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“Close apposition in English: the discourse-functional factors accounting for the existence of indefinite close appositive constructions“

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*To my father.*

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# Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. DEFINING CLOSE APPPOSITION .....	5
2.1. Traditional analyses.....	5
2.1.1. Formal characteristics of close apposition.....	5
2.1.2. Relation between the elements.....	7
2.1.3. Conclusion.....	9
2.2. A transformational grammar account.....	9
2.3. A constructional account.....	11
2.3.1. The early Acuña-Fariña.....	11
2.3.2. The later Acuña-Fariña.....	14
2.4. A functional perspective.....	18
2.4.1. Formal and semantic features of CA.....	19
2.4.2. The discourse functions.....	24
2.5. Conclusion.....	25
3. THE REFERENTIAL ROLE OF (IN)DEFINITE EXPRESSIONS.....	27
3.1. (In)definite reference as a semantico-pragmatic notion.....	29
3.1.1. Indefiniteness vs. uniqueness.....	29
3.1.2. Specific vs. non-specific reference of indefinites.....	31
3.1.3. Dynamic semantics and discourse reference.....	32
3.1.4. Specificity as a semantico-pragmatic notion.....	35
3.2. Cognitive-pragmatic accounts of (in)definiteness.....	38
3.2.1. The notions ‘given-new’.....	38
3.2.2. Prince’s ‘assumed familiarity’ scale.....	39
3.3. Conclusion.....	41
4. AN ANALYSIS OF INDEFINITE CA.....	43
4.1. Introduction.....	43
4.2. Data and methodology.....	43
4.2.1. On the corpora.....	44
4.2.2. The data.....	45
4.3. Findings and discussion.....	47
4.3.1. Variety of the descriptive element.....	47
4.3.2. Indefiniteness in respect to the second element.....	50

4.3.3. Assumed unfamiliarity .....	53
4.3.4. Cataphoric labelling.....	67
4.3.5. Politeness.....	71
4.4. Conclusion.....	74
References .....	76
Abstract .....	81
Abstract in German (Deutsche Zusammenfassung) .....	81

**List of abbreviations:**

CA – close apposition or close appositive construction

NP – noun phrase

COCA – Corpus of contemporary American English

BNC – British National Corpus

NOW – News on the Web

FTA – face-threatening act

**List of figures:**

Figure 1: Prince’s taxonomy of assumed familiarity

Figure 2: Scale of assumed familiarity in respect to the use of descriptive elements and proper nouns



# 1. INTRODUCTION

Different approaches have been taken towards the description of a number of very similar binomial constructions commonly classified in the literature as close or restrictive apposition (Curme 1947; Fries 1952; Lee 1952; Haugen 1953; Hockett 1955; Sopher 1971; Burton-Roberts 1975, 1993; Quirk et al. 1985; Meyer 1989, 1992; Acuña-Fariña 1996, 2009, 2016; Keizer 2005, 2007, 2016). Such constructions include expressions like *the poet Burns*, *Burns the poet*, *the word recession*, *actor Orson Welles*, *my friend John*, *my friend the actor*, *you Germans*, *we teachers*, etc. Linguists generally agree that in terms of formal properties the constructions fall under the same category in that: they contain two nominal elements; one element is a proper noun or a uniquely defining element, the other is a count noun (not in all the types); these elements form one intonation unit; and there is no linking element between the two nominal elements (Keizer 2005: 447). There has been less consensus, however, on their pragmatico-semantic features in respect to the referentiality of the two nominal elements or to the semantic relationship between them. There is also disagreement on certain aspects of internal structure, such as headedness or the scope and form of the determiner. The literature abounds in different analyses of close apposition.

While the literature on close apposition is rather controversial, most linguists seem to agree that the constructions must be definite. Some even claim that the determiner must be the definite article. The examples of prototypical close appositives (henceforth CAs) are usually the patterns such as *def. det. + N + N(p)* (e.g. *the poet Burns*). However, corpus data shows that we do have constructions such as *indef. det. + N + N(p)* (e.g. *a poet Burns*), which indicates that the speakers of English indeed use these binomial expressions as indefinite noun phrases. The indefinite determiners employed are usually the indefinite article *a/an* and the demonstrative determiner *this* on its introductory use (e.g. I know *this girl Virgie* who has a sister I could fix you up with). The question that arises is how can a close apposition construction which contains a proper name (inherently definite) or otherwise uniquely defined element be indefinite? How can such expressions uniquely refer as close appositives are considered to do, and why do speakers use indefinite CA when the definite constructions are perfectly acceptable on the introductory use?

Proper nouns presuppose identifiability without the need to be marked by the definite article and can be considered to represent 'definite concepts' (Chafe 1972: 57). So it is interesting that in the

case of indefinite CAs there is some kind of ‘non-definiteness’ at play. The reason behind is the fact that in many cases of close apposition, the second element (a proper name) merely functions as a label. Du Bois suggests that the use of the indefinite article with a proper name marks non-identifiability, that the particular individual is known to the speaker, but that the name “may mean nothing to the addressee” (1980: 218). This view is echoed in Keizer’s description of some close appositives, where the second nominal may not increase the hearer’s chances of identifying the intended referent (2007: 48). Thus the definiteness of the proper name is not necessarily inherent, or at least it does not presuppose the identifiability of the referent. And though, through a combination of a descriptive element and a proper name, one would assume the identifiability of a referent to increase, this does not need to be the case. Ultimately, it is the use of a determiner that signals the identifiability of the referent. The indefinite CAs are the case in point.

A description of the formal features of CA and the meaning relations between the two nominal elements without looking into a wider discourse does not prove fruitful. The vast amount of contradicting literature on close or restrictive apposition proves that point. What is needed for an account of such binomial expressions is to consider them in the overall context and try to offer an explanation based on the various factors involved in the production and interpretation of indefinite close apposition constructions. Apart from the linguistic encoding, these factors must include the intentions of the speaker, the surrounding context and co-text, as well as the ongoing discourse about the specific entity which is being referred to by using CA. Consider the following examples:

- (1) *The writer Virginia Woolf* famously said that one of the keys to a woman’s freedom is having a room of one’s own. (COCA, magazine)
- (2) *A writer Zulfiqar Ahsan* has written an article on “Waqea Karbala aur Urdu ka Sheri Adab” or “Incident of Karbala and Urdu poetry”... (NOW, news)

The noun phrases in italics in (1) and (2) are very similar in respect to their syntactic, semantic as well as pragmatic properties. Both examples are subjects followed by a transitive verb and a direct object. Both represent agents, particularly persons, who are performing an action in the past. Both NPs are referential and are used to introduce a new referent in discourse. The only difference is that the noun phrase in (1) is determined by the definite article and the one in (2) by the indefinite article. It is generally accepted that an initial mention of a referent is typically introduced or presented using an indefinite noun phrase, and subsequent mentions (which are recoverable) tend

to be encoded as definite. If the speaker assumes that the addressee is able to recover the identity of the referent, a definite NP may also be used on the first mention. The question that remains is why speakers choose an indefinite CA when a definite is also appropriate, and indeed more frequently used.

New information introduced in discourse may be either assumed familiar or unfamiliar to the hearer. Discourse new information can take the form of a definite or an indefinite expression. The former are used to present discourse-new, but hearer-old information, whereas for the latter, the information status is both discourse-new and hearer-new (Prince 1992). The discourse-new and hearer-new information status represents information which has not been evoked in the current discourse, and which the speaker does not believe to be known to the hearer. It is then reasonable to assume that use of the indefinite article in close appositives indicates the speaker's assumption that the hearer is not familiar with the referent of the whole construction (Keizer 2005, 2007).

The aim of this study is to look for the indefinite instances of CA in actual language use and to investigate their functions, i.e. to investigate the discourse-functional factors accounting for the existence of such indefinite appositive constructions. Keizer (2005, 2007) has already shown that there indeed are indefinite close appositive constructions which primarily serve the introductory use. However, due to a small number of examples found in her corpus research, Keizer does not offer a detailed description of such constructions. Inspired by the insights in Keizer (2005, 2007), this thesis is intended to provide a detailed account of the discourse-functional factors that allow the existence of such constructions by investigating larger corpora of natural language.

It is argued in this thesis that indefinite constructions of the type *indef. det. + N + N(p)* are prototypically used on the speaker's assumptions that the hearer is unfamiliar with the referent of the whole construction. The combination of a descriptive nominal element and a proper name or otherwise uniquely defined element is not assumed to facilitate identifiability, but rather to facilitate the introduction of an entity which will become a topical referent in the subsequent discourse. The entity introduced is given a label in the form of the second nominal element, the label which has been efficiently introduced by the descriptive element, and can, on the subsequent mentions, be used alone for the purpose of anaphoric reference. Generally, the most efficient way to refer to an entity is by assigning them a label. For persons, that label is usually a proper name. However, to be able to refer to someone by their proper name, on the assumption that the individual

is unknown to the hearer, we first have to introduce that name. The introduction via a descriptive element as in CA enables the speaker to attach certain attributes to the normally semantically empty label (a name which means nothing to the hearer). Once such introduction is made, we can subsequently put the name to its most basic use, namely to refer to unique individuals in the universe of discourse.

It is further argued that the use of indefinite close appositive constructions might be conditioned by politeness (Brown and Levinson 1978). The assumption that the hearer is able to construe a connection between the two nominal elements puts the hearer in a situation where he/she is expected to be familiar with the referent of the combination. This might be perceived as a face threatening act, since our assumptions may be wrong, particularly when we rely on the shared general knowledge. To mitigate the face threatening act, but at the same time to indicate which individual from the class of individuals is being referred to, the speaker employs an indefinite expression. The indefinite expression does not put the hearer at pressure to look for the referent in his/her knowledge base.

Before indefinite close appositive constructions are analysed and discussed in detail, an introduction to the notion of close apposition itself is needed. The next chapter presents a review of the previous literature in an attempt to depict the various analyses and conclusions on the form, meaning and function of close apposition. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Chapter 3 will provide a theoretical framework for the analysis of indefinite CA while discussing different theoretical approaches to reference and definiteness, with a particular focus on the referential potential of indefinite NPs. The last chapter of the paper will present the analysis of indefinite CA in the form of a qualitative interpretation of empirical data retrieved from different language corpora.

## 2. DEFINING CLOSE APPPOSITION

### 2.1. Traditional analyses

Lee (1952) was one of the first publications on the subject of CA and this opened a highly controversial discussion on close or restrictive apposition that has been going on ever since. This not too extensive (in terms of grammatical description), but nevertheless influential attempt to account for constructions such as *the poet Burns*, *the drug aspirin*, *the name Algernon* etc. seems to have started a chain reaction of publications on the topic of close apposition, with different linguists arguing distinct, and very often opposite positions on how to examine and interpret the patterns. Although close apposition had been accounted for in the literature before Lee, as he himself points out in his paper, he is right to note that a conclusive and argumentative discussion of this pattern had not yet been offered (Lee 1952: 268). The construction is indeed mentioned in some of the early extensive grammars such as Curme (1931, 1947), Jespersen (1949), Poutsma (1928), but it is only rather briefly described. Nevertheless, certain generalizations have been offered, the most prominent ones that the two elements in close apposition refer to the same entity (Poutsma 1928), and that close apposition invariably contains “a proper name or a noun with a similar force, namely, a word or expression representing a thing as an individual, not as a member of a class” (Curme 1931: 92). These definitions are employed in Lee’s as well as in the subsequent analyses.

#### 2.1.1. Formal characteristics of close apposition

In his descriptions of various situations where the pattern is possible and even unavoidable, Lee states that “the first element is classificational, the second specific within the general class” (1952: 269). This means that in the expressions like *the poet Burns*, *the star Sirius*, *the drug aspirin*, the second element specifies which item is meant among the class of items indicated by the first nominal element.

The first element is clearly distinguished from what Lee calls ‘quasi adjectives’ which are similar in form to nouns (e.g. *barbarian* in *the barbarian Cyrus*), justified by the possibility of contextual or illocutionary ambiguities (it could be read either a noun or an adjective). Close apposition is also

distinguished from the so-called dvandva expressions, such as *the soldier king*. It is considered that while here the two nominal elements are juxtaposed, and both equally indicate the characteristics of the referent, in close apposition the reference is indicated through a combination of the first element belonging to the class and the second to the specific member in that class, e.g. *the poet Burns* (ibid: 269). Lee also adds that “the second element is restrictive and is necessary to limit, restrict, or define the meaning of the first” (Ibid: 268).

Lee’s analysis is seriously criticised by Haugen (1953) as “a mixture of formal and semantic criteria” (Haugen 1953: 165). Instead he proposes a formal approach arguing that such grammatical relations should be described in terms of ‘grammatical reality’ and rejects Lee’s claim that the second element restricts the first. He considers the second element (the individual) as the head, i.e. the “thing being talked about”, and the first element (the class name) as being added to identify the second (Haugen 1953: 165-166). As evidence, Haugen applies the replacement by zero test, which enables omission of the first element without affecting the acceptability of the sentence the construction appears in. On the other hand, he claims, it is not possible to omit the proper noun since the definite article before the first noun makes this element unsatisfactory on the first mention in the sentence (Ibid: 166). In constructions like *the poet Burns*, the element *the poet* implies that the entity has already been mentioned and cannot be used to introduce a new referent as the whole construction does. *Burns* alone on the other hand is, according to Haugen, perfectly satisfactory on the first mention.

Another interesting observation from Haugen’s analysis is that he explicitly treats close apposition as definite, analysing the first noun together with the definite article, the second nominal element as inherently definite. He states that nouns which can occur in close apposition constructions as the second element are the ones which can occur in other contexts without an article, namely proper nouns and mass nouns. The first element is a class name and therefore normally requires a definite article. Together with the definite article, the first noun identifies the head noun in close apposition (Haugen 1953: 169). It appears then that the construction comprises two noun phrases and that the definite determiner has scope over the first noun only, but that they together modify the second. Such an analysis, as we will see later in this chapter, has been both accepted and criticised in the literature.

Arguing that we are to describe the extralinguistic features such as discourse functions only once we identify the formal features of the pattern, Haugen goes on to summarize certain formal characteristics of close apposition (1953: 170):

- (1) a. they are modifier-head constructions,
- b. the stress pattern is secondary-primary,
- c. the modifier consists of the definite article followed by a nontitular class noun (i.e. one which normally requires an article),
- d. the head is a substantive expression containing a nonclass, or unitary noun (i.e. one which can occur without an indefinite article<sup>1</sup>).

From this description it is obvious that besides his account of the headedness and definiteness of close apposition, Haugen also describes the stress pattern typically characterizing these constructions. He compares close apposition to similar constructions with a comma, namely *the poet, Burns* and *Burns, the poet*, stating that the comma in writing and a pause in pronunciation is what distinguishes these from *the poet Burns* (1953: 166). Note that Lee also indicates the difference between CA and non-restrictive constructions with a comma, but does not account for the difference in intonation. While the headedness and definiteness remain controversial, Haugen's characterization did lead to a generalization widely accepted by many linguists: close or restrictive apposition can be distinguished from loose or non-restrictive by the absence of comma intonation, and by the stress pattern which is secondary-primary.

### **2.1.2. Relation between the elements**

Though Lee and Haugen describe the grammatical relation between the nominal elements in close apposition operating in clearly opposite directions, we can deduce that both consider this relation to be that of modification. In Lee's account it is the second element that modifies the first, i.e. restricts the meaning of the first. Haugen, as we have seen, takes the opposite to be true, namely the second nominal is the head and the first noun together with the definite article serves as a modifier. Most linguists agree that the relation is one of modification, arguing a position either

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<sup>1</sup> I believe that "without an indefinite article" is a typographical error and that the author meant "without an article" as he states elsewhere in his paper.

similar to Lee's or Haugen's analysis. Hocket (1955), on the other hand, offers a completely different description.

Hocket openly agrees with Haugen on all the formal features except for one, headedness. According to him, the construction is endocentric (Hocket 1955: 101). This can be understood as neither of the elements being the head, or both serving this function. To be more accurate, Hocket actually argues against a unidirectional modification between the two elements in close apposition. What he suggests is that the nominal elements in this endocentric construction are attributive to one another as they both refer to the same entity. He states that in some binomial constructions we find evidence that the first element is head and the second an attribute, and in others vice versa. In some cases, however, we cannot find "cogent evidence for both of these attributive alternatives" and we can thus conclude that the construction in question is an apposition (ibid: 101). Hocket's explanation comes down to the following logic: although it is true that in constructions like *the poet Burns*, *the poet* identifies which individual *Burns* is being referred to, depending on the context<sup>2</sup>, it is also true that at the same time *Burns* identifies which *poet* is meant.

However, Hocket does not offer enough elaboration how his approach is to be applied generally (to different CA types and different uses), as only one use is considered (the contrastive use). For a more general account of the contextual influences on CA, a discourse-functional account would be required (see Section 2.4.). Moreover, in his approach, Hocket dismisses the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive apposition since he considers both patterns under the same relation. Nevertheless, descriptions similar to Hocket's proposal can also be found elsewhere in the literature (e.g. Matthews 1981, Quirk et al. 1985). In Quirk et al., for example, apposition is described in a similar way, namely that the relation between the elements "resembles coordination" in that they "involve the linking of units of the same rank" (1985: 1301). Quirk et al., however, hedge their conclusion by stating that "when apposition is full apposition,<sup>3</sup> it may not be clear which of the appositives is the defining one" (ibid: 1305).

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<sup>2</sup> The context which Hocket mentions is a contrastive use, e.g. *the poet Burns* vs. *the politician Burns*.

<sup>3</sup> Full apposition, as opposed to partial, in Quirk et al. 1985 is the construction that allows omission of both the anchor and the apposition, i.e. both nominal elements, as presented above in the discussion on Haugen 1953 where both *the poet* and *Burns* can stand alone as syntactically or semantically acceptable.

### 2.1.3. Conclusion

It is obvious from these traditional descriptions that close appositive constructions are a rather controversial topic, particularly the relation between the two nominal elements. It proves very difficult to determine which element is the head of the construction, if there is a head at all. If one element is the head, the other should serve to modify it. The question that arose is how could this be possible if the two elements are at the same level, i.e. substitutable in respect to the syntax and the semantics of the resulting expressions.

However, there are certain formal characteristics that seem to be constant and can thus be considered as the features that generally characterize these patterns. The first one is that the two elements in close apposition are nouns, one being a common noun, the other either a proper noun or otherwise uniquely defined noun. The stress pattern of the whole construction is secondary-primary, which formally enables us to distinguish them from the similar non-restrictive appositives. Finally, the two nominal elements in close apposition both refer to the same entity.

