

Epithets at the Syntax-Semantics Interface

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By

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This monograph investigates *epithets*. Epithets are a type of DP, for which we can give the following working definition. First, epithets contain noun phrases that are used in a non-literal, ‘emotional’ way. Second, epithets are anaphoric, i.e. they refer back to another DP, or a contextually salient referent. To illustrate, the word *fascist* can be used as an epithet. In (1a), we see the literal use of *fascist* where it refers to a member of a nationalist political group; in (1a), the use of *fascist(s)* is neither emotive nor an epithet. Examples (1b-c) exhibit the emotive use of *fascist*, where *fascist* is used pejoratively, roughly equivalent in meaning to *bully*. Examples (1b-c) differ with respect to anaphoricity (and stress); in (1b), *some fascist* is not anaphoric, it introduces a new referent and characterises this person as unpleasant. Example (1c) illustrates the epithet use of *the fascist*; it is anaphoric, it refers to John, who was previously introduced and it is also obligatorily unstressed.

- (1) a. *non-emotive, non-epithet*
Mussolini brought the fascists to power.
b. *emotive, non-epithet*
Some fascist asked for you on the phone.
c. *emotive, epithet*
I went out on a date with John. The fascist spent the whole evening interrupting me.

Most examples in this monograph use epithets such as *the idiot*, as these seem to be the most familiar and intuitive ones for speakers cross-linguistically. However we will see that other DPs, like *the teacher*, for example, can also be used as an epithet. The reader should bear in mind that the non-emotive reading (‘an uneducated person’) is less salient with *the idiot*, than the non-emotive reading of other epithets.

The literature on epithets explores their syntactic properties (cf. Lasnik (1976), Dubinsky and Hamilton (1998), Aoun and Li (2000), and Aoun, Choueiri and Hornstein (2001)), and their semantic properties (cf. Hom (2008)). More recent approaches attempt at unifying both their

semantic and syntactic behaviours, e.g. Beller (2011), Schlenker (2005, 2007), and Potts (2005, 2007). One of the major contributions of this monograph is the exploration of epithets from a cross-linguistic comparative perspective, contrasting several languages from distinct language families. The goal of this book is to shed new light on the syntactic and semantic nature of epithets by focusing on the ability of epithets to be referentially dependent on c-commanding antecedents. During the course of this monograph I demonstrate that this property of epithets is attested in a number of languages, and that it bears on an intricate interplay of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic factors.

1.1 The Distribution of Epithet Coreference under C-Command

1.1.1 The Components of Epithets

We will begin by posing the question: What makes an epithet an epithet? The precise definition of epithets remains controversial. The common assumptions shared by most are that an epithet consists of an NP or DP, which is accompanied by a determiner¹. Furthermore, it is also commonly assumed that epithets tend to be expressive and bear a [+evaluative] feature (often descriptively assumed), which can be either positive or negative. The English examples below illustrate these two assumptions. Example (2a) illustrates a case of negative evaluativity (i.e. the speaker does not think highly of John), whereas (2b) illustrates positive evaluation in an epithet². In both examples, the epithet takes the shape of a definite description, i.e. it contains the determiner *the*.

- (2) a. ^{OK} Yesterday **John**₁ bumped into a fan who really loves **the idiot**₁.
 b. ^{OK} Yesterday **John**₁ bumped into a fan who really loves **the great man**₁.

Although it is typically assumed that epithets preferably consist of a nominal component plus a determiner, it seems as though the determiner is in fact *obligatory*. Consider the Russian example in (3). Russian does not have an overt definite determiner analogous to the English determiner *the*. Although Russian does have bare determinerless noun phrases, this

¹ Cf. Aoun & Choueiri (2001), Schlenker (2005), and most recently Potts (2005) and Harris (2009).

² Cf. Schlenker (2005) for additional examples of this nature.

strategy does not seem to apply to epithets. In order to derive the correct reading, a proximal demonstrative, *ètot*³, is required.

Russian

- (3) ^{OK} **John₁** ubedil sovet čto **ètot** **idiot₁** umjon.
 John.nom convinced panel that this idiot.nom smart
 ‘John convinced the panel that this idiot is smart’.

Furthermore, it appears that the determiner that occurs with the epithet must be obligatorily *overt*. This requirement is illustrated by the Japanese example in (4). In Japanese it is typically assumed that noun phrases are accompanied by a null determiner; however, the example in (4) shows that the epithet requires an overt determiner, in this case, *sono*.

Japanese

- (4) ^{OK} kinoo **John₁-wa** [**sono baka₁-o** hontooni aisiteiru] fan-ni atta.
 yesterday John-wa that idiot-acc really love fan-dat met
 ‘Yesterday, John₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁’.

The data in (5) show that Hindi patterns like Japanese; the data replicate the requirement for a demonstrative epithet as opposed to an unmarked epithet.

Hindi

- (5) ^{OK} Kal **Rohit₁** ek fan-se milaa jo ki ***(us)**
 yesterday Rohit a fan-with met.pfv Rel that that
 bewakuuf₁-ko bahut chaahtaa hai
 stupid-Acc lot want.hab is
 ‘Yesterday Rohit₁ met a fan who wants that stupid₁ a lot’.

