

Close apposition in the sandwich

Close apposition, also termed juxtaposition or binominal construction, is a productive pattern in Dutch as well as in German and English. Close appositions often consist of a common noun and a proper name, e.g., *collega Willems, provincie Utrecht, the river Rhine, Bäckermeister Schröder*. This type has received comparatively little attention in the literature on apposition and the noun phrase in general (e.g., Klein 1977, Van de Velde 2009; but see Van Langendonck 2007). It appears, however, that its grammatical status as well as its semantics are far from clear.

Firstly, it is not generally possible to clearly determine which constituent is the head (among other things, this seems to depend on the presence or absence of the determiner, e.g. [*de schilder*_{HEAD} *Rembrandt*] vs. [*schilder Rembrandt*_{HEAD}] (cf. Van der Horst 2010; Werth 2017)) – or whether there is a head at all. Whereas in German inflection can help to resolve this problem, this is impossible in Dutch and English. Secondly, the grammatical status of the construction is unclear. Close appositions are generally regarded syntactic constructions, but the fact they mostly lack syntactic markers (prepositions and determiners) and are inseparable (**the river long Rhine*), both like morphological and unlike syntactic constructions, shows that this categorization is far from obvious (note, however, examples such as *de rivier de Amstel, the city of London*).

These problems hold for Dutch as well as for German and English. In addition, the literature on Dutch has occasionally mentioned another, special type (cf. den Hertog 1973, E-ANS 1997, Broekhuis & Dikken 2012), e.g., *de wet-Cooremans, de kwestie-Irak, het verslag-Haug, het pakket-Monti*. It has been suggested that this type “comes pretty close to a compound” (Broekhuis & Dikken 2012: 641), which is also indicated by the use of the hyphen. However, the exact properties that distinguish this alleged subtype from “regular” close apposition are rather uncertain. Is it a mere orthographic variant? If not, how exactly is it different both from other types of close apposition and from compounding proper (e.g. *de Kok-map* vs. *de map-Kok*), also from a semantic point of view? Is the construction restricted to lexemes such as *wet, regering, commissie*, or is it freely available? The paper discusses the grammatical status of close apposition in general as well as the idea of a special subgroup of the type *wet-Cooremans*. To this end, the Dutch constructions are compared with English and German. In addition to comparing the structural properties in the three languages, translation equivalents from the EUROPARL corpus (Koehn 2005) are used to establish the idea that instead of one construction there is rather a series of related constructions with varying morphological, syntactic and semantic properties. English, Dutch, German differ with respect to the kind of (close) appositional construction types that are available as well as the use of competing alternative constructions (e.g., compounds, genitives, PP constructions; cf. *de kwestie-Jeruzalem – the Jerusalem question – die Frage Jerusalems*). In sum, the idea of a network of related, overlapping constructions is taken as evidence for the idea of a continuum between the lexicon and syntax.

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