(*over*) *there*?**


- First, note that *here* can be parenthetically separated from its anchor, in cases where there is a salient alternative person to which the speaker might be referring.


8. [There are two women in a picture, Mia and Bernice. The addressee seems to be looking at Bernice.]

  
Mia, [pointing] here, is my best friend.

- This is a case where *here* is focused, and thus receives intonational prominence.


- In prosodically integrated cases where *here* can only be used as an identificational appositive, it is **deaccented** (9a)/(9b), unlike regular integrated restrictive modifiers (10)


9. a.  Mia here went to the concert.

b.  #Mia here went to the concert.

10.  The girl outside went to the concert.

- We can explain *here*'s prosodic integration and obligatory deaccenting in these cases as following from the interaction of two constraints.
  - Indexicals tend to be **given**, and thus deaccented (11) (Wagner 2006).
  - Prosodic constraints require accents in every phrase (Selkirk 2005, Féry & Samek-Lodovici 2006).

11. a.  I used to work at Lowes.

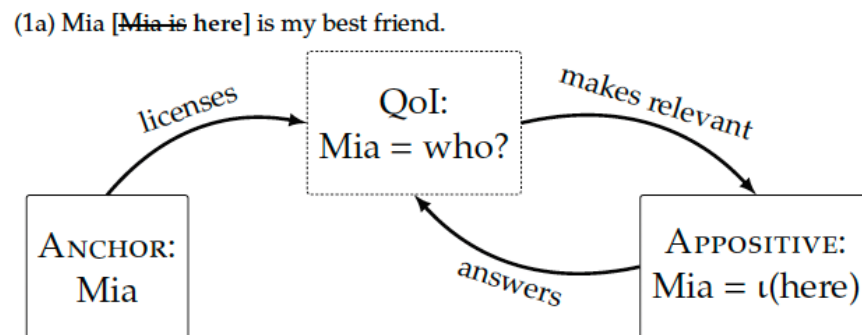
b.  I used to work here.

- A location that the addressee is already looking at is given (unlike (8)), deaccented, and thus cannot take up its own prosodic phrase.
- A syntactically integrated account cannot predict the data in (8)-(10)

What about these specific appositives explains how they can be used restrictively?

#### IV. The Modifiers are Elliptical Answers to implicit *Questions of Identification*

- The appositives are licensed when a Question of Identification (QoI), an equative question about the anchor (e.g., *Who is Mia?*), is available to be raised.
- Expands on Onea & Ott’s account of nominal appositives (2022), as well as precedents in Onea (2016), and AnderBois & Jacobson (2018)



##### A. They are answers to potential QoIs

- They can be used as answers to overt QoIs.

12. *A & B are looking at pictures of their classmates.*

A: Mia is so cool.

B: Which one is Mia?

A: [*taps on Mia in the picture*] Oh, **here** / **with the white hair**.

- They must denote uniquely (i.e., are subject to QoI answerhood requirements).<sup>2</sup>

13. *Ana and Joe just went to a party and talked to Mia, but Joe never learned her name. Joe asks Ana: "I loved that party. Who should I be friends with?"*

a. Ana: Mia, **with the blue hair**, is really nice.

b. Ana: #Mia, **with blue hair**, is really nice<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This particular generalization also explains an interesting interpretive constraint on the use of the modifier *here*: as an identificational appositive, *here* can only be used “deictically” (or, together with pointing) (Ai/ii), although it can be used non-deictically (e.g., anaphorically) elsewhere (Aiii). I explain this constraint in appendix.

(A) *Ana is at a conference where Mia, the sole phonologist at the conference, is giving a talk.*

Ana: I’m so excited for this conference.

i. [*Mia is next to Ana.*] Mia here is going to give a great talk.

ii. [*Mia is not around.*] #Mia here is going to give a great talk.

iii. [*Mia is not around.*] The phonologist here is going to give a great talk.

## B. They are elliptical copular clauses

- Integrated relative clauses cannot be used in this position.

14. a. \*Marie that has the big hat is a good friend of mine.  
b. \*You see the dog, that has the blue eyes?

- IRCs (14), but not PPs (15) are ungrammatical after copulas

15. a. \*~~Marie is~~ that has the big hat.  
b. \*~~The dog is~~ that has the blue eyes.

16. ~~Marie is~~ here.

- We can explain with-PPs' ungrammaticality in full copular clauses (16) as morphological blocking by *has* (= *is with*), a spell-out rule that does not apply with an elided-copula (Kayne 1993, Harley 2002, Levinson 2011)

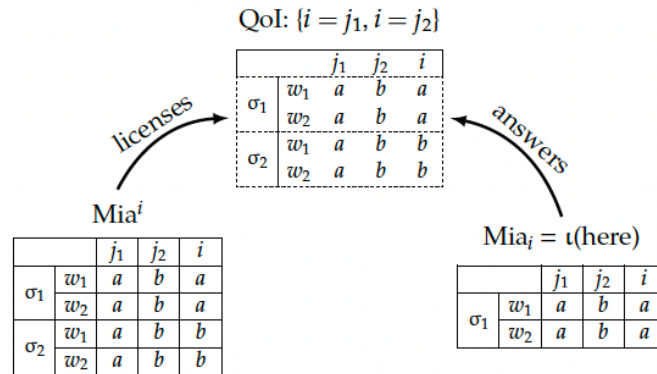
17. ??Marie is with the big hat.

