On “R” in phrasal compounds –

a contextualist approach

Abstract: In phrasal compounds of the type XP + Y, one can assume a relation “R” that holds between the head and the non-head just as in ordinary N + N compounds. The paper discusses the question how “R” should be understood. Three recent approaches, i.e., construction morphology, parallel architecture view, and indexicalism are discussed. It is argued that all approaches lack a pragmatic component which is necessary for modeling pragmatic inferencing with respect to phrasal compounds. Thus, an “unspecific meaning” approach to the semantics of phrasal compounds, together with contextualist views on pragmatic enrichment, is a serious alternative to the approaches discussed.

Keywords: contextualism, indexicalism, morphopragmatics, phrasal compound, word formation

1 Introduction

A well-known fact about word-formation is the existence of a relation “R” that holds between the constituents of a compound. The exact nature of this relation, however, is a matter of dispute. Broadly speaking, one can find semantic, pragmatic, and mixed semantic-pragmatic approaches to “R”. This paper will explore a pragmatic approach to “R”. Basically, it is an essay on “morphopragmatics” – which is a somewhat old-fashioned term for the morphology-pragmatics interface. I will focus on phrasal compounds as a species of compounds in general. This type of compound has mostly been debated with respect to the locus of word-formation (e.g., Lieber 1988, 2009, Lieber & Scalise 2007, Wiese 1996). The special relationship between its constituents has been widely neglected (with the exception of Meibauer 2003, Trips, 2013). The type of compound that suits a comparison with phrasal compounds best is of course the nominal compound (N + N). In fact, scholars have argued that phrasal compounds are N + N compounds on some level of analysis. In this paper, I will argue that (at least the more prominent) morphological approaches lack a proposal for how to model the

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influence of pragmatics on the interpretation of phrasal compounds. My theoretical perspective in this respect stems from recent debates on the proper semantics-pragmatics divide and related discussions as the ones between so-called minimalists (e.g., Cappelen & Lepore 2005, Borg 2012) and contextualists (e.g., Sperber & Wilson 1995, Levinson 2000, Carston 2002, Recanati 2004, 2010). In particular, I will discuss three approaches, namely the construction-grammar approach by Geert Booij (Booij 2009, 2010a, forthcoming), the parallel-architecture approach developed by Carola Trips (2012, 2014, forthcoming), and the indexicalist approach by Daniel Weiskopf (2007).\footnote{Some remarks on the (lacking) morphology-pragmatics interface in Ackema & Neeleman (2004) can be found in Meibauer (2007), and some remarks on Lieber’s notion of the “body” (2004, 2009) are contained in Meibauer (2014).} My aim is a modest one: It is not to provide a theory about the relation of word formation to the semantics-pragmatics interface. Instead, it is about pointing out that there is a theoretical need to do this, and that phrasal compounds are a phenomenon that could serve as a promising testing ground.

The outline of the paper is as follows. In section 2, I will start with a description of an authentic example which will be taken up again in section 4. In section 3, three approaches to “R” are sketched, namely Construction Morphology, Parallel Architecture Approach, and Indexicalism. I will show that these approaches lack a genuine pragmatic component which is, indeed, necessary to model the hearer’s interpretive strategy of enriching “R”. In section 4, it will be shown what kind of pragmatic knowledge may play a role in these processes. The paper ends with the conclusions in section 5.

## 2 An example

Let us start with an authentic use of a phrasal compound and interpret this example in context.

The example is taken from Suhrkamp advertising material issued in 2013 (Suhrkamp, 2. Halbjahr 2013, 151):

\setcounter{equation}{0}

\begin{equation}
\text{Mit Bullshit legte der amerikanische Philosoph Harry G. Frankfurt den Klassiker der “Empört Euch!”-Bücher vor. Im Sturmlauf eroberte er die Herzen aller, die vom Nonsense-Gerede in U-Bahn und Büro und auf allen Kanälen schon lange genug hatten. Binnen Wochen verkaufte sich sein zorniges Manifest in den Vereinigten Staaten eine halbe Million Mal, ein globaler Feldzug gegen “Bullshit” war die Folge.}
\end{equation}

‘With Bullshit, American philosopher Harry G. Frankfurt presented the classic among the Revolt! books. It took the hearts of all those by storm who too had had enough for quite some time of all the nonsense-chitchat on the subway and in the office and on all available channels. Within weeks, his angry manifest sold over half a million copies in the United States; a global crusade against bullshitting was the result.

And yet until today, we find silly Bild columns and hollow chatter on talk shows and mobile phones. Helplessly, we would have to bear it all if it wasn’t for Frankfurt’s elegant-precise clarification of those phenomena, the original of all rage books and indispensable as the fundamental groundwork of the applied research on stupidity. Bullshit? Read it!’

