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Revisiting the typology of English copular clauses: ascription and specification in categorizing and identifying clauses

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Abstract

In work on the typology of English copular clauses two main distinctions have been made: specificational versus ascriptive clauses and identifying versus predicative (which we call "categorizing") clauses. In this article we argue that these two oppositions cannot be conflated. We propose to cross-classify copular clauses into four basic subtypes, namely specificational-identifying, specificational-categorizing, ascriptive-identifying and ascriptive-categorizing clauses. We show that the proposed typology provides an internally coherent characterization of the four basic subtypes of copular clauses, in particular of the neglected subtype of specificational clauses with an indefinite variable (i.e. specificational-categorizing clauses). Zooming in on categorizing clauses, we propose that their semantics are best captured in terms of a correspondence relation between instance and schema.

1. Introduction: state of the art [1]

The typology of English copular clauses has been a topic of long-standing debate. Two main traditions can be found in the literature.

One tradition views the opposition between ascriptive and specificational clauses as the main split (e.g. Akmaijan 1979; Higgins 1976; Huddleston and Pullum 2002; den Dikken 2006). The contrast resides here in the communicative function (Collins 1991: 5), which answers different (implied) questions and entails different focus assignment. The point of ascriptive clauses is to attribute a description to the subject, with the information focus, marked in bold, typically falling on the descriptive complement, i.e. *very conservative* in (1a) and *a conservative* in (1b).

(1)   a. Harry Potter is **very conservative**.

   b. Harry Potter is **a conservative**. (WB)[2]

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[2] Examples followed by (WB) were extracted from Wordbanks*Online* and are reproduced here with the permission of HarperCollins. Examples retrieved from the Internet are followed by their url.

Specificational clauses set up a pragmatically presupposed variable, e.g. *the chief culprit* in (2), to which they assign a specific value, *Kim* in (2), on which the information focus typically falls.

(2)   (Which was the chief culprit?) **Kim** was the chief culprit. The chief culprit was **Kim**.
       (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 266)

The other tradition takes the opposition between predicative and identifying clauses to be the main one (e.g. Halliday 1967, 1994; Dik 1980; Declerck 1988; Langacker 1991; Stassen 1997). The basic semantic contrast is between categorizing versus identifying semantics, which entails that primary importance is assigned to the indefinite or definite status of the complements of *be*. In predicative clauses the complement, which is typically adjectival, e.g. *very greedy* (3a), or an indefinite nominal, e.g. *a thief* (3b), designates the category in terms of which the subject referent is classified.

(3)   a. Alice is very greedy.
       b. Alice is a thief. (Langacker 1991: 67)

Identifying clauses "express that the referents of two definite terms [...] coincide in the same entity" (Dik 1980: 32), as is the case with *Alice* and *the cat that stole the liver* in (4).

(4)   Alice is the cat that stole the liver. (Langacker 1991: 67)

In this article we argue against the view that these two oppositions largely coincide, as suggested by, for instance, den Dikken (2006: 3). Assuming such a coincidence leads to a number of – sometimes tacit – conflations that we reject.

Firstly, a number of authors seem to imply that specifying is the same thing as identifying. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 266), for instance, state of *Kim was the chief culprit* (2), that it "serves *to specify, or identify*, who the chief culprit was" [emphasis ours]. This would, in turn, imply that specificational clauses exhaust the identifying type. Against this, authors such as Halliday (1967, 1994); Higgins (1976); Declerck (1988) and Stassen (1997) have convincingly argued for a second type of identifying clause in which a uniquely identifying description is given of the subject, as in (5).

(5)   Gary Megson is to appeal against the misconduct charge levelled against Albion… After Scott Dobie's second goal, there was a scuffle in the penalty area, but Megson insists that <u>Albion were</u> **<u>the victims rather than the instigators</u>**. (WB)

We adhere to the position that identifying clauses can be either specificational, as in (2), or ascriptive, as in (5). We thus explicitly define the ascriptive subtype as also subsuming copular clauses with definite nominal complements of the subject, as in (5).

Secondly, specifying clauses with an *indefinite* variable NP, like *a familiar example* in (6) have been viewed as identifying, for instance by Halliday (1967, 1985, 1994: 129).

(6)   Now a genus is a category of classification, <u>a familiar example would be **the genus equus**</u>, which contains the zebras, the horses and the donkeys. (WB)

Here we are up against the flipside of the conflation between specification and identification that we reject. Example (6) does not have two NPs whose referents coincide in the same entity (Dik 1980: 32), that is, it is not an identifying clause. Rather, *the genus equus* refers to a more specific referent than *a familiar example [of a genus]*, which designates a "generalized instance" (Langacker 2009) subsuming other more specific instances besides *the genus equus,* such as the genus *canis*. In specifying clauses with an indefinite variable NP like (6), the value thus refers to a specific instance of the more general schema designated by the variable, i.e. they involve a relation between an instance and its schema.

Thirdly, we argue that specificational clauses with an indefinite variable NP like (6) share their instance – schema semantics with the type of copular clause that is traditionally called "predicative", i.e. ascriptive clauses with adjectival or indefinite nominal complement, as in *Alice is very greedy* (3a) and *Alice is a thief* (3b). The semantics of predicative clauses have traditionally been approached in terms of the logical model of "class inclusion" (e.g. Declerck 1988, Halliday 1994). However, class-inclusion cannot offer a natural explanation of the gradability associated with predicative clauses (Declerck 1988: 61), e.g. (3a) *Alice is very greedy*. By contrast, if we conceive of the relation between subject and predicative complement as a correspondence relation between instance and schema (Langacker 1991), then gradability is a natural feature of it (Davidse 1992). Equally importantly, the instance – schema semantic model allows one to generalize over the two copular types with indefinite NP, ascriptive ones with an indefinite descriptive complement like (3b) and specificational ones with an indefinite variable, like (6). To generalize over the instance – schema semantics of clauses like (3) and (6), we propose the term "categorizing" copular clauses. Just as identifying clauses can be either ascriptive or specificational, we hold that categorizing ones can be either ascriptive or specificational too.

In taking this position, we reject a final, very widespread conflation in work on copular clauses, viz. that of ascriptive and predicative clauses (Huddleston & Pullum 2002): Instead, we define ascription as the communicative function contrasting with specification. The copulars with adjectival or indefinite nominal complement that are traditionally labelled "predicative" are ascriptive-categorizing in our approach.

To arrive at a typology that does justice to the coded meanings of the main subtypes and that brings out the main similarities and differences between the subtypes, we thus advocate a *cross-classificational* approach. We argue in effect that *two* semantic oppositions defining *four* contrastive terms and a fourfold typology should be distilled from what is usually presented as a binary, or ternary, typology.[3] As the two main semantic dimensions we take the two oppositions:

> i. ascriptive – specificational;
>
> ii. categorizing – identifying.

Importantly, we partly redefine the four terms as outlined above (and developed further in this article) because we dissociate the two oppositions in which they figure from each other. We will show that these four terms define the following basic subtypes of copular clause:

1) ascriptive-categorizing, e.g. *Alice is **a thief***.
2) specificational-categorizing, e.g. *A familiar example would be **the genus equus***.
3) ascriptive-identifying, e.g. *Albion were **the victims rather than the instigators***.
4) specificational-identifying, e.g. *The chief culprit was **Kim***.

The article will be structured as follows. In Section 2, we outline the semantic values and the main formal correlates of the four terms of our typology. In Section 3, we discuss the two types of identifying clauses. Section 4 concentrates on the two types of categorizing clauses with a focus on specificational-categorizing clauses, which, even though the clause type has been commented on (e.g. Declerck 1988: 49; Mikkelsen 2005: 154-155), has to our knowledge not been elucidated as the specificational counterpart of ascriptive-categorizing, or "predicative", clauses. As the quantitative instantiation of categories is an intrinsic part of a usage-based description, we report on the relative frequencies of the four subtypes in an extensive random sample of 2,926 copular clauses in Section 5. The descriptive generalizations outlined in Sections 2 to 4 were verified by observing the patterns in this dataset.

2 The terms of our crossclassificational typology

2.1 Ascriptive - specificational

The ascriptive – specificational opposition captures the contrasting functions of adding descriptive features to the subject versus specifying a value for a variable. On our understanding of these terms, the contrast between them is reflected in different semantic probes and distinct sets of syntactic alternations, and it correlates with different information structures as defaults.

With ascriptive clauses the information focus is typically on the complement that ascribes descriptive features to the subject, which in our approach can be not only adjectival (7a) or an indefinite

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[3] Binary approaches are found in Huddleston & Pullum (2002), who distinguish ascriptive and specificational copulars, and in Dik (1980) and Langacker (1991), who contrast predicative with identifying clauses. A ternary typology is offered by Declerck (1988), who distinguishes predicative, descriptionally-identifying and specificationally-identifying clauses, and Halliday (1967, 1994), who opposes attributive to decoding-identifying and encoding-identifying clauses.

NP (7b) but also a definite NP (7c). The complement is probed by interrogative preforms such as *how, what like, what type of, what, who*, as illustrated below.