The data above suggest that epithets require an overt determiner; however, more must be said regarding the nominal part of the epithet. I would like to point out that, in principle, anything or anyone could be an epithet, if the corresponding world-view is constructed. For example, *the janitor* could refer to an honest, respectable position of employment, or, if we alter the world-view, a degrading, low life, dirty occupation. This is true

³ Pavel Rudnev (p.c.) points out that in Russian, *ètot* is not often used anaphorically: typically, the demonstrative *tot* is used, sometimes to mark coreference with a non-subject.

of more subtle epithets, for which examples are given in (6)⁴. Another observation that the reader should be aware of is that in order for a noun to be interpreted as an epithet, it must be unstressed. For example, *the dancer*, with regular stress can be understood non-evaluatively. However, if we unstress it, and construct the corresponding world-view, then *the dancer* can be understood evaluatively (i.e. it becomes an epithet).

- (6) a. ^{OK} Yesterday **John**₁ bumped into a fan who really loves **the whistle blower**₁.
 b. ^{OK} Yesterday **John**₁ bumped into a fan who really loves **the Naxalite**₁.

Other examples of a reinterpretation of regular R-expressions as epithets involve the German *Oberlehrer* (or *Schulmeister*) ‘schoolmaster’, which originated as an occupation, but nowadays is mainly used in its epithet reading *Oberlehrer* (or *Schulmeister*) ‘pedant’, with the adjective *oberlehrerhaft* (and *schulmeisterhaft*) ‘pedantic’⁵.

This brings us to our definition of epithets: epithets are made up of a nominal part plus an obligatory determiner. In principle, most DP’s can be epithets depending on the world-view that is constructed, and the data seem to suggest that they can be positively or negatively evaluated.⁶ This monograph focuses on cases where epithets co-occur with a c-commanding antecedent, and is concerned with how their distribution is constrained in such cases. In the following section I would like to discuss a striking observation made by Dubinsky & Hamilton (1998), namely that epithets cannot freely co-occur with a c-commanding antecedent. I will show that this observation can surprisingly be found in many languages. Chapter 1.1.2 looks at epithets in restrictive relative clauses, which is one of the contexts in which epithets that are referentially dependent on a c-

⁴ Thanks to Noam Chomsky (p.c.) for these examples.

⁵ Thanks to Patrick Grosz (p.c.) for the German examples.

⁶ There may be restrictions on more complex DPs used as epithets. Out of the blue, (ii) and (iii) seem less acceptable than (i). Thanks to Martin Hackl (p.c.) for the examples and for pointing this out.

- i. ^{OK} Have you seen **John**₁? **The idiot**₁ is late again.
 ii. ?? Have you seen **John**₁? **The idiot who forgot the broom in the basement**₁ is late again.
 iii. ?? Have you seen **John**₁? **The greatest idiot in the world**₁ is late again.

As we will see later, epithets will be treated as nominal appositives, where *the idiot* has a structure similar to *he*, *the idiot*. The examples in (ii) and (iii) indicate that the nominal appositive has to be suitable as a predicate, as in *he is an idiot*, but not **he is a greatest idiot in the world*. In the examples above, one restriction that may hold here is the difficulty of destressing a long phrase.

commanding DP are most broadly accepted (plausibly due to the absence of an attitude predicate, as we will see later); chapter 1.1.3 turns to epithets in complement clauses that are referentially dependent on a c-commanding DP in the main clause.

1.1.2 Epithets in Relative Clauses

Before turning to epithets, let us revisit the notion of *Condition C*. Classical *Condition C* (of the *Binding Theory*, cf. Chomsky (1981)) is a constraint that rules out constructions where an R-expression is coreferent with a c-commanding antecedent, or rather, is referentially dependent on a c-commanding antecedent. Evans (1980) observes that there are several types of relationships that fall under the umbrella term of ‘coreference’. He introduces the concept of *referential dependency* (see also Reinhart (1983b)). Referential dependency holds between two DPs if the meaning of one is dependent on the meaning of the other. For coreference in the broader sense, no such dependency is necessary, as it can be *accidental* (see also Lasnik (1976)) if both DPs denote the same entity due to the context. Consider the classical illustration of Condition C in (7).

Here, (7a) (where *Harry Wormwood* c-commands *the actor*) is ungrammatical, as it violates Condition C (with the intended reading where *the actor* refers back to *Harry Wormwood*, i.e. where *the actor* is referentially dependent on *Harry Wormwood*). Contrastively, (7b) (where *Harry Wormwood* does not c-command *the actor*) is grammatical, as it does not violate Condition C.

- (7) a. * [Harry Wormwood]₁ thinks that the actor₁ is popular.
 b. ^{OK} [Harry Wormwood’s₁ mother]₁ thinks that the actor₁ is popular.

The difference between referential dependency and accidental coreference is illustrated by (7a) versus (8); example (8) is acceptable under a reading where Harry Wormwood sees an actor on TV without recognising him, and where that actor happens to be Harry Wormwood himself. Here, *Harry Wormwood* and *the actor on TV* end up accidentally coreferring (given that both refer to the same individual), but neither is referentially dependent on the other (indicated by different indices).

- (8) ^{OK} [Harry Wormwood]₁ thinks that [the actor on TV]₂ is popular.

A classical example of such accidental coreference is illustrated in (9), from Higginbotham (1985), who attributes this type of example to Nancy Browman. The idea is that *he* and *John* corefer in the first sentence in (9),

as becomes clear in the following sentences. Yet, this coreference is accidental, and no Condition C violation occurs.

- (9) ^{OK} He put on John's coat; but only John would do that; so he is John.
(Higginbotham 1985:570)

As we will see, the Condition C obviation effects that occur with epithets involve referential dependencies and not accidental coreference.