What can we say about the structure, the meaning, and the use of the phrasal compound “Empört Euch”-Bücher? Here are some initial observations:

As for the particular relation between the head and the phrasal non-head, we notice that the category of books is somehow specified by the CP. At first glance, there are several possibilities, for instance:

(2a) books with the title Empört euch!
(2b) books made from materials that are nonbiodegradable, thus causing people to revolt against them
(2c) books with a content that causes readers to revolt against something

Reading (2a) can either be understood as referring to a pile of books that are all of the same type (with the title Empört euch!), or to a set of books with one of them (accidentally) bearing the same title. The latter reading is readily ruled out as implausible because authors and publishers tend to use original titles. The disambiguation of (2a) already shows that contextual knowledge is necessary. While not altogether impossible, (2b) demands a very specific background. (2c), however, is a plausible candidate. The CP phrasal compound thus creates a certain category of books, it is classificatory in the sense of Booij (forthcoming).

However, this is not the whole story, since background knowledge tells us that Empört Euch! (French original: Indignez-vous!) is actually the name of an essay by former resistance fighter and UN diplomat Stéphane Hessel that has become a worldwide success since its publication in October, 2010. This essay is
a radical attack on recent political developments on the background of the financial crisis and its effects on economies.

Finally, we can conclude that the class of so-called “Empört Euch!”-Bücher comprises at least two books, namely Indignez-Vous! and Bullshit.² Maybe the publisher aims at creating a new category here that would serve for further advertising and selling goals. Note that the above sentence is part of a short text portraying Frankfurt’s book. If a category of “Empört Euch!”-Bücher is successfully established, one may ask whether, for example, the book Deutschland schafft sich ab by Thilo Sarrazin belongs into that class (probably not, since it is presupposed that right-wing books are not proper members of the class).

In what follows, I will assume that “R” is a relevant parameter for phrasal compounds, too. Then, a contextualist perspective would insist that pragmatic inferences by the hearer help to determine the overall signification of the complex word, be it with respect to indexicality, illocution, implicatures, or to relevant contextual and background knowledge. I will come back to the above example in section 4.

3 Three approaches to the meaning of phrasal compounds

With respect to N+N compounds, there is a long tradition of thinking about their compositionality. Basically, there are two strands of argumentation, called “Lees’ solution” and “Downing’s solution” in a recent survey by Spencer (2011) (cf. Lees 1960, Downing 1977). Lees’ approach consists of providing a set of semantic relations that are applied to the head and the non-head of a nominal compound. Downing, in contrast, stresses the fact that in many cases, the relevant relation can only be established when considering the context of an utterance which makes her approach a pragmatic one.

I side with Spencer (2011) in thinking that the pragmatic approach is the more promising one. In fact, there is a certain morphopragmatic tradition (Bauer 1979, Downing 1977, Dressler & Merlino Barbaresi 1994, Merlino Barbaresi & Dressler 2011), yet, on the whole, this tradition is ignored by mainstream morphology (see Meibauer 2014). Obviously, this has to do with the tendency to treat pragmatic notions like speaker meaning, context, pragmatic inference, etc. as global notions that cannot be related to “R” in a sophisticated

² Note that the title of the original American edition was “On Bullshit” (Princeton University Press, 2005).
manner. Consequently, pragmatic approaches to the meaning of compounds are absent in surveys such as Lieber & Štekauer (2009) and Olsen (2012).

In what follows I shall show with respect to PC that pragmatic enrichment is necessary in order to interpret phrasal compounds. For the sake of brevity, I focus on CP phrasal compounds. There are three levels of analysis that must be obeyed: First, the level of CP as a phrasal non-head, second, the relation between the phrasal non-head and the head, third, the context in which the PC appears. In the following sketch we have to look at all three levels in order to evaluate some of the proposals made.

3.1 Construction Morphology

In traditional approaches to German word-formation such as Motsch (2004) and Fleischer & Barz (2012), there is a strong opposition against strictly rule-based and projectionist approaches. Instead of assuming rules “generating” complex word structures they assume patterns of word formation (‘Muster’) which are partly irregular or idiosyncratic, yet associated with meaning. Construction grammar is a syntactic approach which makes similar assumptions because a construction, quite generally, is conceived of as a form-meaning pair. In particular, lexemes can be seen as constructions, in addition to larger syntactic constructions (see Jacobs 2008). Thus, it is consistent to transfer ideas of Construction Grammar to morphology, as Geert Booij does in a number of publications (see Booi 2010a, b, forthcoming).

Instead of providing morphological rules, Construction Morphology assumes “abstract schemas that generalize over sets of existing complex words with a systematic correlation between form and meaning” and serve also the creation of new complex words (Booij 2009: 201). In (4), you find the schema for nominal compounding, as applied to English and Dutch endocentric compounds:

\[
(3) \quad [[a]_X [b]_{Y_1}]_Y 'Y_1 with relation R to X'
\]

In this schema, “the nature of R is not specified, but is determined for each individual compound on the basis of the meaning of the compound constituents, and encyclopaedic and contextual knowledge” (Booij 2009: 203).

