

On Prenominal Relative Clauses and Appositive Adjectives

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1. Introduction

This paper addresses two main issues: the interpretation of Chinese relative clauses modifying proper names or pronouns; and the differences between appositive adjectives and appositive relative clauses.

The discussion is organized as follows: I will first show that Chinese relative clauses modifying proper names or pronouns consistently behave like restrictive relative clauses (section 2). In order to explain such bizarre behavior, in section 3 I compare appositive adjectives, restrictive relative clauses and appositive relative clauses, showing that restrictive relative clauses and appositive adjectives pattern alike and differently from appositive relative clauses. In section 4 I provide evidence to support the hypothesis that Chinese relative clauses are adjectival. The evidence is based on ordering preferences between i-level and s-level relative clauses, following work by Larson and Takahashi (2002) on Japanese and Korean. In section 5 tests on question/answer pairs and on VP-deletion and NP-deletion are used to show that Chinese relative clauses behave as restrictive relative clauses or as appositive adjectives, but never as real appositive relative clauses. Finally, I propose a mechanism for the interpretation of Chinese relative clauses that modify proper names or pronouns, to be extended also to English appositive adjectives.

2. Chinese relative clauses modifying proper names or pronouns

Chinese relative clauses modifying proper names or pronouns consistently behave like restrictives.

* This paper was presented at IGG XXX, Venice, Italy (2003). I would like to thank the audience there, and in particular Guglielmo Cinque, Alex Grosu and Orin Percus for their comments. I am also grateful to Hidehito Hoshi and Richard Larson for their helpful suggestions.

Safir (1986) shows that no pronoun contained within an appositive relative clause can be bound from the matrix clause, while this is possible if the pronoun is inside a restrictive relative clause:

- (1) a. *[Every Christian]_i forgives John, who harms him_i.
 b. [Every Christian]_i forgives a man who harms him_i.

In Chinese, however, a quantified noun phrase in the matrix clause can bind a pronoun contained within a relative that modifies a proper name or a pronoun:

- (2) [Mei-yi-ge xuesheng]_i dou xihuan [shi ta_i daoshi de] Huang laoshi.
 every-one-CL student all like be he advisor DE Huang professor
 lit. '[Every student]_i likes Prof. Huang who is his_i advisor.'
- (3) [Mei-yi-ge xuesheng]_i dou yuanliang (na-yi-ge)_[RC] cengjing
 every-one-CL student all forgives that-one-CL formerly
 shanghai-guo ta_i de] Lisi.
 insult GUO him DE Lisi
 lit. '[Every student]_i forgives Lisi who insulted him_i.'
- (4) [Mei-yi-ge laoshi]_i dou jiaoxun [_{RC} meiyou zunzhong ta_i de] women.
 every-one-CL prof. all scold not-have respect him DE us
 lit. '[Every professor]_i scolded us who disrespected him_i.'

Emonds (1979), following Ogle (1974), notices that the insertion of a sentential adverb of modification within a restrictive relative clause yields ungrammaticality:

- (5) a. The boys, who have frankly lost their case, should give up.
 b. *The boys that have frankly lost their case should give up.

In Chinese, the insertion of such adverbs of sentential modification within relative clauses that modify proper names (or pronouns) always results in ungrammaticality:

- (6) *[Shunbian-yi-sheng xihuan yinyue de] Zhangsan changchang qu
 by-the-way-one-voice like music DE Zhangsan often go
 yinyuehui.
 concert
 intended reading: 'Zhangsan, who by the way likes music, often goes to concerts.'

