Quirkian linguistics and prototypes illustrated by the notion of apposition[1]

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I Introduction

Categories represent one way for the human mind to impose structure on experience. How the human mind sets about this task – or how this process functions, however, is a matter of controversy. A substantial body of research in the cognitive sciences has drawn up a dichotomy between the traditional way of categorisation and one based on a prototypical way of thinking. In a simplified manner one can say that the former classifies on the basis of necessary and sufficient criteria, while the latter is oriented towards regarding categories as a continuum in terms of central and peripheral members.

The field encompassed by the above dichotomy is a wide one and straddles a number of disciplines including philosophy, linguistics and psychology. It would obviously be beyond the scope of the present paper to go into the wide range of issues involved, and my angle will be the linguistic one.

In sections two and three below I shall give a brief outline of the two positions. On the background of this discussion I shall in section four go on to discuss the method of linguistic or grammatical categorisation as used in a corpus-based modern grammar, viz. that of Quirk et al. (1985), whose approach I have dubbed Quirkian linguistics in my headline. To illustrate how their taxonomical framework functions, I shall in section five discuss their handling of the concept of apposition, a notoriously woolly one.

II The traditional view of categorisation

The traditional view of categorisation goes back to antiquity. While Givón (1986: 77) refers to the Platonic point of view in this respect, Taylor (1995: 22–

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[1] This paper is a slightly modified version of my 'vitenskapsteoretisk innlegg' for the Dr. art. degree. The paper was presented on 29 April 1999 at the faculty of arts, University of Bergen.

23) traces its origins to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In this work Aristotle distinguishes between the essence of a thing and its accidents, and sets out the law of contradiction and the law of the excluded middle:

> The law of contradiction states that a thing cannot both be and not be, it cannot both possess a feature and not possess it, it cannot both belong to a category and not belong to it. The law of the excluded middle states that a thing must either be or not be, it must either possess a feature or not possess it, it must either belong to a category or not belong to it. (Taylor: 1995: 23)

According to Taylor this is behind the following three assumptions with respect to categorisation, viz. that categories can be defined in terms of necessary and sufficient features; that features are binary; and that categories have clear boundaries. These are assumptions which according to Taylor have been at the heart of traditional thoughts on categorisation, and have continued to dominate for most of the twentieth century.

When applied to the grammatical description of a language the traditional approach leads to a system of categories which are described in terms of a set of necessary and sufficient criteria. On this basis a lexeme is said to belong or not to belong to the category in question. The number of categories is regarded as finite, and anomalous cases dealt with as exceptions.

A case in point is the taxonomical framework of traditional Latin-based grammar , where categories are described as separate compartments with no overlapping members. Word classes are referred to as a set of categories whose character and number are not subject to discussion, and whose existence can be taken for granted: 'There are in English nine sorts of words, or, as they are commonly called, Parts of Speech' (Murray 1795: 19). The noun class is defined as 'the name of any thing that exists, or of which we have any notion; as, man, virtue, London' (1795: 23). The class is divided into proper and common nouns, but the grammarian recognises that in some cases a proper name can function as a common noun as in the case 'the Cicero of his age' (1795: 24). In the either-or terminology of the grammarian, however, proper nouns in such contexts are said to 'become common names' when they 'have an article annexed to them' (l.c.). The grammarian sees the difference between the word classes as something natural that is to be discovered by learners by the aid of 'the definitions, and an accurate knowledge of their [i.e. the word classes, my note] nature' (1795: 21).

Discreteness of categories and categorisation on the basis of binary features have also been central characteristics of theoretical linguistics for most of the 20th century. We can mention immediate constituent (IC) analysis, phonology, and the phrase-structure grammar which featured prominently in early transformational-generative approaches.

III   The prototypical or cognitive view of categorisation

In recent years, the traditional manner of imposing structure upon experience has been explicitly contrasted with another way of categorising, which has become known as the prototype approach. It has its origin in cognitive psychology and the work of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, and has gained wide currency in linguistics in the last two decades, particularly within semantics.