(7)   a. Harry Potter is **very conservative**. → How is Harry Potter? What is Harry Potter like?
        b. Harry Potter is **a conservative** → What/what type of citizen is Harry Potter?
        c. Harry Potter is **the hawk of the lot.** → Who/what type of citizen is Harry Potter in that group?

This typical information structure may be overridden by contrastive focus on the complement, as in (7d).

(7)   d. **(A) conservative**/**the hawk of the lot** Harry Potter may be, but he is not a fascist.

Syntactically, ascriptive clauses allow for fronting of their complement (Declerck 1988: 63), as in (7d), but they are not reversible in the sense of subject-complement switch (Huddleston 1984: 457), as shown by the fact that the erstwhile subject cannot receive the oblique case marking complements in English. With categorizing ascriptive clauses this is a formal impossibility:

(7)   e. *Very conservative/A conservative is him.

With identifying ascriptive clauses, subject-complement switch inevitably turns them into specificational clauses, which do not fit in the original context anymore. This is illustrated by (8b), which is the reversed variant of (8a). In this context, it makes no sense communicatively to set up *the victims rather than the instigators* as the pragmatically presupposed variable, whose value is then specified by *Albion* as in (8b).

(8)   a. Gary Megson is to appeal against the misconduct charge levelled against Albion… . After Scott Dobie's second goal, there was a scuffle in the penalty area, but Megson insists that <u>Albion were **the victims rather than the instigators**</u>. (WB)
        b. *the victims rather than the instigators were **Albion/them**.

It is precisely because the clauses with indefinite (7b) and definite (7c) nominal complement share the same basic communicative function and the same syntactic behaviour that we propose that they can be generalized over as "ascriptive" copulars.

This generalization allows the natural accommodation of cases of ambiguity between a predicative and identifying reading. The most common form of structural ambiguity is that found with copular clauses whose complement contains a genitive or possessive determiner, as in (9), where *Mr Tedeschi's friend* and *his friend* can in principle refer to either 'the' friend of *Mr Tedeschi's / his* or to 'a' friend of his. This structural ambiguity can be contextually disambiguated: in the context of this

example, the indefinite reading is more plausible because the ascriptive complement *his colleague* is unlikely to be a defining description.

(9)   'Are you **Mr Tedeschi's friend**?' I replied that I wasn't exactly **his friend**, more **his colleague.** (WB)

This ambiguity led Keizer (1990: 1504) to question the soundness of Declerck's (1988) distinction between predicative, i.e. ascriptive-categorizing, clauses and ascriptive-identifying clauses. In reaction to this criticism, Declerck (1990: 524) proposed treating such clauses as in principle ascriptive-identifying clauses, while recognizing that sometimes the speaker deliberately "dodges giving precise identifying information" and instead uses a postcopular NP that is merely a property. However, the analysis of examples like (9) as identifying clauses may have been motivated by the apparent definiteness of NPs with genitive or possessive determiner, whereas they are in fact not overtly marked for definiteness in English (Willemse, Davidse & Heyvaert 2009: 16, 26). Hence, we propose to view clauses like (9) as being ambiguous out of context. On the reading in which the subject is the only friend of Mr Tedeschi the clause is identifying, while on the reading in which he is one of his friends – which is the most plausible in this context –, it is categorizing.

The kind of generalization that we propose for ascriptive-categorizing and ascriptive-identifying copular clauses is more generally accepted for *specificational* copulars. It has indeed been noted in the literature that values may be specified for both indefinite (10) and definite variable NPs (11) (e.g. Declerck 1988: 49; Halliday 1994: 129, Mikkelsen 2005: 154-155, Heycock 2012: 220). The information focus is typically on the NP referring to the value that is being specified for the variable and it is probed by interrogatives that select values from an implied set of alternatives: '*which/who/what is the/an instance corresponding to the variable?*', as in *Which is the chief culprit? Kim is the chief culprit* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 266). Examples (10a) and (11a) provide contextualized examples of categorizing-specificational and identifying-specificational clauses with their probes (10b, 11b). As is generally recognized Huddleston 1984: 457; Higgins 1976; Declerck 1988; Halliday 1994; den Dikken 2001), the crucial recognition criterion of specificational copular clauses in English is their reversibility: the possibility to assign the functions of subject and complement in the reverse way (Huddleston 1984: 457). That the erstwhile subject really becomes the complement is shown by the oblique case it takes in the pronominal form: *her* in (12c) and *him* in (13c). (10c) and (11c) illustrate the reversal of the attested examples (10a) and (11a). The value NP typically remains the most salient new of the utterance and then receives the information focus in initial position. Even though the reversed order (10c)-(11c) is mostly somewhat less appropriate in a context where the non-reversed variant, e.g. (10a)-(11a), was originally selected, it is not communicatively nonsensical like the reversed variant (8b) of ascriptive-identifying (8a), as shown by the pragmatic acceptability of *Or in Valverde, **the Hotel Boomerang** is the best option* for example (11c).

(10) a. the driver can call an OnStar technician who retrieves data from the car's computer to determine the problem. Many GM models come with this option installed; it's free for one year and renewable for $289 a year. <u>An option is **OnStar's personal calling service**</u>. (WB)

b. What is an option?

c. **OnStar's personal calling service** is an option.

(11) a. Where to stay: the Parador El Hierro … has doubles from £80 a night, B&B. Or in Valverde, <u>the best option is **the Hotel Boomerang**</u>. (WB)

b. Which is the best option?

c. Or in Valverde, t**he Hotel Boomerang** is the best option.

(12) a. Who was an example of musical genius – Robert or Clara Schumann?

b. If anyone, **she** was an example of musical genius.

c. An example of musical genius was **her**, if anyone.

(13) a. Who was the difficult one in that marriage?

b. If anyone, **he** was the difficult one.

c. The difficult one was **him**.

Again, the default information structure can be overridden, amongst others when the value is realized by an anaphoric, non-contrastive pronoun, which is intrinsically given and unable to carry the information focus, as in (14) (Halliday 1967: 231).

(14) ("what you've just said" –) // this is what I **meant** // (Halliday 1967: 231)

As specificational constructions, these copulars alternate systematically with specificational clefts. It is generally accepted that specificational-identifying clauses alternate with pseudo-clefts and *it*-clefts and that, indeed, the possibility of constructing these corresponding clefts is a recognition criterion of the specificational nature of the copular clause (Declerck 1988: 10). Corresponding to (11a) *the best option is* ***the Hotel Boomerang**,* we can thus get both the pseudocleft (11d) and the *it*-cleft (11e). Note in this context that the possibility of probing (14) by an *it*-clefts shows the example to be specificational: *what is it that you meant?*

(11) d. The one that is the best option is **the Hotel Boomerang**.

e. It's **the Hotel Boomerang** that is the best option.

Since specificational-categorizing clauses have generally been overlooked as a type in their own right, the "indefinite" specificational clefts corresponding to them have not received much attention either. In fact, parallel to specificational-identifying clauses alternating with definite pseudo-clefts and *it*-clefts,

specificational-categorizing clauses alternate systematically with indefinite pseudo-clefts and with specificational *there*-clefts. Just as the variable in a specificational-categorizing clause (10a) is indefinite, the variable with restrictive relative clause in the pseudo-cleft alternate (10d) is headed by indefinite *one*. And as pointed out by Halliday (1967: 238) and Hannay (1985: 118-123), the indefinite counterpart of *it*-clefts is formed by specificational *there*-clefts like (10e): they non-exhaustively enumerate one or more instances corresponding to the variable expressed by the cleft relative clause.

(10)   d. One that is an option is **OnStar's personal calling service.**
         e. There's **OnStar's personal calling service** that's an option.

The existence of these largely overlooked clefts further supports the logic of the similarly overlooked specificational-categorizing clauses. All these structures with *indefinite* variable share the function of *non-exhaustive* specification (Lambrecht 2001: 303): one or more instances are listed as corresponding to the variable, with the implicature that there may still be other values that satisfy the variable.

2.2 Categorizing – identifying

The categorizing-identifying dimension is to do with the contrast that has traditionally been conceived of as class-inclusion versus identity of reference.

For *identifying* clauses we agree with Dik (1980: 32) that they "express that the referents of two definite terms [...] coincide in the same entity". Identifying clauses have two definite NPs that are contextually co-referential: they apply to the same extralinguistic entities as in *Kim was the chief culprit* (2) and *Alice is the cat stole the liver* (4). Once this identity of reference has been established by an identifying clause, either NP can in principle be used in the following discourse to refer to the single extralinguistic referent in question. By contrast, between the definite, more specific NP and the indefinite, lexicosemantically more general NP in categorizing clauses like *Alice is a thief* (3b) no such co-referentiality is established. *Alice* can be used to refer to the specific cat with that name, but *a thief* is not uniquely identifying and does not pick out the specific instance in question.