According to Giorgi (1984), the Italian long-distance anaphor *proprio*, ‘self’, if inside an appositive relative clause, can only be bound by the ‘head’ of the relative. If instead the anaphor is inside a restrictive relative clause, the sentence is ambiguous: the anaphor can be bound both by the subject of the matrix and by the ‘head’ of the relative clause:

- (7) a. Gianni_i disprezzava Mario_i, che t_i aveva ucciso la propria_{i/*j} moglie.
 Gianni scorn Mario who have killed the own wife
 ‘Gianni scorned Mario, who had killed his own wife.’
- b. Gianni_i disprezzava l’uomo_i che t_i aveva ucciso la propria_{i/j} moglie.
 Gianni scorn the man who have killed the own wife
 ‘Gianni scorned the man who had killed his own wife.’
 (Giorgi 1984: (40))

Interestingly, in Chinese, these sentences are always ambiguous, namely the long-distance anaphor *ziji*, ‘self’, can always be bound by both the matrix subject and the ‘head’ of the relative clause:

- (8) Zhangsan_i renwei [RC ai ziji_{j/i} de qizi de] Lisi_j hen congming.
 Zhangsan thinks love own DE wife DE Lisi very smart
 ‘Zhangsan_i thinks that the Lisi_j who_j loves his own_{j/i} wife is smart.’
- (9) Zhangsan_i renwei [RC ai ziji_j de qizi de] ta_j hen congming.
 Zhangsan think love himself DE wife DE him very smart
 ‘Zhangsan thinks that he who loves his own (that person’s) wife is very smart.’
- (10) Zhangsan_i renwei [RC ai ziji_i de qizi de] ta_j hen bu congming.
 Zhangsan think love himself DE wife DE him very not smart
 ‘Zhangsan thinks that he who loves his (Zhangsan’s) wife is not smart.’

In summary, even though all the Chinese relative clauses in the examples above modify either proper names or pronouns, and hence by virtue of this, would be expected to have the behavior of appositive relative clauses, the tests adopted all show that, both syntactically and semantically, these relative clauses behave like restrictives.

3. Appositive adjectives vs. appositive relative clauses

The interesting behavior of Chinese relative clauses highlighted in the previous section can be explained if we analyze them as appositive adjectives. The meaning of a sentence containing an appositive adjective in

most cases is equivalent to the meaning of the same sentence containing a corresponding appositive relative clause:

- (11) a. I like the Kern, which is navigable.
 b. I like the navigable Kern.

Clearly, the semantics of both (11a) and (11b) is very similar and can be paraphrased as something like:

- (12) I like the Kern and the Kern is navigable.

But the fact that the meaning of (11a) and (11b) is the same doesn't imply that the syntax and semantics of appositive adjectives and appositive relative clauses is the same. We can show the difference between the two types of constructions with tests on question/answer pairs, NP-deletion and VP-deletion. The original idea for the tests belongs to McCawley (1981), the actual examples and the extension to appositive adjectives is mine.

McCawley (1981) notices that in question/answer pairs, while appositives uttered in the question cannot be repeated in the answer, restrictives can:

- (13) a. Did Jeff go to the Kern, which is navigable?
 b. Yes, Jeff went to the Kern.
- (14) a. Did Jeff go to the river that is navigable?
 b. Yes, Jeff went to the river that is navigable.

In this respect, appositive adjectives behave like restrictive relatives, and not like appositive relatives, because they can be repeated in the answer:

- (15) a. Did Jeff go to the navigable Kern?
 b. Yes, Jeff went to the navigable Kern.

McCawley (1981) also observes that with NP-deletion, with a restrictive relative, the antecedent of the elided material must include the relative, whereas with an appositive relative, it cannot:

- (16) Jeff_i fired two employees that were responsible for the losses of his_i section and Dan_j fired one <employee that was responsible for the losses of his_{j/i} section>.
- (17) Jeff_i fired two employees, who apparently were responsible for the

losses of his_i section, and Dan fired one <employee>.

From the examples in (16) and (17), it is clear that the restrictive relative clause is included in the elided material: its content must be present at LF, otherwise we wouldn't have the sloppy/strict reading ambiguity in (16).¹ The denotation of the appositive relative clause, instead, is totally lost in (17): we have no clue whether the employee that Dan fired was at all responsible for either Jeff's or Dan's section's losses.

Appositive adjectives behave like restrictive relative clauses: they have to be included in the elided material:²

(18) Jeff bought two fragrant flowers and Dan bought one <fragrant flower>.

In the example above, we need to read the adjective *fragrant* as appositive, and not restrictive, for the test to be valid. This reading is of course perfectly available and under this reading, we understand that the flower bought by Dan was fragrant as well. Namely, the adjective *fragrant* has to be present at LF, just like we saw it is the case for restrictive relative clauses.