If this schema is applied to phrasal compounds, it follows that “a” may be a phrase. Phrases are also constructions from the point of view of Construction Morphology. This holds all the more when phrases function as lexical units, as is the case with phrasal compounds in which phrases function as “building blocks” of complex words.

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3 Note that these comprehensive works are not even mentioned by Olsen (2012).
Booij (forthcoming) argues that Dutch CP phrasal compounds are usually expressive (being a case of so-called “fictive interaction”), while NP phrasal compounds of the type A + N as non-head are not, since they are used “for the purpose of classification (that is, for naming concepts)”. Both types can also be seen in Dutch NP phrasal compounds. In the first class of Dutch NP phrasal compounds, A + N is a conventional lexical unit, which is not the case in the second class:

(4) $A + N$ is conventional
$$[[\text{derde}_A \ \text{wereld}_N]_\text{NP}\ [\text{land}]_N]_N$$
‘third-world country’

(5) $A + N$ is not conventional
$$[[\text{witte}_\text{NUM} \ \text{boorden}_N]_\text{NP}\ \text{[criminaliteit]}_N]_N$$
‘white collars criminality’

Basically, Booij aims at the degree of lexicalization of the respective type of compound, assuming that non-conventionality goes together with expressivity (see also Meibauer 2007).

How to deal with phrasal compounds in Construction Morphology? While no particular instantiation of the general compounding schema in (3) is given, Booij (forthcoming) concludes that “fictive interaction” (sentences) and classification $A + N$ phrases are semantic correlates of the particular form. “Fictive interaction” goes together with expressiveness, while merely classificatory $A + N$ compounds lack expressiveness.  

However, this grossly underdetermines the data, and it remains unclear how “R” can be drawn from contextual information.

3.2 Parallel Architecture

Next, we consider Jackendoff’s Parallel Architecture Model (1997, 2009). In this system, Jackendoff draws a distinction between simple and enriched composition. Whereas the former does not allow for pragmatics in the way lexical conceptual structures (LCS) are combined, the latter tolerates pragmatics to a certain extent:

The conceptual structure of a sentence may contain, in addition to the conceptual content of its LCSs, other material that is not expressed lexically, but that must be present in conceptual structure either (i) in order to achieve well-formedness in the composition of the LCSs into conceptual structure ['coercion'] or (ii) in order to satisfy the pragmatics of the discourse or extralinguistic context. (Jackendoff 1997: 49)

4 As Schlücker (2013) convincingly shows with respect to German N + N compounds, besides the classificatory function, the modifier can also have an attitudinal or an identifying function. For the attitudinal function, see Meibauer (2013).
Cases in point are Reference Transfer Functions, as in (6a-c):

(6a) Look! There’s King Ogpu hanging on the wall.
(6b) A truck hit Bill in the fender when he was momentarily distracted by a motorcycle.
(6c) The ham sandwich in the corner wants some more coffee.

(7) Interpret an NP as VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF/VEHICLE CONTROLLED BY/PERSÔN CONTEXTUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH NP.

In order to interpret (6a-c), the hearer uses the directive (7). However, since pragmatics is not a separate component in the “tripartite parallel architecture”, it is not clear how pragmatic principles or inferences become active.

In Jackendoff (2009: 117), one finds an interesting speculation about the meaning of N + N-compounds like boxcar (and pontoon bridge).

(8) boxcar ‘car that carries boxes’
    ‘car that resembles a box’
    ‘car that serves as a box’

According to Jackendoff’s idea, the multiple meanings displayed in (8) are not a matter of ambiguity or vagueness. Instead, words such as these are “promiscuous”:

A learner attempts all possible strategies for combining N₁ and N₂ (presumably in parallel), and since there are multiple satisfactory strategies that do not conflict, all such semantic combinations are stored in memory as part of the meaning of the compound. (Jackendoff 2009: 117)

Since Jackendoff is certainly right in warning that “the insistence on a single best solution is only a prejudice” (Jackendoff 2009: 117), one wonders why he does not reflect upon the typical “minimalist” strategy, namely to assume a basic relation of the type “the referent of N₁ is in some relation to the referent of N₂” and leave the rest, i.e., figuring out the exact relation, to pragmatic inferencing. Once again, while Jackendoff alludes to pragmatics on several occasions (Jackendoff 2009: 119, 123, 128), it is not explained how exactly pragmatics is thought to interact with the tripartite parallel architecture or word-formation in general.⁵

This criticism also extends to the recent model by Trips (2012, 2014, forthcoming) which is very elaborated and aims at the integration of morphological, semantic-

