of "difficult vocabulary which cannot be literally translated." Moreover, the author's distinction between the origins of idioms and their context of usage allows us to understand more clearly the phenomena of context change and eventual displacements in meaning.

Thirdly, we must remember the main aim of the book, and the one to which the second part is devoted, i.e. the translation of idioms. The author has chosen to analyse versions of *On the Road* both in Spanish *(En el camino)* and in French *(Sur la route)*, and examples are given in all three languages, though, for the sake of clarity and comparison, occasional examples are quoted from German and Russian. By using also the French version, which indeed is worthy of praise in that it encourages the collaboration between English and French Studies, translators' strategies can be more easily seen, and different choices stand out clearly, above all concerning the dilemma between literal versions (maintaining the original structure) and more "creative" renderings.

An added asset to this book is that it is "user-friendly" in the most literal sense of the word, going from general to particular issues, and featuring a large number of examples and explanations, which make it accessible even for non-linguists. At the same time, it possesses a firmly grounded linguistic basis, with frequent references to literature on translation (especially to García Yebra and Eugene Nida) and to the general structuralist paradigm and mainstream semantic theory.

However, and following our previous comments on aesthetic enjoyment, we cannot conceive this book as a mere linguistic analysis, and therefore it can in no way be considered that *On the Road* is an "excuse" which illustrates a series of theories on idioms; quite on the contrary, *La idiomaticidad* constitutes a real, decided approach to Kerouac's novel, an instrument which enables us to apprehend and enjoy it better. Such should be the pursuit of linguistics, if we want to put an end to the unjust divorce between linguistics and literature and thus put all the progress we have made over the last decades at the reader's disposal.

Miguel Ángel Campos Pardillos

Ch. F. Meyer. *Apposition in Contemporary English*. Studies in English Language. Cambridge. Cambridge UP, 1992, xiv + 152 pp.

The concept of *apposition* has been, to the best of my knowledge, one of the most poorly treated by the scholars of the linguistic science, perhaps due to the fact that it is a technical term whose scope lies beyond the consciousness that, for instance, native speakers have about other linguistic entities such as transparent categories like nouns or verbs, or about primary functions like subject or predicate. Since it had not been properly analysed in traditional Greek- or Latin-based grammars, the apposition has always been a kind of rag-bag into which linguists filed those pieces of discourse which could hardly be placed under other orthodox labels. Even in studies centred upon this notion, syntactic, semantic and informational considerations mingle and blur together, and as a consequence

constituents such as those highlighted in (1)—Curme (1931)—or (2)—Meyer (this volume)—were analysed as appositions:

(1) He came home *sick*
(2) The suggestion *that we should put you down*

The main attempt of *Apposition in Contemporary English*, futile in our opinion, is to delimit the concept of apposition by listing its features, exclusively (I) syntactic, (II) semantic, or (III) pragmatic. The aim is not novel at all, since from the 50s there has been turning up a large number of studies with the same goal in mind. Neither can the originality of this volume under review be found in its conclusions. The proposal of a relational gradient, for which I will account below, far from being convincing, does multiply the number of linguistic dimensions of a concept which will just be operative and useful if we are able to restrict its scope to a limited group of sequences, the more homogeneous, the better.

Meyer's—University of Massachusetts, Boston—novelty is the modernity of his research methodology. The book's most important contribution is the huge amount of statistical information obtained after an in-depth analysis of data taken from three popular computerised corpora of the English language, to wit, *Survey of English Usage Corpus of Written English, Brown University Standard Corpus of Present-day American English* and *London-Lund Corpus of Spoken British English*. Those linguistic descriptions which in the first place make use of actual corpora have the immediate advantage of taking into account a wide range of examples, contrarily to the classic generative framework, which have solely analysed a relatively small number of laboratory utterances, according in most cases to the author's subjective criteria—frequently capricious and always extremely limited. In the current "Corpus-Linguistics fever," the *Survey* has consolidated its position as the standard corpus of written English in the U. K., the *Lund* as the one of oral British English, and the *Brown* as the clearest representative of the North-American variety of the English language.

As one could easily perceive from Meyer (1991)—article which curiously has not been included among the *References* of this book—*Apposition in Contemporary English* turns out to be the definite study at least from the author's point of view. Neither imagination nor technical effort has been spared in order to analyse statistically every possible variable and combination of variables which might have any effect in the concept of apposition. We must not be surprised at Meyer's use of thirteen fields and their related variables in the description of every individual example of apposition he identified in the aforementioned corpora. By means of a powerful program such as *SPSS*, this volume displays more than 75 tables and hundreds of examples perfectly classified.