According to Taylor (1995: 173) the work of Eleanor Rosch is one of the landmarks in this respect. She regards categories in terms of a continuum which can be conceived of in terms of its clear cases, and is less concerned with establishing the boundaries between categories. In her 1978 article, Rosch discusses the way people in different cultures distinguish between colours. This means that she is looking at concepts which can be tested on informants in a meaningful way:

> By prototypes of categories we have generally meant the clearest cases of category membership defined operationally by people's judgments of goodness of membership in the category. (Rosch 1978: 36)

The focus is thus not on establishing a prototype as such, but to arrive at judgments concerning the degree to which there is conformity with the prototypical idea, to degrees of prototypicality. Such judgments can be made on the basis of e.g. lists of features, or structural descriptions.

If we turn to the application of prototype theory with respect to linguistic categories, the work of Givón (1986) is central. He regards the concept as a compromise between the discrete categories of traditional thinking and the family resemblance concept of Wittgenstein (1953), which indicates a trichotomy

rather than a dichotomy. In his words, categories are 'fuzzy-edged and contingent' (1986: 78).

According to Givón (1986: 78) Wittgenstein's family resemblance categories can be symbolised by a meta-category where the marginal members may share no common features. He uses the following figure to illustrate his point of view (a, b, c, d represent category members):
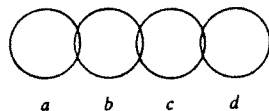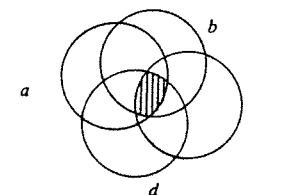

Givón (1986: 72)

Wittgenstein's (1953: 1, 66-71) example of family membership is the category of games, which may resemble one another in different ways without their sharing a set of common properties (cf. Lakoff 1987: 16).

Prototype theory, in contrast, while preserving the continuum and the fuzzy edge way of thinking sees a category as being formed by a number of intersecting or overlapping characteristic or typical features or properties. The member which exhibits all the characteristic properties of a category will thus be its prototype, its most typical member. All members of a prototypical category will, however, share one or more features with the most prototypical member.

Candidates for inclusion in a prototypical category will thus have to be graded or ranked according to how many characteristic properties they have. The number of characteristics is not an absolute criterion, however, because features may also be ranked in terms of their importance; features may be regarded as being more or less central. On the basis of the number of prototypical features and their relative importance Givón (1986) establishes the degree of prototypicality of a member. The following figure is used to illustrate his view of a prototype model, where a, b, c, and d represent characteristic properties. The shaded area represents the prototypical member, i.e. the member which exhibits all the salient features:

Givón (1986: 79)

The relationship between prototypical categories is envisaged as a continuum with 'prototype peaks' (Givón 1986: 94). This means that prototypicality is linked to the majority of the category members which cluster around a prototype mean. Less central members make up the fuzzy edges, and gradually merge with members which can be assigned to the next or closest prototype mean. This relationship has also been described by Hopper & Thompson, who envisage prototypicality in terms of categories which are 'maximally distinct from one another' (1984: 709).

The prototypical way of thinking has been illustrated with reference to concepts like *colour* and *games*, which are part of everyday language and which can be discussed in a meaningful way by all members of a language community. Linguistic categories, however, can not be established in this manner, but rely on the setting up of criteria for category membership. Such criteria, however, may emphasise the central members of a category only, and refer to marginal members as exceptions, or they may emphasise the similarity between the central and the peripheral members, and the continuum between categories.

Due to its flexibility the prototypical approach has found wide application within the various branches of linguistics in the 1980s and 1990s, both within phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics:

> With only Aristotelian categories at our disposal, new data would often demand, for their categorization, the creation of new categories, or a redefinition of existing categories. On the other hand, new entities and new experiences can be readily associated, perhaps as

peripheral members, to a prototype category, without necessarily causing any fundamental restructuring of the category system: (Taylor 1995: 53)

Having scratched the surface of the prototype approach to linguistic categorisation I shall turn to some aspects of linguistic work which can be said to anticipate the prototypical way of thinking.