Finally, McCawley (1981) observes that VP-deletion ignores any appositive relative in the antecedent:

(19) Jeff_i went to the river that is his_i favorite navigable one, and Dan_j did too <go to the river that is his_{j/i} favorite navigable one>.

(20) Jeff_i likes the Kern, which is his_i favorite navigable river, and Dan does too <like the Kern>.

While the pronoun *his* in the elided VP in (19) can be bound by both subjects (hence, the strict/sloppy identity reading), in (20) we have no information whether the Kern is also Dan's favorite river or not. The pronoun is not present at LF because the appositive relative clause that contains it is not.

Once again, appositive adjectives pattern with restrictive relatives, and not with appositive relatives:

1. Recall that the strict interpretation arises when the pronouns are interpreted referentially; when the pronouns are instead bound, we have the sloppy interpretation (see Heim and Kratzer 1998).

2. Thanks to Richard Larson for suggesting this example to me.

(21) Jeff_i picked his_i favorite fragrant flower and Dan_j did too <pick his_{i/j} favorite fragrant flower>.

(22) Jeff_i went to see his_i beautiful Mary and Dan_j did too <go to see his_{i/j} beautiful Mary>.

In both (21) and (22), the appositive adjective is present at LF. Maybe this is shown more strongly in (22), where, given the presence of the proper name *Mary*, we can be sure that the interpretation of the adjective is appositive.

All the examples in this section aim to show that, despite their similarities, appositive adjectives and appositive relative clauses are syntactically and semantically different.

We know from studies on appositive relative clauses (see Demirdache 1991, Sells 1985, Del Gobbo 2003), that appositive relative clauses are not predicates of individuals (type <e,t>), but propositions (type t). At some level (LF, or discourse, or both, depending on different analyses) they are detached from the matrix clause. This allows them to escape binding from the matrix sentence that contains them. It's along these lines that we can explain the contrast seen in the examples in this section between appositive relative clauses on one side and appositive adjectives and restrictive relative clauses on the other side. Even though the final semantics of a matrix clause containing an appositive relative clause and of a matrix clause containing an appositive adjective in most cases boils down to the same truth value, appositive adjectives and appositive relative clauses behave differently in questions/answers pairs, NP-deletion and VP-deletion because appositive adjectives are adjoined to the noun phrases they modify at all levels, through LF, while appositive relative clauses are detached from the noun they modify at some level of the derivation. I therefore propose to acknowledge such a syntactic and semantic difference³ and to make use of

3. That appositive adjectives and appositive relative clauses are not related is also clear from Cinque (2003b). Cinque (2003b) relates indirect modifiers (stage level, restrictive, ect.) to reduced relative clauses. Consider the following examples:

(i) Our most active industrious Greeks

(ii) Our industrious Greeks_i that are most active t_i.

According to Cinque (2003b), there are two levels of modification: the Indirect Modification FP and the Direct Modification FP. The first one takes the second as its complement. The Indirect Modification FP hosts, among other kinds, restrictive modifiers, while the Direct Modification FP hosts non-restrictive modifiers. Post-nominal relative clauses, as the one in (ii), are derived by remnant movement of the Direct Modification FP and its complement, the NP, across it.

it to explain the behavior of Chinese relative clauses modifying proper names and pronouns. Before getting to this, let me first provide some evidence to show that Chinese relative clauses are ‘adjectival’ in nature.

4. Chinese relative clauses as appositive adjectives

I propose to treat Chinese relative clauses modifying proper names or pronouns as ‘adjectival’ relative clauses, in the sense that they are similar to appositive adjectives. In this section I provide evidence for the adjectival status of Chinese relative clauses by showing that they observe the same ordering restrictions that we find for prenominal adjectives in English.

Larson and Takahashi (2002) claim that Japanese and Korean prenominal relative clauses show ordering restrictions resembling those found in English prenominal adjectives:⁴

- (23) a. The [non-visible] [visible] stars include Capella.
 b. *The [visible] [non-visible] stars include Capella.

