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Pronominal Modifiers

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Introduction: The semantic classifications proposed for relative clauses and nominal modifiers have typically been formulated by looking at cases of the form (d)-(adj+)-n-{cp/adjp} (e.g. *the Italian students who are linguists*). The goal of this talk it to draw the attention of the linguistic community to the behavior of two nominal modifier constructions which apply to *pronouns*, rather than common nouns: **Pron-N** (1), and **Pron-RC** ((2) for Italian cases). I will argue that these modifiers do not fit in any of the previously proposed classes (appositive viz restrictive, sortal-internal viz sortal-external, Partee 1973, Grosu and Landman 1998), and that they are best understood as presuppositional operators.

Data and Problems: while the Pron-N construction has interesting and well-known gaps (3), common to English and Italian(/Romance), the latter fills the missing cases with the semantically similar Pron-RC construction, illustrated in (4) and (5). At least three questions arise: (a) what is the semantic role of these modifiers; (b) what is the semantic difference, if any, between Pron-N and Pron-RC; (c) why there are gaps in the Pron-N, but not in the corresponding Pron-RC.

Semantics: Since neither *you linguists are clever* nor (5)b can be used to address a group which is only *partially* constituted by linguists, it is natural to assume that the post-pronominal modifiers cannot be restrictive. According to the traditional classification, they must thus be appositive. However, Pron-N differ from canonical appositive constructions in several respects: (a) the pronoun and the modifier belong to the same phonological phrase (there is no pause); (b) Neither Pron-RC or Pron-N can modify (conjoined) proper names (6a); Pron-N cannot even modify pronoun conjunctions like those in (6b), unless a pause (which I take to indicates genuine nominal apposition) is inserted; (c) Pron-RC is restricted to subject relatives ((7) vs. (2)b); (d) parasitic gaps inside Pron-RC are possible; (e) floating quantifiers cannot appear in Pron-N (in the same phonological phrase with the pronoun, cf. (9)c. vs. a,b).

Analysis: I have two main claims. First, neither Pron-N not Pron-RC are restrictive, but they differ semantically from regular appositives in that the content of the pronominal modifier is *presupposed*. The purpose of the modifiers is to indicate that a property of the referent of the pronoun which is part of the Common Ground (modulo accommodation, see Stalnaker 1974) is causally relevant for the communicative goals of the discourse.

A crucial test case is (10), which is incoherent, since being both linguists cannot (?) be the explanation for a diversity (contrast with *the men who are linguists are different from the women who are linguists*). Note that if the RC was either restrictive or non-restrictive the sentence would have perfectly sensible meanings, paraphrased in (11a) and (11b) respectively. Pronominal modifiers are thus very close to the *qua*-construction (Italian *in quanto*): (12) is analogous to (10), and similarly incoherent.

The second claim is that in Pron-N the property which is presupposed and proposed as causally significant is the fact that the pronoun is an instance of a kind; the nominal must thus be able to denote a kind. This derives (3)a, under the assumption that singular count nouns do not denote kinds; in turn, I take the plurality of the pronoun to be a form of DP-internal agreement: it does not entail that the speaker/hearer is part of a real plurality. Thus (1) can be said by a lone speaker to a single hearer (both acting as 'representatives'), while this is not true of a genuine apposition such as *we, who are linguists, are different from you guys, who are engineers*: who *we* are *you guys* are must be clear from the context. The notion of internal agreement also accounts for **I and you linguists* (a syntactic number clash analogous to **one and one people* as an attempt to say *two people*). The ban on proper names (and possibly *loro* 'they') might come from their origin as common nouns, in a position which clashes with the modifier. Finally, some of the peculiarities of Pron-RC can be accounted for in terms of the presence of a *pro* subject (cf. the pronoun visible in the German Pron-RC *Wir, die **wir** Linguisten sind*).

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(1) [We linguists] are different from [you engineers] **Pron-N** *construction*

(2) a. [Noi che siamo linguisti] dovremmo capirlo. **Pron-RC** *constructions*
         [we that are   linguists] should   get it
     b. [Voi che incontrate sempre Claudia], ditemi di   lei.
         [you that meet   always Claudia], tell me about her

(3) a. *{I / you / he} linguist   *distinct from the appositional "I, Claudius"*
     b. {we / you$_{plur}$ / *they} linguists

(4) a. Io che sono un linguista (dovrei capirlo)   (5) a. Noi che siamo linguisti
         I that am   a linguist (should get it)   we that are   linguists
     b. Tu che sei un linguista   b. Voi che siete linguisti
         you that are a   linguist   you that are   linguists
     c. Lui che è un linguista   c. Loro che sono linguisti
         he that is a   linguist   they that are   linguists

(6) a. {Jack e   Jim / voi   e   Jack / Jack e   io} *(,) (che siete/sono) ingegneri
         {Jack and Jim / you$_{plur}$ and Jack / Jim and I}   (,) (that are$_{2pl/3pl}$) engineers
     b. {Io e   te   / io e   voi   / noi e   te   } *(,) linguisti
         {I and you$_{sing}$ / I and you$_{plur}$ / we and you$_{sing}$ } *(,) engineers

(7) *{Io / tu / lui / noi / voi   / loro} che Carla incontra __ sempre.
     *{I   / you / he / we / you$_{plur}$ / they} that Carla meets   __ always

(8) Una decisione che   noi *(,) che   abbiamo preso e_i, ricordiamo bene e_i
     a   decision that we *(,) that have   taken e_i remember well e_i

(9) a. (Noi t[u:]tti)$_{pp}$, (linguisti generat[i:]vi)$_{pp}$, ...
         (we all),   (linguist generative)
     b. (N[o:]i), (tutti linguisti generat[i:]vi)$_{pp}$, ...
         (we),   (all   linguist generative)
     c. *(Noi tutti linguisti generat[i:]vi)$_{pp}$, ...
         (we all   linguist generative)

(10) ??Noi che siamo linguisti siamo diversi   da   voi   che siete linguisti.
      we that are   linguists are   different from you$_{plur}$ that are   linguists
      cf. ?? "We linguists are different from you linguists."

(11) a. Those of us who are linguists are different from those of you who are linguists
          ="The linguists among us$_{inclusive}$ are different"
      b. We, who are linguists, are different from you, who are linguists
          ="We are different from you, and we are both linguists"

(12) ??*Qua* linguists, we are different from you, *qua* linguists.

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