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⁵ An anonymous reviewer worries that this criticism might be too strong. However, it is a theoretical decision to smuggle pragmatics into semantics instead of assuming, in a more “modular” fashion, a fourth column of the parallel architecture.
conceptual, as well as pragmatic facts about phrasal compounds. Trips (forthcoming) provides a set of lexical-conceptual relations that are instantiations of “R”. Drawing on the conceptual classes in Meibauer (2003) and her own corpus-based taxonomy, Trips (2012) proposes the following relations, all framed by the formalism of the parallel architecture model. As said above, I will focus on what Trips calls the PC[+pred], i.e., those phrasal compounds that contain a predicate. In general, PC[+pred] are said to be based on the following relation (Jackendoff 2010: 13):

\[(\text{State IS-INSTANCE-OF } ([x; \text{TOKEN}], [y; \text{TYPE}]))\]

\[(\text{"I'll go away and think about it" } \text{response} =\]
\[\text{[state IS-INSTANCE-OF (I'LL GO AWAY AND THINK ABOUT IT), (RESPONSE)\]}

\[(\text{"Weather hot, cricket wonderful"}_1 \text{postcard}_2 =\]
\[\text{[state IS-INSTANCE-OF (WEATHER HOT-CRICKET WONDERFUL}_1^{\text{α}}, \text{CONTAINER (α, POSTCARD}_2)]\]

\[(\text{"Steffi is great"}_1 \text{attitude}_2 =\]
\[\text{[state IS-INSTANCE-OF (STEFFI-IS-GREAT}_1^{\text{α}}, \text{PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE (α, ATTITUDE}_2)]\]

\[(\text{"Powdering my nose" } \text{act} =\]
\[\text{(POWDERING-MY-NOSE}_1^{\text{α}}, \text{ACTION (α, ACT}_2)]\]

\[(\text{"I am not going to miss out on the fun"}_1 \text{brigade}_2 =\]
\[\text{[state IS-INSTANCE-OF (I-AM-NOT-GOING-TO-MISS-OUT-ON-THE-FUN}_1^{\text{α}}, \text{AUTHOR (α, BRIGADE}_2)]\]

\[(\text{"Little old lady who's lost her ticket"}_1 \text{routine}_2 =\]
\[\text{[state IS-INSTANCE-OF (LITTLE-OLD-LADY-WHO'S-LOST-HER-TICKET}_1^{\text{α}}, \text{BOUNDED (α, ROUTINE}_2)]\]

While these patterns are certainly convincing – as far as they go – they are restricted to the conceptual level. I would say that the relation “IS-INSTANCE-OF” amounts to a severely underspecified “R”; in fact, it expresses that the denotation of the non-head has to do with the denotation of the head while the typical concepts associated with the heads give some hints how the specific relation is to be understood.

In addition to the function F (IS-INSTANCE-OF), there is another function involved and “this function G is an instantiation of metonymic coercion based
on world knowledge” (Trips, forthcoming). For instance, in (11), it is important to understand that the message is prototypically written on a postcard, i.e., that the postcard contains the message.

The meaning of postcard denotes that it is a medium on which something can be written but the phrase ‘Weather hot, cricket wonderful’ evokes a prototypical situation where postcards with exactly that content are written, and this association is based on world knowledge. (Trips, forthcoming)

While this is certainly a prototypical reading, there are other possible scenarios and it is the hearer’s task to find the most plausible interpretation.

Suppose that whenever Barbie gets a postcard from Ken containing the information that he will visit her during the weekend, she bursts out: “Weather hot, cricket wonderful!” This is what Ken, a devoted cricket player, always says when he is happy. Now, this postcard may be referred to as the ‘Weather hot, cricket wonderful’ postcard Barbie is longing for.

Trips makes two very strong assumptions with respect to “morphopragmatics”:

Next, I would like to come back to the morphopragmatic properties of PCs and the claim that the model of PA can better account for them since the conceptual-semantic structures assumed in this model include pragmatics, or put differently, that no distinction is made between semantics and pragmatics as is generally assumed in Cognitive Grammar. (Trips, forthcoming)

However, both claims seem to be problematic. First, it is not evident why conceptual-semantic structures “include” pragmatics. The idea to capture aspects of a speech situation like in a conceptual-semantic structure is not in itself pragmatic. Neither is metonymy primarily a conceptual-semantic affair, and this holds also for reference transfer (Ward 2004). Second, it is not reasonable to make “no distinction between semantics and pragmatics”. At least such an approach is not compatible with standard assumptions about semantics, pragmatics and the distinction between these levels (e.g., diverse articles in Maienborn et al. 2011, Allan & Jaszczolt 2012, Huang 2012a, b).

I conclude, then, that parallel architecture – according to standard assumptions in pragmatic theory – is unable to account for pragmatic processes in which hearers have to find out which relation is the right one (according to the intentions of the speaker and pertinent information available in the context).

