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Coreference: a question of *common ground*?
Deliberations on a phenomenon at the interface between interaction and cognition

The author of this paper argues that, from the perspective of Interactional Construction Grammar (see Deppermann 2006, 2011; Imo 2014, 2015), the coreference of nominal expressions in verbal interaction is not always necessarily based on a previously established and shared knowledge base in the sense of a *common ground* (Clark 1996a, p. 92–121). But instead, *common ground* can be ensured and developed precisely on the basis of a local construction of coreferentiality. Selected examples will be sequentially analysed to highlight that loose appositions in spoken German, such as "Adelheid– meine SCHWESter", can be described as a condensed form of self-repair, employed by interactants to manage local epistemic asymmetries in social interaction. Through the combination of particular syntactic and prosodic features, loose appositions indicate the coreferential use of the containing NPs and therefore potentially contribute to the development of the interlocutors' *common ground* (see also Imo 2015; Imo/Lanwer 2017, p. 160–168).

The underlying understanding of reference and coreference takes both interactional and cognitive aspects of the establishment of reference (and coreference) into account and thus might diverge from a more 'traditional' perspective. This is reflected most prominently in the following three points: (i) Referring is not understood as a (reference-semantic) function of linguistic expressions but instead as a (pragmatic) act that is performed by social actors through the use of verbal (as well as non-verbal) resources, prototypically nominals (see Croft 1990, p. 247–251; Schegloff 2007, p. 434). (ii) Referentiality is not understood as a (reference-semantic) relation between a linguistic expression and a referent, but rather as the result of a cognitive operation that, based on a (verbal) 'reference instruction', maps a local conceptualisation as a 'reference point' onto an entity in a possible world. From this point of view, there is only a mediated referential relation between a linguistic expression and its referent (see Fauconnier 2003 [1994], p. 158). Coreference is respectively understood as the mapping of two or more cognitive reference points onto one and the same entity. (iii) The establishment of reference (and coreference) in social interaction is regarded as a fundamental collaborative activity that aims at the coordination of social actors in regard to the local conceptualisation of one or more entities and that is further characterised by specific mechanisms for the interactive assurance of intersubjectivity (see Clark/Marshall 1981; Clark/Wilkes-Gibbs 1986).

It is argued that loose (nominal) appositions can be described as a grammatical constructions in the sense of Construction Grammar which is employed to deal with the coordination problem of establishing joint referents in tak-in-interaction. Loose appositions thereby replicate structures of projection-preserving substitution repairs (Pfeiffer 2015, p. 102) in order to signal syntactic identity on the form side of the construction and to express reference identity on the meaning side what simultaneously lead to an implicit predicative relation between tghe containing NPs. The use of appositional patterns thus may lead to the local reduction of epistemic asymmetries which can also result in the extension of the

general (situation-transcending) personal common ground. It appears to be of key importance that, due to the distribution of the involved NPs to more than one intonation phrase (see Löbel 1993, p. 147; Molitor 1979, p. 21; Schindler 1990, p. 49; Schmidt 1993, p. 115), loose appositions (as opposed to narrow appositions) create an opportunity to revise a previously formulated reference instruction post hoc during the online production of a syntactic Gestalt (see Auer 2005 and others) and to therefore tailor it to the anticipated knowledge of the coparticipants in an ongoing interaction (in the sense of *recipient design*) (see Imo 2014, 2015; Imo/Lanwer 2017).

Therefore, loose appositions enable social acteurs to incrementally manage epsitemic asymmetries in the process of interaction. As is shown, two different variants of loose appositions can be obsserved that can be classified with regard to their conversational function as repair or pre-repair apposition. To what extent the respective functional differences can consistently be identified as different pairings of form and meaning, i.e. as different constructions or sub-constructions, remains unclear and must be answered on the basis of a systematic collection analysis. In addition to a thorough, structural description (with a particular focus on prosody), a respective collection analysis requires a context-sensitive, sequential analysis of functional characteristics as illustrated by individual examples.

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