With regard to categorizing copulars, we argue that they are best accounted for in terms of a relation between instance and schema. This converges partly with the long tradition that has taken "class inclusion" as the semantic model of "predicative" clauses (e.g. Declerck 1988; Halliday 1994). It diverges from this tradition in two important respects. Firstly, we argue that "categorizing" semantics do not equal "predication" (or "ascription"), but *can be construed either ascriptively or specificationally* (Davidse 2010) (see below Section 4). Secondly, as pointed out in Davidse (1992), the *gradability* associated with categorizing clauses is better accounted for by the relation of instantiation than by the logical notion of cut-and-dried class membership.

More specifically, we conceive of the semantics of categorizing clauses in terms of conformity, or correspondence, between instance and schema. To conceive of the instance – schema relation, we

follow Langacker (1991) in viewing superordination (type – subtype) and instantiation (type – instance) as one continuum, in which "the lowest level in a type hierarchy consists of specific instances" (Langacker 1991: 61). This continuum is defined by progressive semantic specification in the direction from type to subtypes to instances, and by increasing semantic generality, or schematicity, in the direction from instances to types to more general types. An example of such a unified superordination – instantiation continuum is given in Figure 1.
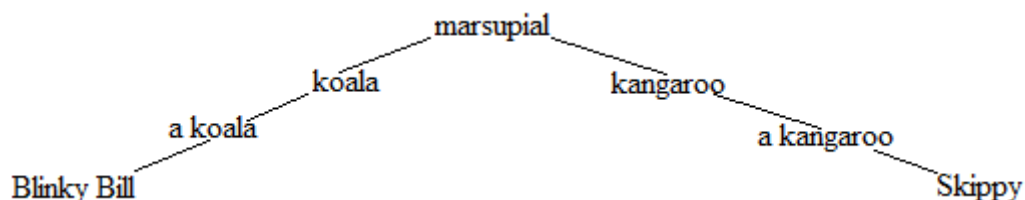
Figure 1. A unified superordination - instantiation continuum.

In the superordination relation between *marsupial* and *kangaroo*, the concept [marsupial] is more general and its semantic contents less precise than the concept [kangaroo]. Likewise, the step from the type *kangaroo* to an instance *a kangaroo* entails semantic specification: the common noun on its own designates a pure "virtual" type, whereas a full NP with a determiner designates an instance related in some way to the speech exchange (Langacker 1991: 33). The final step to a specific instance, *Skippy,* again involves a more elaborate conception, as its semantic value is not limited to its being a particular instance of *kangaroo* but also includes more precise specifications relating to the pet's individual characteristics in the well-known Australian children's series (Langacker 1991: 61).

Importantly, the correspondence relation between instance and schema allows a more natural explanation of the gradability associated with categorizing clauses than class-membership. Classes are "logical bounded entities membership in which is defined by an item's possession of a simple set of criterial (i.e. necessary and sufficient) features, in which all instances possessing the criterial attributes have a full and equal degree of membership" (Rosch & Mervis 1975: 573-574). A schema, on the other hand, designates a "prototypical category, [which] exhibit[s] degrees of typicality – not every member is equally representative for a category – and a family resemblance, in which each item has at least one, and probably several, elements in common with one or more items, but no, or few, elements are common to all items" (Rosch & Mervis 1975: 574-575). The idea of more prototypical versus more peripheral instances of a schema translates directly into gradability, which as observed by (Declerck 1988: 61) is a distinguishing feature of predicative clauses, observable with both adjectical and nominal predicative complements, as in (15)-(16).

(15)   Would you like rolls? They 're a little stale; yesterday's. (WB)

(16)   I'm not much of a clergyman. My sermons tend to resemble legal arguments. I'm awkward at pastoral work. I try to avoid the poor. I think too much about cultivating the people who matter. In fact although I'm so successful I'm really rather a failure. (WB)

The categorizing clause in (16) rates yesterday's rolls on the scale of "staleness" implied in the complement. In (17) by calling himself not much of a clergyman, the speaker categorizes himself as a very peripheral example of the category "clergyman". Grading the ascriptive complement presupposes a view in which instances are evaluated as having more or fewer features of the schema they are related to. Gradability is less naturally accounted for in the traditional view which determines class membership in terms of a fixed set of necessary and sufficient features.

Adjectival complements, as in (15), clearly designate type specifications which are ascribed to the subject, and hence categorize its referent. Categorizing clauses with adjectival phrases can only be construed ascriptively because an adjective cannot function as a variable NP: its inability to become a subject prevents the clause from being reversible in the sense of Subject-Complement switch that is criterial for specificational clauses. However, how precisely a NP, like *a thief* in (17), realizes schema-semantics in a categorizing clause has to be spelt out more precisely. As stressed by Langacker (1991: 67) *a thief* in (17) designates an instance. Only a common noun on its own designates a type but "a full nominal designates a grounded instance of that type, i.e. an instance distinguished from others and situated with respect to speaker/hearer knowledge" (Langacker 1991: 33). As we will argue below (Section 4), the fact that an indefinite NP with a common noun designates "an instance of the type T designated by the noun" helps explain why it can function either as an ascriptive complement or as a variable NP in categorizing clauses[4]. In this section, however, we will limit ourselves to establishing why clauses with an indefinite ascriptive complement like (17) convey categorizing (instance-schema) semantics and those with a definite one like (18) identifying semantics.

(17)   Alice is a thief. (Langacker 1991: 67)
(18)   Alice is the cat that stole the liver. (Langacker 1991: 67)

As pointed out by Langacker (1991: 67-68) part of the semantic contrast between (17) and (18) is caused by the different grounding predications of the nominal predicates. In (17) *the* signals a contextually unique referent, which is evident to both speech-act participants. The copular verb in (18) thus links two specific, separately characterized individuals, establishing contextual co-referentiality, or identity, between them. (17), by contrast, has the indefinite complement NP *a thief*. As argued with regard to the instantiation continuum illustrated in Figure 1, the instance designated by an indefinite nominal like *a thief* is intrinsically semantically more general than a specific instance like *Alice*. Moreover, the indefinite complement in (17) designates "an **arbitrary** member of the *thief* category" (Langacker 1991:

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[4] Because the indefinite variable NP in categorizing clauses such as *An option is OnStar's personal calling service* designates a grounded instance of that type, i.e. an instance distinguished from others and situated with respect to speaker/hearer knowledge, the required presupposition of existence can attach to it (Declerck 1988: 15, 20-21).

67). It is arbitrary in the sense that this instance conception is "'conjured up' by the speaker and hearer solely for purposes of making a type attribution, and has no status outside the confines of this predicate nominative construction" (Langacker 1991: 68). Hence, the semantics of (17) can be glossed as "Alice is an arbitrary member of the type or schema *thief*", i.e. "Alice instantiates the schema [thief]".

The lexical material in the complement NPs contributes further to the semantic contrast between copulars like (17) and (18). Because both are ascriptive copulars, the descriptive material of the complement NP is more general than the meaning of the subject in both the categorizing (17) and identifying (18) clause. However, construing an identifying complement imposes specific pragmatic requirements on the selection of its type specifications: they should be informative enough to function as a *uniquely identifying* description in the given context. This is why definite NP complements function in a defining way in copular clauses. In (18) the detailed type specifications *cat that stole the liver* are chosen to identify *Alice* in a way that distinguishes her from any other cats in the discourse context. By contrast, in indefinite NPs the type specifications are not chosen with the pragmatic motivation of providing a uniquely identifying description. In ascriptive clauses like (17), the function of the NP with the lexicosemantically more general type specifications, e.g. *a thief,* is purely classificational. There is no implicature that there may not be other instances of "thieving cats" in the discourse context.

We propose that the type "thief" in the complement NP provides the "sanctioning structure" (Langacker 1987: 92) that enables *recognition* of *Alice* as an instance of the type "thief". Features of *Alice* correspond to the features that are predicated by the noun *thief* in the complement. It is this "correspondence", or "matching", relation (Langacker 1991: 90-94) between instance and schema that we claim characterizes the semantics of "categorizing" clauses like (16) to (18). They assess the – gradable – *conformity* between a specific instance and the more general schema contained in the indefinite NP of categorizing clauses.

After having disentangled ascription – specification and categorization – identification as two distinct oppositions in this section, we will show in the next sections that cross-classification of the four terms enables a more internally coherent description of copular clauses. In Section 3, we set out the analysis of the two types of identifying clause and, in Section 4, of the two types of categorizing clause.

3 Ascriptive-identifying and specificational-identifying clauses
In this section we argue, like Stassen (1998: 104-106), for the distinction between ascriptive-identifying and specificational-identifying as made by Higgins (1976) and Declerck (1988).[5] We will consider, in order, reversibility as the criterion distinguishing between the two types (Section 3.1), differences in the referential status of the two NPs (Section 3.2), different implicatures with regard to exhaustiveness (Section 3.3), and typical information structures (Section 3.4).

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[5] Declerck (1988) uses the terms descriptionally-identifying vs. specificationally-identifying for this distinction.