Relative clauses expressing i-level properties and relative clauses expressing s-level properties order freely among themselves. But when the two types of relatives combine, i-level relatives must occur closer to the noun than s-level relatives. Chinese shows the same pattern.⁵

When two i-level relative clauses precede the ‘head’, they can order freely among themselves:

- (24) Hui shuo Yidaliyu de xihuan qu yinyuehui de ren shi Zhangsan.
 can speak Italian DE like go concerts DE person is Z.S.

Notice that within this system no relation is or can be established between non-restrictive modifiers (adjectives) and appositive relative clauses, so that no transformation relates the sentences in (i) and (ii) to the following ones:

- (iii) Our most active Greeks, who are industrious
 (iv) Our Greeks that are most active, who are industrious

Cinque (2003b) moves FP (Dir Mod) above FP (Ind Mod) to derive ‘our industrious Greeks that are most active’. Even though in principle it could be possible to move NP only, deriving ‘our Greeks that are most active, who are industrious’, this yields an inappropriate structure. We know in fact that appositive relative clauses are detached from the DP they modify, so that they couldn’t possibly occupy the same position occupied by ‘industrious’.

4. The same facts hold in Turkish (Richard Larson, p.c.).
 5. Other elicited sentences show that s-level relative clauses can precede demonstratives, but i-level ones cannot, and that following the demonstrative, s-level can precede i-level, but not vice versa (Del Gobbo 2004).

‘The person who speaks Italian who likes to go to concerts is Zhangsan.’

- (25) Xihuan qu yinyuehui de hui shuo Yidaliyu de ren shi Zhangsan.
 like go concerts DE can speak Italian DE person is Z.S.
 ‘The person who likes to go to concerts who speaks Italian is Zhangsan.’

When two s-level relative clauses modify the ‘head’ noun, the same holds: they can occur freely among themselves:

- (26) Cong Yidali huilai de wo zuotian kanjian de ren shi Lisi.
 from Italy come-back DE I yesterday meet DE person be Lisi
 ‘The person who came back from Italy who I met yesterday is Lisi.’
- (27) Wo zuotian kanjian de cong Yidali huilai de ren shi Lisi.
 I yesterday meet DE from Italy come-back DE person be Lisi
 ‘The person who I met yesterday who came back from Italy is Lisi.’

When instead the two relatives are one i-level and the other s-level, the s-level one necessarily precede the i-level one:

- (28) Wo zuotian kanjian de xihuan qu yinyuehui de ren shi Zhangsan.
 I yesterday meet DE like go concerts DE person is Zhangsan
 ‘The person I met yesterday who likes to go to concerts is Zhangsan.’
- (29) *Xihuan qu yinyuehui de wo zuotian kanjian de ren shi Zhangsan.
 like go concerts DE I yesterday meet DE person is Zhangsan
 ‘The person who likes to go to concerts who I met yesterday is Zhangsan.’

The same pattern holds with relative clauses modifying proper names, in particular:

- (30) Ni zuotian kanjian de xihuan qu yinyuehui de Zhangsan shi wo
 you yesterday meet DE like go concerts DE Zhangsan is my
 pengyou.
 friend
 lit. ‘Zhangsan who you met yesterday who likes to go to concerts is my friend.’
- (31) *Xihuan qu yinyuehui de ni zuotian kanjian de Lisi shi wo pengyou.
 like go concerts DE you yesterday meet DE Lisi is my friend

intended reading: ‘Lisi who likes to go to concerts who you met yesterday is my friend.’

Larson and Takahashi (2002) claim that in Japanese and Korean prenominal relative clauses function more like adjectival constructions than English finite relative clauses. I showed in this section that this is true for Chinese as well. Chinese relative clauses are somehow adjectival; this allows them to receive an appositive interpretation, while maintaining the behavior of restrictive relative clauses. This is equal to saying that Chinese relative clauses modifying pronouns and proper names behave like appositive adjectives.

5. Where do Chinese relative clauses stand?

Chinese relative clauses show the behavior of either appositive adjectives or restrictive relative clauses. They never behave like true appositive relative clauses. The evidence, once again, comes from the same tests on question/answer pairs, VP-deletion and NP-deletion.