## 2.2. A transformational grammar account

A very different analysis from the ones discussed so far was proposed by Burton-Roberts (1975). He gives close apposition a derivational treatment within the theory of transformational grammar. He postulates that the construction *the poet Burns* is derived from an underlying construction *Burns Burns is the poet* in the following way:

- (2) a. [det] Burns [det] Burns be the poet →
- b. [det] Burns WH be poet (by relativisation, oblig.) →
- c. The Burns who is a poet →
- d. The Burns poet (by relative reduction, opt.) →
- e. The poet Burns (by attribute preposing, oblig.).

Based on this derivation, he then concludes that the two elements in CA like the one above cannot be coreferential since one of the elements (*the poet*), being the complement of a copula in the underlying construction, is not referential. Thus, the relationship between the two nouns so derived must be that of attribute and head, which means that CA like *the poet Burns* are modifier-head constructions (Burton-Roberts 1975: 394-398). He compares *the poet Burns* to other expressions

where nouns are premodified such as *the ingenious Chomsky* or *the lady president*. He concludes that the difference lies only in the type of the modifier (an adjective in *the ingenious Chomsky*), or in the form of the head as in *the lady president* (the head is not a proper name). In all these cases, the noun phrases are derived in the same way and this, according to Burton-Roberts, indicates that close appositives formally do not differ from any other premodified noun phrases.

Burton-Roberts then asks the question how the construction comes by its definiteness and suggests that “since it is *Burns* that is being modified, it is *Burns* that is being determined, and just as any name, when it is being modified, it acquires a determiner”. Restrictive appositions contain proper names (which are modified by nouns), and since names are inherently definite, they require the definite article (ibid: 400-401). For him indefinite restrictive appositions like *a poet Burns* are impossible. Only the non-restrictive indefinites are acceptable, i.e. the ones with a comma intonation like *a poet, Burns* (cf. Delorme and Dougherty 1972; Acuña-Fariña 1996).

Though these derivations are meticulously argued by Burton-Roberts, he does not offer much syntactic evidence, neither for the headedness nor for the definiteness of the close appositives under examination. As pointed out by Keizer (2007: 11), the conclusion that the constructions are modifier-head constructions is dependent on the intermediate structure of the derivation being a relative clause resulting in the element with a proper noun not being able to act as a predicate. Also, depending on the discourse use, the inherent definiteness of proper nouns can easily be overruled. If we accept the fact that close appositives behave like any other premodified noun phrases, as Burton-Roberts does, there is no reason to assume that the construction must be definite. All the constructions with premodified nouns given in his analysis can equally be indefinite, depending on the discourse-pragmatic use. Thus, *an ingenious Chomsky* and *a lady president*, as well as *a poet Burns* are acceptable (see Chapter 4, Section 2). As we shall see later in this paper, the corpus data shows that such expressions are rather frequent in use depending on the function of the noun phrase.

## 2.3. A constructional account

### 2.3.1. The early Acuña-Fariña

Following Burton-Roberts, Acuña-Fariña (1996) also considers close appositions as definite,<sup>4</sup> but makes a distinction between appositions with the definite and ones with a possessive determiner. The first he considers to be single NPs whereas the latter are seen as two NPs. The type with a possessive determiner will not be discussed in detail here as this type cannot be indefinite and thus is of no concern to this thesis.

Acuña-Fariña argues that the patterns usually described as close or restrictive appositives cannot all be analysed in the same way as each construction is sufficiently specific and idiosyncratic to merit its own space in the broader category of “so-called” close apposition (1996; 2006; 2009; 2016). Based on the patterns which have received most attention in the previous literature, he postulates the following types (1996: 25):

- |                                  |                           |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (3) 1. “the” + noun + p. noun    | <i>the poet Burns</i>     |
| 2. p. noun + “the” + noun        | <i>Burns the poet</i>     |
| 3. “the” + noun + noun           | <i>the word “enigma”</i>  |
| 4. a. poss + noun + “the” + noun | <i>my friend the poet</i> |
| b. poss + noun + p. noun         | <i>my friend Burns</i>    |

Acuña-Fariña (1996) then treats these patterns separately arguing a different analysis for each pattern, both in terms of their form and the semantic relation between the two elements. Based on these analyses, he concludes that there is no syntactic or semantic evidence that these constructions are appositive at all. Following Burton-Roberts, he dismisses the notion of close apposition as the two elements do not demonstrate the equality that characterises apposition. Thus, they are seen as ordinary noun phrases with a head and a modifier<sup>5</sup>.

The most attention is given to the most cited pattern *the poet Burns*. Same as Burton-Roberts, Acuña-Fariña treats this construction as a single NP, where the first noun (common) modifies the

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<sup>4</sup> It is due to note here that in his later works, Acuña-Fariña (2008, 2016) accepts the fact that close appositives can be indefinite, as pointed out by Keizer (2005).

<sup>5</sup> The exception would be the type 4a, as these are seen as two NPs.

head (proper) and where the determiner has scope over both. Starting from the perspective that the proper noun is inherently definite, he claims that it imposes the conditions on the kind of elements which cooccur with it. Given that proper nouns denote unique referents, when modified, they can only extend as definite expressions. He justifies this claim with the following examples (1996: 28-29):

- (4) a. Burns.
- b. This Burns.
- c. \*The Burns. / \*A Burns.
- d. \*Poet Burns. / \*Poets Burns.
- e. The poet Burns. / \*A poet Burns.
- f. The excellent Burns. / \*An excellent Burns.
- g. The Burns who came here yesterday. / \*A Burns who came here yesterday.

On the basis of these examples, he also postulates that after this expansion of *Burns* into *the poet Burns*, no further expansion of the common noun is possible. In other words, the first element of the construction cannot be postmodified. Thus, *the poet of the decade Burns* is ungrammatical for Acuña-Fariña. This, according to Acuña-Fariña, shows that *the poet* in *the poet Burns* is not a constituent, which then indicates that the determiner *the* relates to the proper name, making the proper name the head of the construction (ibid: 30). Furthermore, only certain types of adjectives can pre-modify close appositives, i.e. the ones that can normally modify proper nouns alone. *The famous poet Burns* is acceptable only because *the famous Burns* is acceptable. *The tall poet Burns* is questionable since we do not naturally have *the tall Burns* (Acuña-Fariña 1996, 2009).

In support of his modifier-head analysis, Acuña-Fariña then compares *the poet Burns* to its non-restrictive counterpart *the poet, Burns*. The definite article in these constructions plays a different role. In the non-restrictive apposition, the definite article is context bound and functions anaphorically. *The poet* itself refers anaphorically to the entity previously mentioned in the discourse. In close appositives, however, the definite article has a cataphoric role, i.e. it ‘looks forward’ and thus relates to the proper noun (cf. Koktová 1985; Meyer 1989, 1992). This then indicates the head status of the proper noun, as *the poet* alone would yield unacceptable use on the first mention (cf. Haugen 1953).

However, the same points of criticism on the Burton-Roberts' account are applicable to Acuña-Fariña's analysis. Again, as pointed out by Keizer (2005, 2007), depending on the discourse use, the inherent definiteness of proper nouns can easily be overruled (cf. Payne and Huddleston 2002). Since Acuña-Fariña accepts that close appositives behave like any other premodified noun phrases, again there is no reason to assume that the constructions must be definite. This shows that his rejection of examples such as *A Burns* or *A Burns who came here yesterday* as ungrammatical is unjustified. The (in)definiteness is not conditioned by the proper noun, but by the discourse function of the expression as a whole.

Acuña-Fariña's analysis of *the poet Burns* as a modifier-head construction leads him to conclude that it is not possible to analyse similar constructions such as *the word enigma* in the same way. The first means *the Burns who is a poet*, but the latter cannot be *the enigma which is a word* (Acuña-Fariña 1996: 42). These semantic considerations lead Acuña-Fariña to a conclusion that the determiner in this case cannot relate to the second element (*\*the enigma*), but that the construction on the whole is made up of an initial NP *the word* and the modifier *enigma*. The syntactic evidence he offers is the same omission test as with *the poet Burns* (ibid: 42):

- (5) a. The word "cats" is not allowed in these premises.
- b. The word is not allowed in these premises.
- c. \*Cats is not allowed in these premises.

The impossibility of the second element (when plural) to agree with the predication leads Acuña-Fariña not only to conclude that the first nominal element is the head, but also that there is no syntactic equivalence between the two elements and hence no apposition proper. The same, he claims, is true when the second element is a mass noun or singular, though these can be accepted with a different meaning (6d), or when they appear in a marked environment (6f):

- (6) a. The word "butter" is not allowed in these premises.
- b. The word "cow" is not allowed in these premises.
- c. The word is not allowed in these premises.
- d. Butter is not allowed on these premises.
- e. \*Cow is not allowed on these premises.

f. *If* is a conjunction (the word).

In the case of *the word enigma* pattern, Acuña-Fariña concludes that they are “endocentric structures whose head is always the common noun occurring after the determiner” (1996: 44). This noun (which usually conveys a metalinguistic meaning) is the only element that establishes the agreement with the predicator. Only in special circumstances where the metalinguistic interpretation is provided by the context, the head can be omitted (6f). This, however, falls outside the grammar of the construction itself as the interpretation is then context bound (ibid: 44-45).

However, it is unusual that Acuña-Fariña does not allow for the influence of the context of the discourse in these instances but clearly does so in the examples where the first nominal element is possible. Thus, in example (6c) it is obvious that the first nominal element (*the word*) is clearly dependent on the previous context for the hearer to establish the reference and the interpretation. In the full construction (*the word enigma*), this is not the case since it can easily be used on the first mention.

### **2.3.2. The later Acuña-Fariña**

In his later work Acuña-Fariña (2009; 2016) changes some of his views on the formal features of the patterns, but intensifies his argumentation why the patterns are to be individually analysed. Here a construction grammar-oriented approach is more present than in his early work. Acuña-Fariña postulates that the different constructions identified in the literature under the class of close appositives form “a dense network of taxonomic and inheritance ties” while at the same time each have certain idiosyncratic features of their own (2009: 455). In Acuña-Fariña’s opinion, there is not enough evidence for any of the analyses on the headedness, i.e. neither can be proved that the first element is the head, nor that the second is the head. The same he claims for the analyses assuming that both elements are heads (e.g. Hockett 1955). What he proposes is that the constituency of close appositive constructions is simply unresolved:

[...] these highly conventionalized close appositions are instances of ‘inchoate’ noun phrase structure, and [...] the internal constituency of such strings is not fully elaborated due to a lack of strong functional pressure. Three reasons are put forward in order to defend such a view: 1. the construction has as its job the activation of a social referent, and in the social world that we inhabit this is usually done either by name or profession, with no logical incompatibility between the two; 2. the construction is a hybrid of distinct and more productive (and fully elaborated) templates, which act as

*attractor poles* and pull constituency in opposite directions; and 3. the construction is easily identifiable as such ‘from the top’ (2009: 470).

The first claim that the internal structure of close appositions is not fully elaborated due to their function to activate a referent in the social world is explained in terms of the ‘descriptively identifying’ function<sup>6</sup> introduced by Keizer (2005: 453). Here the descriptive element provides information which allows the hearer to relate the referent to his/her ‘knowledge base’ by anchoring this referent in the (linguistic or extra-linguistic) discourse situation. As such, the information of the descriptive element serves to forestall questions on the part of the hearer such as “Who is s/he?”. This, according to Acuña-Fariña is the reason why close appositions of the type *det + N + Np* always code professions, occupations and the like.

That the construction is a hybrid of distinct and more fully elaborated templates which pull constituency in opposite directions is explained in respect to two other similar constructions: the modifier-head and the head-modifier NPs that contain either of the two elements of the CA in question. This means that the selection restrictions, the strong constraints on the elaboration of the first unit, and the stress pattern could be taken as inheritance ties<sup>7</sup> from structures such as *the famous Burns*. Alternatively, those NPs with mundane nouns like *poet*: e.g. *the poet of the revolution*, *the poet distinguished by critics* give pluralization, agreement and constituent order. In fusing the two, a third, different construction arises. So, *the poet Burns* has all the selective features of *the famous Burns*, on the one hand, and the formal features of *the poet of the revolution*, on the other, but it also has unique features of its own. Finally, Acuña-Fariña adds, the new features (a new construction) guarantee functional survival in a network composed of similar, yet subtly distinct constructions (Acuña-Fariña 2009: 470-471).

The identifiability of close appositions as such from the top can be paraphrased as absence of full, step-by-step, bottom-up specification in the grammar of the constructions, which basically means that they resemble idioms. According to Acuña-Fariña, close appositions have no fine-grained internal structure, but this nevertheless counts as structure since constructions form an interconnected network where each construction in the system is set off from the rest by some

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<sup>6</sup> The ‘descriptively identifying’ function as well as the other discourse functions of close appositions in Keizer (2005) will be discussed in detail in the next section.

<sup>7</sup> The notion ‘inheritance ties’ is taken from Goldberg (1995; 2006).

unique feature. Furthermore, he claims that both the token frequency and the type frequency of the CA (the pattern *det + N +Np*) are the clearest indicator of constructional status. Thus, he hypothesizes, on the one hand, that the number of times words (tokens) like *poet*, *painter*, or *writer* appear in CA in the press genre to be very large (by comparison with other genres). On the other hand, the number of words that appears in the construction (in the type) is extremely low. Only those of occupations and the like appear, and not even all those (e.g. occupations like *butcher* or *carpenter* usually lack the social dimension to be treated by the press). Taking type frequency as an indication of productivity, Acuña-Fariña concludes that CAs in general, and especially the construction *det + N +Np*, are not very productive as a pattern, which in turn makes them more or less like idioms (Acuña-Fariña 2009: 472-473).

There are many points to criticize in Acuña-Fariña's treatment of close appositives, which will be duly done in in the remainder of this section. Firstly, let us consider the claim that there is only a restricted set of nouns that can fill in the position of the first nominal element in close appositives. An examination of corpus data show this claim to be incorrect: data from COCA, for example, show a fascinating variety of different words in this position in the pattern *det + N + Np*. Here are some of the examples, which Acuña-Fariña would found unusual, if not impossible:

- (7) a. KING: What about *the friend Charlie*? GALANTER: Well, *the friend Charlie*, I think is a figment of the ghostwriter's imagination because I think everybody's in agreement that there was not a second person at the trial -- at the crime scene. (COCA, spoken)
- b. *The man Dirk* was very quiet, but Heather Flower did not mind. (COCA, fiction)
- c. On its back cover is an endorsement from *the priest Aurel Radulescu*, who is identified as the vicar general of the Orthodox Church in the United States. (COCA, news)
- d. The book has only one voice, that of *the carpenter Severin Hansen*, who is in a constant dialogue with himself in his indefatigable quest to understand his fellow beings, including the deathwatch beetle, a pest that works in the same wood as he. (COCA, fiction)
- e. *The butcher Robert Pence* said bones from the front legs of the steer make the best-tasting marrow bones. (COCA, news)

Acuña-Fariña claims that only nouns denoting occupations and the like are available as N1 in *det + N + Np* patterns such as *the poet Burns*. In his view, *the friend Burns* would be highly questionable. However, as is obvious from the example in (7a), we do indeed find such instances

in actual language use. Thus, if we consider examples in (7), the denotation of the first nominal element, whether it is only certain occupations or something else, seems irrelevant here. Of course, having in mind that the apposition is a proper noun, it is expected that the descriptive element in the first noun will denote a concept closely related to the description of people, which is usually their occupation.

Acuña-Fariña also discusses the indefinite CAs in his later work (2009, 2016), namely *a/an + N + Np* and *this + N + Np* patterns, and states that the constructional schema of this pattern is fairly constrained as well. It is constrained in that it too involves a very restricted set of common nouns. Whereas in *the poet Burns* pattern the nouns were restricted to occupations and professions, here they are limited to the nouns with very low lexical information, such as *friend, child, guy, chap, bloke* (Acuña-Fariña 2016: 74). He uses the examples from Keizer (2005) for his conclusions, which is a rather limited set of four examples in total. However, as we shall see in Chapter 4, this conclusion proves to be inaccurate since the corpus investigations conducted within this study show that there is no such constraint.

In sum, Acuña-Fariña proposes that close appositive constructions are fixed, idiom-like constructions which are hybrids of distinct and more fully elaborated templates of modified NPs. In his view, the best approach is to assume that the head status of close appositions is simply not resolved, and that there exist only traces of constituency of the patterns pointing in conflicting directions. These traces he considers “inchoate due to a lack of strong functional pressure: in *the poet Burns*, for instance, whatever the constituency, the reference to the intended individual is never in danger” (Acuña-Fariña 2016: 66).

However, although the referent status of the intended entity is in no danger, this does not answer the question why a binomial construction is used to refer to one single entity. The next questions that follow are what the construction as a whole is used for, and how does the determiner relate to the two nominal elements. To me, these are the major question to be answered if one is to describe close apposition. An explanation that the constituency in close apposition is unresolved disables one to further analyse these constructions in any way. In order to account for the actual use of CA and their functions in discourse, a functional approach is needed. The next section discusses the discourse-functional perspective of close apposition which, in terms of theoretical framework, inspired the present study.

## 2.4. A functional perspective

So far, we have seen that most linguists provide a description of CAs in terms of their formal properties, usually disregarding their functional characteristics. However, we have also seen that such analyses are not very revealing and conclusive. Therefore, a functional perspective on the explanation of these patterns seems to be necessary. An analysis from a discourse-functional point of view has been proposed by Keizer (2005, 2007). Keizer describes the patterns of close apposition in respect to their discourse functions. Since the present thesis is taking the same discourse-functional approach, Keizer's description of CA will be discussed in more detail in comparison to the other accounts presented so far.

Keizer classifies 4 major types (and 2 subtypes) of close appositive construction depending on the form of the nominal element, the presence of a determiner and the form and position of the determiner (2005: 448):

- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (8) Type 1a: <i>det + N + Np</i>   | <i>(the actor Orson Welles),</i> |
| Type 1b: <i>det + N + N</i>        | <i>(the number four),</i>        |
| Type 2a: <i>poss + N + Np</i>      | <i>(my friend Orson Welles),</i> |
| Type 2b: <i>poss + N + det + N</i> | <i>(my friend the actor)</i>     |
| Type 3: <i>Np + det + N</i>        | <i>(Orson Welles the actor),</i> |
| Type 4: <i>N + N</i>               | <i>(actor Orson Welles).</i>     |

Keizer (2005: 449) then introduces four discourse functions:

- (9) 1. the functionally identifying use
2. the descriptively identifying use
3. the introductory use
4. the contrastive use

The author notes that there is no direct relationship between the types and the functions, but what is important is the fact that not all subtypes can fulfil each of the discourse functions. The following

sections of this paper are devoted to discussing the types<sup>8</sup> and the discourse functions introduced by Keizer (2005).