### 3.3 Indexicalism

Indexicalism is a label for an approach to the semantics-pragmatics interface that views some expressions, e.g. nouns, in analogy to classic indexicals (or deictic expressions) like I, here or now (Finkbeiner & Meibauer, forthcoming). The indexical variables related to these expressions are typically “hidden” or
“covert”, and therefore have to be reconstructed through linguistic argument, e.g. arguments from binding. Indexicalism is to be contrasted with other major approaches to the semantics-pragmatics interface, especially minimalism and contextualism (Borg 2012: 18–29). If one considers these approaches on a scale, it is safe to say that indexicalism sits between minimalism and contextualism. According to Huang (2012a: 154), indexicalism is

the position in the contemporary philosophy of language and pragmatics and semantics according to which there is a role for the speaker’s meaning to play in the determination of the truth-conditional sentence, but only when a slot is set up by the sentence itself to be pragmatically filled in its logical form (Huang 2012a: 154).6

Minimalism is the position that semantics (‘what is said’) is truth-conditional and pragmatics (‘what is implicated’) is inferential. Grice (1989) is a minimalist in this sense, although he allows for pragmatic resolution of indexicals and ambiguity. Contextualism, in contrast, is the position that semantic structures are systematically underdetermined and are in need of pragmatic enrichment. Most Neo-Griceans, including Levinson (2000), Carston (2002) and Recanati (2004, 2010) are contextualists.

As far as I see, Weiskopf (2007) has been the first author who dwells on the proper analysis of nominal compounds with special attention to the recent debates on the semantics-pragmatics interface. He proposes an indexicalist approach, i.e., an approach postulating hidden (or “tacit”, “covert”) indexicals that are sensitive to the context:

(...) the linguistic meaning of CNs [compound nominals] contains a phonologically unrealized open variable or otherwise indexical expression that picks out the relation among their constituents, and this relation is filled in by pragmatic mechanisms that draw on features of the context of utterance. (Weiskopf 2007: 175)

Weiskopf (2007: 175) provides three rules for the interpretation of CN:

**Table 1**: Relations in English compound nominals (Weiskopf 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain of application</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rule I “a relation between an individual N₂ and the class of N₁s, or between the class of N₂s and the class of N₁s”</td>
<td>dog house, fire department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule II “a quantified relation between N₂ and N₁”</td>
<td>hamburger plate, murder weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule III “habitual, regular, or recurrent relations that obtain between an N₂ and N₁s” (operator: typically)</td>
<td>garbage man</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 The term ‘indexicalism’ appears to have been coined by Recanati (2004).
All rules contain an element “R*” that is “an indexical, context-sensitive expression”, whose job is to pick out “the most relevant and conversationally sensible relation obtaining between N₁ and N₂” (Weiskopf 2007: 175).

Surprisingly, Weiskopf (2007: 180) calls his indexicalist approach a “contextualist” approach, too. This is somewhat confusing, since contextualism basically argues that pragmatic processes determine to a large extent the truth-conditional meaning of constructions.

An indexical account locates the variability in the meaning of CNs in the content (what is said in particular utterances of CN-containing sentences), rather than in the linguistic meaning of the CNs themselves. Their linguistic meaning is constant but incomplete – it does not determine a content – pending assignment of a relation to the indexical. Pragmatic inferences operate to make such assignments in particular utterance contexts. (Weiskopf 2007: 180)

There are at least two problems with such an indexicalist view. The first question is why to assume exactly three rules in Table 1. Why do we not have more of them (compare the set of rules in Jackendoff’s approach) or less? The second question is genuinely pragmatic. How does a hearer manage to infer that not all of these rules are relevant in a particular context, i.e., cancel out the applicability of one of these rules?

While this approach admits the prominent role of pragmatics in determining the relevant meaning of CN in context, it is still not pragmatic enough because we do not know how a hearer upon hearing a CN can derive the appropriate contextual meaning. The selection of an appropriate rule (in case they are applicable at all), the operation of pragmatic principles (leading to implicatures or explicatures?), the calculation of the necessary background knowledge, all this is not done by a somewhat mystic “R*”, but by ordinary hearers. Thus, the indexicalist approach has still a pragmatic story to tell.

Weiskopf (2007: 163) seems aware of this tension. He draws a general distinction between three sorts of semantic analyses of CNs. According to the first approach, the meaning of CNs is “fully compositional, but context-sensitive”. This is the indexicalist approach he endorses. According to the second approach, the meaning of CN is “compositional, but ‘unspecific’ in their meaning”. The third approach assumes that CNs are “compositional but semantically many-ways ambiguous”. Most scholars would dismiss the last approach because it results in massive ambiguity, as becomes clear when one tries to list all the possible meanings of simple CNs.