## V How identificational appositives become restrictive.

- Referring expressions are associated with a requirement of identification with a discourse referent across epistemic possibilities (world/assignment pairs) in the CG, corresponding to Roberts (2003)'s notion of WEAK FAMILIARITY

18. IDENTIFICATION: Given a DP with index  $i$ ,  $\exists j \in \text{domain}(C) : \forall \langle w, g \rangle \in C : g(i) = g(j)$ <sup>4</sup>

- When Identification is not met and cannot be accommodated, a QoI becomes salient in the context, equating  $i$  with distinct drefs  $j_1, j_2$ , etc.
- The appositive discourse update satisfies Identification, as it associates  $I$  with a particular weakly familiar dref  $j$
- Can model using Heimian contexts (as above), but more likely we need sets of possibilities (information states) (Anderbois et. al. 2015, Dotlačil & Roelofsen 2019) or reference systems (Vermeulen 1994, Beaver 1999).<sup>5</sup>



- We can also define a more general notion of restrictivity that captures both subjective modifiers and identificational appositives:

19. RESTRICTIVITY: A modifier is *restrictive* in context  $C$  if it maps  $C$  to  $C'$  s.t.  $\exists x \in \text{domain}(C)$ ,  $\text{domain}(C') : \{g'(x) \mid \langle w', g' \rangle \in C'\} \subset \{g(x) \mid \langle w, g \rangle \in C\}$

<sup>4</sup> This analysis does not deny that uniqueness is relevant for definite reference. As the comparison in (5) shows, however, uniqueness only applies to material in the 'core DP'. The analysis conceptualizes *weak familiarity* as a discourse-pragmatic constraint associated with all referring expressions, rather than being, e.g., the meaning of 'the'.

<sup>5</sup> We need these more complex systems in order to capture the difference between uniqueness and weak familiarity, for one, as well as the distinction between epistemic uncertainty about reference and indefinite reference. E.g., a referent may uniquely refer to an entity in a single information state but be non-unique *across* information states.

## VI. Outstanding Questions: Names vs. Descriptions

- If all referring expressions require Identification, why do unfamiliar names but not unfamiliar descriptions require such an appositive to resolve reference (19a)/(19b)?
  - Note that incomplete descriptions may require these appositives (19c)
20. *The hearer doesn't know Mia, or that she's the speaker's HR representative.*
- a. Mia #(, **with the blue hair,**) asked me out!
  - b. The HR rep at my job (, **with the blue hair,**) asked me out!
  - c. The HR rep #(, **with the blue hair,**) asked me out!

### Some Thoughts

- It's not that unfamiliar names are non-unique, as there are no implications about more than one Mia.
- It can't be that names are 'strong definites' (syntactically bearing an index), as they take weak determiners in many languages (Schwarz 2009)

### Possible explanations

- Could it have to do with a lack of *informational uniqueness* (Roberts 2003), which is harder to satisfy for names since they are arbitrary and speaker-dependent (Guerts 1997)?
- Could it relate to their rigidity: e.g., accommodating the presupposition of a rigid name is much more difficult than accommodating the presupposition of a description (Maier 2009)?

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## VIII. Appendix: The Deictic Constraint on *here*

- In English, *here* can be used “deictically” – together with pointing (1a) – or non-deictically – e.g., anaphorically, or as a pure indexical (1b):
  - (1) a. [*pointing*] Sit here.
  - b. I love this city. Everyone here is so nice.
- When used as an identificational appositive, *here* can only be used deictically (2a/b), although it can be used non-deictically when it is integrated restrictive modifier (2c).
  - (2) *Ana is at a conference where Mia, the sole phonologist at the conference, is giving a talk.*  
 Ana: I’m so excited for this conference.
    - a. [*Mia is next to Ana.*] Mia here is going to give a great talk.
    - b. [*Mia is not around.*] #Mia here is going to give a great talk.
    - c. [*Mia is not around.*] The phonologist here is going to give a great talk.
- The constraint applies to all unique referring expressions, including definites (3) and possessives (4) – that is, when *here* can **only** be interpreted as an appositive.
  - (3) *The Pope is visiting the conference that Ana and Ben are at. Ana says:*  
 The Pope here is staying at my hotel [*✓The Pope is next to Joe; # The Pope is not around.*]
  - (4) *Ana’s mother is visiting the conference that Ana and Ben are at.*  
 My mother here is staying at my hotel [*✓Ana’s mother is next to Ana; # Ana’s mother is not around.*]

This constraint follows from the analysis of identificational appositives presented in this handout, in conjunction with a semantic property of *here* that will be motivated below.

**Part 1:** Answerhood constraints on QoIs require the modifier to denote uniquely, since it appears as the argument of an equative copula.

**Part 2:** Relevant semantic property of *here*:

- the speaker has to be inside of the location referred to by non-deictic “here”
- the speaker may be outside of the location referred to by deictic “here”.

(5) *Ana used to work at the Empire State Building.*  
 I used to work here. (*here* = *the Empire State Building*)

Context	Deictic	Speaker inside location	Felicitous?
<i>Ana and Ben are riding an elevator in the Empire State Building.</i>	No	Yes	✓
<i>Ana and Ben are in front of the Empire State Building, Ana points to it.</i>	Yes	No	✓
<i>Ana and Ben are near the Empire State Building, but Ana does not point to it.</i>	No	No	#

**The argument:**

- If the speaker has to be in the location denoted by non-deictic “here”, then the location can never be used to uniquely pick out some *other* individual from the speaker.
- The location denoted by “deictic” *here* can correspond to the spatial extent of a single person separate from the speaker, and thus can be used to uniquely pick out that person.
- Therefore, only “deictic” *here* can be used as an identificational appositive