IV Quirkian linguistics

In discussions contrasting the traditional manner of categorisation and the prototypical approach recent focus has for understandable reasons been on the fresh contribution which the latter has made with respect to the way we think about categories. The contrast has been set up as a dichotomy as in Rosch 1978, or as a trichotomy as in Givón 1986, if we regard Wittgenstein's view as a third one. While these manners of presentation have the advantage of clarity and sharp focus, they tend to play down the grey area of everything in between. However, throughout the 1960s and 1970s work on categorisation was carried out which did not conform to the traditional paradigm as described by the prototype linguists. In general it is fair to say that this work received little attention at the time, since the spotlight was on those working within the generative paradigm. Nor has this work been focused on by proponents of the prototype point of view in linguistic categorisation like e.g. Givón (1986) and Lakoff (1987).

In the following I shall argue that the 1960s saw a number of linguists carrying out work which can be seen as anticipating a prototypical way of categorising. Robins (1964), Quirk (1965), Crystal (1967), Bolinger (1961), Svartvik (1966) and Hockett (1961) all recognise that category membership may be graded according to the centrality of its members.

Taylor (1995: 181) states that in the following passage Robins (1964) 'uncannily anticipates the terminology of the prototype theorists':

> Words ... are the products of several different though related criteria. Thus they comprise nuclear members of the category, to which all the criteria apply, more peripheral or marginal ones to which only some apply, and very marginal or doubtful cases in which the criteria may conflict and different conclusions may be reached by the different weighting of the conflicting criteria. (Robins 1964: 194-95)

The notion of gradability of category membership applied to language in use was central in the work carried out by Randolph Quirk and his associates and which, among other publications, eventually resulted in two major reference grammars of the English language, viz. Quirk et al. 1972 and Quirk et al. 1985. This approach to grammatical description which has been pioneered by Quirk and his associates I shall refer to as Quirkian linguistics. Crystal (1997: 319) labels it Quirk grammar, and sees its central feature as being 'a synthesis of knowledge about the grammatical structure of English', in addition to its being descriptive, corpus-based and taking into account both stylistic and regional differences. Another dictionary definition sets out its essential features in the following manner:

> Quirk .... assigns priority to the meticulous examination of language data and to total accountability of the data. The pursuit of these priorities has induced him to assert the prominence of analogy and gradience in the functioning of the language system; categories are viewed as overlapping rather than discrete, and peripheral subcategories or individual items are shown to share to varying extents the features of the central members of a category. (McArthur 1992: 835-36)

The foundation of the taxonomical system of the work of Quirk et al. can be traced to Quirk's (1965) discussion of serial relationships. In this article he contrasts what he refers to as rigid discreteness in categorisation to concepts like analogy, to Halliday's (1961) 'scale of delicacy', and the concept of 'blending' as used by Hockett (1961) and Bolinger (1961b). The problem is not that linguists have been unable to think in terms of fuzzy boundaries between categories:

> It is rather that such a concept has been generally unattractive in the ambience of rigid discreteness that has characterized most theoretical linguistics since Bloomfield, whether the discreteness be that of phonemic and IC segmentation or that born of the more recent interest taken by transformative-generative linguists in unidirectional transformations and unique derivations. (Quirk 1965: 213)

As his basic analytical tool Quirk (1965: 205) sets up as a number of characteristics or features which he groups into sets according to whether they are overt or covert. *Overt* or *manifested* constituent features can be observed from looking at the construction in question and describing it in terms of grammatical analysis, e.g. deictic + head + postmodifier. *Covert* features are of two kinds:

They can be *potential*, which means that they can be characterised by the substitutions and additions which they permit; or they can be *transformational*, in which case they can be described in terms of their relationship to other structures of the language via a regular restructuring process.
These sets of characteristics are said to have three broad uses:
1) as 'markers of definition' serving to 'distinguish one sequence from another' (1965: 206)
2) to establish 'degrees of identity between the sequences' (l.c.), a term he relates to Halliday's (1976: 66) 'scale of delicacy'.
3) to dismiss 'irrelevant differences ' to focus on 'common features demonstrating a connection between structures which otherwise suffer the fate endemic in classificatory linguistics of being unrevealingly separated in distinct pigeonholes' (1965: 208)

These characteristics are obviously not set up to force linguistic items into rigid categories. On the contrary, the focus is on establishing which features are shared between two or more constructions, and in what respects they are different. By using this method one can establish degrees of identity by setting up a number of relevant criteria to describe a category. Members fulfilling all criteria will be obvious candidates for inclusion; but it will also be possible to describe the extent to which constructions are identical and what this identity consists of. Finally, these characteristics also make it possible to demonstrate parallels between structures that are not generally regarded as related. The concept of gradience is introduced to show a scale where constructions may be placed in descending order according to how many features they share with the member fulfilling all criteria.

