

## Deriving “restrictive” interpretations for clarificatory nominal appositives

John Duff (UC Santa Cruz)

In English, certain nominal appositives (NAs) (1d, 2d), call them clarificatory NAs (CNAs), appear to have “restrictive” interpretations. That is, they seem to pattern with restrictive modifiers (1b, 2b) in affecting the construals of definite descriptions (1) and quantifier restrictors (2). This is atypical for supplements—cf. appositive relative clauses, which canonically cannot restrict (1c, 2c). Nevertheless, I’ll propose that CNAs follow from a unified semantics for NAs, deriving their interpretations via not-at-issue imposition of equivalence between an NA and its anchor.

- (1) *Context*: There are many boys, but only one with a hat. (Figure 1)
- # The boy sneezed.
  - The boy who had a hat on sneezed.
  - # The boy, who had a hat on, sneezed.
  - The boy, the one who had a hat on ({*anyway, at least, I mean*}), sneezed.
- (2) *Context*: There are many children, and those with hats ate tamales. (Figure 2)
- # Every child ate a tamale.
  - Every child who had a hat on ate a tamale.
  - # Every child, who had a hat on, ate a tamale.
  - Every child, the ones who had a hat on ({*anyway, at least, I mean*}), ate a tamale.

Existing work has noted various CNA interpretations [1-4] but denied that CNAs are typical NAs, taking them to have exceptionally low scope equivalent to restrictive modifiers [3], or else suggesting some third category due to their intuitive corrective function [1].

The intuition I’ll pursue is that CNAs are neither truly restrictive nor exceptional, but an application of a NA to elaborate on a description, common in the face of a communicative problem where a speaker uses some description, but realizes their interlocutors may need additional information to recover their intended meaning [5] (see Table 1). This function can be explained in an account where all DPs may include implicit restrictors [6], and NAs may communicate equivalence. Comprehenders can then exploit this equivalence to solve for appropriate implicit restriction.

We can informally characterize the meaning of cases like (3) as three components: a matrix assertion (P1), a obligation of equivalence imposed by the NA (P2), and a more specific assertion recoverable from considering P1 in the light of P2 (P3). Note that this approach helps us to see that, contra previous claims [1,4], the CNA here makes a not-at-issue imposition typical for NAs: B cannot target P2 alone for denial (4a), though its meaning contributes to the deniable P3 (4b).

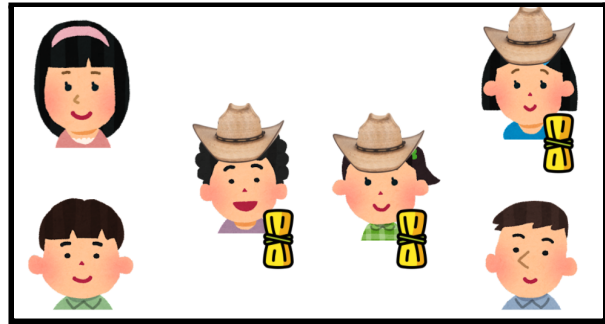
- (3) A: Armstrong, the one who went to the moon, was implicated in a famous doping scandal.
- P1: Armstrong was implicated in a famous doping scandal.  
P2: *Armstrong* and *the one who went to the moon* refer to the same person.  
P3: Neil Armstrong was implicated in a famous doping scandal.
- (4) (a) # B: No, he didn’t go to the moon.  
(b) B: No, he wasn’t implicated in a doping scandal. (You’re thinking of Lance!)

If NAs can be anchored by any description which establishes a discourse referent [3], we can capture (1) and (2) together in any framework which allows quantifiers to establish plural drefs for their restrictors. Appropriately, this predicts distinct restrictor dref (5a) and nuclear scope dref (6a) readings for CNAs following quantifiers like *few*. It also predicts non-local CNAs—while additional marking seems more necessary in such cases, this may be for strictly pragmatic reasons (5b, 6b).

CNAs thus reduce to normal supplemental content, despite failing traditional diagnostics for non-restrictivity. Note also forthcoming work describing the same patterns of judgments for CNAs in a Zapotec language [7]. It is apparent that the semantic typology of modification, and supplements in particular, continues to merit careful examination.



**Figure 1:** The context for (1): *boy* is non-unique, but *boy wearing a hat* is unique.



**Figure 2:** The context for (2): all *children with a hat*, but not all *children*, have tamales.

Example	Source
(i) Where's <b>the doctor, the one from Atlanta</b> ?	American Gothic (TV) (via COCA)
(ii) ...yeah, you can do that, but not with autonomous trucks, and that is because <b>every state, the ones that have autonomous truck legislation</b> , it is different.	<a href="#">Patrick Penner on The Washington Journal (C-SPAN)</a>
(iii) <b>Most nations, the ones today at least</b> , see that as a much bigger cost than the reward.	<a href="#">Quora answer by user Alexis Leskinen</a>
(iv) <b>Most countries (ones comparable to the UK)</b> operate some form of compulsory health insurance for their citizens.	<a href="#">"The future of adult social care in the UK". LexisNexis news article</a>

**Table 1:** Some naturally-occurring examples of the construction under discussion.

- (5) *Context:* A minority of children with hats, but a majority of children, ate tamales.
  - a. Few children, the ones who had a hat on ({*anyway, at least, I mean*}), ate a tamale.
  - b. Few children ate a tamale, the ones who had a hat on ?({*anyway, I mean*}).
- (6) *Context:* A minority of children ate tamales, in particular just the children with a hat.
  - a. Few children, (namely) the ones who had a hat on, ate a tamale.
  - b. Few children ate a tamale, ?(namely) the ones who had a hat on.

**References:**

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- [6] Stanley & Szabó (2000) On quantifier domain restriction. *Mind & Language*.
- [7] Duff, Sichel & Toosarvandani (2022) Redundancy and restriction in the derivation of relative clauses. To appear in *Syntax & Semantics at Santa Cruz*.