First, Dubinsky & Hamilton (1998) observe that epithets can obviate Condition C in certain contexts. One of the examples that they provide contains an epithet in a restrictive relative clause; an illustration is provided in (10). The intended reading is one where the epithet's meaning is referentially dependent on the antecedent⁷.

- (10) ^{OK} John_i ran over a man (who was) trying to give the idiot_i directions.
(Dubinsky & Hamilton 1998:687)

The above observation is a specific observation about epithets, and not a general observation about R-expressions. This becomes obvious when we contrast (11a) with (11b). As indicated, only (11a), which contains the epithet *the idiot*, exhibits the relevant "Condition C obviation" effect, whereas (11b) still seems to violate Condition C.

- (11) a. ^{OK} Harry Wormwood_i ran over a man who was trying to give the idiot_i directions.
b. * Harry Wormwood_i ran over a man who was trying to give the actor_i directions.

A question that naturally arises here, is why does (11b) not allow for the relative clause to be late merged after Quantifier Raising of *a man* (cf. Lebeaux (1988))? The answer to this question is that such movement is not unconstrained; for instance, Fox (1999) discusses the examples in (12), which are ungrammatical even though QR should give rise to the LFs in (13).

⁷ Evidence that this is referential dependency rather than accidental coreference is given in chapter 2, where it is shown that epithets can be syntactically bound.

- (12) a. *^{??}You bought him₁ every picture that John₁ liked.
 b. * He₁ bought you every picture that John₁ liked.
 (Fox 1999:181)
- (13) a. [every picture that John₁ liked]₂ [you bought him₁ t₂].
 b. [every picture that John₁ liked]₂ [he₁ bought you t₂].
 (Fox 1999:181)

One possible factor that facilitates QR with late merge is Antecedent-Contained Deletion (ACD). In ACD, illustrated in (14a), a relative clause such as *that John₁ expected you would* contains an elided VP. Furthermore, the antecedent of this elided VP contains the DP that the relative clause modifies; this is illustrated in (14b), where the bracketed phrase is the apparent antecedent VP for the elided VP. In other words, the VP ellipsis appears to be contained in its own antecedent VP. Authors such as Fox (1999) argue that ACD requires QR, with the result that the elided VP is no longer contained in its own antecedent; this is sketched in (14c).

- (14) a. ^{OK} You sent him₁ the letter that John₁ expected you would.
 (Fox 1999:185)
 b. You [_{antecedent VP} sent him₁ the letter that John₁ expected you would <_{elided VP}>]
 c. [the letter that John₁ expected you would <_{elided VP}>]₂ [you [_{antecedent VP} sent him₁ t₂]]

As a result, ACD creates configurations that may involve QR with late merge; this fact is illustrated by the contrast in (15) versus (16). Example (15) involves ACD and is acceptable, whereas (16) does not involve ACD and is unacceptable; this is an observation that goes back to Fiengo & May (1994). The examples in (11) do not involve ACD, which accounts for the unacceptability of (11b) and leaves the acceptability of (11a) as a puzzle. Observe, moreover, that the examples in (17a-b) differ from the examples in (16a-b) in the same way; if we replace the R-expression *John* by the epithet *the idiot*, the utterance becomes acceptable.

- (15) a. ^{OK} You sent him₁ the letter that John₁ expected you would.
 b. ^{OK} You reported him₁ to every cop that John₁ was afraid you would.
 (Fox 1999:185)
- (16) a. ^{??}/*You sent him₁ the letter that John₁ expected you would write.
 b. ^{??}/*You reported him₁ to every cop that John₁ was afraid of.
 (Fox 1999:184)

- (17) a. ^{OK} You sent him_i the letter that the idiot_i expected you would write.
 b. ^{OK} You reported him_i to every cop that the idiot_i was afraid of.

We can conclude (in particular from the contrast in (16) vs. (17)) that epithets in restrictive relative clauses can be referentially dependent on a c-commanding antecedent even in situations in which Condition C obviation cannot be achieved by means of a late-merged relative clause. This monograph focuses precisely on cases like (17), and other cases where epithets co-occur with a c-commanding antecedent, and is concerned with how their distribution is constrained in such cases. In this monograph I will not provide an analysis for the syntax of relative clauses, but focus on predicates that take clausal complements. Dubinsky & Hamilton (1998) observed constraints on epithets when they co-occur with a c-commanding antecedent; for instance, examples like (18) are ungrammatical. In the remainder of this chapter, I show that this observation is not unique to English, and can be reproduced cross-linguistically.

- (18) * Harry Wormwood_i thinks that the idiot_i is popular.

Data that involve epithets are typically not evaluated cross-comparatively. The majority of research on the topic focuses on a single language, either Thai or Arabic, with English being the contrastive language. However even in the reported cases, the data have not been contrasted from one language to the next in a way that allows us to make stronger, cross-linguistic generalisations. The reason for this is as follows. Epithets are an interface issue; they concern syntax, but also have a strong semantics and pragmatics component, due to the evaluativity property they possess; and it is this evaluativity component that contributes to fine grained judgments. In addition to “fuzzy data”, it is imperative that the individual languages’ syntax, semantics and pragmatics be taken into account when constructing stimuli for informants. In this monograph, I aim to provide cross-linguistic generalisations on the distribution of epithets, by drawing on a variety of languages throughout. The reader should bear in mind that there is considerable variation amongst speakers as to whether they accept certain statements with epithets or not. In general, the data that I report are based on surveys that involved multiple speakers per language (where possible), and I focus on data that could be reproduced across speakers, as well as across languages. This is also a good place to point out that some interesting differences between languages emerge, which I will document, but they are not the main area of investigation; for instance, Dutch speakers generally seem to accept a wider range of examples than speakers

from other languages – it is a topic for future research to see how this kind of seemingly parametric variation can be explained.