A straightforward two-dimensional matrix is rejected as inadequate since it does not capture all the interrelationships which may hold between the members of a class. For this purpose a polydimensional model is required (1965: 209). The term which Quirk uses about the model he arrives at, described as 'overlapping gradience' is 'serial relationship'; and constructions are said to be 'serially related' (1965: 210). He illustrates this by means of the passive, and explains apparent anomalies in the relationship between the active and the passive form with the interrelationships between the different verbs. Thus a verb may enter into a passive construction which has no active counterpart, e.g.
He is said to be careful (*They say him to be careful). However, say behaves like other verbs like feel and know in constructions like They feel/say/know that

he is careful, It is felt/said/known that he is careful, and both these verbs allow the active form They feel/know him to be careful. The postulation of serial relationships is thus a move away from rigid categorisation at the same time as criteria for inclusion in and exclusion from a category are taken into account. It is of course also an approach which places emphasis on properties of the individual lexical items and their syntactic properties. The object of establishing serial relationships, then, is to establish similarities where these exist, even if they are found across traditional boundaries.

The systematic evaluation of constructions with respect to acceptability is also a feature which deserves to be mentioned. It introduces an element of 'testing' and may lend fuzzy edges to categories, since these may be evaluated as being of various degrees of acceptability rather than being either acceptable or unacceptable.

It will be clear from the above that to describe the work of Quirk (1965) in terms of hard-and-fast categorisation would in itself be a violation of the principles of prototypical thinking. His work, together with the concepts he refers to such as analogy, scales of delicacy and blending are indications of a fuzzy borderline with respect to the manners of categorisation outlined in sections 2 and 3 above. A couple of points distinguishing Quirk's (1965) approach from a prototypical approach. One of them is that there does not appear to be any weighting concerning the various parameters set up; no single syntactic relationship is explicitly said to be more central than another. The number of characteristics which a construction has is the only thing which is referred to. Secondly, there is no discussion of whether a potential member is to be included only on the basis of meeting one out of the criteria set up. There is, however, a mention of relative frequencies of patterns, but this is not explicitly discussed as an indication of a construction being more central than another.

These aspects are discussed by Crystal (1967), where, as pointed out by Taylor (1995: 181), we find a fully worked out theory of word class membership according to a notion of the centrality of its members. Class membership can be decided on the basis of criteria which may be phonological, grammatical, lexical or semantic, and have to be ranked according to importance. The notion of importance is linked to frequency, and word classes can only be established by such a ranking of criteria. Finally, 'that criterion is ranked first which applies to most cases, and which least applies to other classes .... One would always expect

a coherent word class to have at least one criterion with 100% applicability, to justify one's intuition of coherence' (Crystal 1967: 45).

With respect to the notion of discrete word classes Crystal rejects the concept of clear-cut dividing lines, and refers to 'overlapping' or 'shading-off' (1967: 50). If a word class has characteristics from two classes, he does not assign it to either class, but sees it as 'forming a kind of "bridge" class' or 'bridge area' (l.c.):

> Moreover, it is typically the case that there is not one such class, but a number of partially-overlapping sub-classes. The situation, in fact, strongly resembles gradience phenomena, and suggests that the description of word classes in English might be usefully approached by displaying the serial relationship existing between single words or word-groups. (1967: 50).

Crystal thus sees the establishing of word classes as dependent on empirical investigation into the distribution of individual lexemes.

On the basis of the works referred to in the present section it should be clear that category membership has by no means been regarded as a matter of either-or in grammatical writings preceding the prototype approach to categorisation. There does, however, seem to have been no contact between the work carried on by linguists like Quirk and Crystal in the 1960s and the tradition represented by Givón (1986: 79). Despite the fact that the latter sets up a model for prototypical categories which is very similar to that of Crystal (1967), there is no reference to Crystal's work in his article.
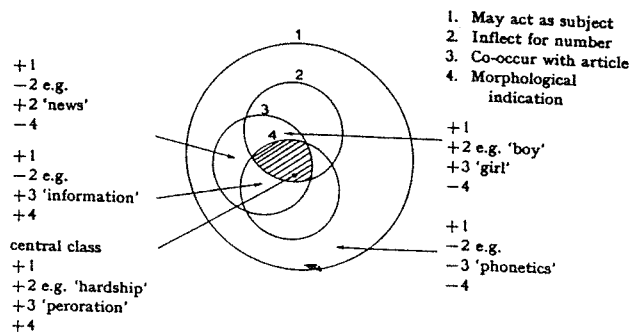
Crystal (1967: 46)

