WHEN APPOSITION MEETS EXEMPLIFICATION: A SEMANTIC AND SYNTACTIC DESCRIPTION OF TWO RELATED CATEGORIES

Paula Rodríguez-Abruñeiras

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mark Twain once said "few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example" (Hefferton 2006: 134). Though he was probably talking about the importance of having (or being) a good role model, his words point at an undeniable fact: examples have a deep impact on us, deeper than that of the general assertions which they illustrate. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that speakers use examples as powerful discursive tools. As a matter of fact, in an act of social interaction, speakers may rely on this and other strategies in order to accomplish different linguistic goals and transmit their intentions: they may feel that a given statement is not clear enough and they may opt for reformulating it; they may give examples from a previous general element in order to provide the addressee with more relatable evidence; they may even decide to modify the assertive power of their words for the sake of politeness. In this work, two strategies which may be used to achieve success in communication are brought to the fore, namely exemplification and apposition.

Exemplification is a discourse strategy by means of which the meaning of a first unit is clarified by pointing at one of the items which belong to that unit (i.e. by providing an example). The notion of exemplification has been largely ignored in the history of grammar. The works which deal with exemplifying constructions generally make it in a very brief and concise way. Those works

usually classify exemplifying constructions as a type of apposition, without referring to the significant differences which exist between both types of structures. However, things are starting to change and exemplification has recently received closer attention so as to demonstrate the positive effects of illustrating a statement by means of examples. Thus, for instance, studies have addressed the effects of exemplification on specific types of discourse, such as news reports (see Zillmann et al. 1996; Zillmann 1999; Zillmann and Brosius 2000; or Arpan 2009, among others); elsewhere, the use of exemplifying strategies by learners of a foreign language has been explored (see Paquot 2008), and, more recently, the different pragmatic functions of exemplification, especially its mitigating use, have been examined (see Barotto 2017, 2018; Lo Baido 2018a, 2018b).

For its part, apposition has been under close scrutiny, but scholars still do not agree on what the term *apposition* actually means. Indeed, there are many different kinds of structures which seem to fall into the category of what is known as *apposition*. According to a popular proverb, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder", and, apparently, apposition too. This is the reason why offering a single definition of this category which applies to all the appositive structures is almost impossible. That being said, an appositional structure is understood in this monograph as a sequence in which two units (which may be either juxtaposed or linked by means of a connector) refer to the same external reality.

This monograph has a twofold objective. First, to revise the literature available to date on apposition (exemplified in (1) below, where *your real name* and *the name you were born with* refer to the same reality) and provide a definition which delimits this notion and distinguishes it from other related categories. Therefore, this work does not aim at simply providing a synthesis of previous knowledge, but also at delimiting the notion of *apposition* itself. Second, to fill the gap which exists in the study of exemplification by conducting a contrastive analysis between central appositional types and exemplifying sequences (as shown in (2), where *dark, city streets* is

an example of *all sorts of things*), trying to justify whether or not exemplification can indeed be regarded as a subtype of apposition.

(1) *I... don't know your name.*Your real name, **that is**, the name you were born with. (Davies 2019, *Victoria*, Episode "The Queen's Husband", 2016)

(2) *Television can condition you to be frightened of* all sorts of things. **For example**, dark, city streets. (Davies 2019, *How TV Ruined Your Life*, Episode "Fear", 2011)[1]

Moreover, authors such as Quirk et al. (1985) and Meyer (1992) have each proposed classifications of the forms used to connect the units in apposition (i.e. appositional markers), but no classification exists hitherto of the markers used in exemplification (i.e. example markers). Therefore, this work not only proposes a typology of the forms used to connect the units which appear in exemplifying constructions, but it also identifies their earliest attestations in the language. By means of this monograph, the reader will hopefully get a more definite idea of what apposition and exemplification are and how they can contribute to a successful communication act. Although most of the examples given in this monograph are taken from the authors consulted, Chapters 4 and 5 include examples taken from two main types of sources, namely dictionaries and corpora.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) and the *Middle English Dictionary* (MED) are the two main sources of information consulted in order to explain the origin and earliest attestations of the example markers. As the OED team states on its website, this dictionary "is widely regarded as the accepted authority on the English language. It is an unsurpassed guide to the meaning, history, and pronunciation of 600,000 words —past and present— from across the English-speaking

1. All the examples in this book are italicised. However, appositional constructions (including exemplifying ones) are not italicised so as to help the reader identify them, whereas appositional markers (including example markers) are highlighted in bold type.