Before I propose an analysis for the distribution of epithets with a c-commanding antecedent, I want to show that examples like (11a) are not specific to English. In fact, the same pattern first observed by Dubinsky & Hamilton (1998) can be found in many languages. In the following overview, I present cases where the antecedent is a pronoun, as Schlenker (2005) claims that these are less acceptable than cases where the antecedent is an R-expression (given in (19a) vs (19b)). What we find is that for most languages, no such difference can be attested, i.e. (19b) is equally acceptable to (19a); however the reader should observe that even in English there is inter-speaker variation (for example, there are speakers who do not get a contrast between (19a) and (19b), and accept both equally well), suggesting that this contrast is subtle.

- (19) a. ^{OK} John_i ran over a man (who was) trying to give the idiot_i directions.
 (= (10))
 b. How about John?
 ? He_i ran over a man who was trying to give [the idiot]_i directions.
 (Schlenker 2005:396)

To begin with, consider the Czech data in (20). In this language, epithets in relative clauses can be referentially dependent on a c-commanding antecedent, whether it is a pronoun or an R-expression; this is illustrated by the data given in (20).

Czech

- (20) a. ^{OK} Včera **Honza** narazil na fanouška, který **toho idiota**
 yesterday Honza bumped on fan who that idiot
 úplně zbožňuje.
 totally adores
 ‘Yesterday, John_i bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot_i’.
- b. ^{OK} Zrovna jsem mluvil s Honzou. Včera **pro** narazil
 just aux.pst.1sg talked with Honza yesterday pro bumped
 na fanouška, který **toho idiota** úplně zbožňuje.
 on fan who that idiot totally adores
 ‘Just talked to John_i. Yesterday, he_i bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot_i.’

Languages as diverse as Croatian, Dutch, French, Hindi, Hungarian, Russian and Slovenian behave like Czech as shown by the data in (21)-

(27). Notice that the uniformity extends to the observation that these languages do not distinguish between an R-expression antecedent and a pronominal antecedent.

Croatian

- (21) a. ^{?OK} Jučer je **John**₁ naletio na obožavatelja koji
 yesterday aux.3sg John bumped.ptcpl on fan who
 stvarno obožava **tog idiota**₁
 really adores that idiot
 ‘Yesterday, John₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁’.
- b. ^{?OK} Upravo sam razgovarao s Johnom₁. Jučer je
 just aux.1sg talked with John. yesterday aux.3sg
pro naletio na obožavatelja koji stvarno obožava
 pro bumped.ptcpl on fan who really adores
to idiota₁.
 that idiot₁.
 ‘Just talked to John₁. Yesterday, he₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁.’

Dutch⁸

- (22) a. ^{OK} Gisteren kwam **Jan**₁ een fan tegen die helemaal dol is
 yesterday met Jan a fan prt who entirely fond is
 op **de idioot**₁
 of the idiot
 ‘Yesterday John met a fan who is really fond of the idiot.’
- b. ^{OK} Heb net met Jan₁ gesproken. Gisteren kwam **hij**₁ een fan
 have just with Jan spoken. yesterday came he a fan
 tegen die helemaal dol is op **de idioot**₁.
 prt who entirely fond is of the idiot
 ‘Just talked to John₁. Yesterday, he₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁.’

⁸Other translations pattern the same, as shown in (i) and (ii), indicating that this is not due to a particular phrase or idiom.

Dutch

- i. ^{OK} Gisteren liep **Jan** tegen een fan op die echt van **die gek** houdt.
 ‘Yesterday, John₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁.’
- ii. ^{OK} Net met Jan gepraat. Gisteren liep **hij** tegen een fan op die echt van **die gek** houdt.
 ‘Just talked to John₁. Yesterday, he₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁.’

French

- (23) a. ^{OK} Hier, **John** est tombé sur un fan qui adore **cet** yesterday John₁ is fallen onto a fan who loves the **imbécile**. idiot₁.
 ‘Yesterday John bumped a fan who loves the idiot.’
- b. ^{OK} Je viens juste de parler à John. Hier, **il** est I come just from talking to John yesterday he is tombé sur un fan qui adore **cet imbécile**. fallen on a fan who adores this idiot
 ‘Just talked to John₁. Yesterday, he₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁.’

*Hindi*⁹

- (24) a. ^{OK} kal **Rohit** ek fan-se milaa jo ki **us** yesterday Rohit a fan-with met.Pfv Rel that that **bewakuuf**-ko bahut chaahtaa hai stupid-Acc lot want.Hab is
 ‘Yesterday Rohit₁ met a fan who wants that stupid₁ a lot’.
- b. ^{OK} mE-ne bas abhii Rohit-se baat kii. kal **vo** I-Erg just now Rohit-with talk do.Pfv.f yesterday he ek fan-se milaa jo ki **us bewakuuf**-ko bahut a fan-with met.Pfv Rel that that stupid-Acc lot chaahtaa hai want.Hab is
 ‘I just talked to Rohit. Yesterday he₁ met a fan who wants that stupid₁ a lot’.

⁹ The examples in (i) and (ii) show that different translations of the same sentence behave the same way in Hindi.