The book's most serious weaknesses spring from precisely the non-statistical part of the study, especially the first and final chapters, in which, as well as in former publications by the same scholar, Meyer tries to characterize the syntactic relationship between the members in an apposition as one exclusive of these constructions, different from traditional coordination, subordination or complementation. Nevertheless, he, in practice, limits himself to giving some characteristics—arbitrary in my opinion—and to

recognizing that a certain group of the examples under analysis are in-between one of the classic types of syntactic relations and that new one of apposition. We will focus on this topic below when we review those chapters in more detail.

Apposition in Contemporary English consists of five chapters, two appendices and a works-cited list which, although a bit short, turns out to be a splendid specific bibliography on this topic. On the one hand, Appendix 1 gives an account of every possible value assigned by Meyer to each of the thirteen fields to which we referred above, and which shape the individual registry of each appositive entry found in the corpora. The second appendix puts forward the numerical data of the number of appositions *per* corpus and genre, as well as relative percentages taking into account the number of words which every sample has. On the other hand, the first and final chapters amount to respectively a theoretical introduction and a final-remark section about the concept of apposition, the latter of which, i.e. Chapter 5, is lavishly illustrated with statistical tables. In the ensuing lines I will explore the contents of every section, paying special attention to those of theoretical nature.

The first chapter opens with some criticism of former studies on the apposition, highlighting both their too restrictive or too permissive character and their heterogeneity, and which thus were scarcely scientific. The author pays special heed to Quirk *et al*'s (1985) three well-known criteria applying to *strict full appositions*, to wit, (I) omissibility of either member, (II) functional identity with respect to the clause to which the apposition belongs, and (III) extralinguistic coreferentiality between both units. Meyer ends this introductory chapter by putting forward a table marshalling the characteristics of his peculiar notion of apposition, which

> is best viewed as a grammatical relation that stands in opposition to relations such as complementation or modification. The relation of apposition is realized by constructions having specific syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic characteristics that both define the relation of apposition and distinguish it from other grammatical relations. (5)

Those "other grammatical relations" are strictly those of complementation—exocentrism, syntactic interordination or interdependence—subordination—modification or expansion— and coordination. Nevertheless, in that table just mentioned the apposition is not distinguished at all from the traditional relations. Meyer, under the column labelled "Syntactic Characteristics" poses a list of the possible configurations that the members may show, of the functions of the construction as a whole, its binary vs non-binary structure as well as the tendency the members may have to appear either juxtaposed or separated by any material. In Chapter 2 we will find the criteria the author has followed so as to classify a given construction as apposition. However, I do think that threefold division of the linguistic sequences which derive from members in apposition is most valuable. This first chapter ends with some technical information on the three corpora, as well as on the research method and computational tools used.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the syntactic treatment of appositions. In the first part, Meyer explores (I) the different categories of the members, concluding that the nominal apposition is the most productive type in English—55% out of the whole—and (II) the

syntactic composition of each of the members. More simply put, the main concern of this section is to put forward a detailed statistical analysis of the configurational properties of appositions in English, especially the relationship of pre- and postmodification between each member's head and the peripheral material. Besides, here is also introduced the metalinguistic variable of "genre," interacting with the frequencies of every type of appositive phrasal construction.

The apposition of a noun phrase and a clausal or sentential constituent is the third type which is most productive in English—15%—after nominal and non-nominal appositions—the latter, with a frequency of 17%. The second members which usually take part in clausal appositions are *that*-clauses and *to*-clauses, attested in (3) and (4):

(3) *The fact that the testimony of the Spirit is taken an objective form in a people and words and actions* preserves it from the arbitrariness of subjectivism and individualism ([49] in Meyer 22)

(4) He spoke of *his desire to promote the abolition of slavery by peaceable means* . . . ([47] in Meyer 21)

By no means do I accept that (3) and (4) show examples of appositions, not even within Meyer's theoretical framework. If appositions are a peculiar kind of syntactic relationship, *ie* different from complementation, coordination or subordination, on what scientific basis can we ground the exocentric nature of the examples above, in which the constituents following *fact* and *desire*, respectively, are absolutely governed and even, let's say, required? In what way can we not allow for the existence of relations of complementation between *fact* and the *that*-clause in view of the first unit's, in broad outline, "subcategorizing" its following argument, or how can we neglect that relationship between *desire* and the *to*-clause if we compare it to predicate versions such as (5)?