### 2.4.1. Formal and semantic features of CA

Besides describing the discourse-functions of close appositives, Keizer (2007) also offers the most comprehensive and authoritative discussion of the types and their formal and semantic characteristics (Acuña-Fariña 2009: 457). Critically reviewing the vast amount of the literature on close apposition, Keizer analyses each type and offers a highly systematic discussion in respect to intonation, form and the scope of the determiner, definiteness, headedness, and reference. The following sections summarize and review this discussion.

#### 2.4.1.1. Intonation

Intonation is the least controversial property of close apposition. Most linguists agree that the two elements in a close apposition form one intonation unit, i.e. they are not separated by a pause in speaking. In writing, this formal characteristic is indicated by the absence of a comma between the two elements. This distinguishes them from loose or non-restrictive apposition which is characterised by the comma intonation (Haugen 1953, Quirk et al. 1985). Consider the following examples from Keizer (2007: 26) taken from the spoken<sup>9</sup> (a and c) and written (b and d) part of ICE-GB corpus:

- (10) a. This is really big home win for Jaguar and indeed for Silverstone because *the Jaguar boss Tom Walkenshaw* is of course the uh managing director of Silverstone Circuits the B R D C (ICE-GB:S2A-012 #90:6:A)
- b. *The historian Pio Cassius* claimed that all the tribes in Scot Caledonia had grouped themselves under either the Maetae or the Caledonians. (ICE-GB:W1A-009 #108:2)
- c. I asked *the conciliation director at the National Family Conciliation Council, Thelma Fisher* (ICE-GB:S2B-019 #101:1:A)

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<sup>8</sup> The discussion will mostly revolve around the Type 1 as this is the only type that can be indefinite. However, the other types will be referred to when relevant.

<sup>9</sup> For the spoken examples, sound files were available (Keizer, personal communication).

- d. The characterisation of *the heroine, Cindie*, might also have alienated these Party readers (ICE-GB:W2B-009 #53:1)

In (10c) the string *the conciliation director at the National Family Conciliation Council, Thelma Fisher* is uttered with a clear pause between the two nominal elements, which indicates the non-restrictive status of the apposition. In (10a), on the other hand, the construction is pronounced without such a pause, suggesting the restrictive interpretation. In the examples from the written registers, the distinction between the non-restrictive (10d) and the restrictive (10b) is shown in the presence or absence of a comma, respectively.

The pause is not the only intonation characteristic that allows for the distinction between close and loose apposition. In close apposition the stress pattern is secondary-primary, i.e. primary stress falls on the second element whereas the first element receives secondary stress (Haugen 1953; Francis 1958). Thus, in the construction *the Jaguar boss Tom Walkenshaw* in (10a), only the proper noun receives primary stress with the first element receiving secondary stress. In loose apposition, both nominal elements receive primary stress (Keizer 2007: 4/26). The same difference is assumed in the examples taken from the written registers by the presence/absence of commas.

Although the intonation feature is not very reliable since “pauses may be difficult to define, and people are notoriously sloppy with commas” (Keizer 2007: 25), it is nevertheless considered an indicator of the restrictiveness of apposition. There seem to be more examples that prove the intonation and stress pattern than those that counter it.

#### 2.4.1.2. *Definiteness and the scope of the determiner*

We have seen so far that in order for a structure to qualify as a close appositive construction, linguists generally agree that the two elements must belong to the class of nouns. The first element is a count noun and the second either a proper noun or a uniquely defined element which does not need an article in other contexts (Haugen 1953: 169).

Since most of the constructions are characterized by the definite determiner, it is not surprising that linguists mostly agree on the assumption that close appositions must be definite (e.g. Haugen 1953; Burton-Roberts 1975; Hawkins 1978; Quirk et al. 1985; Acuña-Fariña 1996). As pointed out before, the definiteness of close appositives is usually justified by the inherent definiteness of

proper nouns. Keizer (2007) criticises these assumptions of definiteness and explains that, albeit it is true that proper nouns are inherently definite, it is also true that on a non-unique use this definiteness can be overruled. This is clear from the following examples (Keizer 2007: 41):

- (11) When *a Forsyte* was engaged, married, or born, the Forsytes were present; when *a Forsyte* died – but *no Forsyte* had as yet died; they did not die; death being contrary to their principles ... (John Galsworthy, *The man of property*)

Accordingly, Keizer concludes that there is no reason to assume that CAs cannot be indefinite, though such expressions are restricted to the type *det + N + Np*. The function of such expressions in discourse is the introductory use when the speaker assumes that the hearer is unfamiliar with the referent. The examples given in Keizer (2007: 42) are listed below:

- (12) a. I have *a friend John* who's in linguistics with me (ICE-GB:S1A-032 #294:2:B)  
b. He also has *a sloppy elder brother Robert* who is forever mooning about some girl or other and *a sister Ethel* who has all the brisk no-nonsense superiority of a true Wodehouse gel (ICE-GB:S2B-026 #14:1:A)  
c. And supposing I take *a value K*, and I want to know if FX affects that value (ICE-GB:S1B-013 #128:1:A)  
d. I remember I was talking to *this bloke Mark* some sort of ...this really old friend of mine (ICE-GB:S1A-015 #250:1:B)

The presence and the function of the determiner in CA is no different than in any other NP. Like in other NPs, (in)definiteness in CAs is a pragmatic function indicating the speaker's assumption on the hearer's (un)familiarity of the referent. The definite determiner is used when the hearer is assumed to be familiar with the entity referred to by the CA in question. Likewise, if the speaker assumes that the hearer is unfamiliar with the intended referent, he/she will use the CA with an indefinite determiner (Keizer 2007: 43). This, as Keizer explains, presupposes that the determiner in *det + N + Np* has scope over both nominal elements, as represented in (13):

- (13) the [actor Orson Welles]  
  
the [[N] [Np]]

Keizer explains this representation by criticising the contradiction of the approaches where the two elements were treated as two co-referential NPs (e.g. Haugen 1953). Traditionally, it is claimed

that close appositions must be definite since the proper noun is inherently definite and the first element is under the scope of the definite determiner. This can be represented as in (14):

- (14) [NP] [NPp]  
[the poet] [Burns]

The definite determiner could then serve to indicate identifiability of the referent of the first NP alone. However, as Keizer points out, this is not the case. The first nominal element together with the determiner cannot equally successfully refer as the whole construction does. *The poet* on its own does not identify the referent to the same extent as *the poet Burns* does. Hence the conclusion that the felicitous use of the determiner requires both nominal elements to fall under its scope (ibid: 38). Therefore, if we accept the underlying structure of close apposition as *det + (N + Np)* there is no reason to assume that close apposition cannot be indefinite.

#### 2.4.1.3. Headedness

As has become clear from the discussions so far, headedness in close apposition is the most controversial issue. We have seen different analyses proposed which mostly rely on the omissibility tests to justify which of the elements should be the head of the construction. Keizer proposes some further criteria to determine semantic and syntactic headedness of CAs. At the semantic level, she considers which of the elements comply with the selection restrictions of the verb (which is in a way omission test as well, cf. Acuña-Fariña 1996: 42- 44), while at the syntactic level pluralization and subject-verb agreement is investigated.

Keizer explains that selection restrictions of the verb may be used to indicate headedness because these are usually taken to hold between a verb and the head of the noun phrase (2007: 55). However, since in most cases both elements of CA are compatible with the selection restrictions of the verb, it is no surprise the issue of headedness is problematic. In some cases, one of the elements violates these restrictions when used on its own as is shown in (20b) (ibid: 55):

- (15) I have *a friend John* who's in linguistics with me  
(15a) I have *a friend* who's in linguistics with me.  
(15b) \*I have *John* who's in linguistics with me.

On the semantic level, the verb *have* imposes selection restrictions on the nouns. Thus, we can have a friend, but not a person. In the example from (15), the first element can be considered the head of the CA.

The syntactic evidence seems to point in the same direction. When the CA has plural reference, the first nominal element is pluralized. The second element, the proper noun or uniquely defining element, usually comprises two or more coordinated elements (Keizer 2007: 56):

(16) the Milanova sisters Teresa and Maria,

(17) the words consonant and vowel.

Finally, in respect to subject-verb agreement, the evidence once again suggests that the first element functions as the head of CA. In most cases, both elements show agreement with the verb, but in CA where the first element occurs in the plural and the second does not, only the first agrees with the verb (ibid: 57):

(18) The *biologists* Huxley *were* both equally brilliant.

(19) The *initials* C.S. *stand* for Clive Staples.

Based on this evidence, Keizer concludes that for all the types of close appositive construction, a certain pattern is observed. In all the types it is the first nominal element that is the head. For the type mostly relevant to this thesis (the CA type which can be indefinite), the following representations are given<sup>10</sup>:

(20) Type 1a: *det + N + Np*  
 head: descriptive element (N1)  
 the poet Burns [NP [detthe][ExtN[N-headpoet][N-ModBurns]]]

(21) Type 1b: *det + N + N*  
 head: descriptive element (N1)  
 the word recession [NP [detthe][ExtN[N-headWORD][N-Modrecession]]]

These representations reflect the following: 1. only the construction as a whole is referential, 2. the determiner has scope over both nominal elements, 3. the two elements together form an extended nominal predicate, 4. the descriptive element is regarded as the head (ibid: 58).

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<sup>10</sup> For the representations of the other types see Keizer (2007: 58-59).

### 2.4.2. The discourse functions

The discourse functions of close apposition identified by Keizer are based on the communicative function of the two elements and the construction as a whole. As for the two nominal elements, the distinction of uses is based on whether the elements are providing given, inferable, or new information. The discourse function of the construction as a whole shows whether it introduces a new discourse referent or not. Finally, it has been demonstrated how the different subtypes differ in respect to the uses they allow.

The functionally identifying use is the most restrictive. Only one subtype of the Type 1 is put to this use in discourse, namely the pattern *det + N + N* (*the number four*). Keizer explains that in accordance to Grice's maxims of quantity (Grice 1975), the speaker is being cooperative in such a way that the hearer is guided to interpret that the uniquely defined element (e.g. *four*) is not used in its usual (prototypical) function (Keizer 2005: 452).

The descriptively identifying function exists in all the stated types. Here, the descriptive element "allows the hearer to relate the referent of the construction to his/her 'knowledge base' by anchoring this referent in the (linguistic or extra-linguistic) discourse situation" (ibid: 453). In other words, the descriptive element in close appositions is meant to forestall questions such as 'Who is he/she?' and so help the hearer identify the name/referent by linking it to his/her knowledge base.

The contrastive use is manifested in the three ways how the descriptive element in close appositives can be used contrastively. There is the contrast between two entities of the same kind (e.g. *the critic Paul Jones* vs. *the singer Paul Jones*), between entities of a different kind (e.g. *Algernon the name* vs. *Algernon the person*), and between different properties of the same entity (person) (e.g. *the actor Orson Welles* vs. *the director Orson Welles*) (ibid: 462).

The most relevant discourse function for this thesis is the introductory use of close appositives. When describing this use, Keizer is the first to state that there are indefinite close apposition constructions, contrary to all the previous descriptions in the literature. Although all the types can fulfil this function, the introductory use also allows for the indefinite article to act as the determiner in the type *det + N + Np* (e.g. *a poet Burns*). This use is similar to the descriptively identifying use, but here the speaker assumes the referent to be unfamiliar to the hearer. Thus, the description in the first element does not allow the hearer to link this entity to his/her knowledge base (ibid: 461).

## 2.5. Conclusion

This chapter provided a review of close apposition in the literature in an attempt to show the formal, semantic and discourse-pragmatic characteristics of such constructions. The literature review showed many disagreements on certain aspects of form, such as headedness, on the relationship between the two nominal elements, as well as on the scope and form of the determiner. The literature abounds in different formal treatments of close apposition. In fact, most linguists based description solely on the formal features, with only few analyses including the discourse-functional properties of close appositives.

The most controversial issue is headedness, i.e. whether the first or the second nominal elements should be considered as the head. Consequently, the question of the relationship between the elements was another unresolved issue. We have seen that it is not simple to pin down whether the relation is that of predication, modification, coordination, or subordination. The scope of the determiner is another issue discussed differently in the literature. Some linguists consider the determiner to have the scope over the first element only, whereas the second noun is considered inherently definite. Others state that the determiner has scope over both nominal elements, while some propose different scope depending on the determiner in question.

Despite the different analyses, some consensus is apparent and certain generalizations seem to be agreed upon. Therefore, according to what most linguists agree on, we could state the following characteristics of close apposition:

- the two elements in close apposition are nouns,
- the first is a common noun, the second either a proper name or some otherwise uniquely defined element,
- they can both be used to refer to the same entity,
- there is no pause in pronunciation and no comma in writing between the two elements (as opposed to the loose apposition),
- the stress pattern is secondary-primary.

To this list of characteristics, I will add the following adapted from Keizer (2005, 2007):

- there is no linking element between the two nominal elements (e.g. as in *the city of Rome*),
- the determiner has scope over both nominal elements,

- the first nominal element is the head and the second serves to modify (specify) it,
- close appositives can be indefinite (they are not inherently definite)

The last feature on definiteness is central to this thesis. We have seen that most treatments of close apposition in the existing literature take the definite determiner as a defining feature of the constructions. However, Keizer (2005) shows evidence of indefinite close appositive constructions arguing that the choice for the definite or the indefinite determiner is discourse-pragmatically determined. Arguing against the previous analyses, Keizer explains that the presence of the indefinite determiner in CAs is problematic only if it is assumed that the determiner has the scope over the first nominal element alone. If we assume that the determiner has scope over the construction as a whole, then the indefinite determiner indicates unidentifiability or unfamiliarity of the referent for the hearer (Keizer 2007:23). In other words, in respect to the use of determiners, CAs behave just like any other (in)definite noun phrases in discourse.

### 3. THE REFERENTIAL ROLE OF (IN)DEFINITE EXPRESSIONS

We have seen in Chapter 2 that the problems involved in analysing indefinite CA come from the mismatch between the usual uses of the indefinite article and the usual unique reference of proper nouns, which makes them inherently definite. However, as pointed out by Keizer (2007: 28) the (in)definiteness of close appositions is determined by the use. On a non-unique use, for example, the inherent definiteness of proper names can be overruled (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 289). Furthermore, the felicitous use of the determiner in CA requires both nominal elements to fall under its scope (Keizer 2007: 38). Therefore, if we accept the underlying structure of close apposition as *det + (N + Np)*, there is no reason to assume that close apposition cannot be indefinite (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1.2.1). The presence and the function of the determiner in CA is no different than in any other NPs. Like in other referential NPs, (in)definiteness in CA is a pragmatic function indicating the speaker's assumption of the hearer's (un)familiarity with the referent and their (in)ability to identify that referent.

However, reference by means of indefinite NPs is far from a straightforward and uncontroversial matter. The referential potential of indefinite expressions has been treated in several different ways. The discussion started with early work in the logical philosophical tradition dealing with the truth value of propositions (Frege 1892, Russell 1905) and continued with more recent and more linguistically-oriented accounts of the so called 'ordinary language philosophers' interested in context and speaker intentions (Strawson, 1950, Donnellan 1966, Grice 1968, Searle 1969, among others).<sup>11</sup> Philosophical discussions on reference and definiteness were taken up by linguists whose proposals on the properties, uses, and functions of indefinite noun phrases have been equally controversial.

From a logico-semantic point of view, one of the most basic characteristics of indefinite NPs is existential quantification. The paraphrase *there exists* or *there is at least one* was adapted in

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<sup>11</sup> Though acknowledging that the ideas of the logical philosophers have greatly influenced the way in which the notion of reference is employed in linguistics, I will not discuss the philosophical debate here, mostly due to space limitations. For a detailed discussion on reference in the philosophy of language and its influence to linguistics see for example Lyons (1977); Keizer (1992); Abbott (2010).

semantics from the logical philosophical traditions. In linguistic terms, this means that the predicate within the scope of existential quantifiers is true for at least one value of the predicate variable (Abbott 2010: 154).

In addition to existential quantification, the notion of specificity of indefinite noun phrases has acquired significant interest in linguistics as well (e.g. Karttunen 1969; Partee 1970; Kripke 1977; Kamp 1981; Fodor & Sag 1982; Givón 1983, 1993; Ludlow and Neale 1991; Farkas 2002; von Heusinger 2002, 2011; Kamp and Bende-Farkas 2006). As a semantic-pragmatic category, specificity does not describe particular properties that always apply to all indefinite noun phrases, but rather distinguishes between different uses and readings of indefinite noun phrases. A specific indefinite noun phrase as an expression is motivated by the communicative principle of referential intentions, i.e. “the speaker’s intention to refer to a particular referent he/she ‘has in mind’” (von Heusinger 2011: 1026). Additionally, specificity is sometimes associated with ‘discourse prominence’ or ‘topic continuity’, i.e. the potential of an indefinite to introduce a referent that will be mentioned again and tends to persist in the subsequent discourse (Givón 1983, 1993).

From a discourse-semantic point of view, indefinite NPs have been described in respect to the structuring of the information in a text. In the so-called ‘dynamic approaches’ indefinite noun phrases are described in respect to the ‘novelty condition’, i.e. the property of indefinite NPs to introduce new and unfamiliar entities in a discourse (Kamp 1981, Heim 1982, Kamp and Reyle 1993, Asher and Lascarides 2003). With respect to this property, indefinite NPs function differently from definite NPs. The latter are used to refer back (anaphorically) to discourse-old entities, i.e. entities that have been previously introduced in the discourse.

In the pragmatic-cognitive accounts, (in)definiteness is treated primarily in terms of the assumption of interlocutors’ willingness to be cooperative, and the assumptions about their shared knowledge (e.g. Chafe 1972; Clark and Haviland 1977; Du Bois 1980; Prince 1981, 1992; Givón 1983, 1993; Lambrecht 1994: 36-113). Key notions in such accounts are familiarity, identifiability, cooperativeness, mutual knowledge, and given-new distinction (Keizer 1992: 219). Indefinite expressions are used on the assumption by the speaker that the hearer is unfamiliar with and unable to identify the intended referent. This assumption about the pragmatic information is based on the mutual knowledge and reflects the cooperativeness of the interlocutors.

A similar line of research has investigated different types of referring expressions in terms of activation and accessibility (Gundel et al. 1993, Ariel 2001). According to these analyses, discourse referents are ranked with respect to their activation or accessibility and each type of referring expression is associated with one particular referent on this scale. The accessibility of the associated referent is determined based on the status of this referent in the immediately preceding discourse and on the assumed familiarity for the hearer. As indefinite NPs generally do not refer back to an antecedent, they have been either left unaccounted for in these studies, or have been associated with referents ranked lowest on the accessibility or activation scale. The notable exception is the introductory indefinite *this*, which has been presented similarly to some previous discourse-pragmatic accounts, namely in respect to ‘topical continuity’ (e.g. Perlman 1969, Prince 1981).