If we apply the test on question/answer pairs in Chinese, we see that the relative clause can be repeated in the answer, as it is possible for an appositive adjective (cf. (15) above):

- (32) a. [Xihuan yinyue de] Zhangsan changchang qu yinyuehui ma?
 like music DE Zhangsan often go concert MA
 lit. ‘Does music-liking Zhangsan often go to concerts?’
- b. Dui, [xihuan yinyue de] Zhangsan changchang qu yinyuehui.
 yes, like music DE Zhangsan often go concert
 lit. ‘Yes, music-liking Zhangsan often goes to concerts.’

Let’s consider now an example of VP-deletion:⁶

- (33) Zhangsan xihuan [ganggang lai de] nage laoshi, Lisi ye xihuan
 Zhangsan likes just arrive DE that-CL prof. Lisi also likes
 <[ganggang lai de] nage laoshi>.
 just arrive DE that-CL professor
 ‘Zhangsan likes the professor who just arrived, and so does Lisi.’

We can now test VP-deletion on a relative clause that modifies a proper name, as the one in (34):

6. Following Grace H.-J. Li’s (2002) work, I consider Chinese null object constructions as examples of VP-deletion.

- (34) Zhangsan_i xihuan [shi ta_i de daoshi de] Huang laoshi, Lisi_j ye xihuan
 Zhangsan likes be he DE advisor DE Huang professor, Lisi also likes
 <[shi ta_{i/j} de daoshi de] Huang laoshi>.
 be he DE advisor DE Huang professor
 lit. 'Zhangsan likes Prof. Huang that is his advisor, and so does Lisi.'

As we can see from the example above, the relative clause is present at LF, after VP-deletion. We know that this is so because the sentence is ambiguous: it can either receive the sloppy or the strict identity reading. The relative clause in this case behaves as an appositive adjective, since it modifies a proper name. But it crucially doesn't behave as a real appositive relative clause, since it is present at LF, while real appositive relative clauses are not (cf. (20)).

If we test NP-deletion on relative clauses in Chinese, given the nature of the test itself (namely the fact that the elided NP has to be a common noun), we can show that Chinese relative clauses behave as restrictive ones, and not as appositive ones. Take the following as an example of NP-deletion in Chinese:

- (35) Wo mai le liang-ben [Li laoshi xie de] shu, ta ye mai le liang-ben
 I buy LE two-CL Li professor write DE book he also buy LE two-CL
 <[Li laoshi xie de] shu>.
 Li professor write DE book
 'I bought two of the books that Prof. Li wrote, and he also bought two.'

If we add a pronoun inside the relative clause to be bound by the matrix subject, we see that in the elided part this again gives rise to the strict/sloppy reading ambiguity:

- (36) Zhangsan_i mai le liang-ben [ta_i zui xihuan] de shu, Lisi_j ye mai le
 Zhangsan buy LE two-CL he most like DE book, Lisi also buy LE
 liang-ben <[ta_{i/j} zui xihuan de] shu>.
 two-CL he most like DE book
 'Zhangsan bought two of the books that he likes the most, and Lisi also bought two.'

This again demonstrates that relative clauses in Chinese show the behavior of restrictive relative clauses, and not of appositive ones (cf. (17)).

To conclude, Chinese relative clauses never behave as real appositive relative clauses, but either as restrictive relative clauses or as appositive adjectives.