3.1 Reversibility of specificational-identifying clauses

Ascriptively-identifying clauses add to their subject a definite description realized by a uniquely identifying NP, e.g. *the best* in (19). Specificational-identifying clauses specify a value for a definite variable, e.g. *the pretty one* in (20), whose meaning is paraphraseable as "the X who is the pretty one" (Declerck 1988: 5). The two identifying types of copular clauses display the syntactic behaviour described for ascriptive and specificational clauses in Section 2.1. Ascriptive clauses allow fronting of their complement with contrastive focus, as in (19b), but not re-assignment of the subject and complement functions (19c). Conversely, specificational-identifying clauses allow subject-complement switch (20b) but not fronting of the complement, (20c). (The role of focus assignment in the possible and impossible alternates will be discussed further in Section 3.4.)

(19)   a. Ella, I see Ana as one of the best players in the world. I mean, <u>she may not be **the best**</u>, but one of the best she certainly is. (http://www.womenstennisblog.com/2009/10/03/ana-ivanovic-puts-an-end-to-2009-tennis-season/)

b. **the best** <u>he may not be</u>, but capable, Gambit most certainly is (http://www.killermovies.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-324923-the-best-leader-of-the-x-men.html)

c.***the best** is not her/him

(20)   a. The pretty one is **my daughter**. The ugly one is **me**. (https://myspace.com/gambitthebandit/photos)

b. More importantly, we now have confirmation that out of Sam and Dean, **Dean** is the pretty one. (http://io9.com/5673069/supernaturals-twilight-spoof-transcends-parody-and-becomes-a-work-of-greatness)

c. *The pretty one **my daughter/Dean** is.

An important caveat regarding reversibility as a recognition criterion of specificational-identifying clauses is that it does not apply to so-called reduced *it*-clefts, e.g. (21a) and (22a), which structurally can always be reformulated as *it*-clefts (22a), (22b). We follow (Declerck 1990: 525-526) in analysing such examples as specificational-identifying clauses whose variable is not overtly realized by a cleft relative clause. The variable may be either textually evoked, as in (21a), where *it is Vexille* actually repeats the *it*-cleft of the preceding text in reduced form, or inferrable from the preceding discourse (Kaltenböck 2005), as in (22a).

(21)   a. Then he felt a pulse of excitement at the thought that it might truly be Guy Vexille who rode unsuspecting towards the fight. "If <u>it is</u> **Vexille**," Sir Guillaume said, fingering the awful scar on his face, "then he's mine to kill." (WB)

b. If it is Vexille who is riding towards the fight.

(22)   a. I noticed for the first time that I was aching all over and that I had a deepish cut on my forearm. I couldn't think how I'd got it. Perhaps it was **the glass from the vase**. (WB)

b. Perhaps it was the glass from the vase that had cut my forearm.

3.2 Referential status of NPs

Typically, the two NPs in identifying clauses have a different referential status, which following Declerck (1988: 47) we characterize in terms of weakly referring versus strongly referring NPs, a contrast inspired by Donnellan's (1966) distinction between the "referential" and "attributive" use of definite descriptions. The speaker uses a definite description as a strongly referring NP, if that description enables the hearer to pick out the exact thing spoken about in some world. For instance, if the sentence *Smith's murderer must be insane* is uttered at the trial of the perpetrator, *Smith's murderer* is a strongly referring NP, because it identifies, for the people present, the exact person spoken about. The definite NP *Smith's murderer* can also be used as a weakly referring NP in a context in which someone, hearing the atrocious details of Smith's murder, says *Smith's murderer must be insane*, without having any idea who actually did it. The speaker simply gives a definite role specification which applies to whoever it was that killed Smith. This definite description does not allow the hearer to pick out the right person in reality.

In specificational-identifying clauses, the variable NP is, as observed by Declerck (1988: 47), inherently weakly referring. This is clearly illustrated with a context like that of the ceremony of the Academy Awards, where the speaker tears open the envelope containing the winner's name at the very moment of uttering *And the winner is .... .* To the variable *the winner* attaches a presupposition of existence to the effect that there is one specific winner, but the NP does not give mental access to the actual identity of the winner. The value is typically strongly referring, as in a paradigm case like (23), in which the actual winner is identified by a proper name. However, the value for a variable may also be specified by a weakly referring definite description such as *the person who makes his structure prevail* in (24).

(23)   And the winner is… **Cate Shortland**. (WB)

(24)   A power struggle ensues, and the winner is **the person who makes his structure prevail**. (WB)

In ascriptive-identifying clauses, the subject is typically strongly referring, picking out a specific individual, like *Marble Arch* in (25) and *he*, referring to *Bill*, in (26), while the complement may be weakly referring, like *where people used to be hanged* in (25), or strongly referring as in *that man over there* (26) (Declerck 1988: 107). Exceptionally, the two NPs of ascriptive-identifying clauses may both be weakly referring, as in (27).

(25)   I recalled reading somewhere that Marble Arch was where people used to be hanged. (WB)

(26)   Bill? Who's Bill? – He's that man over there. (Declerck 1988: 107)

(27)   But the most important piece of equipment is the one you can least afford. (Halliday 1985: 118).

3.3 Presence or absence of exhaustiveness implicature

There is general agreement in the literature that specificational-identifying clauses have an exhaustiveness implicature: hearers will take it that the values corresponding to the variable have been listed exhaustively (e.g. Halliday 1967: 225; Lambrecht 2001: 303). For instance, on hearing *And the winner is... Cate Shortland* (23), the audience will not expect there to be a second winner. Declerck (1988: 28) argues that this is a conversational implicature, which can still be cancelled. If a child is told *What you need is a smack on the bottom*, s/he has a right to conclude that a smack on the bottom is all s/he needs and that there will not be any extra form of punishment. If this "exhaustiveness" presumption proves to be unfounded, the utterance cannot be said to have been false. Rather "although technically true", it "is deceiving because it is not as informative as it should be, and therefore violates one of Grice's (1975) principles of conversation" (Declerck 1988: 30).

Importantly, ascriptive-identifying clauses do not have this exhaustiveness implicature: there is no suggestion that the ascriptive complement is the only one that descriptionally identifies the subject referent (Declerck 1988: 107). In this sense, ascriptive identification is open-ended. Additional definite descriptions may be added without thwarting any "exhaustiveness" implicature. Even when an ascriptive-identifying example contains several descriptions, as in (28), there is no sense that this list is exhaustive.

(28)   Mr Andrew Hunter, Conservative MP for Basingstoke. <u>Well Andrew Hunter is the Conservative M P for Basingstoke and, more importantly in this context, chairman of the Tory backbench Northern Ireland committee.</u> Andrew good afternoon to you. (WB)

3.4 Typical information structures

A number of authors have raised the point that it is not always easy to distinguish ascriptive-identifying clauses from specificational-identifying clauses (e.g. Keizer 1990, 1991; Patten 2012: 60). For instance, Keizer (1990: 1051-1053) raises queries with regard to clauses of the form *it/he is* + proper name[6]. In reaction to the criticisms by Keizer (1990) of Declerck (1988), Declerck (1990) relaxed his earlier conceptual definition, which was that ascriptive-identifying clauses ascribe a uniquely identifying description to the subject referent, which distinguishes it from all other entities. Firstly, he tied ascriptive-identifying clauses to specific conceptual contexts, proposing that "[t]hey are typically used after the act of specification has taken place and are meant to give further information about the entity

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[6] Above an example of the form *it be* + proper name (21) was discussed, while two examples of the form *she/which one is* + proper name are looked at more closely below in (33) – (34).

that has been specified as a value" (Declerck 1990: 521-2), as in (29). Contexts in which ascriptive-identifying clauses are used certainly include ones in which the hearer is given a description that will back up with real 'familiarity' (cf. Lyons 1999: 5-6) his or her knowledge of a definite referent that hitherto had merely been mentally stored, as in example (29). However, this type of context is not the only one for ascriptive-identifying clauses, as shown by the range of examples (25)-(27) discussed in the previous section.

(29)   A. Who won the first prize?

B. It was Deirdre (who won the first prize).

A. Deirdre? Who's Deirdre?

B. She's my neighbor's daughter[7]. (Declerck 1990: 522)

Secondly, he stated that they may not fully identify the subject, but allow to "build up a backing of descriptions, to make the full identification possible" (Declerck 1990: 524). This may have contributed to further confusion about the type.

We advocate upholding the definition of ascriptive-identifying clauses as providing a uniquely identifying description of the subject. However, what is at stake is not a philosophical kind of identification distinguishing the entity in question "from all other entities". Rather, it is *contextual* identification that is at stake: the assignment of a defining description, which may be in contrast with just one other potential defining description, as in example above, *Albion were **the victims rather than the instigators*** (5), or which may be one (or more) from an indefinite number of unique descriptions, as in *Andrew Hunter is the Conservative M P for Basingstoke and, more importantly in this context, chairman of the Tory backbench Northern Ireland committee* (28). We hold that the difference between ascriptive and specificational identifying clauses is determined by the distinct communicative functions of adding a contextually identifying description to the subject versus specifying a value for a pragmatically presupposed variable. In this section, we will show that careful consideration of the information distribution in real text examples much aids the analyst to determine whether the identifying clause is of the ascriptive or specificational type.