Given the variety of the treatments of (in)definiteness and reference, it comes as no surprise that the notion of indefinite NP, i.e. the notions relevant to the properties, uses, and functions of indefinite NPs, are a complex and controversial matter. In order to analyse indefinite close appositives, we must first clearly define these notions. Therefore, the present chapter will present the various treatments of reference and definiteness in the relevant literature, with regard to how indefinite CA might fit in the proposed descriptions. The subsequent sections will thus discuss the referential potential of indefinite NPs reflecting on some concepts relevant to the present study, such as ‘specificity’, ‘speaker intention’, ‘identifiability’, ‘familiarity’, etc. In other words, while reviewing the literature on (in)definite expressions, this chapter aims to provide a theoretical framework for the analysis of indefinite CA presented in the subsequent chapter.

### **3.1. (In)definite reference as a semantico-pragmatic notion**

#### **3.1.1. Indefiniteness vs. uniqueness**

One of the most comprehensive semantico-pragmatic accounts of (in)definiteness was offered by Hawkins (1978, 1991). Hawkins (1978) proposes a combination of logical and pragmatic considerations. According to his ‘Location Theory’, entities to which linguistic expressions refer exist within certain speaker-hearer shared sets of entities. The shared speaker-hearer set represents the discrete mental or physical sets defined by shared knowledge and the shared situation of utterance in which the entities are available to speaker and hearer (Hawkins 1978: 130). The

definite article is used to instruct the hearer to identify the shared set and to locate a referent as the member of this shared set. Additionally, certain appropriateness conditions determine definiteness (ibid: 168):

- (1) a. the definite expressions require that speaker and hearer indeed share the set of objects the referent is to be located in,
- b. the hearer must be able to infer which set is intended by the speaker,
- c. the referent must actually exist within this set,
- d. there must be no other objects within the shared set satisfying the descriptive predicate.

The logical component of Hawkins' theory states that the use of the definite article "requires the speaker to refer to the totality of the objects or mass within the shared set" (ibid: 167). This is known as the 'inclusive reference', meaning the reference to all the objects or mass within the shared set.

According to Hawkins, indefinite expressions can also be used to refer to objects existing in some shared set, but only if they can be understood to refer to not-all objects of the required kind in this set (ibid: 184). The indefinite article thus has an 'exclusive reference', meaning that the referent is 'one of' the referents in the shared set. In other words, although the use of the indefinite article is pragmatically motivated, its logical meaning renders the potential referents as non-unique within the shared set.

Hawkins has been criticised by many linguists as the notions inclusiveness and exclusiveness imply uniqueness of the definite article and non-uniqueness of the indefinite article, respectively. The criticisms will not be presented here in detail;<sup>12</sup> it suffices to say that the critics present numerous counterexamples (e.g. in existential contexts). As a reply to the criticism, Hawkins (1991) has argued that 'uniqueness/non-uniqueness' can be explained as a Gricean conversational implicature. First, Hawkins introduces the term P-set (pragmatic set) as a cover term for the shared speaker-hearer sets. He then explains that when an indefinite article is used where *the* could be used, the speaker conversationally implicates non-uniqueness. This, however, does not require the referent

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<sup>12</sup> Lyons (1980) and Declerck (1987b) offer the most notable critiques (see Keizer (1992: 199-201) for a summary of criticisms to Hawkins' proposal).

of the indefinite expression to be a member of a P-set, but only means that it will be interpreted as such if there is a relevant set available (Hawkins 1991: 427). Therefore, the logical meaning of the definite article is negated, but the pragmatic meaning associated with *the* remains since the conversational implicatures depend on the context. However, because the P-membership is only conversationally implicated in indefinite descriptions, the potential referents of P-sets remain unique for *the* and non-unique for *a/some* (ibid: 417).

### 3.1.2. Specific vs. non-specific reference of indefinites

Lyons (1977: 177) points out that indefinite noun phrases can be used referentially, as long as they are interpreted as referring to specific entities as in (5). The indefinite NP *a book* refers to a specific book, albeit unidentifiable to the hearer:

(2) John gave me a book.

Accordingly, if an indefinite NP is used non-specifically, it cannot be referential (ibid: 177). If an indefinite NP, for example, is used predicatively, it is only descriptive and not referential:

(3) John is a teacher.

However, certain contexts allow both a specific and a non-specific interpretation of the indefinite NP, e.g. when it occurs after verbs of propositional attitude, such as *believe*, *want*, *hope*, etc.:

(4) John wants to marry a girl with green eyes.

According to Lyons (1977: 190):

“The expression ‘a girl with green eyes’ can be construed as being used specifically or non-specifically. If it is taken as a referring expression (i.e. as having specific indefinite reference), then it presupposes, or implies, the existence of some individual who satisfies the description [...]. If the indefinite expression ‘a girl with green eyes’ is construed as non-specific, there is no presupposition or implication of existence at all” (Lyons 1977: 190).

Therefore, this expression could be referred back to anaphorically by a definite (referential) expression (e.g. a pronoun). However, Lyons (1977: 192) notes, even if the indefinite NP in (7) is construed as non-specific, it can nevertheless serve as an antecedent to a pronoun:

(5) John wants to marry a girl with green eyes and take her back to Ireland with him.

The problem that arises is that the two expressions (*a girl with green eyes* and *her*) cannot have the same reference, since one of them is not a referring expression at all. Lyons raises this dilemma without really offering any solution.

### 3.1.3. Dynamic semantics and discourse reference

Within the framework of ‘dynamic semantics’ (Karttunen 1976; Kamp, 1981; Heim, 1982 among others), the developing context of interpretation plays an important role in mediating between linguistic forms and reference. In order to account for indefinite noun phrases that act as antecedents for coreferential pronouns or definite NPs, Karttunen (1976) introduced the concept of ‘discourse referents’. Definite and indefinite noun phrases are analysed as two types of referring expressions that play a role in a discourse representation. The difference between the definite and indefinite NPs is that the first (usually) refer back to familiar, i.e. already established discourse referents, whereas the latter introduce new, i.e. non-familiar discourse referents into discourse. However, discourse reference is to be understood as a linguistic concept, or as Karttunen (1976: 17-18) puts it: “the notion of ‘discourse referent’ as we have used it, is not at all the same as ‘the individual the speaker has in mind’”.

Definite and indefinite noun phrases thus behave alike in that they introduce discourse referents in episodic contexts (Karttunen 1976: 13), as (9) shows (the examples (9-11) are taken from von Heusinger 2011:1031):

- (6) a. Anna owns the Porsche. It is red.
- b. Anna owns a Porsche. It is red.

Definite and indefinite noun phrases, however, differ in opaque contexts (cf. Quine 1960, Fodor 1970, Abbott 1976, Givón 1993a), such as the one in Lyons’ example in (7). According to Karttunen, an indefinite NP in the scope of an intensional operator like *want* in (10) does not license discourse anaphors:

- (7) a. Chris wants to own the Porsche. It is red.
- b. Chris wants to own a Porsche. \*It is red.

However, Karttunen (1976: 11) notes that a certain class of indefinite NPs with “strikingly different” interpretations, does not follow this restriction, as shown in (11). The difference in these indefinite NPs is generally taken as an indicator of specificity. If we compare the indefinite NPs in (11b-c) to the one in the example (7) from Lyons, it becomes obvious that modification (in the broadest sense) may have an impact on specificity (cf. Fodor and Sag 1982):

- (8) a. Chris wants to own this<sub>indef</sub> Porsche. It is red.  
b. Chris wants to own a certain Porsche. It is red.  
c. Chris wants to own a Porsche he saw a day before. It is red.

Heim’s novelty-familiarity theory also explains the difference between definites and indefinites in terms of Karttunen’s (1976) ‘discourse reference’. Heim adds to Karttunen’s account an explicit definition of discourse referents with the ‘file-card’ metaphor. In Heim’s theory, a discourse consists of a number of file cards, representing entities spoken about: “[...] to understand an utterance is to keep a file which, at every time in the course of the utterance, contains the information that has so far been conveyed by the utterance. [...] For every indefinite, start a new file. For every definite, update an old card” (Heim 1983: 167-168).

The major function of indefinite NPs is to introduce new entities into the discourse, while definite NPs are used to refer to existing discourse entities. A simple discourse like that in (12) illustrates Heim’s approach:

- (9) A woman came in. She sat down.

Indefinite NPs like *a woman* introduce new file cards, or variables, into the discourse. Pronouns like *she*, on the other hand, must be linked to something else. In this case there is no other potential referent available, so it would be taken to refer to the woman mentioned in the preceding sentence. In Heim’s approach the property of having sat down would be added to the file card created for the woman by the preceding sentence (cf. Kamp 1981). This way of adding information in sequence contributes to the discourse which changes the hearer’s information state (also called context in Dynamic Semantics). In other words, keeping a file is the hearer’s state which is systematically updated by information where indefinite NPs add new information, and definite NPs update the old.

The main problem with the familiarity theory of definiteness are the non-anaphoric uses of definite expressions. The definite expressions that are being mentioned for the first time in discourse do not have an appropriate familiar file card for them to be coindexed with. Heim's response to such examples was to invoke the concept of 'accommodation' proposed by Lewis (1979b). This allows other ways of adding information to the file cards (cf. Hawkins 1978). As Heim explains, an NP can be novel in respect to the logical form of the text, but also familiar with regard to the file that it obtains (Heim 1982: 371).

However, a more important downside of the dynamic semantic approaches is their exclusion of many components of the universe of discourse (as defined in the introduction to this section). Such approaches to discourse focus on the way in which different units function in relation to each other, disregarding "the functional relations with the context of which discourse is a part" (van Dijk 1985: 4). The discourse is thus limited only to the 'text-internal world' (Lambrecht 1994: 37), i.e. it completely disregards the abstract world of linguistic representations construed in the minds of the interlocutors in the process of communication. The problem is, as Lambrecht puts it, that "[t]he hearer's mind is not a blank sheet of paper on which new propositions are inscribed. Conveying information therefore requires constantly changing hypotheses on the part of the speaker about the state of knowledge of the hearer as speech progresses" (1994: 45-46).

As has been pointed out in Chapter 2, descriptions of close appositive constructions from a text-internal perspective prove infelicitous. Moreover, an analysis of indefinite instances of close apposition with regard to discourse reference in Karttunen's terms is not at all revealing. The distinction between definite and indefinite NPs with regard to introducing familiar or new entities in discourse, respectively, does not tell us much when it is evident that both definite and indefinite CA can be used to introduce new entities. Therefore, a broader theoretical framework is needed in order to account for the functions and uses of indefinite CA.

Before we introduce some other theoretical approaches to (in)definiteness, the following subsections will briefly discuss the notion of specificity of indefinite noun phrases, which has acquired significant interest in linguistics, particularly in the formal semantic treatments of indefinite NPs. As we shall see, however, specificity is not exclusively related to the formal semantic approaches described in this section. It has also been used to describe some pragmatic and cognitive aspects of the use of indefinite NPs.

### 3.1.4. Specificity as a semantico-pragmatic notion

Specificity is a linguistic category that distinguishes between different uses or interpretations of indefinite noun phrases. Karttunen (1966, 1976) used the notion to describe the different potential of two types of indefinites to introduce ‘discourse referents’. This contrast was related to the referential properties of indefinites in opaque contexts and also to the scopal behaviour of indefinites with respect to extensional operators (e.g. Fodor 1970, Partee 1970, Abbott 1976, Kripke 1977, Kamp 1981, Fodor & Sag 1982, among others<sup>13</sup>).

Over the course of time, specificity has been employed to describe further contrasts, such as different epistemic states of the speaker, i.e. the assumptions of different degrees of familiarity with the referent, and different levels of discourse prominence of the referent. The various uses of the notion specificity are related in one way or another to the communicative or pragmatic notion of ‘referential intention’, according to which the speaker uses a specific indefinite to refer to an object “s/he has in mind” (von Heusinger 2011: 1027). With all this in mind, it becomes clear that specificity seems to be a semantico-pragmatic notion, though perhaps less semantic and more pragmatic. The following sub-sections will briefly present some of the relevant concepts that were used to explain the semantico-pragmatic relation that accounts for specificity of indefinite NPs.

#### 3.1.4.1. Epistemic specificity

Specificity of indefinite NPs is a “semantic mapping relation”, which also involves “the speaker’s intent to either refer or not refer to a specific entity in the universe of discourse” (Givón 1993a: 230). Consider the following example taken from Fodor & Sag (1982: 355), which has two possible interpretation (a and b):

- (10) A student in the syntax class cheated on the final exam.
  - a. I know which student cheated.
  - b. I don’t know which student cheated.

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<sup>13</sup> The scope of indefinite NPs with respect to different operators, and other treatments of indefinite NPs in formal semantics and logic will not be particularly discussed in this paper. The reason is mainly the functional approach taken in the analysis in the paper, where the discourse-functional as well as cognitive approach to NPs is advocated. Due to limitations in space, a contrastive discussion between functional and formal approaches to indefinites (and specificity) is unfeasible. For a discussion of the work done in formal semantics, see Abbott 2010, von Heusinger 2011.

According to Fodor and Sag (1982: 355), although this is no opaque context, there are no modals or negation, and there are no other quantifiers to interfere with the scope, the sentence is ambiguous in that the indefinite NP can have the two semantic interpretations: a referential and a quantifier interpretation. In their formal terminology, the specific interpretation (10a) indicates that the speaker has a referent in mind (intended referent) and makes an assertion about this referent. The non-specific reading in (10b) suggests that the speaker just makes an assertion that the set of students in the syntax class who cheated on the final exam is not empty.

Farkas (1994, 2002) uses the term ‘epistemic specificity’ to describe this contrast which is found in non-opaque contexts. Epistemic specificity concerns the way in which the use of an indefinite is related to the information state of the speaker who uses it (Kamp and Bende-Farkas 2016: 2). Epistemic specificity thus expresses the contrast in (10) in respect to the speaker’s knowledge (10a) and speaker’s ignorance or indifference (10b) about the referent of the indefinite. Approaches to epistemic specificity (e.g. Farkas 1994, Dekker 2004, Kamp and Bende-Farkas 2006) thus assume that the speaker has particular knowledge of the referent or of the means to identify the referent, which is not available to the hearer (cf. Lambrecht 1994: 81). If it were also available to the hearer, a definite expression would be adequate.

Kamp and Bende-Farkas (2006) extend the epistemic view to a hearer perspective. They distinguish between a specific use of an indefinite by the speaker and a specific interpretation by the hearer. The speaker signals by means of a linguistic form associated with specificity (e.g. *a certain*, or additional modification) that the hearer should create a stable representation for the indefinite introduced. Specific indefinites behave like hearer-new proper names, which force the hearer to establish a stable representation for the subsequent discourse. (Kamp and Bende-Farkas 2006: 5). This feature of specific indefinites has also been accounted for by other linguists as ‘topic continuity’ (Givón 1983).

#### *3.1.4.2. Discourse prominence and topic continuity*

Specificity is sometimes associated with discourse prominence and refers to the notions ‘referential persistence’ or ‘topic continuity’, i.e. the potential of an indefinite to introduce a referent that will be mentioned again and tend to persist in the subsequent discourse (von Heusinger 2011: 1039). This can be shown in a simple example of a usual narrative text, as in (11):

(11) There was a little girl named Sally who lived on a farm. The girl had a pony and she loved her pony ...

Additionally, English has an indefinite introductory use of the demonstrative *this*. The use of indefinite *this* has been shown to be the introduction of a discourse referent that becomes the topic of the subsequent discourse (Perlman 1969, Prince 1981) or that is ‘noteworthy’, i.e. has an unexpected and interesting property (McLaran 1982). Indefinite *this* signals particular, new information, while unmarked indefinites signal that they introduce a discourse referent with more or less important properties (von Heusinger 2011: 1039).

According to Givón (1984: 135), the most relevant context for determining reference is the thematic organization of the universe of discourse. Entities are considered referential within the universe of discourse only if the nature of their participation in the thematic organization makes their unique referential identity important enough (ibid: 136). Therefore, for Givón, the amount of importance allocated by speakers to different referents is decisive.

Givón proposes two ways of measuring importance or topicality, which is measured by referential continuity in two opposite directions, namely in the preceding and in the upcoming discourse. The first is anaphoric continuity or referential distance. Here a referent’s history is investigated by exploring whether the referent has an antecedent, and if so, in which sentence in the preceding discourse it occurs. The smaller the distance between antecedent and anaphor, the more topical the referent will be (Givón 1983: 67). The second method of measuring topicality is cataphoric continuity, which measures the persistence of a referent in the subsequent discourse. The more often a referent is picked up in the subsequent discourse, the more topical it is. This reflects the speaker’s intentions about the role that entity will play in the continuing discourse (ibid: 69).

The advantage of Givón’s model of topic continuity is that it combines cataphoric and anaphoric methods to measure the topicality of a referent in a given discourse. This model can be applied to explore the accessibility of referents introduced by indefinite noun phrases (including indefinite CA), which generally lack an antecedent and thus have no anaphoric force.

### **3.2. Cognitive-pragmatic accounts of (in)definiteness**

In the pragmatic-cognitive accounts, definiteness is treated primarily in terms of the assumed willingness of both speaker and hearer to be cooperative, as well as of the assumptions made by each about the pragmatic information of the other. Discourse referents are, in addition to text internal referents, the representations of the referents of linguistic expressions in the minds of interlocutors (Lambrecht 1994: 74). In terms of pragmatics, “the study of discourse is the study of *any* aspect of language use” (Schiffrin 1994: 31, emphasis in original). Key notions in such accounts are familiarity, identifiability, cooperativeness, mutual knowledge, and the given-new distinction (Keizer 1992: 219). Indefinite expressions are explained in reference to the assumptions made by the speaker that the hearer is unfamiliar with and unable to identify the intended referent.