(5) He desired to promote the abolition of slavery by peaceable means

A second part within this chapter is centred on the existence or not of specific markers of the appositive relationship, which, to the best of my knowledge, far from being simply "either optional or obligatory," as the author points out in p. 25, (I) can exist optionally, (II) can be required, or (III)—and here is the difference—are impossible—cf. (4). Let us remember that 97% of the appositions in Meyer's data-base have no markers at all, according to a table in Chapter 5. After Meyer's claim just quoted, we come across numerical tables with every type of marker, and the kind of units "marked" in each occurrence. For example, *of* is said to be a marker in utterances such as (6) below. Again, and turning back to the discussion of the previous paragraph, I cannot identify any apposition or any appositive member introduced by *of* in (6). The syntactic relationship between *the problem* and *of rural tenancy* is not different from that of modification or even complementation.

(6)   It should also be recognized that *the problems of rural tenancy* cannot be solved by
       administrative decrees alone ([71] in Meyer 29)

After sections dealing with the available categories in an appositive construction,
Meyer gives a brilliant analysis of the non-nominal appositions, which, in my opinion,
amounts to one of the most useful parts of the volume under review.

In the following part of Chapter 2, the author discusses the syntactic functions of the
whole appositive construction with respect to the clause in which it appears. The
conclusion is that the function "object" is particularly frequent—55%—if compared to,
for instance, that of subject—33%. An explanation for those figures is given in the
following chapters, in which Meyer takes into account pragmatic factors, to wit, the
constituents' weight, end-focus, and the like, which strongly influence the organization
and placement of apposition in discourse.

Once topics such as the members' juxtaposition, its number, or the exclusive twofold
nature of appositions have already been dealt with, Meyer brings about his claim for a
syntactic gradient of the relation "apposition" with respect to the other types upon which
we commented above.

> If however, apposition is considered an undifferentiated, or *gradable*, relation, we can
> distinguish those constructions that are most appositional—central appositions—from
> those that are (in varying degrees) less appositional—peripheral appositions. . . .
> Appositions can be either coordinative or subordinative. Those that are coordinative will
> be considered central appositions. Those that are subordinative will be considered
> peripheral appositions and on gradients between central apposition and coordination,
> peripheral elements . . . modification, and complementation. (41)

This quotation, in the first place, seems to collide with that in p. 5 of the book, reproduced
above in this review. The adjective *gradable*—italics in the quotation are mine—in
apposition with *undifferentiated* undoubtedly limits Meyer's initial intention to oppose the
appositive relation to the others usually identified in the literature. Now it seems to be the
case that appositions are defined by means of their proximity or remoteness to those
traditional syntactic relations, namely, coordination and subordination. Apart from that,
neither can I find a justification for the implication that modification and complementation
are in the middle of a scale between coordination and subordination, especially in light of
Meyer's examples of apposition which, as I pointed out above, did illustrate central cases
of complementation and postmodification. As a conclusion, in those theoretical aspects,
Meyer's framework collapses, since we cannot both countenance the syntactic existence
of appositions in English and at the same time agree with the fact that they comprise
different syntactic relations. Meyer's apposition should be regarded exclusively as a
semantic relation. Once we take that for granted, those problematic examples classified as
appositions which I here criticised are completely mitigated. Meyer is not convincing
enough when he tries to add the apposition to the traditional list of syntactic relations, and
consequently the goal of *Apposition in Contemporary English* cannot be found in its
theoretical implications. Let's say that appositions have just a semantic nature—and even,
if one prefers, a pragmatic one—and then we will greatly benefit from this study. The

characterization of a linguistic structure must not be grounded on its partial fulfilment of any of the three criteria suggested by Meyer, to wit, (I) the omissibility of the first member, (II) of the second one, or (III) their interchangeability.

To those claims some sections are added which confuse rather than shed light on the former proposal of a gradient of syntactic relations, and the similarities that systematically need to be recognized between, for instance, appositions and relative clauses on the one hand, and those examples of *that-* or *to*-clauses and the average verbal complementation on the other.