- i. ^{OK} kal **John**₁ acaanak ek fan se Takraa gayaa **jo muurkh**₁ ko sac meiM pyaar kartaa hai / caahtaa hai / pasaMd kartaa hai
 ‘Yesterday, John₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁.’
- ii. ^{OK} John₁ se abhii abhii baat kii. kal **vo** ek fan se acaanak Takraa gayaa **jo muurkh**₁ ko sac meiM caahtaa hai.
 ‘Just talked to John₁. Yesterday, he₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁.’

Hungarian

- (25) a. ^{OK} Tegnap **János** belebotlott egy rajongóba, aki tényleg
 yesterday Janos stumbled.into a fan.with who really
 szereti **az** **idiótát**.
 loves the idiot
 ‘Yesterday, Janos₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁.’
- b. ^{OK} Épp most beszéltem Jánossal. Tegnap **pro** belebotlott
 I just spoke Janos.with yesterday pro stumbled.into
 egy rajongóba, aki szereti **az** **idiótát**.
 a fan who loves the idiot
 ‘Just talked to John₁. Yesterday, he₁ bumped into a fan who really
 loves the idiot₁.’

*Russian*¹⁰

- (26) a. ^{OK} **John** včera vstretil poklonnicu, kotoraja bogotvorit
 John yesterday met fan.fem who.fem adores
etogo **idiota**.
 this idiot
 ‘Yesterday, John bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot.’
- b. ^{OK} Tolko čto zvonil John. **On** včera vstretil poklonnicu,
 just now rang John he yesterday met fan.fem
 kotoraja bogotvorit **etogo** **idiota**.
 who.fem adores this idiot
 ‘Just talked to John on the phone. Yesterday, he bumped into a fan
 who really loves the idiot’

¹⁰Again, we find that different translations show the same pattern, given in (i) and (ii).

Russian

- i. ^{OK} Včera **Ivan**₁ vstretil fanat-a, kotor-yj
 yesterday, John₁ meet-PST-M fan-ACC who/which-M
 po-nastojaschemu lubi-t **idiot-a**₁
 really love-PRS.3SG idiot₁-ACC.
- ii. ^{OK} Tol'ko čto govori-l s Ivan-om₁.
 only that talk-PST.M.SG with John₁-INSTR.
 Včera **on**₁ vstretil fanat-a, kotor-yj po-nastojaschemu
 yesterday, he₁ meet-PST-M fan-ACC who-M really
 lubi-t **idiot-a**₁.
 love-PRS.3SG idiot₁-ACC.

Slovenian

- (27) a. ^{OK} Včeraj je **John** naletel na oboževalca, ki res
 yesterday, cl John₁ bumped into fan who really
 obožuje **tega** **idiot**₁.
 loves the idiot₁.
 ‘Yesterday, John bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot.’
- b. ^{OK} Ravnokar sem govoril z Johnom.
 just talked to John₁.
 Včeraj je **pro** naletel na oboževalca, ki res
 yesterday, cl pro bumped into fan who really
 obožuje **tega** **idiot**₁.
 loves the idiot₁.
 ‘Just talked to John. Yesterday, he bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot’

For completeness’ sake, it is worth pointing out that there are languages that exhibit the pattern that Schlenker (2005) observes in (19), namely that epithets that are referentially dependent on a pronoun are less acceptable than epithets that are referentially dependent on a non-pronominal DP. Such languages include Flemish, Japanese and Spanish; these data are given in (28)–(30).

Flemish

- (28) a. ^{?OK} Gisteren ei **Jef** een vrou gezien da **daue** **stoemerik**
 yesterday has Jef a woman seen that that idiot
 al juiere volgt.
 already years follows
 ‘Yesterday, Jef₁ bumped into a fan who has been following the idiot₁ for years.’
- b. ^{??} Kem just me Jef geklapt. **Ij** ei gisteren een vrou
 I.have just with J spoken he has yesterday a woman
 gezien da **daue** **stoemerik** al juiere volgt.
 seen that the idiot already years follows
 ‘Just talked to Jef₁. Yesterday, he₁ bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot₁.’

Japanese

- (29) a. ^{?OK} kinoo **John**-wa [**sono baka**-o hontooni aisiteiru] fan-ni
 yesterday John-top that idiot-acc really love fan-dat
 atta.
 met
 ‘Yesterday, John_i bumped into a fan who really loves the idiot_i.’
- b. ^{??} Ima John-to hanasita. Kinoo **kare**-wa [**sono baka**-o
 now John-with talked. yesterday he-top that idiot-acc
 hontooni aisiteiru] fan-ni atta.
 really love fan-dat met
 ‘Just talked to John_i. Yesterday, he_i bumped into a fan who really
 loves the idiot_i.’

Spanish

- (30) a. ^{OK} Ayer, **Juan** se encontró con un admirador que adora
 yesterday Juan self met with an admirer who adores
 a **ese idiota**.
 to this idiot
 ‘Yesterday, Juan bumped into a fan who loves the idiot.’
- b. ^{??} Acabo de hablar con Juan. Ayer, *pro* se encontró
 finished of/speak with Juan yesterday self met
 con un admirador que adora a **ese idiota**.
 with an admirer who adores to this idiot
 ‘Just talked to Juan_i. Yesterday, he_i bumped into a fan who really
 loves the idiot_i.’