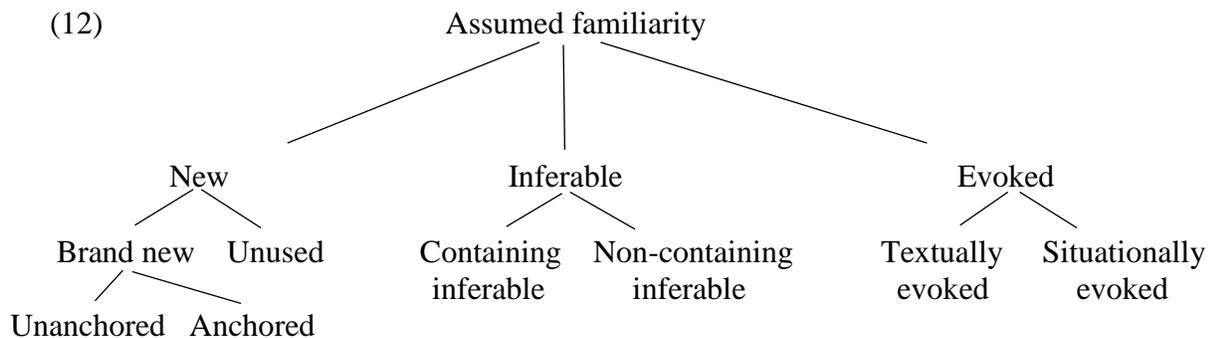
#### **3.2.1. The notions ‘given-new’**

Chafe (1976) discusses reference in terms of the notion of ‘givenness’. Given information is defined as “that knowledge which the speaker assumes to be in the consciousness of the addressee at the time of the utterance,” whereas new information is defined as “what the speaker assumes he is introducing into the addressee’s consciousness by what he says” (Chafe 1976: 30). Chafe defines consciousness as “the mechanism by which the self makes use of information”, i.e. the activation of some available information (1980: 11). This is not the same as what the addressee is expected or not expected to know (cf. Ariel 2001). The addressee may have knowledge of the entity but may not be thinking about it at the time of speaking, in which case the knowledge is considered not ‘activated’ (Chafe 1980: 15). Furthermore, if speakers consider the idea to have been ‘semi-active’ in the consciousness of the addressee, then they are likely to verbalise it as ‘accessible’ information. On the other hand, if an idea is considered to be previously ‘inactive’, then it will be verbalised as ‘new’ (Chafe 1994: 74).

Following Chafe, Clark and Haviland (1977) propose the so called ‘Given-New contract’ between interlocutors, based on Grice’s Cooperative Principle. According to the Given-New contract, the speaker “agrees” that the information he/she assumes to be known to the hearer will be conveyed as ‘given information’, and that the information which he/she assumes to be unknown to the hearer will be conveyed as ‘new information’. The hearer, conversely, “agrees to interpret all utterances in the same light” (Clark and Haviland 1977: 4).

### 3.2.2. Prince's 'assumed familiarity' scale

Prince (1981, 1992) was also concerned with how the speaker's assumptions about the addressee's knowledge state affects how information is organized in a discourse. Instead of the two values given-new Prince (1981) suggests a scale of different degrees of assumed familiarity. She distinguished the following categories of assumed familiarity (Prince 1981: 245):



**Figure 1:** Prince's taxonomy of assumed familiarity

Prince explains her taxonomy of assumed familiarity with the following examples (ibid: 233):

- (13) a. Pardon, would you have change of a quarter?  
b. Noam Chomsky went to Penn.  
c. I got on a bus yesterday and the driver was drunk.  
d. A guy I work with says he knows your sister.  
e. Hey, one of these eggs is broken!

'Evoked' entities are assumed to be familiar to the hearer. An entity can be evoked in two ways: it can be 'textually evoked' if the hearer has evoked it on textual grounds; if the hearer is able to evoke an entity by way of situational context, it is 'situationally evoked'. *He* in (13d) is textually evoked, whereas *you* in (13a) is situationally evoked (Prince 1981: 233-234).

'New' represents an entity which a speaker first introduces into the discourse. New discourse entities are of two types: if the hearer has to create a new entity, it is 'brand new'; if the hearer is assumed to have a corresponding entity in his/her own model and simply has to place it in the

discourse model, it is ‘unused’. Assuming each sentence in (13) is discourse-initial, *Noam Chomsky* is unused, that is, assumed to be in the hearer’s model, whereas *a bus* and *a guy I work with* are brand-new and must be created by the hearer. Brand new entities can be ‘anchored’ and ‘unanchored’. A brand new discourse entity is anchored if the NP representing it is linked, by means of another NP, or ‘anchor’, properly contained in it, to some other discourse entity. Thus, *a bus* in (13c) is unanchored, or simply brand-new, whereas *a guy I work with* in (13d), containing the NP *I*, is anchored (ibid: 236).

Apart from evoked and new entities, the third type of discourse entity is distinguished, namely ‘inferables’. According to Prince, “[a] discourse entity is inferable if the speaker assumes the hearer can infer it, via logical or, more commonly, plausible reasoning, from discourse entities already evoked or from other inferables” (ibid: 236). *The driver* in (13c) is inferable from *a bus* since the hearer can be assumed to know that buses have drivers. A special subclass of inferables is the ‘containing inferables’, where the information from which the inference is made is properly contained within the inferable NP itself. In (13e), *one of these eggs* is a containing inferable, as it is inferable, by a set-member inference, from *these eggs*, which is contained within the NP and which, in the usual case, is situationally evoked (ibid: 236).

Additionally, Prince argues that a discourse analysis reveals the following hierarchy that ranks entities from most to least familiar (ibid: 245):

(14) Evoked > Unused > Inferable > Containing inferable > Brand new anchored > Brand new

The higher the information is on the hierarchy, the more discourse-old its status is. Inferable information is ranked lower than unused information. Unused, inferables, containing inferable, brand new anchored, and brand new entities are regarded as discourse-new, whereas evoked information corresponds to the traditional category of discourse-old information.

In her later work, Prince (1992) revised her approach and proposed a pair of overlapping dichotomies which classify information as either ‘discourse-old’ or ‘discourse-new’ and, either ‘hearer-old’ or ‘hearer-new’ (1992: 309). Discourse-old information is that which has been evoked in the prior discourse, while discourse-new information is that which has not (ibid: 309). Correspondingly, hearer-old information is that which the speaker assumes to be present within the hearer’s knowledge base, while hearer-new information is that which is not assumed to be present

within the hearer's knowledge (ibid: 309). Familiarity of information within the discourse is thus distinct from its (assumed) familiarity to the hearer. This distinction indicates that what is new to the discourse need not be new to the hearer, which accounts for the inferables from the earlier taxonomy (compare Heim's 'accommodation'). However, any discourse-old information is assumed automatically to be hearer-old (Prince 1992: 309).

New information introduced in a discourse may also be either familiar or unfamiliar to the hearer. In respect to indefinite NPs, the information status is usually both discourse-new and hearer-new. This information status represents information which has not been evoked in the current discourse, and which the speaker does not believe to be known to the hearer. As we shall see in the analysis of indefinite close appositives, this is exactly the discourse function that usually characterises such expressions.

### **3.3. Conclusion**

This chapter presented different accounts of (in)definiteness and reference, showing that the meaning and function of indefinite NPs is a complex and controversial matter. From a logico-semantic point of view, one of the most basic characteristics of indefinite NPs is existential quantification. Similarly, but from a logico-pragmatic point of view, indefiniteness has been treated as non-uniqueness (explicitness). In addition to existential quantification and non-uniqueness, the notion of specificity as a semantic-pragmatic category has been used to distinguish between different uses and readings of indefinite noun phrases. The communicative principle of referential intentions, i.e. the speaker's intention to refer to a particular referent he/she has in mind motivates the specific use of indefinite NPs. Additionally, specificity has been associated with the potential of an indefinite to introduce a referent that will be mentioned again and tend to persist in the subsequent discourse, namely the topic continuity of referents.

From a discourse-semantic point of view, indefinite NPs have been described in respect to the structuring of the information in a text. In the so-called 'dynamic approaches' indefinite noun phrases abide to the 'novelty condition', i.e. they introduce new and unfamiliar entities in the discourse. With respect to this property, indefinite NPs function differently in comparison to other types of referring expressions. The major function of indefinite NPs is to introduce new variables, or file cards, into discourse. However, the main problem with such accounts is that significant

cognitive and pragmatic aspects of discourse, such as speakers intentions and his/her assumptions of the shared (general) knowledge, are usually excluded.

In the cognitive-pragmatic accounts, (in)definiteness is treated primarily in terms of the assumption of interlocutors' willingness to be cooperative, and the assumptions about their shared knowledge. Indefinite expressions are used on the assumptions made by the speaker that the hearer is unfamiliar with and unable to identify the intended referent. This assumption about the pragmatic information is based on the mutual knowledge and reflects the cooperativeness of the interlocutors. The notions of 'given-new' and 'assumed familiarity' are central to these accounts. Information is classified as either 'discourse-old' or 'discourse-new' and, either 'hearer-old' or 'hearer-new'. Discourse-old information is that which has been evoked in the prior discourse, while discourse-new information is that which has not. Correspondingly, hearer-old information is that which is believed to be present in the hearer's knowledge, while hearer-new information is that which is not assumed to be part of the hearer's knowledge. Familiarity of information within the discourse is thus distinct from its (assumed) familiarity to the hearer. New information introduced in discourse may also be either familiar or unfamiliar to the hearer. In respect to indefinite NPs, the information status is usually both discourse-new and hearer-new.

The review of the literature on (in)definite expressions introduced the theoretical framework for the analysis of indefinite CA presented in the following chapter. For the study of such constructions it seems more appropriate to use an approach which reflects the cooperation between the speaker and the hearer as well as the discourse event as a whole. A pragmatic-cognitive approach to reference seems to be able deal with these requisites and offers a way of explaining reference by taking into consideration the discourse-functional, cognitive, (but does not exclude semantic and syntactic) requirements of the referring process. This, of course, does not mean that the logico-semantic literature reviewed in this chapter will be disregarded in the study. Rather, the point is that such approaches alone are not sufficient for the analysis of indefinite CA.

## **4. AN ANALYSIS OF INDEFINITE CA**

### **4.1. Introduction**

In Chapter 2, it was argued that it is best to treat close appositive constructions just as any other referential NP. The focus of this study being indefinite CA, the aim is to show their uses as instances of indefinite reference. Chapter 3 thus offered some insight into the referential potential of indefinite noun phrases in order to provide a theoretical framework for the analysis of indefinite CA. Overall, it has been argued that the (in)definiteness of close appositions is determined by their use; hence the constructions can be best explained via discourse-functional analysis. As Keizer notes, “the whole point of using an apposition consists in the fact that through a combination of a proper noun and a descriptive element one can produce a referring expression which is felicitous in a given context” (2005: 464).

It is generally accepted that an initial mention of a referent is typically introduced or presented using an indefinite noun phrase, and subsequent mentions (which are recoverable) tend to be encoded as definite. If the speaker assumes that the addressee is able to recover the identity of the referent, a definite NP may also be used on the first mention. We have seen that in the literature, close apposition is generally considered definite in all its uses (one exception being Keizer 2005, 2007), usually justified by the inherent definiteness of the second nominal element (a proper name or a uniquely describing noun). However, as Keizer (2007: 22) pointed out, and as is obvious from this study, evidence from corpus shows that indefinite close appositions do exist. It may therefore be assumed that indefinite close appositives are also used to introduce a new referent. Therefore, this study aims to account for the reasons why speakers choose an indefinite CA when a definite is also appropriate. The subsequent sections will thus present a qualitative analysis of indefinite CA observed in their actual language use.

### **4.2. Data and methodology**

It has been argued throughout this paper that describing close appositives based on intuition is insufficient to explain their properties and functions in natural language. After all, we have seen in Chapter 2 that most theory-driven analyses which rely only on intuition have claimed that CA can

only be definite. This, of course, is not to say such theory-driven analyses are wrong, but that such accounts are insufficient in that they seem to end up being more prescriptive than descriptive. What is advocated in this study is that an analysis of close appositive constructions should begin with observing them in their actual language use and then try to relate that use to the existing theories to account for the formal features of CA.

The discussion in Chapter 3 showed that definiteness is a pragmatic feature of a linguistic expression and as such is determined by its use. Therefore, the first step in the analysis of indefinite CA was to look for such indefinite expressions in use. With the advances of language corpora, an investigation of linguistic expressions in their actual use is possible. This research is therefore a corpus based qualitative study of empirical data. The following section presents the data used in this study and the methodology used to collect and analyse that data.

#### **4.2.1. On the corpora**

The data were extracted from three relatively large corpora, namely British National Corpus – BNC (Davies (2004-)), Contemporary Corpus of American English – COCA (Davies (2008-)), and News on the Web – NOW (Davies (2013-)) in the period between November 2017 and March 2018. At the time the corpora were last accessed, BNC comprised 100 million words, COCA 560 million, and NOW over 5,9 billion. The expressions under examination are most commonly found in the media and fiction sections of these corpora. Both COCA and BNC contain subgenres like newspaper, magazines and fiction (which is in total 60% of the corpora), whereas NOW consists exclusively of texts from online newspapers. Therefore, the exploration of these corpora should provide representative empirical insights into the use, form and meaning of indefinite close appositives.

The three corpora are different in respect to the variety of English contained in them. BNC is a corpus with the focus on British English, COCA consists of texts from General American, whereas NOW comprises online news articles from different varieties of English (e.g. Australian, Indian English, etc.). However, the main reason for examining all three corpora was not primarily to cover all the varieties of English, but more a necessity because close appositive constructions are very difficult to find in corpora. Although all three corpora allow for POS (part of speech) tagging, CAs comprise two nominal elements and possibly modifiers, for which reason the results very

frequently overlap with similar expressions such as compound nouns, dvandva expressions (see Chapter 2, Section 1), two-word names or other modified NPs. This means that the results had to be manually analysed in order to divide indefinite CAs from the rest of the similar expressions.

#### 4.2.2. The data

Only two types of CA were searched for, namely *det + N + Np* and *det + N + N* types. Other types identified by Acuña-Fariña (1996) and Keizer (2005) were not considered since the focus was on the CA determined by an indefinite determiner. The determiners taken into consideration were the indefinite article *a/an*, the indefinite introductory *this*, and *some*. Therefore, the aim was to find expressions such as *a poet Burns*, *a word recession*, *this poet Burns*, *this word recession*, *some poet Burns*, *some word recession*. Although intuitively most of these seem unacceptable, it appears that only the combinations *this<sub>indef</sub> + N + N* (*this word recession*) and *some + N + N* (*some word recession*) are not attested in the corpora. All the other forms were found in the corpora, with one exception: there was only one instance of *some + N + Np*.

With now narrowed search, a sample of a total of 250 examples was extracted from the corpora. The majority of these examples comprised the type *det + N + Np*, but the use of *det + N + N* was also relatively frequent. Most of the examples were found in the newspaper genre, the majority of those in the spoken register. The rest of the examples were found in the fiction and academic genres.

The type *det + N + Np* was found with all three indefinite determiners, namely *a/an*, *some*, and *this*. As noted before, there was only one indefinite CA with *some*, the one in example (1). Therefore, the pattern *some + N + Np* can be considered as extremely rare.

- (1) *Some guy Ben Pullan 13* on this thread made the most uneducated, ill-informed, and frankly dim-witted comment I've heard anyone make about anything related to cricket in a really really long time. (NOW)

One of the reasons for this is the variety of meanings of *some* which might have influence on one another (Israel 1999). Besides its existential reading, as in (1), *some* also has the so-called 'spesumptive' reading (Warfel 1972) which can be paraphrased as *some or other*. Perhaps the functional influence from the spesumptive *some* does not allow a specific reading usually expressed by CA and we therefore do not frequently come across the use of *some + N + Np* patterns. The CA *Some guy Ben Pullan 13* cannot be understood as *some or other guy* because the second nominal

element renders the NP specific. I will not pursue this issue any further here as I believe it deserves more inquiry than can be devoted in this paper. Some further research is therefore necessary.

Indefinite CA with the determiners *a/an* and *this*, on the other hand, are rather frequent in use. Some examples are given below:

- (2) a. Mr. Clinton's comments may have been aimed less at Bush than the Republican Party, according to *a historian Stephen Wayne*. (COCA, news)
  - b. With *a colleague Don Van Atta*, we wrote a story about the efforts to derail any kind of idea to, you know, reform derivatives. (COCA, talk show)
  - c. *A singer Frankie Beverly* bought a 1977 Porsche when he first began to make big bucks. (COCA, magazine)
  - d. "He was a kind person", *a friend Anthony Scalzo*, told ABC13 Action news. (NOW)
  - e. He still faces yet another defilement charge in Nyahururu where he used *a name David Ndung'u*, the prosecution highlighted. (NOW)
  - f. He has since written *a book "No Easy Answers: The Truth Behind Death at Columbine"*, to try to explain how the authorities missed signs that Dylan and Eric were planning a massacre. (COCA, news)
- (3) a. Last week, *this girl Melissa* collapsed after Torsen made her stand at attention for five hours in the sun. (COCA, fiction)
  - b. And then we had *this friend Jane Lancellotti* who worked in advertising and she suggested, you know - we never really had much money. (COCA, spoken)
  - c. Every week, I remember *this guy Jeff Ingold*, who worked at NBC - he came every week to say, listen, it's - I love this show. (COCA, talk show)

The indefinite CA of the type *det + N + N* were only found with the indefinite determiner *a/an*. Some examples are provided in (4):

- (4) a. For example, there's *a word storge* -- S-T-O-R-G-E -- which refers to the instinctive love that a parent has for its offspring, which is a perfectly useful word and lot shorter than saying what it means. (COCA, spoken)

- b. If you consider ideas like killing or biting, for example, Kalkadoon uses *a suffix -tu* to indicate who is carrying out the action -- in grammatical terms to mark the ‘subject’ of the transitive verb. (BNC, non-academic)
- c. And there is then *a word babiwanjit* for people who call each other babi. (BNC, non-academic)

As has been noted before, the present study is a qualitative analysis of empirical data with the aim of investigating discourse-functional factors accounting for the use of indefinite CA. Bearing this in mind, as well as the difficulty in finding the expressions under investigation (which resulted in a relatively small sample), no conclusions can be drawn about frequency of occurrence of the different patterns. The expressions were analysed in their wider context (co-text) with regard to the theoretical framework set in Chapter 3. The analysis of the context ensured that the expressions were used to introduce new referents in discourse, and to trace the introduced referents in the subsequent discourse. The context also made it possible to observe when the expressions were used to refer non-uniquely and when they were used to refer to unique/specific entities. The wider context (e.g. the genre, the interlocutors) made it possible to hypothesise about the intentions and assumptions of the speaker, again with regard to the theoretical framework in Chapter 3.

### 4.3. Findings and discussion

#### 4.3.1. Variety of the descriptive element

Acuña-Fariña (2009, 2016) states that the constructional schema of the patterns *a/an + N + Np* and *this + N + Np* is fairly constrained in that it involves a very restricted set of common nouns, since they are limited to nouns with very low lexical information, such as *friend, child, guy, chap, bloke* (Acuña-Fariña 2016: 74). Indeed, there seems to be a tendency to use the pattern *this + N + Np* most frequently with the descriptive element consisting of common nouns such as *guy, man, woman, girl, friend*, etc. Some examples are given in (5).