6. On the interpretation of Chinese relative clauses

I claim that Chinese relative clauses cannot be real appositive relative clauses. This means that they cannot behave syntactically and semantically as such. Real appositive relative clauses denote propositions (see Sells 1985, Demirdache 1991), hence independent sentences (type *t*). Syntactically, they are detached from the ‘head’, at some relevant level (Del Gobbo 2003).⁷ Chinese relative clauses behave as if they are never detached from their ‘heads’: we saw that it is possible to bind inside them (ex. (2)-(4) and (8), (10), and that they are always present at LF in contexts of VP-deletion and NP-deletion (ex. (34) and (36)). On the other hand, they do not behave as full propositions (type *t*), for example they do not accept the insertion of sentential adverbs of modification (ex. (6)), and in question/answer pairs they can be repeated, while real appositives (i.e. full propositions) cannot. In sum, relative clauses that modify proper names and pronouns in Chinese have the syntax of restrictive relative clauses, but they can modify singular terms (type *e*). Now, if Chinese relative clauses are always adjoined to their ‘heads’ and if they are predicates of individuals (type $\langle e, t \rangle$), how can it be possible for them to be combined semantically with singular terms (type *e*)? I propose that when the relative clause, a predicate of individuals (type $\langle e, t \rangle$), modifies a singular term (type *e*), it simply intersects with the singleton set formed from the denotation of the latter. The structure is acceptable if the predicate denoted by the relative is true of the individual denoted by the DP. This will hold for the cases of Chinese relative clauses modifying proper names that we saw in this article,⁸ but crucially also for appositive adjectives in English. We saw from section 3 that appositive adjectives are a lot more similar to restrictive relative clauses than they are to appositive relative clauses. This is so

7. In Del Gobbo (2003), I claim that appositive relative clauses are an instance of E-type anaphora. Simply put, in order for the appositive pronoun to be properly interpreted as E-type, the relative clause has to follow its ‘head’. This is ultimately why Chinese relative clauses are prevented from being real appositive relative clauses, namely because they are prenominal.

8. There exists another possible interpretation, which is what I call the stage-level interpretation. In some cases, when a nominal of type *e* is combined with a restrictive relative clause, the nominal is type-shifted to a predicate of type $\langle e, t \rangle$. The relative clause is not predicated of the individual denoted by the ‘head’, but of a particular ‘stage’ of that individual (see Paul 1994). So that in:

(i) Ta bu shi [wo renshi de Zhangsan]
 he not be I know DE Zhangsan
 ‘He’s not the Zhangsan I know.’

[[wo renshi de Zhangsan]] = the *x* s.t. *x* is a ‘stage’ of Zhangsan and I know *x*.

because even though in the end the following two sentences mean the same thing:

- (37) a. That student, who is smart, will always do well.
 b. That smart student will always do well.

their syntax and semantics is not identical. More precisely, while appositive relative clauses are propositions (type *t*), and an instance of E-type anaphora, and as such are restricted by precise conditions (see Del Gobbo 2003), appositive adjectives are semantically properties (type $\langle e,t \rangle$), and syntactically adjuncts. What distinguishes them from restrictive relative clauses is simply what they modify; namely, appositive adjectives can modify proper names, restrictive relative clauses cannot.

As for Chinese relative clauses, we saw that there is evidence to consider them more ‘adjectival’ than relative clauses in English (section 4). This allows them to function as appositive adjectives when they modify pronouns and proper names. The next question of course is: what prevents English relative clauses from being as ‘adjectival’ as Chinese ones? To find an answer, we need to investigate what it means for a relative clause to be ‘adjectival’. Is this property related to finiteness or to linear order (we saw here that this property seems to be characteristic of prenominal relative clauses)? I leave this question open, for further development.

7. Conclusion

Chinese relative clauses modifying proper names and pronouns are not appositive relative clauses, but appositive adjectival relative clauses.

We can distinguish appositive adjectives and appositive adjectival relative clauses from real appositive relative clauses using tests on question/answer pairs, VP-deletion and NP-deletion.

In Del Gobbo (2003), I propose that appositive relative clauses denote propositions (type *t*); syntactically, they are detached from the ‘head’, at some relevant level. Here I claim that appositive adjectives denote properties (type $\langle e,t \rangle$); syntactically they are modifiers (adjuncts). Appositive adjectives are then very similar to restrictive relative clauses. The difference simply lies in the denotation of the noun they modify.

If, as proposed by Cinque (2003a), post-nominal relatives are derived from prenominal ones and if prenominal relative clauses cannot be appositive relative clauses (see Del Gobbo 2003, De Vries 2002), then post-nominal appositive relatives need to have a different source: they are full sentences (propositions) disguised as nominal modifiers.

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