I conjecture that the contrast between (20)-(27) vs. (28)-(30) reflects a subtle preference in how speakers of different languages utilise pronouns. The idea being, that speakers try to introduce evaluative information as early as possible. In the examples in (28b), (29b) and (30b), the deviance is due to the fact that speakers prefer a variant where the first pronoun is realised as an epithet. In other words, Schlenker’s (2005:396) example in (31a), repeated from (19b), is deviant due to a preference for (31b).

- (31) a. How about John?
 [?] He_i ran over a man who was trying to give [the idiot]_i directions.
- b. How about John?
 ^{OK} [The idiot]_i ran over a man who was trying to give him_i directions.

I speculate that this is a universal, but subtle preference, and not a grammatical restriction. The fact that some speakers exhibit this contrast whilst others don't may reflect variation amongst speakers. This is supported by the fact that in Spanish, some of my informants find the version where the antecedent is a pronoun in example (30b) above, less acceptable than the alternative, (30a); however other informants find both variants equally acceptable. To conclude this discussion, the question should be addressed why Dubinsky & Hamilton's (1998:687) example in (32a), repeated from (10), does not compete with an example like (32b) in the same way. This seems to be due to the fact that (32b) is marked, as indicated. I attribute the markedness of (32b) to the fact that in (32) *John* introduces a new referent, which seems to clash with modification by *the idiot*.

- (32) a. ^{OK} John_i ran over a man (who was) trying to give the idiot_i directions.
 b. [?] [John, the idiot_i]_i ran over a man (who was) trying to give him_i directions.

Based on the data in (20)-(30), we can safely conclude that Dubinsky & Hamilton's (1998) observation for English can be reproduced in many languages. In this section we have seen that epithets in a (restrictive) relative clause can be c-commanded by antecedents outside this relative clause, which they are referentially dependent on, suggesting that they are not subject to Condition C in such contexts, or at least they obviate Condition C. It is worth pointing out, that in the acceptable examples we have seen so far, there is often material between the epithet and the antecedent; for example in (32a), the DP *a man* occurs between the epithet *the idiot* and the antecedent *John*.

One question that arises here is whether we are truly dealing with restrictive relative clauses (as opposed to appositive relative clauses); in other words, we want to know whether the antecedent truly c-commands the epithet (which may not be the case in appositive relative clauses (cf. Safir (1986))¹¹. The examples in (33) and (34) indicate that we are dealing with restrictive relative clauses, and thus the antecedent does c-command

¹¹ This is shown by the examples in (i) versus (ii), quoted from Safir (1986:672), which Safir attributes to Luigi Rizzi. The pronoun in the restrictive relative clause in (ii) can be bound by the subject, but the pronoun in the appositive relative clause in (i) cannot.

i. * Every Christian_i forgives John, who harms him_i.
 ii. ^{OK} Every Christian_i forgives a man who harms him_i.

the epithet. We know that the relative clause is restrictive in these cases, since the relative clause serves to identify its head noun.

Russian

- (33) A: Kogo John povjol v operu?
 who.ACC John.NOM take.PERF to opera
 ‘Whom did John take to the opera?’

B: **John₁** povjol kollegu, kotoraja dejstvitel’no ljubit
 John took colleague.ACC who.NOM really loves
ëtogo idiota₁
 this idiot.ACC
 ‘John took the colleague who really loves the idiot.’

Russian

- (34) A: S kem John xodil v operu?
 with whom John went to opera
 ‘Who did John go to the opera with?’

B: **John₁** xodil s kollegoj, kotoraja dejstvitel’no ljubit
 John went with colleague who really loves
ëtogo idiota₁
 this idiot
 ‘John went with the colleague who really loves the idiot’

The same point can be made by the following examples from Czech, Dutch, Croatian and French in (35)-(38); here, the restrictive relative clause introduces new information that contrasts with the old information provided in the previous clause and serves to determine the referent of *somebody*. In other words, of the possible people that the subject (Karel, Jan, ...) may have met, the speaker uses the restrictive relative clause to single out the one who really loves the subject.

Czech

- (35) Karla většinou každý nenávidí. Já ho taky nemůžu vystát.
 Karel mostly everybody hates I him also not.can stand
 ‘Usually everybody hates Karel. I can't stand him either.’

- ^{OK} Ale nedávno potkal **Karel**₃ někoho, kdo má **toho**
 but recently met Karel:nom somebody:acc who has that
idiota₃ fakt rád.
 idiot really glad
 ‘But recently Karel₃ bumped into someone who really LOVES that idiot₃.’

Dutch

- (36) Normaliter haat iedereen Jan. Ik kan hem ook niet uitstaan.
 usually hates everyone Jan I can him also not stand
 ‘Usually everybody hates John. I can’t stand him either.’
- ^{OK} Maar onlangs liep **Jan** tegen iemand op die echt van **die**
 but recently ran Jan against somebody on who really of the
idioot HOUDT.
 idiot loves
 ‘But recently John₃ bumped into someone who really LOVES that idiot₃.’

Croatian

- (37) Nitko ne voli Johna. Ni ja ga ne mogu
 noone Neg loves John.acc. Neither I him.acc Neg can
 podnijeti.
 stand.
 ‘Usually everybody hates John. I can’t stand him either.’
- ^{OK} Ali nedavno je **John** naletio na nekega
 but recently Aux John.nom bumped.part.m on someone.acc
 tko stvarno VOLI **tog idiota**.
 who.nom really loves that idiot
 ‘But recently John₃ bumped into someone who really LOVES the/that
 idiot₃.’