Following Gundel (1988) we can distinguish between two dimensions of information structure: a referential one and a relational one. The *referential* dimension is concerned with the activation status of referents in the discourse and involves the extent to which the addressee can be presumed to be familiar with the referents referred to by the speaker. Kaltenböck (2005) operationalizes this distinction in terms of information that is retrievable or not from the preceding discourse, with a basic opposition between discourse-given and discourse-new information. The *relational* dimension of information

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[7] As discussed in Section 2.2, (29) is in fact ambiguous between an ascriptive-categorizing and an ascriptive-identifying reading

structure concerns the specific relation between linguistic elements and (other elements of) the proposition in which they are expressed. For our current purposes, we can operationalize this as the relation between focus and background. The focus is "that information which is relatively the most important or salient in the given communicative setting, and considered by S to be most essential for A to integrate into his pragmatic information" (Dik 1997: 326). It is marked by tonic prominence in spoken language. The information with respect to which some element of the proposition is focused, may be either presupposed or new. The referential and relational dimensions typically (but not necessarily) interact with each other: if an utterance is to be informative, it needs to add information to the discourse (cf. Grice's (1975) conversational maxims), because of which discourse-new information is usually the most informative and therefore typically receives the information focus.

Ascription and specification correlate by default with information focus on the ascriptive complement and the value respectively, and typically, the focal element will contain discourse-new information. In this section, we show how these typical information structures shed light on the two identifying clause types in addition to the alternation tests.

Let us first return to ascriptive-identifying example (5), reproduced here as (30).

(30)   Gary Megson is to appeal against the misconduct charge levelled against Albion…. After Scott Dobie's second goal, there was a scuffle in the penalty area, but Megson insists that <u>Albion were **the victims rather than the instigators**</u>. (WB)

Homing in on the discursive embedding of the copular clause in terms of discourse-givenness and discourse-newness, we see how Albion is first associated with alleged *misconduct*, which Megson denies by stating that in the scuffle Albion were *the victims rather than the instigators*. The contrastive information in the complement is in Kaltenböck's (2005) terms new-anchored. As to the information structure of the copular clause itself, ascriptive subject and complement map onto given and focal information, which is the default for ascriptive-identifying clauses. The discursive embedding and the speaker's main concern with the "victims" status of Albion rule out a specificational reading here. As Stassen (1997) puts it, "the speaker intends to add knowledge to a file [i.e. *Albion*] which he assumes is already present with the hearer […] and hereby offer[s] a new piece of information for it [i.e. *the victims rather than the losers*]" (Stassen 1997: 103).

By contrast, the identifying clauses in (31) are specificational-identifying clauses, as shown by the possibility of replacing them by *it*-clefts in their own contexts: *it's **the accountants** that are the big winners, it's **you and me** who are the losers*. The preceding context mentions largely fictive sales, involving *profit* and *investment*. This creates the inferential ground from which *the big winners* and *the losers* can be pragmatically presupposed as variables of the identifying clauses (Lambrecht 2001: 474) If read aloud, the tonic prominence signalling information focus naturally falls on the values *the accountants* and *you and me*, which occur in their unmarked, clause-final position. In the spoken

example (32) the speakers are presumably involved in a game, in which the one who first shows their teeth or tongue loses. In this context, *the los*er is the presupposed variable for which a value is sought, as also shown by the corresponding cleft *it's **Tom** who's the loser*. (32) exemplifies the variant in which the value is the subject and receives clause-initial information focus.

(31)   HOLLOW SWAPS: Telecom companies with room on their airwaves "sell" their spare capacity to each other. No cash changes hands but the 'sale' goes into the books of the selling company as profit and into the buying firm as 'investment'. Besides the bosses, who cash in on short-term share price gains, <u>the big winners are **the accountants**</u>. They get paid for dreaming up tax wheezes-and when companies finally go belly up they cash in as the receivers. <u>The losers are **you and me**</u> with shares and pensions linked to these firms. (WB)

(32)   Saw your tongue <others laugh> Yeah. Right. <u>**Tom** is the loser</u>. (WB)

With examples (33)-(34) we turn to identifying clauses whose subject is a pronoun and whose complement is a proper name. The preceding context of (33) involves detectives trying to find out the identity of the victim, the woman designated by the strongly referring pronoun *she*. The complement of the underlined copular clause links the new and defining information of the woman's name, *Mrs Billie Pavane* to the subject *she*. This is a typical context for an ascriptive-identifying clause, and, indeed, it is followed by what is very clearly an ascriptive-identifying clause, *She's the wife of the American Ambassador*. The alternation tests confirm the ascriptive reading of the underlined copular: the contrastive complement can be fronted, ***Mrs Billie Pavane** she is*, but subject-complement switch is not possible in this context: ****Mrs Billie Pavane** is her*. By contrast, in the underlined identifying clause in (34) the proper name *Mr Tedeschi* is the pragmatically presupposed variable: the nurse has this name in mind and seeks to assign one of the two males in the context to it, Christian or the narrator, as signalled by the 'selective' interrogative pronoun *which*. In an interrogative it is the *wh*-element which corresponds to the value.

(33)   'So she's not - ' Clements looked at his notebook; he still carried it like an old family heirloom. 'Not Mrs Belinda Paterson?' 'No. <u>She's **Mrs Billie Pavane**</u>. She's the wife of the American Ambassador.' (WB)

(34)   The nurse came out. At first Christian didn't notice, though. He'd got so involved in his tirade and was staring at me in this very intense way. Finally she interrupted to ask <u>which one of us was **Mr Tedeschi**</u>. Christian went silent and the blood drained from his face again. He made a feeble signal with his hand, then got up and shuffled along behind the nurse. (WB)

Fairly exceptionally, examples of identifying clauses cannot be contextually disambiguated because they allow two possible ways of analysing the discursive embedding of their NPs. In (35) *That's your real interest* is such an example.

(35)   What I mean is, isn't there something that engrosses you, something you must achieve?' 'I don't have kind of ambition.`… 'So it's your job after all. <u>That's **your real interest**</u>, your job. (WB)

Its two NPs, anaphoric *that*, referring to *your job,* and *your real interest* are both discourse-given, as the preceding text mentions both *your job* and *something that engrosses you, something you must achieve*. The copular clause is preceded by a reduced *it*-cleft, which specifies *your job* for the implied variable 'that engrosses you'. The following copular clause can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it can be read as repeating the previous specification, i.e. with that as non-contrastive, anaphoric value and *your real interest* as variable. It then has the marked information pattern with information focus on the variable pointed out by Halliday (1967: 231) for *this is what I meant*, example (14) above. On the other hand, the example can be interpreted as an ascription following the specification made in the preceding reduced *it*-cleft. That is, *your real interest* then gives a description that uniquely defines *that*, referring to *your job*, in this context. In both readings the information focus is on *your real interest*.

3.5 Interim conclusion

The description of ascriptive-identifying and specificational-identifying clauses developed in Section 3 provides us with recognition criteria to assign readings to examples in context: possible and impossible alternates (3.1), referential status of the two NPs, (3.2), presence or absence of the exhaustiveness implicature (3.3) and typical information structures (3.4). As we will see in Section 5, where we report on our data analysis, these criteria and typical patterns allowed us to assign the identifying clauses in our dataset to either the ascriptive or specificational subtype in most cases, leaving only a small fraction of contextually supported ambiguous cases.

4 Ascriptive-categorizing and specificational-categorizing clauses

Focusing on the same issues as we did for specificational-identifying and ascriptive-identifying clauses in the previous section, we will now set out the differences between the specificational-categorizing type and the ascriptive-categorizing one, while also showing how they are moulded by the semantics of instance-schema correspondence. This is essential to our claim that the specificational clauses with indefinite variable discussed in this section should be subsumed under the categorizing, not the identifying, type. In Section 4.1, we show that specificational-categorizing clauses allow for reversibility. In Section 4.2, we describe the kind of indefinite reference associated with the complement in the ascriptive type, and the variable in the specificational type. In Section 4.3, we look into the non-

exhaustiveness implicature of specificational-categorizing clauses, while in Section 4.4, we show how recognition of the two types is aided by their different typical information structures. Finally, we discuss gradability as a feature associated with the two types of categorizing clauses (Section 4.5).

4.1 Reversibility of specificational-categorizing clauses

The two categorizing types display, just as much as the two identifying types, the syntactic behaviour characterizing ascription versus specification (Section 2.1). Examples (36a-b) illustrate the non-reversibility of ascriptive categorizing clauses, which has always been taken as a recognition criterion of what are traditionally called "predicative" clauses (Declerck 1988: 62). Examples (37a-b) by contrast illustrate the reversibility of an example with an indefinite variable NP and a definite value NP. In (37a), *the Gulf War* is subject and *a good example* complement, while in (37b) we find the opposite functional assignment but the same information structure. Both examples are hence shown to be specificational.