- (5) a. This WikiLeaks revelation today coupled with an interview I did with *this guy Vinnie* who was a 32 year NSA veteran who is a whistleblower retired, he said every phone conversation, every text, every email of every American is locked up in metadata. (COCA, news-spoken)

- b. I went to see *this guy Matthew* who I know, who inherited a lot of money when he turned twenty-one, and I asked him if I could borrow some money. (COCA, fiction)
- c. Speaking of other story, *this woman Carrie Emerson* said she had contact with Giordano. (COCA, news-spoken)
- d. Um, well, y’know, I was living with *this woman Naomi*, about two years ago, and my friends Rob and Carrie invited us to a party on the beach. (COCA, fiction)
- e. For example, one morning on the playground *this kid Kevin* went up to *this girl Nicole*, who was wearing sweat pants, and he grabbed her sweat pants by the pockets, and he pulled them down around her ankles. (COCA, fiction)
- f. And then *this girl Sandy*, who is African-American, with this big smile on her face said, “I’m going to be the first black president and the first woman president”, and I thought, “Great”. (COCA, news-spoken)

However, this cannot be interpreted as a constraint on the use of this pattern. First of all, if we were to divide nouns according to their lexical information, as Acuña-Fariña does, *woman*, *girl*, *kid* provide (at least slightly) more lexical information than *chap*, *guy*, or *bloke*. Moreover, corpus data shows instances of descriptive elements with even higher lexical information:

- (6) a. And I remember *this singer Joyce Bryant*. She was a black singer, and I always admired her. (COCA, magazine)
- b. I remember *this actress Pia Zadora* who was vilified, castigated and ostracised for her role in the film ‘The Lonely Lady’. (NOW)
- c. But they had *this uncle Ned* -- useless man, never interested in ranching. (COCA, fiction)
- d. Waiting for a first draft from *this writer Marti Noxon*, who is a Buffy veteran and is currently, I think, a consulting producer on Mad Men. (NOW)

Acuña-Fariña’s conclusion proves even more inaccurate with the pattern *a/an + N + Np*. The corpus searches conducted in this study show that there is a variety of nouns used as the descriptive element in this type. The denotation of the first nominal element seems irrelevant to the indefiniteness of the pattern (but see Section 4.3.3.2.). The following examples demonstrate this:

- (7) a. Mr. Clinton’s comments may have been aimed less at Bush than the Republican Party, according to *a historian Stephen Wayne*. (COCA, spoken)

- b. *A writer Zulfiqar Ahsan* has written an article on “Waqea Karbala aur Urdu ka Sheri Adab” or “Incident of Karbala and Urdu poetry”, which has been incorporated in the book similarly... (COCA, news)
- c. General systems theory was proposed by *a biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy* as an analytical framework and procedure for all sciences. (BNC, academic)
- d. *An officer Johnson* found her on Route 78 and Broadway. (COCA, fiction)
- e. Well, now *an economist Thomas Sowell* is here to break it all down and in plain English. (COCA, news-spoken)
- f. *A reporter Bill Weir* who’s on the ground there, seeing a lot of, obviously, continued destruction to rural parts of the island. (COCA, news-spoken)
- g. They have *a daughter Kelly* and *a son Jack*, who are 16 and 17. (COCA, talk show)
- h. Dylan as an actor and as an explosive performing force was a dangerous rival for other actors, as I know, for I worked with him a few times or several, and once for instance *a director Douglas Cleverdon* said to him -- we were rehearsing a radio play at the time -- Dylan, will you take the words ‘Mam! Mam!’ and scream them for me. (BNC, biography)
- i. The most extraordinary celebration in the world is carried out in the small village of Acacia twice a year. It is *a holiday Tinka*. It takes place in the form of an old ritual. (NOW)
- j. Turn and go past the swimming baths and take your first right and you're going more or less down to erm where that boy married what you (unclear) (SP:PS0V9) Greenbanks (SP:PS0V8) but as you go round you will see *a sign Fancy Goods*. (BNC, spoken)
- k. Two other charges against Mr Sanele related to *a company MacPallets*, which supplied pallets and other packaging materials to Thermakraft. (NOW)
- l. It promotes four interconnected virtues - belonging, skills mastery, independence, and generosity - and is drawn from *a book Reclaiming Youth At Risk* authored by professors from Augustana University in South Dakota. (COCA, news)

The data on indefinite CA show that such indefinite constructions allow for a variety of descriptive elements, irrespective of whether they are nouns with low or high lexical information. Of course, since the descriptive element introduces a proper name, this lexical information has to provide a

description compatible with that proper name. In the expressions referring to people it is expected for that information to relate to people, hence the nouns denoting occupations, relatives, etc. Moreover, the proper noun does not have to be a name of a person (e.g. (7i-1)), and this is exactly what is indicated in the descriptive element introducing that name.

#### **4.3.2. Indefiniteness in respect to the second element**

Burton-Roberts (1975: 394) compares CA with premodified NPs and suggests that since it is the proper name that is being modified, it acquires a determiner just as any modified name. Restrictive appositions contain proper names (which are modified by nouns), and since names are inherently definite, they require the definite article (ibid: 400-401). Therefore, according to Burton-Roberts, indefinite CA cannot exist. Although the mere data collected for this study proves this claim incorrect, we have to elaborate a little on why this is the case. Furthermore, we shall see that it is not felicitous to compare (referential) CA with premodified names at all.

First, we have seen in Chapter 2 that, depending on the discourse use, the inherent definiteness of proper nouns can easily be overruled. It is not uncommon for a proper noun alone to be used non-uniquely (Du Bois 1980: 218; Quirk et al.1985: 289; Keizer 2007:28). The examples of non-unique uses of proper names make this clear as in the following example:

(8) A Lannister always pays his debt.

This is also sometimes the case when a proper name (or otherwise uniquely defined element) is in combination with a descriptive element in indefinite close apposition. Some more examples are given in (9):

(9) a. I felt like Dante Alighieri, walking past the portals of Hell, more than “halfway along his life’s path”, into dark woods in the front of a mountain (The Mokola Hill visible afar off, on which the Premier Hotel perched); into an ominously uncertain realm, a deep place where the sun, obscured by an arboreal host, is dark and silent. # But unlike the fourteenth century poet, there wasn’t *a poet Virgil* to come to my rescue, no muse to accompany and comfort me as I began my journey into the underworld of Agodi Gardens. (NOW, newspaper)

- b. Zalim Singh is a fake ID because you guys all know the meaning of Zalim which means “Cruel” so why would someone have *a name Zalim Singh*. It is a fake name to cause a problem between Sikhs and Muslims. (NOW)
- c. They have founded their Jerusalem in a Holy Land much like the original. Like Gennesaret, Lake Utah is a body of fresh water emptying by *a river Jordan* into a Dead Sea without an outlet and intensely saline. The Saints find their Edomites and Philistines in the Indians of the desert... and the Gentile troops of Uncle Sam. (COCA, academic)

In such cases, indefinite CAs do not refer to entities described by the descriptive element of the CA, but rather to entities with such qualities or characteristics. The reference is thus considered non-unique, and the expressions can be easily paraphrased with a comparative *like*. To have *a name Zalim Singh* is to have *a name like Zahlim Singh*.

There are several reasons why we might normally do that. First, we can use a proper noun as an example of particular traits that could also be held by others (Payne and Huddelston 2002: 521). In (9d), *a river Jordan* is used in that sense, as well as the following NP in this example, *a Dead Sea*. The two NPs obviously do not refer to the river Jordan or to the Dead Sea, respectively. Similarly, in (9a) it is not the poet Virgil who is being referred to but someone with the characteristics of the poet Virgil, i.e. someone like Virgil.

Additionally, but closely related, a hypothetical use allows us to describe an entity as what they might be if they really existed, as in (10):

- (10) a. North Korea would be a pressing priority for *a president Clinton*, as much as it is for the Trump administration. The difference is that under President Trump, the US has itself become the major source of strategic unpredictability. (NOW)
- b. Ambassador Ross said *a Secretary Kerry*, presuming he’s confirmed, would have more scope, more influence over policy. (COCA, spoken)

If Clinton became the president of the United States, we would construe her as *president Clinton*, just as *president Trump* is presented later in the same example. This type of CA does not normally take articles because the descriptive element is more or less similar to titles (Keizer 2005: 458). However, the fact that we are referring non-uniquely justifies the indefinite article, just as it does

with the proper name in (8). It is not president Clinton we are referring to but to someone like the president that Clinton would be (if she were to become a president).

Another use is directly related to the modification of proper names but does not reflect a non-unique reference. In an NP with a premodified proper name, such as *an ingenious Chomsky*, the assumption would be that there is still only one, identifiable person named Chomsky, but that this person can appear in different ‘states’ or ‘manifestations’ (*a defiant Chomsky, a despondent Chomsky, etc.*) (cf. Carlson 1977, Landman 1989, Payne and Huddleston 2002, Keizer 2007: 42). Indefinite CA can be modified in the same way, but only if the modifier has scope over the whole construction. The different states or manifestations are possible, but only when the whole construction is taken to be premodified. Consider the following example:

- (11) I hope - knock on wood – we’re going to see *a different President Obama* at Hofstra.  
(COCA, spoken)

However, in CAs such as *a poet Burns* this does not seem to be the case. Being *a poet* is very difficult to construe as a different state of *Burns*. Furthermore, the indefinite article with a modified name can be used non-referentially as nominal predicates, which is not the case with indefinite CA:

- (12) In spite of his glasses, he wears no real mask of universality. He is *a different Harold*,  
with a different worry, in every film. (NOW, the Guardian)
- (13) \*He is *a poet Burns*.

This short section serves to show that it is not appropriate to compare the use of the indefinite article with (modified) names to its use with CA. In construction of the type *a poet Burns* the indefinite article does not seem to indicate non-uniqueness nor different states of the entity referred to, which is normally the case with (premodified) proper names determined by the indefinite article. The constructions with the uses described in (10) are the CAs which are normally used referentially without an article (e.g. *President Obama*), whose descriptive element is more a title and is thus convention-bound rather than used descriptively. Additionally, the paraphrase *a poet like Burns* is possible (example (9)), but the construction is not being used to refer to that particular person denoted by the combination of the descriptive element and the name. In conclusion, the use of indefinite CAs can indicate non-uniqueness and possibly different states or manifestations of the

referred entity, but in most cases the indefiniteness of close apposition indicates assumed unfamiliarity of the entity referred to for the hearer. This is what we turn to in the following section.

### 4.3.3. Assumed unfamiliarity

We have seen in the previous chapter that new information introduced in discourse may be assumed either familiar or unfamiliar to the hearer. Discourse new information can take the form of a definite or indefinite expression. Definite expressions are used to present discourse-new, but hearer-old information. As for indefinite expressions, the information status is both discourse-new and hearer-new. This information status represents information which has not been evoked in the current discourse, and which the speaker does not believe to be known to the hearer.

The use of the indefinite article in close appositives indicates the speaker's assumption that the hearer is not familiar with the referent of the whole construction. While the combination of a proper noun and a descriptive element nevertheless may refer to a specific individual (at least in the speaker's mind), no identification on the part of the hearer is expected. In constructions like *a friend John*, as in *I have a friend John who's in Linguistics with me* (Keizer 2007: 22), the hearer is not assumed to be familiar with the referent, but the entity referred to is nevertheless specific in the speaker's mind and familiar to the speaker. On a discourse introductory use of the CA in question, the use of the indefinite article makes perfect sense.

However, an entity can be introduced into the discourse with a definite CA as well. Here the introductory use of CA with the definite article indicates that the hearer assumes the speaker to be familiar with the referent (cf. Keizer 2005: 47). This justifies the use of such definite constructions as first mention definites. The hearer is assumed to know of *the poet Burns* when such a definite construction is used on the first mention. The entity is discourse-new, but hearer-old. This is the main functional feature that distinguishes between definite and indefinite CA on the introductory use (Keizer 2005, 2007). The difference can be seen in the following examples:

- (14) a. So what really caused the financial crisis and how should we tackle it? Well, now *an economist Thomas Sowell* is here to break it all down and in plain English. And he'll also tell you which politicians are to blame. (COCA, spoken)

- b. The book also briefly tells about the rich literary history of Sargodha. *A writer Zulfiqar Ahsan* has written an article on ‘Waqea Karbala aur Urdu ka Sheri Adab’ or ‘Incident of Karbala and Urdu poetry’, which has been incorporated in the book similarly. (NOW)
- (15) a. The question before us, as *the economist Robert Reich* reminds us, is whether we as a nation will play with the handicaps we are beginning to see, or somehow seek to avoid and deny them. (COCA, academic)
- b. *The writer Eudora Welty* died this past week in Jackson, Mississippi, at the age of 92. (COCA, spoken)

All of the close appositive constructions in examples (14) and (15) are used to introduce new referents into the discourse. The speakers introduce the referents by a combination of the descriptive element and a proper name in all four instances, the difference being only the use of the determiner. The indefinite expressions in (14) indicate that the referents, the economist and the writer, respectively, are assumed unfamiliar to the addressee(s). The expressions in (15), on the other hand, indicate that the speakers assume the hearer(s) to be familiar to the introduced referents. The first two examples consist of the entities which are both discourse-new and hearer-new, whereas the latter two examples are discourse-new and hearer-old.

The literature offers different explanations of such uses of the definite article. Hawkins (1978: 131), for example, explains this use of the definite article in CA with the ‘unfamiliar use’ of the definite article, where the presence of the nominal modifier enables the hearer to identify the referent. However, this may not be sufficient for the intended reference to be achieved. Although, the modifier may help identify the referent, it does not have to. If the referent of the combination of the two nominal elements (*poet Burns*) is not familiar to the hearer, the combination itself does not make the difference for the (assumed) identification and hence does not explain the use of the definite article. The name may mean nothing to the hearer, and even though the descriptive information is provided in the first nominal, the referent may still not be identifiable. If, however, the speaker does assume, based on the shared knowledge, i.e. based on the assumption of the shared knowledge, that the hearer is familiar with the referent, it is signalled by the use of the definite

article and only then does the combination of a descriptive element and a proper name indicate the assumed identifiability (see Keizer 2007: 48 for a similar view).<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, only the combination of what Hawkins calls the ‘unfamiliar use’ of the definite article and the assumption of shared (general) knowledge<sup>15</sup> of the interlocutors allows the speaker to use the definite article on the assumption that the hearer will successfully identify the referent. Prince (1981) explains such uses under the category ‘unused’, meaning information that is discourse-new, but familiar to the hearer on the basis of general (long-term) knowledge. In constructions such as close appositions, the descriptive element does provide background information to help facilitate the identification, but only provided that the hearer is at least partially familiar with the referent (Keizer 2007: 48). Additionally, the speaker may not be sure whether the referent is familiar to the hearer(s), it could be either hearer-old or hearer-new, something Loock classifies as ‘indeterminate inferables’ (Loock 2010, 2013). With multiple addressees, the descriptive element may facilitate a compromise for the heterogonous audience, but the assumption is that the majority will be able to identify the referent.

Likewise, if the speaker does not assume the hearer to be familiar with the referent, the descriptive element will not provide the background information to facilitate identifiability, nor will the proper name help identify the referent in any way. The combination of the descriptive element and the proper noun is thus used with an indefinite determiner to indicate this assumed unfamiliarity. Indeed, the corpus data provides numerous examples of such discourse-new and hearer new-uses of indefinite CAs (some of the examples are repeated from the previous sections):

- (16) a. The Huffington Post reports that *a critic David Badash* of The New Civil Rights Movement, said: “Apparently, in the Cathy family’s mind, gay people don’t have families, no one divorces, and everyone must be Christian.” (NOW)
- b. And I had *a teacher Rosie MacDonald* who was a bit of a psychopath so I would leave my aunt and go to Rosie. (NOW)

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<sup>14</sup> Keizer explains that on the introductory use, the identity of the referent in the definite CA is not presupposed, but that the descriptive element provides just enough background information to help facilitate the identification provided that the hearer is at least partially familiar with the referent (Keizer 2007: 48).

<sup>15</sup> Hawkins’ (1978: 110) ‘larger situation’ use is closest to the notion of relying on the interlocutors’ general knowledge to account for the use of the definite article. On this use, the speaker appeals to the shared knowledge of entities which exist in the non-immediate or larger situation of utterance. This shared knowledge may be either specific or general.

- c. I have just received the terrible news that President Zuma's blue lights brigades killed *a friend Solly Moutlana* in Pretoria yesterday. (NOW)
- d. A single member bench of IHC comprising of Justice Athar Minallah resumed the hearing of case filed by *a woman Mahera* seeking recovery of her husband and expressing doubt that he was abducted by security institutions. (COCA, news)
- e. The police lost that one, but for years they had a kind of Beat patrol, led by *an officer William Bigarani*, who was charged with protecting the public morals from God knows what beatnik depravity. (COCA, news)
- f. We've got *a manager Jim Fregosi* who wasn't a Boy Scout, either. (COCA, spoken)
- g. We sat there and looked at him curiously, finally *a student Doris* informed him that we couldn't speak English and that whatever he had to say to us, she would be glad to interpret to us. (COCA, fiction)
- h. Dylan as an actor and as an explosive performing force was a dangerous rival for other actors, as I know, for I worked with him a few times or several, and once for instance *a director Douglas Cleverdon* said to him -- we were rehearsing a radio play at the time -- Dylan, will you take the words 'Mam! Mam!' and scream them for me. (BNC, biography)
- i. *A man Tony Tuoyo* has been arrested by security operatives in Sapele for duping people. (NOW)
- j. General systems theory was proposed by *a biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy* as an analytical framework and procedure for all sciences. (BNC, academic)

Additionally, these examples show even more evidence that it is the second nominal element that serves as a modifier. Obviously, the constructions in question are referential, i.e. specific, since the combination of a common noun a proper name makes the whole indefinite construction specific in reference. The common noun alone, conversely, may in some contexts have both a specific and a non-specific reading when used with the indefinite article. Consider the following example (a modified (16j)) where the omission of the proper name allows for a non-specific reading:

- (17) General systems theory was proposed by *a biologist* as an analytical framework and procedure for all sciences.

In some instances, mostly in news genre with multiple addressees, the (direct) hearer's familiarity is ignored for the sake of the assumption of the unfamiliarity of the rest of the addressees, and possibly the speaker's as well. The example in (18) shows this:

- (18) And one reference you used is *a book Emilie* by the French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. (COCA, spoken – talk show)

This use almost contradicts the claims above, as the combination of the descriptive element and the proper name in the given context clearly shows that the hearer is both familiar with the referent and can identify it. The hearer obviously knows the book he or she used as a reference. However, in instances such as (18), an utterance which is part of a news talk show, the speaker has a wider range of hearers whose (un)familiarity with the referent is to be considered. Thus, although the direct interlocutor (the guest in the studio) is familiar with the referent, the speaker assumes the audience (who are also his/her addressees) to be unfamiliar with the book being referred to.