In conclusion I shall try to relate the Quirkian to the prototypical approach. Both approaches emphasise the non-discreteness of categories, and the grey areas between categories. Both accept that some members of a category are more central than others, and that the criteria for category membership can be ranged according to importance. They also link centrality of features to some notion of frequency. Among the dissimilarities one can point to the fact that the prototype approach is more abstract and sets out a comprehensive philosophical-cognitive framework of the way the human mind organises all experience. Nor does it discuss grammatical and syntactic categories independently of meaning. The work of Quirk and his associates, on the other hand, has no claims to apply beyond a linguistic description, and there is a tendency for syntactic form to be emphasised rather than the semantic aspects involved.

V Apposition as a concept in Quirkian linguistics

From what we have said so far it will be clear that in the view of linguists working within a prototypical or a Quirkian framework the description of a grammatical category should not only include reference to its characteristic features but also to other categories which it fades into or overlaps with. If we take prototype to mean most central member of a category, a category will be defined according to its most central or prototypical member, and other members will cluster around it according to how they meet the criteria in question.

Discussions of central and peripheral members will differ according to the aim of the analysis. To take two extremes: At one end of the scale there is the abstract discussion of how different structures interrelate, an activity which can be carried out within a stringent theoretical framework; at the other there is the taxonomical framework which has to be drawn up in order to 'account for all linguistic phenomena' (Quirk et al. 1972: vi). Quirk et al. point to the fact that while all theories and/or approaches have their merits, no one linguistic theory will fit this bill, which has led to their adopting what they refer to as a 'compromise position' (1972: vi).

Quirk et al. regard grammar as a complex system of mutually defining parts. All grammatical categories will thus have to be seen in relation to one another. There is, however, the basic assumption that some concepts are more central

than others and that there are major concepts and categories, including clause and phrase structure and word classes.

When it comes to apposition the two versions of Quirk et al. deal with its primary relationship to other categories differently. In Quirk et al. (1972: ix) its main discussion is placed in a chapter with coordination, while the corresponding discussion in Quirk et al. (1985: viii) is subsumed under the noun phrase. As the index of both grammars show, 'apposition' is indeed used in a number of contexts, and has to be defined with reference to concepts like coordination, pre- and postmodification, the prepositional phrase and punctuation, in addition to semantic and stylistic factors. The function of reformulation can arguably take its application into the realm of the text.

Crystal (1997: 24) defines apposition as 'a traditional term retained in some models of grammatical description for a sequence of units which are constituents at the same grammatical level, and which have an identity or similarity of reference', exemplified by *John Smith, the butcher*. He does, however, state that there are 'many theoretical and methodological problems in defining the notion of apposition, because of the existence of several constructions which satisfy only some of these criteria' (l.c.).

Apposition as a concept is special due to the fact that it cannot be defined with respect to syntactic criteria alone, but draws on both semantics and phonetics (i.e. intonation). This is made clear both in Quirk et al. (1972: 620) and in Quirk et al. (1985: 1300-01).

In the 1972 version the focal relationship is between apposition and the central category of coordination, since both coordination and apposition link units at the same level. The main distinction between the two is that apposition is also a semantic relationship whose units are coreferential, or where the reference of one must somehow be included in the reference of the other. The definition of apposition as a relationship between semantically related items at the same level of syntax also includes apposition between units other than noun phrases, whether between units of the same syntactic class, as in *to Bob Pitt, to a man of integrity*; (1972: 646) or between members from different syntactic classes, as in *his explanation, that he couldn't see it* (1972: 647). Terminologically, however, Quirk et al. show some vacillation, and may refer to appositives as 'subordinate'

and as 'modifier' (1972: 624), concepts which would indicate a head-modifier relationship, albeit between semantically related members.