French

- (38) D’habitude, tout le monde déteste John. Je ne peux pas le
 usually all the world hates John I not can neg him
 sentir moi non plus.
 stand me neither
 ‘Usually everybody hates John. I can’t stand him either.’

^{OK}Mais récemment **John** est tombé sur quelqu'un qui aime
 but recently John is fallen on someone who loves
 VRAIMENT bien **cet imbécile**.
 really well this idiot
 'But recently John₃ bumped into someone who really LOVES the/that
 idiot₃.'

The first observation presented in this section can be summarised as follows: In many languages, epithets can be c-commanded by an antecedent that they are referentially dependent on, across clause-boundaries, if they are located in a restrictive relative clause. We now move on to another observation that will be at the core of this monograph.

1.1.3 Epithets in Complement Clauses

If we look beyond relative clauses, we find that epithets can also occur in complement clauses, e.g. with the matrix predicate *convince*. As our point of departure, consider the Croatian example in (39a) and a Hindi example in (40a); in both cases, the epithet is c-commanded across a clause-boundary by an antecedent that it is referentially dependent on. In the examples under discussion, the epithet is in a complement clause and its antecedent is the matrix subject. We will see examples from more languages throughout this monograph of this nature. What the contrast between (39a) and (39b) shows us, is that once again, epithets differ from other R-expressions; only the former are acceptable in such configurations.

Croatian

- (39) a. ^{?OK} **Peter**₁ je uvjerio predstavnike da će
 Peter aux.3sg convinced.ptcpl representatives that will.3sg
prokleti izdajnik₁ riješiti problem.
 damn traitor solve problem.
 'Peter₁ convinced the representatives that the damn traitor₁ would solve the problem.'
- b. * **Bill**₁ je uvjerio predstavnike da će
 Bill aux.3sg convinced.ptcpl representatives that will.3sg
podvornik₁ riješiti problem.
 janitor solve problem
 'Bill₁ convinced the representatives that the janitor₁ would solve the problem.'

The same observation can be found in Hindi; this is illustrated by the data in (40a) versus (40b). The epithet *vo deshdrohii* ‘that traitor’ can be referentially dependent on a c-commanding antecedent, (40a), but the R-expression *vo jamaadaar* ‘that sweeper’ cannot, (40b).

Hindi

- (40) a. ^{OK} **Samir**-ne₁ pratinidhiyoN-ko₂ samjhaa diyaa hai ki
 Samir-Erg representatives-Dat explain GIVE.Pfv is that
vo deshdrohii₁ un-kaa kaam kar de-gaa
 that traitor they-Gen work do GIVE-Fut
 ‘Samir₁ has convinced the representatives that that traitor₁ will do their job.’
- b. * **Samir**-ne₁ pratinidhiyoN-ko₂ samjhaa diyaa hai ki
 Samir-Erg representatives-Dat explain GIVE.Pfv is that
vo jamaadaar₁ un-kaa kaam kar de-gaa
 that sweeper they-Gen work do GIVE-Fut
 ‘Samir₁ has convinced the representatives that that sweeper₁ will do their job.’

We may now be led to believe that epithets can freely occur with a c-commanding antecedent, but this is not correct either. As shown in (41), epithets cannot refer to c-commanding antecedents in the same clause, as shown by the Croatian and Hindi data below.

- (41) a. *Croatian*
 * **Peter**₁ je uvrijedio majku **prokletog izdajnika**₁.
 Peter AUX.3sg insulted mother.ACC damn.GEN traitor.GEN
 ‘Peter₁ insulted the damn traitor’s₁ mother.’
- b. *Hindi*
 * **Rohit**-ne₁ **us deshdrohii**-kii₁ maaN-kaa apmaan kiya.
 Rohit-Erg that traitor-Gen.f mother-Gen insult do.Pfv
 ‘Rohit₁ insulted the damn traitor’s₁ mother.’

Similarly, it appears that the nature of the matrix predicate also seems to play a role. Consider the examples in (42); here we see that epithets are less acceptable in complements to *think* than in complements to *convince*. This observation is illustrated by the following examples; example (42a) contrasts with (39a), and (42b) contrasts with (40a).

- (42) a. *Croatian*
 * **Peter**₁ misli da je **prokleti izdajnik**₁ pametan.
 Peter thinks that AUX.3sg damn traitor smart
 ‘Peter₁ thinks that the damn traitor₁ is smart.’

b. *Hindi*

- * **Rina**₁ soc-tii hai ki vo **deshdrohii**₁
 Rina think-Hab.f be.Prs.Sg that that traitor
 buddhimaan hai.
 intelligent be.Prs.Sg
 ‘Rina₁ thinks that the damn traitor₁ is smart.’

This monograph aims at shedding new light on the syntax and semantics of epithets, in a way that also explains the distribution of epithets in contexts where they occur with a c-commanding antecedent; i.e. one of the goals is to derive contrasts such as the ones between (42) and (39a)/(40a).