Weiskopf clearly sees that the serious rival to an indexicalist account would be a contextualist account. In particular, he discusses a possible “pragmatic
enrichment analysis” along the lines of Recanati’s (2004, 2010) framework.\(^7\) According to Weiskopf, a Recanati-style account would argue “that CNs have a conventionally determined meaning consisting only of the juxtaposed meanings of their constituents” (Weiskopf 2007: 169). In this case, there is no need for computation of the conventional meaning of the compound, and the resulting meaning in context is elaborated by pragmatic processes of the hearer. According to Weiskopf (2007: 170), the main challenge for such a theory that assumes primary pragmatic processes is “to say what the complete conventional meaning of a CN is, and to show that it is compatible with judgments made under hedging operators”, for example literally, strictly, or really: \(^8\)

The idea of this test is to show that some readings of a CN are implausible or even excluded when they are in the scope of such operators. According to Weiskopf (2007: 165) such hedges “often function to direct attention towards the highest standards of applying or assessing the truth conditions of the statements they modify.”

(16a) X is literally/strictly/really a jazz cat.
(16b) *X is both a cat and jazz.
(16c) X is a cat that enjoys (or seems to enjoy) jazz.

This observation is intuitively sound. However, it is unclear to which extent this has to do with the meaning or force of hedging operators. Hedging operators are nothing but a conventional lexical means to lead the hearer to make standard or normal assumptions. Yet it remains unclear whether these assumptions should be normative for literal readings. After all, in those contexts that do not fit the standard assumptions or where it is not clear what the standard situation should be, pragmatic inferences are needed anyhow.

That hearers tend to pick out certain standard relations if they are unsure about the specific relation in the context of utterance is quite plausible. Weiskopf (2007: 181) alludes to “a default set of relations” that “might be

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\(^7\) Note that Recanati does not deal with morphology, and that there are many more contextu-alist approaches available, see Meibauer (2014).

\(^8\) Weiskopf (2007: 170) presupposes that “the p-process theorist cannot allow that CNs are incomplete, since incomplete expressions trigger grammatically mandated saturation”. As far as I see, so-called p-process theorists (like Recanati) can assume that CNs are incomplete in the sense that they need to be pragmatically enriched by ‘modulation’. Weiskopf discusses this as “optional free enrichment” but argues that this is only possible on the basis of “the juxtaposed meanings of their constituents” which he in turn attacks. However, juxtaposed constituent meanings are not the same as the intersection of meanings. Juxtaposition may simply follow from the property of being a complex word.
generated by hearers on the basis of the degree of familiarity” and points out that “to the extent that relations have been used and experienced in the past, they are likely to be used and recovered in the future.” Thus, some relations can become conventionalized.⁹ In sum, it is not clear whether these standard relations should be considered part of the conventional semantics of R* at all. On a final note, consider Rule III in Table 1, in which an operator typically’ is assumed. What is considered typical (normal, expectable, regular, etc.) arguably depends on many factors, among them social and cultural ones. Since these factors are subject to variation and change it is not clear to which extent they should be conceived of as semantic in nature.¹₀

Though Weiskopf discusses “R*” with respect to CNs, it is easy to imagine how such an approach would work with regard to phrasal compounds. As I will show in the next section, phrasal compounds invite for a contextualist approach for a number of reasons.

### 4 Towards a contextualist approach to phrasal compounds

Coming back to our initial example, I want to show that the interpretation of the phrasal compound “Empört Euch!”-Bücher is dependent on pragmatic inferencing. Let us assume that pragmatic inferencing happens on the pragmatic level of language computation.¹¹ After pointing out what happens at the interface between word-formation and pragmatics, I will present a contextualist proposal how to model “R” in the case of phrasal compounds.

It goes without saying that phrasal compounds are not interpreted in isolation but as parts of a sentence. These sentences are subject to the construal of truth-conditions. So, we can ask under what conditions a sentence such as (17) is true or false:

    ‘The Revolt! Books were sold out.’

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⁹ Another source of hearer orientation is the ongoing discourse. Weiskopf (2007: 181) mentions discourse-based priming effects: “Hearers will more readily recover relations that have been mentioned in discourse”. Moreover, analogy may play a role (see Olsen 2012).

¹⁰ Hence it is a candidate for rule reduction (see Weiskopf 2007: 178–179).

¹¹ In a modular fashion (which is, admittedly, outdated for many researchers) one could posit a pragmatic module interacting with other syntactic modules, see Ackema & Neeleman (2004) and Meibauer (2007).
In order to be able to judge whether this sentence is true or false we need to have access to the meaning of “Empört Euch!”-Bücher. This requires an understanding not only of the meaning of the component parts but also of the adequate relation “R” between them.

From a contextualist point of view, “R” is semantically underdetermined and has to be enriched by pragmatic inferencing. Thus, pragmatics influences truth-conditions. I think it suffices to assume that the conventional meaning of a phrasal compound XP + Y is that the referent of XP has some relation to the referent of Y, as already Günther (1981) put it with respect to N + N-compounds.12 The rest can be done by a speaker using pragmatic processes in the context. Note that it is by no means easy to exactly say what a context is (Meibauer 2012). This said, we can go on and take up a number of pragmatic processes that influence the enrichment of an underdetermined phrasal compound. For the sake of clarity, I come back to our initial example.