(36) a. ... allied air forces destroyed key targets in and around Baghdad and bombed Iraq's armed
          forces entrenched within and around Kuwait, after which coalition ground forces quickly
          overran the remaining enemy troops. ***In military terms, the Gulf War was*** *an overwhelmingly*
          one-sided event (Airospace Power Journal 2001: fall 01: 43, War termination in the Persian
          Gulf: Problems and Prospects, M. Garrard)
       b. *****an** *overwhelmingly one-sided event **was the Gulf War***.
(37) a. In applying the principles to interventions in the New World Order it's reasonable to predict
          that the above principles will more often than not decide against U.S. and UN interventions.
          The Gulf War <u>is a good example</u>. (http://solidarity-us.org/site/node/2480)
       b. Yeah, other than Russia (who's worse off than China), there is no other threat in Asia to us.
          What can India and Vietnam do? China can even outnumber us with a standing army- our tech
          is far too advanced to be overwhelmed by a bunch of foot soldiers shooting at jets and rockets
          in the sky … Also, <u>a good example is</u> **the Gulf War** – we destroyed Iraq's military within a
          few days. 250,000 Iraqi troops, dead. How many U.S. soldiers? About 250.
          (https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20100915145626AAFQLvv)

That examples like these are specificational has never been denied in the literature, but their semantics have, to our knowledge, not been viewed so far as fundamentally of the "categorizing" type (on our definition). Halliday (1994: 129), for instance, treats them as identifying. In such an approach it is overlooked that they share the semantics of "correspondence between instance and schema" with categorizing ascriptive clauses, and form a logical subtype of "categorizing" clause.

By the same token, we propose that specificational-categorizing clauses impose a different directionality on the correspondence relation between instance and schema than ascriptive-categorizing clauses. Because of their different communicative functions, they answer different implied questions.

Ascriptive-categorizing clauses take the instance referred to by the subject as point of departure: the implied question corresponding to their communicative function is: under what schema can the instance be categorized? That is, starting from a specific instance, they abstract away from its specifics, to recognize the general features of the schema in it. The type specifications of the schema contained in the complement serve the function of *type-attribution* (Langacker 1991: 68) to the subject. For instance, in (36), the complement attributes the type specifications *overwhelmingly one-sided event* to the instance referred to by the subject, *the Gulf War*. This categorization adds information to the addressee's knowledge of the subject referent.

By contrast, the implied question answered by a specificational assertion is: which value(s) *satisfy* (Lambrecht 2001), or "qualify for", the variable. The type specifications conveyed (and implied) by the variable NP function as a set of criteria, so to speak, that the value must meet. The correspondence relation hence takes as logical point of departure the variable stipulating the criteria to be met by instances "satisfying the variable". The meaning of (37a) can be paraphrased as *the Gulf War* being a "qualifying" example [of a non-UN-approved military intervention], and that of (37b) as a "qualifying" example [of the US's technological military power] being *the Gulf War*. The order in which the specificational relation is presented is of no direct importance to the assertion: saying that value x is a qualifying example of the variable, as in (37a), or that a qualifying example of the variable is value x, as in (37b), boils down to the same assertion.

4.2 Indefinite reference in specificational vs. ascriptive-categorizing clauses

In this section, we look more closely at the referential status of the indefinite complement NP in ascriptive-categorizing clauses and the indefinite variable NP of specificational-categorizing clauses.

As we saw in Section 2.2, Langacker (1991: 67) analyses the complement of ascriptive-categorizing clauses such as *Alice is a thief* as conveying *non-specific* indefinite reference. He (1991: 104-106) characterizes the meaning of non-specific indefinite reference (39) in contrast with indefinite specific (38) and generic indefinite (40) reference. In his view, both specific and non-specific indefinite reference "establish mental contact between H [hearer] and an instance t_i of [type] T " (Langacker 1991: 104), even though the instance is in neither case uniquely identifiable in relation to the current discourse space. Specificity "pertains to whether the speaker (S) […] has some pre-existing or independent mental contact with t_i" (Langacker 1991: 104). As Bache (2000: 179) puts it, with indefinite specific reference "a particular referent answering the description of the noun group is picked out specifically", as in (38), in which *an eligible bachelor* "does not simply refer to a random member of the class" of bachelors, but to a specific individual, which, after its first mention in the discourse by this indefinite NP is referred to by *him*. Non-specific reference merely "represents an arbitrary instance of T" which "is 'conjured up' for a particular immediate purpose and has no status outside the special mental space thereby created" (Langacker 1991: 104), as in (39), where 'an' instance of *eligible bachelor* figures in the mental space of (some) women's – as yet unsuccessful – search for 'such a' man. The profile of an instance is needed

merely to embody the relevant type specifications associated with the T *eligible bachelor* – such as "male, unmarried, attractive, wealthy, well-connected", etc. – in the virtual mental space of (some) women's hopes and desires. An indefinite non-specific NP does not designate a specific individual (Bache 2000: 179), but merely an arbitrarily conjured up instance of the type. An indefinite generic as in (40) do[es] not imply either that "S or H has any pre-existing mental contact with the instance designated by the *a*-marked nominal: the instance […] is thought of as a representative instance of the category rather than a particular instance" (Langacker 1991: 106). An indefinite generic NP evokes an instance of T in order to "represent the speaker's conception of how the world is structured" (Langacker 1991: 106).

(38)   A couple of weekends ago, I exchanged numbers with an eligible bachelor**.** His last words (via text message) were "speak soon". (WB) (specific)

(39)   Fewer and fewer women are spending all their waking time looking for an "eligible bachelor". (http://www.marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/ 2008/04/why-are-there-s.html) (non-specific)

(40)   An eligible bachelor is a bachelor considered to be a particularly desirable potential husband, usually due to wealth, or social status. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eligible_ bachelor) (generic)

On the instantiation – superordination continuum (Section 2.2, Figure 1), the three types of indefinite NPs, specific, non-specific and generic, involve in that order progressively greater semantic generality, with the indefinite generic forming the most 'schematic' of the three types of indefinite NP.

By analysing the indefinite complement of ascriptive-categorizing clauses, e.g. *Alice is a thief,* as non-specific, Langacker (1991: 67) holds that speaker and hearer *both* conjure up an arbitrary instance of the category for the purposes of a specific type attribution. The reference is not specific because the instance has no status outside of the predicative construction (Langacker 1991: 68). This is in contrast with the indefinite NP *an eligible bachelor* in (38) where the speaker does have a specific instance in mind.

The variable in specificational-categorizing clauses should, we argue, also be analysed as a non-specific indefinite NP. The indefinite variable NP itself does not designate a specific individual, but construes its referent as an arbitrary instance of the type specifications implied by the variable NP, as in *another* 'spelling variant of Jahweh' in (42). However, an important difference with the non-specific indefinite NP functioning as ascriptive complement is that a presupposition of existence attaches to the indefinite variable in (42), as it does to the definite variable in (41) (Declerck 1988: 14ff). When using an indefinite variable NP, such as *another version* in (42), the speaker conveys that s/he assumes that there is 'an' instance of the variable in some world. As is required of a presupposition, it remains constant under negation. For instance, as a rejoinder to (42) one could say ***Hayah*** *is not another version*,

which still presupposes that there *is* another spelling variant of Jahweh. Non-specific indefinite NPs functioning as variables such as *another version* in (42) can be viewed as the counterpart of weakly referring definite NPs functioning as variable, e.g. *the most common variant* in (41), (Declerck 1988: 22). The speaker does not have a *specific* individual in mind, as with the first mention use of indefinite NPs illustrated in (38) above, but the indefinite variable NP does designate an *existing* instance.

(41)   [on spelling of name 'Hookins'] The most common variant is **Hookings**. (*one-name.org/name_profile/hookins/*)

(42)   [on spelling of 'Jahweh'] Another version was **Yeshua or Jeshua.** (WB)

The values actually specified for the variable in specificational clauses are typically definite NPs with specific reference, such as *Hookings* in (41) and *Yeshua or Jeshua* in (42). Specification is brought about by the assignment of such specific value(s) to the 'weakly referring' variable, be it definite (41) or indefinite (42).

4.3 The non-exhaustiveness implicature of specificational-categorizing clauses

A specificational clause picks out the referents that satisfy the variable from a set, which "is by definition an act of selecting (and hence excluding)" (Declerck 1988: 28). Typically, such a selection is expected to be exhaustive. However, as pointed out by Lambrecht (2001: 504), there are also some specificational constructions that do not have an exhaustiveness implicature like specificational existential clefts such as (43): they have a non-exhaustive, "'listing' (Rando and Napoli 1978) function", "denoting members of a presupposed open set" (Lambrecht 2001: 504), *Adam Smith* in (43), that correspond to the variable, *who's just building a new one*.

(43)   A: I've really just got to fill them in on lexicographers' needs just because we've been doing a lot of it but there's other people that you think are doing kind of creative corpus lexicography. – B: Well, <u>there's **Adam Smith** who's just building a new one</u>.[8] (WB).

Categorizing-specificational clauses are very similar[9]: they do not have an exhaustiveness implicature but, on the contrary, imply non-exhaustiveness. The non-exhaustiveness of the specification derives

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[8] For reasons of privacy, the original Wordbanks example had MX (male proper name). We have provided a fictive name to capture the rhetorical effect of the enumerative cleft.