1.2 Sneak Peek

This section provides an overview of the core questions that this monograph addresses. Alongside these questions, I will discuss (briefly) my own approach to the issues at hand. In Chapter 2, I start by discussing a long-standing debate in the literature as to whether epithets are pronouns or R-expressions. This will become crucial later, for whether an epithet is a pronoun or an R-expression will partially determine the locality constraints that apply to it (i.e. Principle B of the Binding Theory¹² if it is a pronoun, and Principle C of the Binding Theory if it is an R-expression). In Chapter 2.1, I outline the controversy present in the literature, and I side with the camp that claims that epithets are pronouns. In addition to various forms of evidence from the literature, I present cross-linguistic empirical evidence of my own in Chapter 2.2, which is perhaps the strongest observation that favours the argumentation that epithets are in fact pronouns: I will show that epithets can be syntactically bound (as opposed to only semantically bound, which is the case with e-type readings) by a quantifier. A first illustration of such quantifier-variable binding is given in (43) (where the assumption holds that speaker B hates artists). Moreover, the binding relationship that we see in (43) illustrates that in the case of epithets, we find referential dependency and not accidental coreference, because the meaning of the epithet is dependent on the meaning of the DP that binds it (here: *every artist*). One new observation that this monograph makes is that when epithets appear to violate Condition C, this violation happens in spite of a referential dependency between the epithet and its antecedent, and is not due to

¹² Here I refer to Chomsky’s (1981) Binding Theory.

accidental coreference, which underlies other types of Condition C obviation¹³ (cf. (9) above).

Russian

- (43) A: Kakuju devušku privjol na prazdničnyj prijom každyj
 which girl brought to festive reception each
 xudožnik iz tvoego goroda?
 artist from your town
 ‘Which girl did each of the artists from your town bring to the festive reception?’
- B: OK Samo soboj, každyj xudožnik₁ privjol tu (samuju) devušku,
 naturally each artist brought that very girl
 kotoraja po-nastojščemu ljubit ètogo idiota₁
 that really loves this idiot
 ‘Naturally, each/every artist brought the one woman who really loves the idiot’

Having argued that epithets have the properties of pronouns, in Chapter 2.3 I will argue that epithets are nominal appositives that have a null anchor. We will see that this claim is substantiated by diagnostics from Kayne (2010) and den Dikken (2001). This new observation gives rise to the following question: if epithets are pronouns, why do they appear to trigger Condition C violations at all?

In Chapter 3, I show that epithets can be treated according to a two-dimensional semantics that is compatible with the views of Potts, (2003), (2005), (2007), Schlenker (2007) and Sauerland (2007). A summary of the basic idea is presented in (44). Consider the answer given in (44a), where *the idiot* is an epithet referring to *Fritz*. The analysis I argue for is given in (44b), where the epithet involves a nominal appositive, *the idiot*, that modifies a null anchor, *pro*. Assuming (in the spirit of McCawley 1982, Schlenker 2010a, 2010b) that appositives are interpreted in conjunction with their host clause, I assume that (44b) is interpreted as (44c), which gives rise to the presupposition (in Schlenker’s (2007) and Sauerland’s (2007) view) or conventional implicature (in Potts’s (2003), (2005), (2007) view) in (44e) (which contains the evaluative content of the epithet) and the (main) assertion in (44d). I discuss the details in section 3.3.3.

- (44) a. Do you know Fritz₁? John just met the idiot₁.

¹³ I thank Noam Chomsky (p.c.) for pointing this out to me.

- b. *syntactic analysis*: John just met $pro_1(,)$ the idiot.
- c. *interpretation of appositive*:
John just met $pro_1(,)$ and he_1 is the/an idiot.¹⁴
- d. *assertion*: John just met Fritz₁(, and he_1 is the/a (salient) person).¹⁵
- e. *presupposition*:
The speaker/John/a salient person believes that Fritz₁ is stupid.

A prediction that arises from the claim that epithets are pronouns (namely nominal appositives with a null anchor) is that epithets and pronouns should pattern alike in all environments. In other words, they should have the same distribution. However this is not what we see in (45). The data show that when epithets are in complement clauses, they do not pattern like pronouns, but R-expressions, (45a)/(45d) vs (45b)/(45c). This raises the following question: If epithets are pronouns, why are they unacceptable in cases where pronouns are acceptable? In other words, we know that R-expressions cannot be referentially dependent on a c-commanding antecedent, which is why (45d) is ungrammatical. Contrastively, pronouns *can* be referentially dependent on their antecedent, which is why (45b-c) are grammatical. If epithets (as a type of pronoun) can be referentially dependent on a c-commanding antecedent, why is (45a) deviant?¹⁶

¹⁴ It is unclear at this point whether a nominal appositive *the idiot* is interpreted as *he is the idiot* or *he is an idiot*. One possible view is that *the* remains uninterpreted, as in Potts (2003, 2005), so the resulting interpretation is equivalent to the copula construction *he is an idiot*. By contrast, Aoun, Choueiri & Hornstein (2001) use the variant *he is the idiot* in their rendering of similar appositives in Lebanese Arabic. We have seen in an earlier footnote that (ii) and (iii) seem less acceptable than (i) (Martin Hackl, p.c.).

- i. ^{OK} Have you seen **John₁**? **The idiot₁** is late again.
- ii. ^{??} Have you seen **John₁**? **The idiot who forgot the broom in the basement₁** is late again.
- iii. ^{??} Have you seen **John₁**? **The greatest idiot in the world₁** is late again.

This supports the interpretation as *he is an idiot* versus *he is the idiot*, as we cannot say **he is a greatest idiot in the world*, but we can say *he is the greatest idiot in the world*.

¹⁵ I consider the possibility that an epithet, such as *idiot*, also introduces the (vacuous) assertion ‘he is the/a (salient) person’, based on Schlenker’s (2007) analysis of *honky*, see chapter 3.3.3, in particular (160) and (161). As we will see, this may be necessary to account for statements such as *some idiot just asked for you on the phone*.

¹⁶ See the discussion around (276)-(279) for an explanation of the difference between (45a) and (45c).