Chapter 3, centred on meaning matters, opens with a semantic classification of appositions comprising several reflections on former studies. The main concern of the suggested typology is the distinction between those appositions whose members are extralinguistically coreferential and those which refer to different entities in the real world, such as synonymy, attribution or hyponymy. The former are quite productive in the corpora—62%—in spite of the fact that the criteria used by Meyer for their ascription to this group are unreasonably strict. Anyway, non-coreferential appositions are almost marginal, particularly those showing hyponymy. In twenty pages the author analyses each type and subtype, the description of which falls beyond the purview of this review. I will just add that, in my opinion, this is the capital section of the book.

The second part of this chapter deals with the semantic nature of the members, and their reciprocal contribution as far as meaning is concerned. In this way, a second classification—more comprehensive and accurate than Quirk *et al*'s (1985)—is drawn, whose point of departure is the axis plus/minus specificity of the second with respect to the first member.

In the third and final part of Chapter 3, Meyer develops again a gradient, semantic in this occasion, going from the most to the least appositional examples. Strictly speaking, he posits a chain whose borders are, respectively, those cases showing full coreferentiality and the semantic relation part/whole. Cataphoric reference, attribution or hyponymy would be included in the middle of the gradient.

The third of the dimensions put forward in the first pages of this volume, that is, the pragmatic one, is studied in detail in the penultimate fourth chapter. In its introductory paragraphs, Meyer places the apposition within a general theory of linguistic processing, whose main maxim is that new information occupies the last locations in a sentence. Using the author's words, "[t]hematically, apposition is a relation in which the second unit of the apposition either wholly or partially provides new information about the first unit" (92). Consequently it must not puzzle us that in 86% of the examples the second member carries new information. As far as I am concerned, since my intention is to highlight the importance of the semantic and pragmatic dimensions over the syntactic one —null in my approach—the concept of apposition is very similar to the *afterthought*—cf. Li (1976). In other words, the second member will always add new information to the first one, at least in idealistic terms. And I say "idealistic" because although sometimes the hearer or reader may know in advance the second member's informative contribution, the speaker's or writer's appealing to a so-heterodox syntactic structure as the apposition is, can only be assessed if he or she wants to put forward new information to the listener or reader. In fact, to that 86% of second members which contain, according to Meyer, new

information, we could well add the remaining 14%, which includes every second member carrying partial given informative contents. In other words, the concept of apposition that I am suggesting here lets us treat terms such as (7) as constituents carrying new information, even though they have known material, like *visitor*.

(7)   My agreement carries me from one division to another but only in the capacity as a, of *a visitor, a visitor from above*, you see ([2] in Meyer 93)

I consider exaggerated Meyer's labelling of members such as those in (8) or (9) as informatively old just because they contain a single—anaphoric—pronoun, and a repeated form of *be* respectively:

(8)   He owns everything that isn't given to the mortgage company. That is to say, he owns the difference between what is bespoke and its actual value
(9)   His face was altered, [that is to say] was thinner.

As Meyer correctly claims, those final members with given or old information are particularly operative in spoken language, since they function as linguistic mechanisms aiding "in the comprehension and production of spoken texts . . . [creating] parallelism, and . . . [emphasizing] important information in the apposition" (95). In written texts their usefulness decreases because the reader has a powerful tool which oral communication lacks, to wit, *feedback*. As a consequence, the use of appositions in written language is aesthetically marked.

After a small digression with further comments on appositive markers in which its informative role in mediating between the first and the second members is underscored, Chapter 5's most extensive part deals with the frequencies shown by appositions in every sample's genre—fiction, conversation, science, journalism, and so on—as well as the standard semantic types found in those stylistic variants just mentioned.

Chapter 5, which closes the book, summarizes the conclusions drawn from the main sections of the study, and adds new tables and diagrams demonstrating the previous chapter's essential concern, that is, the distribution of the different types of apposition in the corpora. This brief section's only novelty is that "variation in apposition usage is motivated not by differences between American and British English but by the varying functional needs of the different genres of English" (126).

To sum up, the book's typographical and graphic quality contrasts with the serious flaws of the theoretical framework put forward. Nevertheless, even though the final results undoubtedly lose value, neither Meyer's felicitous contribution to the computational study of the apposition in actual corpora of the English language nor his plausible rigour in classifying this linguistic structure *semantically* is diminished at all.

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