[9] As noted in Section 2.1, non-exhaustive, listing *there*-clefts are the indefinite counterpart of *it*-clefts. Therefore, the counterpart of reduced *it*-clefts can be argued to be formed by reduced *there*-clefts, e.g. *Well, there's Adam Smith* as corresponding to the *there*-cleft in (43) (Davidse 2014). Such "reduced" *there*-clefts can, in turn, be argued to be the type of existential known in the literature as "listing" or "enumerative" existentials (Abbott 1995): they list entities corresponding to a type given or implied in the previous discourse. An enumerative *there*-cleft can be "reduced" to a listing existential if the variable can be presupposed from the preceding text, as in (43). As existentials are not a subtype of copular clause, we will leave listing existentials,

directly from the indefiniteness of the variable: since an NP with indefinite reference does not designate an instance that is "unique and maximal in relation to the current discourse space" (Langacker 1991: 98), the relation between the variable and value is not unique or maximal, leaving room for other instances corresponding to the schema implied in the variable. Because the variable NP is indefinite, the value(s) being specified for it, are construed as a list, enumerating one (44) or more values (45). The implicature is that the list is incomplete, but this implicature can be cancelled (cf. Rando & Napoli 1978), as in (46). The values specified within the individual clauses are non-exhaustive (since the value picks out only one of the possible instantiations of the schema NP), but the metaphor of the four-legged chair indicates that all the potential values are listed within the complex sentence.

(44)   Another possibility is **Channel 5 's Kirsty Young**. (WB)

(45)   Other possibilities are **Point No Point, Oak Bay, Liplip Point on Marrowstone Island and Midchannel Bank**. (WB)

(46)   Like a table that needs legs to stand, we need references on which our beliefs can rest. What are the references that are going to make your idea stand up? Let us say the idea is that you could be slimmer. You have a HABIT of being overweight but an IDEA of being slimmer. <u>One reference is to change what you eat, another to be prepared to exercise, another to eat more slowly, another to drink more water.</u> Now that your idea has four legs, it can stand. (WB)

4.4 The typical information structures of ascriptive vs. specificational-categorizing clauses

In Section 3.4 we showed that the contextual disambiguation of identifying specificational and ascriptive clauses is greatly helped by their typical information structure and discursive embedding. The reason is that a sentence's information structure typically reflects its communicative function, or as Lambrecht (1994: 52) calls it, its "pragmatic assertion", i.e. what the speaker means to convey by uttering a sentence. In this section, we will argue that information structure is also indicative (though not constitutive) of the distinction between categorizing specificational and ascriptive clauses.

The communicative function of specificational clauses is to specify a value for a variable. The most pertinent information is thus the value, since in the act of specification the variable is pragmatically presupposed (Lambrecht 2001: 474). In terms of discourse-familiarity, the variable is typically predictable from the discourse context and the value discourse-new. Example (47) illustrates the typical information structure for specificational clauses, as it plays out for categorizing clauses. The variable *Another interesting political theorist who…* links up with the preceding context, whereas the value *Hannah Arendt* is discourse-new information. This discourse-newness naturally maps onto the focal status of the value relative to the variable, yielding the type with unmarked, clause-final information

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and the idea of viewing them as reduced enumerative *there*-clefts, out of consideration in the typology of copular clauses developed in this article.

focus. In (48) the variable, *an example of a volcanic rock,* is again derivable from the preceding context, while the value *basalt* is discourse-new. Although the semantically specific NP *basalt* and the general NP *an example of a volcanic rock* are assigned the syntactic functions that are more typically associated with an ascriptive reading, their relative discourse-familiarity points out that the value *basalt* is the salient new and therefore the focus of the clause, thus allowing for the clause to be correctly recognized as specificational rather than ascriptive.

(47)   In the book "The McDonaldization of Society" by George Ritzer, he discusses and provides his perspective of the modern world in the view of fast-food restaurant. <u>Another interesting political theorist who provides a negative view on the atmosphere that Mcdonaldization has created is</u> **<u>Hannah Arendt</u>**.
         (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonaldization#De-McDonaldization)

(48)   {volcanic rock} A category of igneous rock which comprises those rocks formed from magma which has reached the earth's surface. (This is to be contrasted with plutonic rock which forms below the surface.) **<u>Basalt</u>** <u>is an example of a volcanic rock</u>, as are all solidified lavas. (WB)

Ascriptive-categorizing clauses, by contrast, are concerned with describing what the subject is like. Therefore, the descriptive complement (the 'schema' NP) is typically focal relative to the subject, the 'instance' NP, and this correlates with the further default of the subject being discourse-given and the complement discourse-new. Example (49) illustrates the two defaults. In terms of discursive embedding, *the Peabody Museum* has already been introduced in the discourse, but *an example of the functional school of architecture* is new to the discourse (and is itself further developed in the following sentence as meaning *big, bulky, square, and grey*). This helps the reader interpret the information structure of the copular clause as having the information focus on the complement NP – and the whole clause as being ascriptive-categorizing (in contrast with the specificational-categorizing reading of example (48)).

(49)   Zerk found a parking space on the street a couple of blocks from the Peabody Museum. We got to the front entrance with ten minutes to spare. We sat on the steps in the dim September sunlight to wait for our friend, Daniel F. X. Sullivan. <u>The Peabody Museum is</u> **<u>an example of the functional school of architecture</u>**. It's big, bulky, square, and grey - unmistakably a museum. (WB)

As with identifying clauses, a few examples, such as (50), cannot be contextually disambiguated.

(50)   I can tell you something though. Something you can mention to the others. It might help them. Weldon's disappearance has got nothing to do with your husband. <u>That's one thing I'm</u> **<u>sure about</u>**.'

Its two NPs are discourse-familiar: *that* refers back to the previously stated proposition that *Weldon's disappearance has got nothing to do with your husband* and the type specifications of *one thing I'm sure about* are also evoked in the preceding context by expressions such as *I can tell you something* and *something you can mention to the others*. Hence, the context supports a specificational reading in which *that* is the anaphoric, non-contrastive value and *one thing I'm sure about* the variable, which can be pragmatically presupposed because its type specifications are present in the preceding text. On this specificational reading, it has the marked information pattern Halliday (1967: 231) pointed out for examples like *this is what I meant* (example (14) above), with the variable rather than the value carrying the information focus. But an ascriptive reading is also possible in the context: *one thing I'm sure about* then characterizes the proposition referred to by *that* as certain for the speaker. The ambiguity of the categorizing copular with indefinite complement in (50) is thus parallel with the ambiguity of the identifying copular with definite complement discussed for *That's your real interest* (35) above.

4.5 Verbal gradability in ascriptive and specificational-categorizing clauses

In this section, we will be concerned with the grading of the correspondence relation itself between instance and schema. We will restrict ourselves to verbal gradability involving explicit degree modification (Moreau 2014), i.e. modification expressed by a degree adverb such as *very much*. As noted in Section 2.2, *ascriptive-categorizing* clauses in principle allow to indicate whether the instance designated by the subject corresponds more or less to the prototypical centre of the schema implied in the complement, as illustrated by

(51)   Ezekiel is very much a visionary. (WB)
(52)   I'm not much of a clergyman. (WB)

In this section, we consider the question if the correspondence relation in specificational-ascriptive clauses can also be graded (Van Praet 2013, 2014).

Logically speaking, verbal gradability is an ascriptive and not a specificational feature: what it does is describe how much an instance corresponds to a schema. The basic function of specification, on the other hand, is not to say how much an instance corresponds to a schema but simply that it corresponds to that schema. Hence, specification is not conducive to verbal gradability. However, unlike identification (which necessarily requires a one-on-one relation), categorizing specification does not rule out gradability. Extensive corpus and Internet searches yielded a few examples of verbal gradability in specificational-ascriptive clauses with clause-initial value, as in (53). In terms of information structure *Pandora's Tower* in (53) is clearly both discourse-new, i.e. not mentioned in the previous discourse, and focal with respect to the pragmatically presupposed variable **an example of** *the difficulty I'd like to see in Zelda game.*

(53)   [preceding threads discussed the disappointing ease of the game Zelda, with the immediately preceding one mentioning the "Zelda-esque game" Dark Souls as a suitably difficult one]
Yeah, there are a lot of Zelda clones that do it right. I haven't played Dark Souls yet, but **Pandora's Tower *is very much an example of*** the difficulty I'd like to see in Zelda game. Even Okami, while not super difficult, does feel like the AI has a better idea of what it's doing. (http://www.reddit.com/r/zelda/comments/2n5i3v/zelda_needs_a_ better_difficulty_ setting_ than_hero/)

By contrast, we found no examples at all of verbal gradability in specificational-categorizing clauses with clause-final value and adding *very much* to attested examples such as (54a) did not produce acceptable results, as shown by (54b).