Additionally, this use may also portray the speaker's indication of his/her own unfamiliarity with the referent, as the referent (in the speaker's mind) is assumed not to be part of the shared speaker-hearer general knowledge. In this sense of referring to a specific person but indicating one's unfamiliarity with the referent, it is not uncommon to use indefinite NPs. Consider the following example from Quirk et al. where the use of the indefinite article indicates "a certain person called X but otherwise unknown" (1985: 289):

- (19) *A Mrs Robertson* was trying to contact you this morning.

Interestingly, the second CA in example (18) is used with the definite article (*the French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau*). The referent of this CA is assumed by the speaker as part of shared general knowledge, i.e. familiar to both interlocutors, and the wider audience. Thus, whereas the speaker indicates that the philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau is assumed known, one of his books is not, or not necessarily.

As pointed out by Keizer (personal communication), there seems to be a scale of assumed familiarity when introducing new entities into a discourse, a scale reflected in providing a description and a name. Consider the following examples, example (14a) and the modified versions of it:

- (20) a. So what really caused the financial crisis and how should we tackle it? Well, now *an economist* is here to break it all down and in plain English. And he'll also tell you which politicians are to blame.
- b. So what really caused the financial crisis and how should we tackle it? Well, now *an economist Thomas Sowell* is here to break it all down and in plain English. And he'll also tell you which politicians are to blame.
- c. So what really caused the financial crisis and how should we tackle it? Well, now *the economist Thomas Sowell* is here to break it all down and in plain English. And he'll also tell you which politicians are to blame.
- d. So what really caused the financial crisis and how should we tackle it? Well, now *Thomas Sowell* is here to break it all down and in plain English. And he'll also tell you which politicians are to blame.

An indefinite expression alone (20a) seems to imply that the referent is assumed to be unfamiliar to the hearer and not really important enough as a topic in the discourse to be introduced with more information. The description provided in the indefinite expression indicates the referent's relation to the topic of the discourse but does not introduce him with an indication that he will become an important topic. In (20b), additional information in the form of a proper name is provided. On first appearance, it does not seem to make any difference since the indefiniteness of the referent implies that he is unfamiliar to the hearer. However, the extra information must have a purpose. The newly introduced referent is added a proper name as an indication of his relevance in the subsequent discourse, namely for future anaphoric reference. This issue will be elaborated in Section 4.3.4. For now, suffice it to say that the extra information gives importance to the newly introduced referent, though he is still assumed unfamiliar. Using a definite CA (20c) to introduce a new referent in discourse implies assumptions that the hearer is (at least to some degree) familiar with the referent and that the definite CA would trigger (at least partial) identification of the referent. Using a proper name alone (20d) would imply this assumption even more. There is not even the need to add a descriptive element, because the hearer is expected to know that *Thomas Sowell* is an economist. Therefore, the following scale can be proposed, reflecting the information provided and the assumptions of familiarity indicated by the use of a determiner:

(21)

assumed familiarity ↑	proper name	<i>Thomas Sowell</i>
	definite CA	<i>the economist Thomas Sowell</i>
	indefinite CA	<i>an economist Thomas Sowell</i>
	indefinite description	<i>an economist</i>

Figure 2: Scale of assumed familiarity in respect to the use of descriptive elements and proper nouns

The difference using an indefinite description alone and an indefinite CA is admittedly more a difference in specificity than in assumed familiarity. We have seen that an indefinite expression without a name can be understood as a generic reference. But if this be the case, then there is not even a slightest possibility of assuming familiarity because generic concepts do not refer to specific individuals. One can of course be familiar with a generic concept, but this is not the case discussed here. The assumed familiarity (which enables identifiability) refers to being familiar with specific entities. Additionally, this use may also portray the speaker's indication of his/her own unfamiliarity with the referent, with a possibility of assuming that the referent is (at least to some extent) part of the hearers' general knowledge. Using an indefinite description without the name would rule out such a possibility and is hence lower on the scale of assumed familiarity. I admit, however, that this is a tentative conclusion, which deserves further research.

#### 4.3.3.1. The pattern *this* + *N* + *Np*

As Keizer (2005, 2007) first indicated, the introductory indefinite *this* can also be used with the same function as the patterns *a/an* + *N* + *Np*. One difference between CA with *this* and with *a/an* is that, as shown in previous studies on indefinite NP (e.g. Prince 1981), if a referent is introduced with *this* it is more likely to become a topical referent in the subsequent discourse. Some examples indicating the subsequent topicality of a newly introduced referent by this pattern (with the anaphoric reference also in italics) are provided in (22):

- (22) a. Um, well, y'know, I was living with *this woman Naomi*, about two years ago, and my friends Rob and Carrie invited us to a party on the beach. *Naomi* couldn't go. *She* was working on a paper for school. (COCA, fiction)

- b. And I remember *this singer Joyce Bryant*. *She* was a black singer, and I always admired *her*. And I had two role models. I liked *Joyce Bryant*, because *she* wore fishtail gowns, sequined, fishtail gowns, and *she* was black, and *she* had the nerve to wear platinum hair. (COCA, spok)
- c. But they had *this uncle Ned -- useless man*, never interested in ranching. And when the grandparents died, *he* left for the city and sent word through lawyers *he* wanted his claim to the land so *he* could sell it. (COCA, fic)

This distinction in respect to topicality is not so evident in case of indefinite CA, since the combination of a descriptive element and a proper name renders the referent specific anyway and hence indicates the speaker's intention to make this referent topical in the subsequent discourse. This can be seen in one of the examples from the previous section, repeated here for convenience:

- (23) *A man Tony Tuoyo* has been arrested by security operatives in Sapele for duping people. *The man* had duped quite a number of people by collecting money from them in hope of getting them jobs in oil companies. (NOW)

However, some difference between the pattern *a/an + N + Np* and *this + N + Np* is notable. Wald (1983:97) notes that an important feature of using *this* is that "introduction of a referent by new *this* implies that more information about the referent is imminent as the discourse progresses". Some of his examples (taken from Chen 1990: 142) are:

- (24) a. ...there's *this* guy that goes into the next door neighbour's house... (Wald 1983: 98)  
 b. ...so I took off my jacket y'know n I had on *this* turtleneck sweater. It was a knitshirt y'know n everything of my brother's. (Wald 1983: 103)

*This* indicates that the speaker is about to add further information about the referent, hence both NPs in (24a&b) are further modified either by relative clause (24a) or by a premodifying adjective (24b). In CA determined by the introductory *this*, the addition of the second nominal element is almost expected, as an introduction without this modification looks as if the speaker is withholding further information about the referent (Chen 1990: 142). This, however, does not need to be the case with the indefinite article *a/an*. Compare (25) with (26), both comprising examples based on (22a) above:

- (25) a. Um, well, y’know, I was living with *this woman Naomi*, about two years ago, and my friends Rob and Carrie invited us to a party on the beach.
- b. Um, well, y’know, I was living with *this woman*, about two years ago, and my friends Rob and Carrie invited us to a party on the beach.
- (26) a. Um, well, y’know, I was living with *a woman Naomi*, about two years ago, and my friends Rob and Carrie invited us to a party on the beach.
- b. Um, well, y’know, I was living with *a woman*, about two years ago, and my friends Rob and Carrie invited us to a party on the beach.

In (25a) it seems as if the added name was expected, indicated by *this*. (25b) is not unusual either, but more information about *this woman* is expected to follow. In any case, *this* requires more information about the referent. In CA, this information is very easily added by the second nominal element.

In (26), however, the use of the indefinite article does not signal such expectation of additional information. (26b) is thus completely acceptable even with no additional information, neither in the form of a second nominal element as in CA, nor in the form of subsequent relative clause. Moreover, it is not expected that the referent of *a woman* will become a topical referent. The speaker may be simply indicating that he/she was living with a woman in generic sense. Therefore, the addition of the proper name as in (26a), does not fulfil expected further information as with *this woman*. It simply adds further information which will be useful in the subsequent discourse (see Section 4.3.4.). It does indicate a specific reading of *a woman*, which has been shown to be an indicator of speaker’s intention to make this referent topical in the subsequent discourse, but as opposed to *this woman*, the hearer does not expect this topicality, nor does he/she expect any imminent information in the form of modification. Therefore, it seems that the difference is not much evident in the speaker’s intention, but in the hearer’s expectation (which is triggered by the use of *this*).

This is also a very tentative conclusion since this comparison would require much more research than it was conducted within this study. For example, *this* can also indicate that the additional or subsequent information about the introduced referent has a more intimate relation with that referent, i.e. *this* indicates a closer link between the head noun and the additional or subsequent information about that noun (Perlman 1969: 77). Furthermore, since there is a number of different

uses of this (cf. Chen 1990), its introductory indefinite use would have to be compared to its other (usually definite) uses. This was not feasible within this study, mostly because of limitations in space, but also because of a possible digression from the topic of this thesis. Nevertheless, the overall conclusion is that CAs with introductory indefinite *this* are also used on the assumption that the newly introduced referent is unfamiliar to the hearer, which seems to be the prototypical function of indefinite close appositive constructions.

#### 4.3.3.2. *The type det + N + N*

The assumed unfamiliarity can also account for the indefinite CA of the type *det + N + N*. Although, as Keizer (2005, 2007) points out, their use is primarily functionally identifying, the corpus data shows that such expressions can have an introductory use with an indefinite article. Such use is thus similar to the introductory indefinite *det. + N + Np* type. The referent of the whole construction is assumed to be unfamiliar, i.e. the entity which is functionally identified by the descriptive element, is assumed to be unfamiliar to the hearer. Some examples are provided below.

- (27) a. When we use the term uncle for example, the listener can not tell from this whether we mean our father's brother or our mother's brother. Aborigines always distinguish the two. In the Kalkadoon language the mother's brother is *bubi* and the father's brother is *pitarda*. They take a different approach too when describing relationships. If you were a Kalkadoon woman you would call your father's mother *babi* and she would call you *babi* in return. And there is then *a word babiwanjit* for people who call each other *babi*. (BNC, non-academic)
- b. They're not words you'd only use if you were, you know, looking at a new plant somewhere up in the Himalayas of something. In other words, it could actually, you know, be actually used in regular conversation. For example, there's *a word storge* -- S-T-O-R-G-E -- which refers to the instinctive love that a parent has for its offspring, which is a perfectly useful word and lot shorter than saying what it means. But it's not used very much any more. (COCA, spoken)
- c. If you consider ideas like killing or biting, for example, Kalkadoon uses *a suffix -tu* to indicate who is carrying out the action -- in grammatical terms to mark the 'subject' of the transitive verb. (BNC, non-academic)

If we examine the passage in (27a), the entity which was considered familiar was used with a definite CA, namely *the term uncle*, whereas the presumably unfamiliar concept *babiwanjit* was introduced by an indefinite article. The descriptive element in *a word babiwanjit* cannot have the functionally identifying use since the functionally identifying use renders the reference unique (Keizer 2007: 42). However, the reason why this pattern is possible with an indefinite determiner is that the second element is assumed to be hearer-new in the sense that the hearer is not familiar with the word at all. The examples of indefinite CA of the type *det + N + N* have either a word from another language (27a&b), or some technical term (27c) as the second nominal element. As opposed to the word *uncle*, a word which is part of the English language, *babiwanjit* is not and is thus not expected to be familiar to the hearer. Therefore, the descriptive element (the first noun) cannot serve the functionally identifying function, but is instead introductory. In fact, the introduction of such hearer-new terms is no different from the introduction of proper names which are assumed not to mean anything to the hearer. Therefore, the types *det + N + Np* and *det + N + N* show no difference in function, i.e. in both patterns, the second nominal element, which is normally uniquely defined, is assumed unknown.

#### 4.3.3.2. Possible semantic constraints

We have seen that indefiniteness seems not to be sensitive to the denotation of the first element as proposed by Acuña-Fariña (2016), namely that the constructional schema of the patterns *a/an + N + Np* and *this + N + Np* is fairly constrained in that it involves a very restricted set of common nouns with very low lexical information, such as *friend, child, guy, chap, bloke*, etc. (see Section 4.3.1.). However, there seems to exist a different constraint on (in)definiteness with regard to the denotation of the descriptive element. The CAs which have descriptive elements denoting relative concepts (e.g. father, son, friend) impose certain restrictions to the use of determiners on the introductory use. Consider the following examples:

- (28) a. I've had to put that out the way so he doesn't wrap that up, no he comes and does them up for me tonight, and *a friend Ian* will help him as well, so you know it's, it's great really... (BNC, spoken)

- b. In 1688 Townesend married Anne, daughter of Henry Brian, gentleman, of Witney: they had at least eight children but only *a son John* and a daughter survived their father, the former carrying on the business. (BNC, non-fiction)
- c. I have *a brother Carl Jr.* who's three years older than I am and *a sister Shenitric* who's two years older than him. (COCA, magazine)
- d. And he says he has no plans to make room in his life for Toney as a father or a friend. As O'Neal sees it: "I have *a father Harrison*, and I have enough friends". (COCA, magazine)

The nouns in question are all relational nouns. i.e. nouns that take an (implied) inalienable argument. Fillmore describes 'inherently' relational nouns which consist of nouns denoting entities which are obligatorily (or 'inalienably') possessed by some other entity: "one doesn't speak of a side, but of the side of something; one doesn't say of someone that she is a daughter, only that she is somebody's daughter..." (Fillmore 1968: 61-62). Such relational nouns are usually determined by a possessive determiner or a genitive. In close apposition, the patterns is normally *poss + N + Np* (e.g. *my friend Ian*). CAs with a descriptive noun which is relational can be introduced by an indefinite determiner, but they are always (inferably) anchored, or in Prince's terms, non-containing inferables (Prince 1981).<sup>16</sup> Therefore, *a friend Ian* in (28a) is either anchored by the referent of *he*, which is the topic of the discourse, or by the speaker. The newly introduced *friend* is thus either *his friend*, or *my friend* (the speaker's). The same is evident in the other examples in (28): in (28b) *a son John* is anchored by *they* (*Townesend* and *Anne*); *a brother Carl Jr.* and *a sister Shenitric* are anchored by *I* in (28c); and *a father Harrison* is anchored by *I* in (28d). For all the CAs in (28), the newly introduced referent is nevertheless assumed to be unfamiliar to the hearer, hence the indefinite expression.

However, CAs with relational nouns that are used with a definite determiner appear to be restricted to the discourse-new and hearer-old use. Such definite expressions seem to be understood as

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<sup>16</sup> Notice that I use the terms 'anchor' and 'anchored' with an ellipsed 'inferable' in front of it. Prince's notion 'anchored' would technically refer to the paraphrase *a friend of mine Ian*. Here, the indefinite NP is overtly anchored by the possessive element contained in it. (Though, one could argue that it is a containing inferable.) In the cases where there is no overt anchor, like in *a friend Ian*, it can be said that the relation is inferable, i.e. the expression is non-containing inferable. But for the sake of simplicity, I will use the terms 'anchor' and 'anchored' here. The point is, anyway, that the noun is relational and that this semantic property requires it to take (at least implied) inalienable argument. This argument I refer to as anchor.

referring anaphorically, rather than being inferable definites. Compare the following modifications of (28b):

- (29)
- a. ... only *a son John* survived.
  - b. ... only *the poet Burns* survived.
  - c. ... only *the son John* survived.

While the CAs in (29a&b) can be construed as discourse introductory (the difference only being hearer-new vs. hearer-old), it is highly unlikely to understand the CA in (29c) as discourse-new. This would require the hearer to be familiar with the person denoted by the combination *son + John* in the same way as one could be assumed to know the entity denoted by the combination *poet + Burns*. *The poet Burns* indicates that we assume that the hearer is familiar with this (usually one, unique) individual.<sup>17</sup> However, it is unreasonable to expect the hearer to be familiar with *the son John* based on the shared general knowledge without relating him to someone whose son he is. The relational descriptive element makes the hearer look for the anchor either in the immediate situation or discourse, not in their general knowledge base. Usually, one would look for the preceding entity to which the CA anaphorically refers, where the definite CAs with relational descriptive elements make perfect sense:

- (30) The next day Jerry introduced us to Mr. and Mrs. Imamoto, an older couple whose house near Hanalei was blown away in the storm. They were living with her *sister's* family, seven people in one little house: Mr. and Mrs. Imamoto, *the sister Rosalie* and her husband Derek Kuono, as well as the Kuonos' grown daughter Natalie, her husband and their four-year-old son. (COCA, fiction)

However, this conclusion needs to be taken with caution. The referent of the CA with a relational descriptive noun cannot be inferred from shared GENERAL knowledge, the kind of shared knowledge needed for the hearer to infer *the poet Burns* on the first mention. The speaker-hearer shared knowledge must be narrower than shared general knowledge, in which case definite CAs with relational descriptions are perfectly fine:

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<sup>17</sup> Of course, there can be more poets who are called Burns, in which case the apposition can be used contrastively (Keizer 2005: 462), but it is rather unusual and in such cases, it is normally overtly indicated in an explanation: *The singer Iglesias is quite popular these days. I mean Enrique, not his father Julio.*

(31) But the actual killings and the murders are not mentioned in the book at all. KING: What about *the friend Charlie*? GALANTER: Well, *the friend Charlie*, I think is a figment of the ghostwriter's imagination because I think everybody's in agreement that there was not a second person at the trial -- at the crime scene. (COCA, talk show-spoken)

(31) is part of a talk show where the interlocutors discuss a book (based on real events) and the main character in the book. One of the characters in the book is *Charlie* who is a friend of the main character and has not been previously mentioned in the conversation. The entity is thus discourse-new, but the use of the definite article indicates that it is hearer-old. The referent is assumed inferable from the hearer-speaker shared knowledge (the speaker knows that the hearer has read the book). However, the referent is inferable only because the anchor to which he is relatable is the topic of the discourse.

Another, very interesting exception is the following:

(32) "From this platform, I erase all the past, and I invite *the brother Abu Mazen Abbas* for a bilateral meeting to start with, then with the factions," said Hamas leader-in-exile Khaled Meshaal at a conference for resistance groups in Beirut, according to Reuters. (COCA, news)

The definite CA in (32) is discourse-new and hearer-old, i.e. the speaker assumes the hearer(s) to be familiar with the newly introduced referent. The descriptive element is in the form of a relational noun (*brother*), but here we see a different meaning of *brother*. The noun is used here more as a title, which is conventionally used usually for the members of certain religious groups. Indeed, as some authors have pointed out (e.g. Löbner 1985), it is not so much the nouns themselves that are relational, but their use. Thus we can have *father John* who is nobody's father, but rather a priest, or *sister Mary*, etc. The relational meaning of the descriptive element in such examples is lost and use of the noun no longer implies the existence of an inalienable argument or anchor, as we defined it.