1. **Deixis:** The XP-part of the PC in (17) is an imperative. German imperatives have hidden 2. Ps. Subjects, that, as can be seen from the expression euch, are necessary for an inherently reflexive verb like sich empören (and coindexed with the 2. Ps. Subject, i.e., Ihr empört euch). So, the hearer of (17) has to find out, drawing on the immediate context or their background knowledge, who the addressee is. A plausible assumption is that the subject refers to the population of Western societies and economies. In the Gricean tradition, deixis is standardly assumed to be a context-related phenomenon which nevertheless intrudes into ‘what is said’. As pointed out in section 3.3, it lies at the heart of indexicalism. The point is that phrasal compounds, via their non-head, can contain deictic elements. It follows that the interpretation of these components must have access to the context.

2. **Anaphoric binding:** It is possible to bind anaphorically into phrasal compounds, see Lawrenz (1996), Meibauer (2003, 2007) for examples.13

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12 This relation is semantically unspecific and has to be pragmatically enriched.

13 As counterexamples to the claim in Meibauer (2007: 243) that anaphoric binding is possible in (i), an anonymous reviewer presents (ii) and (iii):

(i) *Damals wurde die Gott,ist-tot-Thematik in allen Zeitungen diskutiert, aber wir glaubten nicht daran, dass er, tot ist.*

   ‘In those days the god-is-dead subject was discussed in all newspapers, but we did not believe that he was dead.’

   (Meibauer 2007: 243)

(ii) *Er erwähnte die [Gott,ist-tot]-Thematik. Das ist falsch.*

   ‘He mentioned the god-is-dead subject. This is false.’

(iii) *Eric erwähnte die Gott,ist-tot-Thematik. Er, ist nicht tot.*

   ‘Eric mentioned the god-is-dead subject. He is not dead.’
Als Weihnachtsgeschenke bekamen wir jede Menge “Empört Euch!“-Bücher, aber schon kurz darauf verfielen wir wieder in den alten Trott.

‘As Christmas presents, we got lots of Revolt! Books but already soon thereafter we lapsed into the daily routine again.’

What has to be pragmatically derived is the construal of the speaker as being a part of the set of people addressed by the phrase Empört Euch!

Similarly, in (19) the personal pronoun wir as part of the CP is construed as coreferential with the genitive NP [der lieben Kleinen aus der zweiten Reihe]:

Selbst bei hohem Tempo könnte man das “Sind wir schon da?“-Gejaule [der lieben Kleinen aus der zweiten Reihe] nur zu genau gehören.

‘Even at high speed you might well hear the Are we already there? howling of the dear kids on the back seat.’

(Pafel 2011, this issue) assumes that quotative XPs in phrasal compounds are pure quotations, hence anaphoric islands. However, I assume that there are convincing cases of anaphorical binding into the XPs of phrasal compounds. Arguably, anaphoric binding is a pragmatic process, see Ward et al. (1991), Huang (2010). For instance, with respect to (17), the referents of wir have to be understood as being at least part of all the referents addressed by the imperative subject.

3. Resolving of ambiguity: As is well-known, phrasal compounds, like N + N-compounds, are compatible with a number of readings. In order to find out what the adequate relation is, the addressees make use of their knowledge of context, background, stereotypes, etc., obeying Gricean maxims. For instance, the reading ‘books made from materials that are nonbiodegradable, thus causing people to revolt against them’ (see (2b)) is a possible reading yet is not plausible in the context of the advertisement and the text as a whole.

I assume that (ii) is not acceptable because das is preferably construed as referring to the whole speech act of mentioning which leads to a contradiction. The anaphor davon, however, picks out the CP without any problems:

(iv) Er erwähnte die [Gott-ist-tot]-Thematik. Davon, kann meiner Meinung nach jedoch keine Rede sein.

‘He mentioned the god-is-dead subject. That’s out of the question, in my opinion.’

As for (iii), this is no problem, either.

(v) Eric erwähnte die Gott-ist-tot-Thematik. Er sei auf keinen Fall tot.

‘Eric mentioned the god-is-dead subject. According to him, he is not dead at all.’

I agree, however, that this is a field of research in which further study is called for.
4. **Illocution assignment:** The non-head CP *Empört Euch!* is an imperative sentence. In German, the verb *sich empören* is obligatorily reflexive, the reflexive anaphor *Euch* is related to the addressee (referred to by the hidden pronominal subject). *Euch* is written with a capital E, signalling a polite form, as opposed to *euch*. Imperative sentences are prototypically related to directive illocutions. Thus, a component of speech act assignment assigns the directive illocution to the non-head. This can only happen through access to this component.