(54)   a. A sweet old lady wrote from Dayton, Ohio, that she thought the Bermuda shorts proposed for horses in the SINA magazine were a trifle "cumbersome". "Surely," she went on, "<u>a better idea would be **some sort of adhesive covering for the genitals***?"</u> The newspapers faithfully recorded it all. (WB)
b. *A better idea would <u>very much</u> be **some sort of adhesive covering for the genitals**. (WB)

We venture that the reason why gradability is possible (though rare) with specificational-categorizing clauses with initial value, but absolutely impossible with ones with final value, has to do with a difference in perspective on the relation between instance and schema. Depending on which element is subject of the relation, we can view it as profiling a relation of schematicity or one of instantiation. The schematicity perspective is typical of specificational-categorizing clauses as it takes the schema, which is criterial for the value, as point of departure, as shown in (55a). The instantiation perspective is typical of ascriptive-categorizing clauses as it enables *recognition* of the subject instance *as* an instance of the schema. However, "reversed" specificational-categorizing clauses also construe the value – variable relation but from the perspective of the subject instance (55b).

(55)   a. *Schematicity*: schema → instance   (e.g. An example of a volcanic rock is **basalt**.)
b. *Instantiation*: instance → schema   (e.g. **Basalt** is an example of a volcanic rock.)

Only when a relation of instantiation is profiled can the correspondence relation between an instance and a schema be graded: an instance can correspond more or less to a schema, but a schema is always fully schematic of an instance (Langacker 1991: 61ff). It is also the instantiation perspective that allows the speaker to construe the instance designated by the non-specific indefinite schema NP as a prototypical instance, e.g. *is very much a visionary* (51), *is very much* **an example of** *the difficulty I'd*

like to see in Zelda game (53). The grading by a modifier such as *very much* of the correspondence relation locates the instance conjured up in the variable somewhere in the internal structure of the category vis-à-vis its prototypical centre. This centre is representative of the abstract conception of the schema: the closer to the centre an instance is, the more it corresponds to the conception of the schema; the further away from the centre, the less it corresponds with the schema. It is for these reasons, we propose, that verbal gradability can only occur in ascriptive-categorizing and reversed specificational-categorizing clauses.

We conclude that the gradability – however marginal – found with specificational-categorizing clauses bolsters our argument for approaching categorizing clauses in terms of the correspondence relation between instance and schema (rather than in terms of the traditional model of class membership).

4.6 Interim conclusion

In Section 4 we outlined recognition criteria to assign categorizing clauses to either the ascriptive or specificational subtype: possible and impossible alternates (4.1), the referential status of the indefinite NP (4.2), the non-exhaustiveness implicature of specificational-categorizing clauses (4.3), and the typical information structures (4.4).

5 Quantitative instantiation of basic copular types in data sample

In this final section, we report on the quantitative instantiation of the four basic copular types in an extended data sample. The dataset of 2,926 copular clauses was retrieved from Wordbanks*Online* by the following steps. A first step was to extract all the instances of the verb *be* in all its possible forms by means of the query [lemma="be"]. This maximally open query had to be used because both in the subject and object slot members of classes other than noun and adjective had to be allowed for. Non-nominal and non-adjectival realizations of subject and complement to be netted included: (i) fused relatives, as in *That's what I want*, and (ii) members of other classes than nouns that that are functioning in nominal slots', i.e. that are "reclassified" as NPs (Langacker 1991: 148, McGregor 1997: 127-136), e.g. *What I'd really like to do is go for a swim, The most common favourite colour is blue, The best time is after the largest meal of the day*.

Next, a random sample was taken of 6,000 clauses, from which all the non-copular examples had to be eliminated. Specifically, we removed all the auxiliary uses of *be*, existential clauses, and clauses with *be* followed by a predication adjunct (Quirk et al 1985: 985), e.g. *Marianne was in the garden*. In the latter type of clause the complement is probed by interrogative adverbials such as *where?*, not by a probe suggesting anything "categorial" such as *what (type of)?* (McGregor 1997: 149). We also removed complex sentence constructions containing *be* which are traditionally not subsumed under copular sentences proper such as extraposition, e.g. *It's likely that this story will come out anyway,* and full-fledged *it*-clefts.

This left us with a dataset of 2,926 copular clauses, which we analysed, applying all the recognition criteria discussed in Sections 2, 3 and 4. The four copular types were instantiated in the relative proportions indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Relative proportions of the four types of copular clauses

	Ascription			Ascription / Specification	Specification		
Categorizing	*Adjectival Compl.*	1459 (49.86%)	2174 (74.30%)	2 (0.07%)	7 (0.24%)		
	Nominal Compl.	715 (24.44%)					
Categorizing / Identifying	26 (0.89%)			/	/		
Identifying	336 (11.48%)			43 (1.47%)	*Reversible*	240 (8.20%)	338 (11.55%)
					Reduced it-Cleft	98 (3.35%)	

Ascriptive-categorizing clauses make up the largest proportion of the sample with 74.30%, of which 49.86% has an adjectival complement. Copular clauses with two NPs together make up only half of the dataset, of which 24.75% is categorizing and 24.45 identifying. Between the ascriptive-categorizing and ascriptive-identifying clauses, there is an area of ambiguity, 0.89%, occupied mainly by examples whose complement contains a possessive or genitive, e.g. *'Are you Mr Tedeschi's friend?' I replied that I wasn't exactly his friend, more his colleague* (9).

Of the copulars with two NPs, half, 24.44%, is ascriptive-categorizing. Specificational-categorizing clauses form a small fraction, 0.24%, of the whole dataset, as well as very much a minority option within the categorizing clauses with two NPs, of which they form 1%. This confirms the observations in the literature about their infrequency (e.g. Mikkelsen 2005: 154-155). Yet, as we have shown in Section 4, the specificational-categorizing type is a logical subtype of the oppositions within the copular system. The description of copular clauses that we propose also allows us to naturally accommodate the few examples that are ambiguous between an ascriptive-categorizing and a specificational-categorizing reading (0.07%), such as *That's one thing I'm **sure** about* (50), discussed in Section 4.4.

Within the identifying clauses, the ascriptive and specificational subtype are represented by similar proportions of 11.5% in our dataset. However, of the 11.55% of specificational-identifying clauses, 30% is formed by reduced *it*-clefts[10]. The latter do not require the specific discursive embedding that reversible specificational copulars need for their two NPs, the value and the overtly expressed variable. The reversible specificational-identifying clauses and the ascriptive-identifying clauses

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[10] As argued in Section 4.1, the functional counterpart of the reduced *it*-cleft is the reduced *there*-cleft, which, however, we leave out of this typology of copular clauses because it is a subtype of existential construction.

intersect in ambiguous examples, parallel to the ambiguous examples between specificational-categorizing and ascriptive categorizing clauses, and supported by the same types of textual embedding, as discussed for *That's your **real interest*** (35) in Section 3.4.

6 Final conclusion

In existing approaches to English copular clauses one finds two different basic splits whose areas of overlap remained unclear. One tradition takes the ascription – specification opposition as the central divide and the other focuses on the predication (or "categorization") – identification opposition. We argued that these are two distinct oppositions the cross-classification of which results in a fourfold typology that distinguishes between ascriptive-categorizing, specificational-categorizing, ascriptive-identifying and specificational-identifying, clauses. In this article we developed this fourfold typology, arguing that it does more justice to the semantics of the main subtypes than traditional approaches and that it brings out the main similarities and differences between the subtypes better. In particular, we argued that categorizing clauses are best analysed as profiling a correspondence relation between an instance and a schema, which can be construed either ascriptively (the traditional predicative clause) or specificationally. They differ from identifying clauses, which express that the referents of two definite terms coincide in the same entity. Identifying clauses can also be construed either ascriptively or specificationally (Section 2).

In Section 3, we focused on the two types of identifying clauses. Our distinction between ascriptive-identifying and specificational-identifying clauses corresponds largely to that between descriptionally-identifying and specificationally-identifying clauses developed by Higgins (1976) and Declerck (1988). As stressed by them, specification and identification should not be conflated. We made a plea for a description that looks at their communicative function and information structure in real contexts.

In Section 4 we dealt with the two types of categorizing clauses, showing that ascriptive and categorizing clauses cannot be conflated either, even though they have been in traditional conceptions of the 'predicative' copular clause. While distinguishing the ascriptive-categorizing from the neglected specificational-categorizing type, we also stressed that they both construe a correspondence relation between a specific instance and the schema implied in the more general NP, which allowed us to explain the gradability that is typically associated with them.

The distinction between ascription and specification that subclassifies both the identifying and the categorizing type was substantiated in terms of four distinguishing features: (i) (non) reversibility, (ii) the different semantic generality and referentiality of the arguments of the copula, (iii) the absence or presence of a (non) exhaustiveness implicature and (iv) the typical information structures of the clauses. In Section 5 we reported on the quantitative instantiation in an extended data sample of the four basic copular types, identified in terms of these recognition criteria. Future research along the lines outlined in this article will, on the basis of qualitative and quantitative corpus-based research, have to dig further

into subtypes and marked mappings, particularly ones involving the different referential types of the NPs and the typical information structures. It may well be that this will lead to the distinguishing of further subtypes within the basic typology proposed in this article.

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