#### *4.3.3.3. Conclusion*

Based on the examples from the corpora, we can conclude that in indefinite CA, it is only the assumed (un)familiarity of the interlocutors (and the wider audience) that is indicated by the use of the determiner, provided, of course, that the entity is being introduced in discourse. Therefore, we can conclude that this is the most prototypical use of indefinite CAs. The assumption of unfamiliarity reflects the direct hearer's unfamiliarity as well as the wider audience being addressed. In some cases, the speaker's unfamiliarity is indicated by the use of an indefinite CA.

We have seen that there is a certain semantic constraint on the (in)definiteness caused by the denotation of the first descriptive element. If the descriptive element is a relational noun, the assumed familiarity seems not to be based on the shared general knowledge, but on the anchor to which the noun inalienably relates. If the relational noun, due to a convention, loses its relational meaning and becomes descriptive as any other noun which fits a descriptive element in CA, the restriction no longer exists. In sum, there seems to be enough evidence to conclude that the function of indefinite CAs is to introduce new referents into a discourse for which the speaker assumes to be unfamiliar to the hearer.

However, besides the discourse function of the construction as a whole, the interest of this study is also the function of the nominal elements when a CA is used indefinitely. Being discourse introductory expressions, the descriptive elements in CAs cannot actually ground the proper name to the discourse situation, but they do indicate their relevance to the discourse. At the same time, the proper name does not enable identifiability of the referent, but it must serve some function. Therefore, we must account for the relation of the nominal elements in CA on the introductory use. The following sections discuss this with the examples from the corpus data.

#### **4.3.4. Cataphoric labelling**

If the combination of a descriptive element and a proper name will not facilitate identifiability of the referent, the question that remains is what the purpose of such a combination is. The indefiniteness does assume unfamiliarity with the referent, but why use a descriptive construction such as close apposition to introduce a referent that one does not expect neither to be familiar nor identifiable to the hearer? In any of the examples above, omission of the proper name would still

leave a felicitous introduction of an unfamiliar, discourse-new referent (though not always as explicitly specific, see example (17)). Furthermore, the omission would not lead to either syntactically, semantically, or pragmatically unacceptable structure. Consider the modified example (14a) from above, where the proper name was omitted:

- (33) So what really caused the financial crisis and how should we tackle it? Well, now *an economist* is here to break it all down and in plain English. And he'll also tell you which politicians are to blame.

The indefinite noun phrase *an economist* fits perfectly in the respective discourse without the proper name. One of the reasonable answers to why the name has been combined with the descriptive element is so that the noun phrase is more informative. But what is the point in being more informative if the speaker does not assume the hearer to be able to identify the referent even with the extra information? To me, there seems to be none. If anything, this extra information would be a burden the hearer to process. Another question that poses itself is why add a description to the name which is not expected to facilitate identifiability. Therefore, we have to answer two questions here: a) why add the proper name, and b) why add the description? I will initially answer these in a reverse order simply because the description precedes the name.

The answer to why a close appositive is used on such occasions lies in the subsequent discourse. The descriptive nominal element serves to introduce the name. The name thus being introduced indicates its relevance to the discourse. It would be unusual to introduce a new referent with the proper name without providing some additional information on how the name is relevant to the discourse. It may be true that we normally introduce people with names, but we do not just randomly introduce new names into discourse. In accordance with Grice's maxim of quantity, introducing a name with a descriptive element as in CA is a very efficient way to introduce a name.

At the same time, the name provides additional information, not for reasons of identifiability but for the purpose of future reference. The name obviously in no way serves to enable identification, but rather serves as a label. In referring back we usually use the most specific thing, e.g. a person's name. We can call this function of the proper name in indefinite CA 'cataphoric labelling' because such labelling function can additionally be interpreted as an indicator of the subsequent topicality of the newly introduced referent (Givón 1983).

The addition of a proper name is pragmatically motivated for by its usefulness for future reference. Indeed, given the option to refer back to the referent introduced by an indefinite CA, the speakers in most cases use the proper name and not the descriptive nominal element (the head) with the definite article. Of course, given that the whole construction is used to refer to one entity, other means of anaphoric reference are used too (e.g. personal pronouns). However, given the choice to refer with one of the nominal elements, the speakers tend to use the proper name. This use can be seen in the following examples:

- (34) a. Mr. Clinton's comments may have been aimed less at Bush than the Republican Party, according to *a historian Stephen Wayne*. (...) *Wayne* says since Al Gore lost his bid for the White House, Mr. Clinton remains the head of the Democratic Party. (COCA, news-spoken)
- b. The film revolves around *a writer Yudi* (Saif Ali Khan), who wrote a hit book years ago but is still living life king-size in Los Angeles, enjoying fame, avoiding commitment, not working, partying with his miserable married friend Montu (Ranvir Shorey). Suddenly, *Yudi* runs out of money and his publishers dump him for a hit romance novelist Aanchal (Ileana D'Cruz), visiting from Mumbai. (NOW)
- c. And I had *a teacher Rosie MacDonald* who was a bit of a psychopath so I would leave my aunt and go to *Rosie*. (NOW)
- d. The evidence swung in an unexpected direction when Nicholas called a witness in his defence, *a friend Christopher Brown*, who was also on holiday in Ibiza. *Brown* claimed it was himself and not Nicholas who was guilty of the assault adding somewhat implausibly that Charlie was 'pure as the driven snow'. (COCA, news)
- e. A magisterial court had in its October this year order held that the two cops had committed the offence under section 221 IPC by intentionally not bringing *a man Shamsuddin Malik*, accused in an assault case, before the court. # The offence is punishable with up to two years imprisonment or fine or both. # In their revision plea, the cops had contended that non- bailable warrant issued against *Malik* could not be executed because he was admitted in a drug rehabilitation centre and the in charge of the centre did not hand over his custody without advice of the doctor concerned. (NOW)

- f. Several years ago and at various times *a friend Mike Sanborn* has told me of how he would pick range balls for John DeRudder at the old Meadowbrook range in exchange for lessons. # Like Bill Craig, *Mike* thought these were golf lessons, in reality they turned out to be life's lessons. (NOW)

These examples show that the introduction of a referent using a CA is very efficient since the proper name proves to be very useful when referring back to the introduced entity. Anaphoric reference with the first, descriptive element is possible as well. There is nothing ungrammatical about referring back to the introduced referent of an indefinite CA by the first nominal element, of course it would require the definite article. However, such anaphoric reference is infelicitous because it might be confusing for the hearer in longer texts, particularly where more than one persons are mentioned. As Givón explains, the more other topics are present in the immediate discourse environment, the more difficult it is to identify a topic, especially if those other topics have a semantically similar role within the clause which the topic in question occupies (1983: 11). Consider the following example in this respect:

- (35) On the night of the tragedy on April 10 last year, Miss Alam said she and Lena had been at the home of *a friend Marcia Khan* before heading to a shisha bar, where guests smoke flavoured tobacco in pipes. # Afterwards Lena asked to be dropped off on a road near the motorway. Miss Alam said: 'All I remember is her going up some stairs, she seemed happy. She wasn't saying about hurting herself, she never said anything.' # *Miss Khan* said during the evening Lena had confided in her about her romance with Ahmed. She said: 'Lena was saying how he didn't love her.' (NOW)

First of all, the newly introduced referent *a friend Marcia Khan* is introduced in a discourse where many other discourse-old and hearer-old referents are immediately present. To relate the referent to the discourse topic, the name was introduced with a descriptive element. As noted before, we cannot introduce a new name into a discourse without indicating its relation to that discourse in some way. Being just introduced, the name does not facilitate identifiability, but indicates the speaker's intention to use it for the subsequent mentions of the referent in the discourse. Because there are other entities (or topics in Givón's words) which serve similar semantic (and syntactic) roles to the newly introduced referent, the name (the label) has been added to make further reference possible without creating a confusion for the hearer. The most efficient way to refer back

to people is with a proper name, which most distinctly differentiates them from other people. In the passage in (35), *Miss Khan* is easily understood as referring back to *a friend Khan*, whereas the descriptive element *the friend* or even a personal pronoun *she* would be easily confused with referring to other topics in the discourse, particularly when these topics intersect the continuity of the newly introduced referent and its anaphoric reference (*Miss Alan* (also a friend) and *Lena* are mentioned in-between the introduction of *a friend Khan* and the subsequent anaphoric reference to her).

The identification of the referent by the name is rendered unique and identifiable because it had been introduced with a descriptive element in CA. The introduction serves to relate the newly introduced name to the discourse. On the introduction, the name provides additional information, not for identifiability but for the purpose of future reference, i.e. it functions as a cataphoric label.

#### **4.3.5. Politeness**

The majority of the examples in the data retrieved from the corpora show the use where the speaker assumes the hearer to be unfamiliar with the referent. If the speaker assumes the hearer to be (at least partially) familiar with the referent, a definite CA is used on the first mention. The reason behind using an indefinite CA can be seen as a face-saving strategy on behalf of the speaker, i.e. mitigation of a face-threatening act. The referent in question could be a well-known person in the speaker's (general) knowledge, but he/she does not assume this to be the case for the hearer. To use the definite article to introduce the referent of a CA would imply assumed familiarity of the hearer, hence a face-threatening act. To mitigate the face-threatening act, the speaker employs an indefinite construction.

'Politeness Theory' perceives 'politeness' as the preservation of 'face'. Face is defined by Brown and Levinson (1978: 66) as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (originally defined in Goffman (1967)). Face is thus a technical term for a sense of public self-esteem that all of us project in social interactions. According to Politeness Theory, every person has a 'face want', i.e. a territory that he/she wants to preserve, and each utterance is potentially threatening the face of the addressee(s) (a face-threatening act). Politeness is then defined as the speaker's intention to limit or even cancel such face-threatening acts by the use of specific linguistic expressions (Brown and Levinson 1978).

Using a definite CA to introduce a new referent in discourse implies assumptions that the hearer is (at least to some degree) familiar with the referent and that the definite CA would trigger (at least partial) identification of the referent. When uttering *the economist Robert Reich* on the introductory use (example (15)), the hearer is expected to know that at least there existed an economist named Robert Reich. In the best-case scenario, the hearer is assumed to be able to fully identify the referent. The description determined by the definite determiner assumes that the hearer will be able to relate this entity to his/her knowledge base (Keizer 2007: 48).

If the speaker, conversely, assumes that the referent might be unfamiliar to the hearer, and that no identification is to be expected, an indefinite construction will be used. The referent of an indefinite CA is assumed unknown to the hearer, though it may be obvious from the context of the utterance the speaker knows of him/her. The use of an indefinite expression signals this in a way to mitigate the face-threatening act of knowing the referent in question. The use of the definite article would directly require the hearer to make the connection between a descriptive element and a proper name. The need for this connection is made explicit by the definite article. Some examples for comparison are provided below:

(36) *The writer Virginia Woolf* famously said that one of the keys to a woman's freedom is having a room of one's own. (COCA, magazine)

(37) *A writer Zulfiqar Ahsan* has written an article on 'Waqea Karbala aur Urdu ka Sheri Adab' or 'Incident of Karbala and Urdu poetry', which has been incorporated in the book similarly. (NOW)

In (36) the addressee is assumed to know of the writer Virginia Woolf and the connection between the descriptive element and the proper name is expected to make the identification of the referent possible. In (37), on the other hand, the hearer is not assumed to know the writer Zulfiqar Ahsan (though they may in fact know him). But to indicate that the hearer does not have to make the connection between the descriptive element and a proper name, which, if one is unfamiliar with the referent might not be possible, an indefinite expression is used. The definite expression would put the hearers who are unfamiliar with the writer Zulfiqar Ahsan in a position where they are expected to know him, hence it could be a face-threatening act. The use of an indefinite expression signals this in a way to mitigate the face-threatening act.

The strategy which the speaker employs to minimize the face-threatening act is explained in Brown and Levinson (1978) in respect to the wants hearer takes into account: a) the want to communicate the content, b) the want to be efficient, and c) the want to maintain hearer's face to any degree. If b) is not greater than c), the speaker will want to mitigate the FTA (Brown and Levinson 1978: 68). In respect to (in)definiteness of CA, although both definite and indefinite CA can be used to introduce new referents, usually the definite expressions are used (presumably on the assumption that the referent is hearer-old, i.e. 'unused' in Prince's terms). The assumption that the hearer is unfamiliar with the intended referent will prompt the speaker to consider the want to maintain the hearer's face over the want to abide to the convention and disregard the assumption of the hearer's unfamiliarity. Therefore, the speaker employs a strategy to mitigate the FTA by using an indefinite article, which normally introduces brand new entities into discourse.

In the examples of indefinite CA, a face-saving strategy is reflected in that the hearer is signaled by the indefinite article that he/she is not obliged to look for the referent in his/her knowledge base. No identification is assumed, meaning no connection of the descriptive element and the proper name is expected for the purpose of identification. The expected connection signaled by the indefinite article is the following: the descriptive element introduces the name which in turn serves as a label for future referencing of this new referent. This then mitigates the face-threatening act of expecting the hearer to be familiar with the referent by connecting the two nominal elements in CA. In this way a speaker can communicate the intended meaning clearly while showing concern for the addressee's face wants and needs.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

The whole point of using an indefinite CA is basically similar to any other referential indefinite NP: to introduce a discourse-new referent on the assumption that the newly introduced referent is also hearer-new. The combination of a descriptive nominal element and a proper name or otherwise uniquely defined element is not assumed to facilitate identifiability, but rather to facilitate the introduction of an entity which will become a topical referent in the subsequent discourse. The entity introduced is given a label in the form of the second nominal element, the label which has been efficiently introduced by the descriptive element, and can, on the subsequent mentions, be used alone for the purpose of anaphoric reference. The use of an indefinite CA is different from the use of the definite CA in that the latter assumes the hearer to be able to identify the intended referent in his/her knowledge base by creating the connection between the two nominal elements, whereas with the use of an indefinite expression, no such identification is presupposed.

The indefinite CA is referential because the head of the construction, the descriptive element provides the attributes belonging to that entity. The second nominal element only serves as a label on that first mention, but a cataphoric label which indicates that the entity will be referred back to by that label. On the subsequent mention, the label incorporates the attributes provided by the descriptive element, and is therefore justifiably referential. Generally, the most efficient way to refer to an entity is by assigning them a label. For persons, that label is usually a proper name. However, to be able to refer to someone by their proper name, on the assumption that the individual is unknown to the hearer, we first have to introduce that name. The introduction via a descriptive element as in CA enables the hearer to attach certain attributes to the normally semantically empty label (a name which means nothing to the hearer). Once such introduction is made, we can subsequently put the name to its most basic use, namely to refer to unique individuals in the universe of discourse.

Finally, the use of indefinite CA might be conditioned by politeness. The assumption that the hearer is able to construe a connection between the two nominal elements puts the hearer in a situation where he/she is expected to be familiar with the referent of the combination. This might be perceived as a face threatening act, since our assumptions may be wrong, particularly when we rely on the shared general knowledge. To mitigate the face threatening act, but at the same time to indicate which individual from the class of individuals is being referred to, the speaker employs an

indefinite expression. The indefinite CA does not put the hearer at pressure to look for the referent in his/her knowledge base. At the same time, the newly introduced referent is cataphorically labelled by the second nominal, which indicates the intended topical status of the referent and enables the speaker to refer back to it by that label alone.

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## Abstract

This thesis is intended as a qualitative analysis of indefinite close appositive constructions (e.g. *an economist Thomas Sowell, a book Emilie, a word babiwanjit*) to account for the discourse-functional factors which determine the use of such expressions. It is argued that indefinite constructions of the type *indef. det. + N + N* are prototypically used on the speaker's assumptions that the hearer is unfamiliar with the referent of the whole construction (Keizer 2007:23). The combination of a descriptive nominal element and a proper name or otherwise uniquely defining element is not assumed to facilitate identifiability, but to introduce an entity which will become a topical referent in the subsequent discourse. The entity introduced is given a label in the form of the second nominal element, the label which has been efficiently introduced by the descriptive element, and can, on the subsequent mentions, be used alone for the purpose of anaphoric reference. The introduction via a descriptive element in close appositive constructions enables the speaker to attach certain attributes to the normally semantically empty label (a name which means nothing to the hearer). Once such introduction is made, we can subsequently put the name to its most basic use, namely to refer to unique individuals in the universe of discourse. It is further argued that the use of indefinite close appositive constructions might be conditioned by politeness. i.e. they are used to mitigate a face threatening act (Brown and Levinson 1978).

## Abstract in German (Deutsche Zusammenfassung)

Diese Arbeit ist als qualitative Analyse von unbestimmten „close appositive“ Konstruktionen gedacht (z. B. *an economist Thomas Sowell, a book Emilie, a word babiwanjit*), um die diskursfunktionalen Faktoren zu erklären, die die Verwendung solcher Ausdrücke bestimmen. Es wird argumentiert, dass unbestimmte Konstruktionen der Art *indef. det. + N + N* prototypisch für die Annahmen des Sprechers verwendet werden, sodass der Hörer mit dem Referenten der gesamten Konstruktion nicht vertraut ist (Keizer 2007: 23). Die Kombination eines deskriptiven nominalen Elements und eines Eigennamens oder eines anderweitig eindeutig definierten Elements soll nicht die Identifizierbarkeit erleichtern, sondern eine Einheit einführen, die im nachfolgenden Diskurs zu einem aktuellen Bezugspunkt wird. Die eingeführte Einheit erhält eine Markierung in Form des zweiten nominalen Elements, die Markierung, die durch das beschreibende Element effizient eingeführt wurde, und kann bei den nachfolgenden Erwähnungen allein für den Zweck der anaphorischen Referenz verwendet werden. Die Einführung über ein beschreibendes Element in „close appositive“ Konstruktionen ermöglicht dem Sprecher, bestimmte Attribute an das normalerweise semantisch leere Label anzuhängen (ein Name, der dem Hörer nichts bedeutet). Sobald eine solche Einführung erfolgt ist, kann der Name später auf seinen grundlegendsten Verwendungszweck angewendet werden, nämlich auf einzelne Individuen im Diskursuniversum zu verweisen. Es wird weiter argumentiert, dass die Verwendung von unbestimmten „close appositive“ Konstruktionen durch Höflichkeit bedingt sein könnte. d.h. sie werden verwendet, um ein „face-threatening act“ zu mildern (Brown und Levinson 1978).