Apposition, however, is not dealt with as an either-or relation in Quirk et al. (1972). They set up three pairs of distinctions (1972: 625):

APPOSITION

- full (either omissible)
- partial (only one omissible)

- strict (same syntactic class)
- weak (different syntactic class)

- non-restrictive (different information unit)
- restrictive (same information unit)

These three types of distinction apply simultaneously, and are set up in eight combinations. Quirk et al. (1972: 624-25) go on to illustrate the potential combinations of features by means of example sentences, which I have cited below. (I have introduced a vertical line to separate the appositive elements):[2]

(1) Full, strict, non-restrictive: *Paul Jones, | the distinguished art critic,* died in his sleep last night,
(2) Full, weak, non-restrictive: *Playing football, | his only interest in life,* has brought him many friends.
(3) Full, strict, restrictive: *My friend | Peter* was here last night.
(4) Full, weak, restrictive: *The question | whether to confess or not* troubled the girl.
(5) Partial, strict, non-restrictive: *An unusual present* was given to him for his birthday, *a book on ethics.*
(6) Partial, weak, non-restrictive: *His explanation, | that he couldn't see it,* is unsatisfactory.
(7) Partial, strict, restrictive: Next Saturday, *financial expert | Tom Timber* will begin writing a weekly column on the national economy.

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[2] The term appositive is by Quirk et al. used both about an appositive element, e.g. *Paul Jones* in (1), and adjectivally about a construction having features associated with apposition, e.g. appositional postmodification. I shall follow this usage.

(8) Partial, weak, restrictive: *The explanation | that he couldn't see it* is unsatisfactory.

Despite the fact that it is not explicitly stated, it will be clear that some of these features are regarded as more central than others, and even if they cannot be ranged on a scale from one to eight, it would not be a problem to argue that the most typical member, and the one which the others resemble to varying degrees, is the one labelled full, strict and non-restrictive, viz. *Paul Jones, the distinguished art critic*. It seems reasonable to conclude that nobody would establish a concept of apposition as a central topic on the basis of e.g. examples (7) and (8) listed above.

The set-up of apposition in terms of full/partial, strict/weak and nonrestrictive/restrictive is repeated in Quirk et al. (1985: 1305); the same applies to examples (1) to (8), the only differences being the additional comment with respect to (7) that this is typical of journalistic style, and that example sentence (5) is also alternatively referred to as 'discontinuous full apposition' (1985: 1302).

The concept of apposition, however, receives less prominence in Quirk et al. (1985). While coordination is still a chapter heading, the main discussion of apposition is now found in the chapter on the noun phrase. This means that non-nominal apposition, e.g. the juxtaposition of near-synonymous adverbials, verb phrases and adjectives are no longer included because this 'makes the concept of apposition too weak' (cp. Quirk et al. 1972: 645ff and 1985: 1308). A major problem with excluding these constructions, however, is that they fit the criteria for full, strict, non-restrictive apposition in every respect except for word class or clause element type, since

- either appositive may be omitted
- they belong to the same syntactic class
- they belong to different information units.

The following examples are thus not included under the appositional concept of Quirk et al. (1985), but are regarded as 'apposition-like constructions' and 'exceptional':

Although she was reluctant, | although she felt an understandable hesitation, she eventually agreed. (1985: 1308)

She is *better, | very much better,* than she used to be. (l.c.)

In the 1985 version, then, Quirk et al. (1985) subsume apposition under the general concept of the noun phrase due to the fact that it is 'primarily, and typically, a relation between noun phrases' (1985: 1300-01). In addition to this central or typical case there are a number of syntactic constructions which are referred to as 'appositive'. The crucial feature of describing a construction as appositive is the semantic relationship between phrase or clause elements.

Cases in point are appositive postmodification by *that*-clauses, by appositive nonfinite clauses and by appositive prepositional phrases. By discussing these types under postmodification the similarity or parallel to other postmodifying elements is emphasised rather than the semantic relationship between the putative appositive elements. E.g.

His claim | that he couldn't see the car was unconvincing. (1985: 1306)

The construction has features characteristic both of head + postmodification and of appositive + appositive. Like examples of postmodification the *that*-clause can be omitted without destroying the structure of the sentence. Like examples of apposition the second appositive, the *that*-clause, may be linked to the first appositive, *his claim*, by means of *be*.