5. **Quotation:** As is well known, non-heads of PCs may be quotations or not (Meibauer 2003). With respect to our example, it is not clear for the addressee whether the CP is a quotation or not. If *Empört Euch!* is stored as a book title in the mental lexicon of a reader, it might count as a quotation of the title. Note that the CP is in quotation marks. Yet, if that relation is not salient to the reader she would simply understand that "*Empört Euch!*"-Bücher is the name of a certain class of books.

If XPs as parts of the PC are quotations, the relation R obtains between an original utterance (including fictional original utterances) and the referent of the head. If they are not quotations, the relation obtains between the referent of the XP and the head. The very existence of XP-quotations shows that pragmatic mechanisms are operating here, at least when one endorses a pragmatic approach to quotations, as I do (see Brendel et al. 2011, Gutzmann & Stei 2011).

6. **Expressivity:** Finally, at least CP phrasal compounds seem to be expressive in many cases. This has to do with the fact that there are always syntactic constructions competing with the compound, e.g.,

(20a) "*Empört Euch!*"-Bücher
    ‘Revolt! Books’

(20b) Bücher vom Typ "*Empört Euch!*" (quotative reading)
    ‘books of the type Revolt!’

(20c) Bücher, die zum Widerstand auffordern (descriptive content-related reading)
    ‘books that provoke to opposition’

The idea is, then, as explicated in Meibauer (2007), that CP phrasal compounds are understandable, since they display much material in the CP, as well as witty due to a conflict between the Q-principle (requiring enough information) and the I-principle (requiring stereotypical enrichment). Since the operation of these principles must be balanced for the respective coinage, it is obvious that a pragmatic component has access to the level of word structure.
7. **Information structure:** To my knowledge, there is not much work on the functioning of phrasal compounds in texts. With respect to our example, we find an anaphoric relation as in (21):

(21) Bullshit

(21a) *der Klassiker der “Empört-Euch!”-Bücher*
    ‘the classic of the revolt! Books’

(21b) *sein zorniges Manifest*
    ‘his angry manifesto’

(21c) *Frankfurts elegant-präzise Abrechnung mit derlei Phänomenen*
    ‘Frankfurt’s elegant-precise clarification of those phenomena’

(21d) *Urschrift aller Wutbücher*
    ‘original of all rage books’

(21e) *unverzichtbares Grundlagenwerk der angewandten Dummheitsforschung*
    ‘indispensable fundamental groundwork of the applied stupidity research’

From the interrelation of the noun phrases in (21), we can conclude that *Wutbücher* is a near-synonym for “Empört-Euch!”-Bücher. However, in order for the addressee to draw this inference, they have to derive that *Wut* (‘anger’) is a cause for *Empörung* (‘rebellion’) so that the CN *Wutbücher* is to be read as ‘books showing anger at capitalist societies and economies, etc.’. Hence, the ability to enrich *Wutbücher* is necessary in order to link this expression to “Empört-Euch!”-Bücher which is in itself in need of pragmatic enrichment.

Coming back to Weiskopf’s (2007: 170) challenge for the so-called pragmatic-process theorist, I do neither see a problem with saying what the complete conventional meaning of a CN is nor in showing its compatibility with judgments made under hedging operators like literally, strictly, or really. When I produce one of the utterances in (22), in reference to some exemplars of Bullshit and Indignez-vous! at my local bookseller, it can be concluded that I derive a contextually appropriate reading like ‘books with a content that causes readers to revolt against something’ (see 2c) and embed it under the scope of the respective operators.

(22a) *Dies sind wirklich “Empört-Euch-Bücher”.*
    ‘Really, these are Revolt! Books.’

(22b) *Strenggenommen sind dies “Empört-Euch-Bücher”.*
    ‘Strictly speaking, these are Revolt! Books.’

(22c) *Dies sind buchstäblich/im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes “Empört-Euch-Bücher”.*
    ‘Literally, these are Revolt! Books.’
If you will, this is a nice example for the contextualist assumption that pragmatic processes intrude into semantics.

5 Conclusions

While the approaches by Jackendoff and Trips (Parallel Architecture Approach), by Booij (Construction Morphology) and by Weiskopf (Indexicalism) acknowledge pragmatic influence on the interpretation of “R”, they do not go far enough since they do not provide a pragmatic component that interacts with word-formation and is flexible enough to capture the pragmatic inferences a hearer draws while trying to make sense of “R”. With respect to “R” in CP phrasal compounds, it has been shown that there are a number of genuine pragmatic influences to be modeled. Therefore, a contextualist approach to word-formation is attractive and may be spelled out along the lines of typical contextual approaches, e.g. Recanati’s work. Ironically, as I have made clear in Meibauer (2014), this huge task has so far been ignored by contextualists. Alternatively, one could posit a pragmatic module interacting with syntactic or lexical modules assumed in other morphological frameworks. Phrasal compounds (but also normal N + N compounds) show that there is ample room for pragmatic enrichment so that “R” may be simply stating that there is a relation. This does not exclude the existence of a number of standard relations which could be conceived of as pragmatically dependent, too.

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