→ His claim is that he couldn't see the car.

The term appositive postmodification is thus an appropriate one since it takes into account both the close semantic relationship between the two elements and the fact that the *that*-clause is clearly subordinate to the first noun. The close semantic relationship between the two elements is further emphasised by the fact that this clause type is restricted to cooccurring with general abstract nouns like e.g. *fact* and *belief*. The same applies – but with only partial overlapping between the actual nouns in question – to appositive postmodification by nonfinite clause.

In looking at the two grammars of Quirk and his associates, we must keep in mind their overruling aim, which is the total accountability of data. This aim sets their work apart from writings devoted to one concept, in this case apposition, where the linguist may concentrate on the chosen concept and include or ex-

clude constructions from discussion without going into the consequences of how the excluded constructions are to be described. Kicking the appositive *that*-clause out from under the appositional umbrella and defining it as postmodification does not change the basic aspect of its semantic relationship to the abstract noun which it is either apposed to or which it postmodifies, depending on one's point of view.

To my mind apposition presents an intriguing example of how a concept both may be used as a central concept like in e.g. Quirk et al. (1972) and how it may be reduced to a subordinate concept like in e.g. Quirk et al. (1985). If the conceptual system is conceived of both in terms of the semantic and the syntactic relationship between the elements of a phrase or a clause, apposition becomes an inclusive concept. This is the approach adopted by Meyer (1992) in his corpus-based monograph on apposition, where he sets up a 'gradient of central apposition to peripheral apposition' (1992: 132) on the basis of semantic categories and syntactic criteria.

The opposite view is held by Acuña (1996), who relies on syntactic criteria and argues in favour of an analysis in terms of subordination. He sees Meyer's approach to apposition as a gradable relation as 'abandoning syntax' (1996: 119), and does not see that the existence of the central type of apposition exemplified by (1) above is sufficient to base a grammatical category on; the relationship 'must be applicable to a number of other constructions, and not just to one construction' (1996: 162). He also stresses the fact that the problem of defining apposition is that 'linguists have paid independent attention to different features of a prototype construction which has always been believed to represent apposition par excellence' (1996: 20). The same line of argument is pursued in Acuña 1999.

If one accepts apposition or appositive relationships as a viable category of grammar one can make out a good case for a prototype approach. In my view the concept is a fruitful one within a comprehensive grammatical framework to distinguish juxtaposed semantically related units from units in asyndetic coordination; and to explain the possibility of rewriting certain noun phrases in terms of a subject–subject complement structure. The analysis adopted by Quirk et al. (1972, 1985) can be regarded as such an approach. The construction which they label full, strict, nonrestrictive would be the central or prototypical member which the other example constructions resemble to varying extents. One can also regard their use of terms like appositive postmodification, appositive

nonfinite clauses and appositive prepositional phrases as an indication of fuzzy boundaries between full, strict, nonrestrictive apposition and postmodification.

A final argument for recognising apposition as a concept is a pragmatic-stylistic one. The pragmatic aspect of apposition has been pointed out by among others Bîtea (1977), Koktová (1985) and Meyer (1992). Interesting points to note in this connection is the pragmatic function which the central or prototypical apposition has in certain types of prose, particularly in journalism, when it comes to adding information about proper names; and also as a stylistic marker with determiner deletion (Jucker 1992). This appositional type has also been demonstrated to be a characteristic feature of newswriting as opposed to other newspaper subgenres (Bjørge 1998).

VI Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that a dichotomy between a system of categorisation which refers to criteria as either–or and the prototype approach is too crude to capture much of the taxonomical work carried out by a number of linguists in the 1960s, in particular by David Crystal and Randolph Quirk and his associates. Good examples of this approach to grammar are the two comprehensive corpus-based university grammars of Quirk et al. published in 1972 and 1985. As an example of this framework, I have discussed the status of apposition as a concept with reference to how the term has been handled in these grammars, arguing that the term was a more central concept in the 1972 version and less central because it was seen as subordinate to the noun phrase in 1985. Finally, I have argued that the concept is a viable one due to the fact that it takes into account both syntactic and semantic features, in addition to having pragmatic and stylistic implications.

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