Reexamining Higgins' taxonomy:
A split in the Identificational class

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Higgins's (1979) taxonomy of copular clauses

(1)

Clause type	Example
Predicational	*Susan is a doctor.*
Specificational	*The winner is Susan.*
Identity (Equative)	*She is Susan.*
Identificational	*That is Susan. / That woman is Susan.*

The project (e.g. Williams 1983; Partee 1986, 2000; Heycock and Kroch 1999)

- Explain the taxonomy in terms of the semantics of the expressions flanking the copula

A specific proposal (Geist 2002, 2003; Mikkelsen 2002a, in prep.)

(2)

Clause type	Subject	Complement
Predicational	$\langle e \rangle$	$\langle e, t \rangle$
Specificational	$\langle e, t \rangle$	$\langle e \rangle$
Identity	$\langle e \rangle$	$\langle e \rangle$

- Evidence for subject type: pronominalization in tag questions (Mikkelsen 2002b)

(3) a. Susan is a doctor, isn't **she**? **[Predicational]**

b. The winner is Susan, isn't **it**? **[Specificational]**

c. She is Susan, isn't **she**? **[Identity clause]**

- Evidence for complement type: the second constituent of a small clause under *consider* must be predicative (Rothstein 1995)

(4) a. I consider [Susan the best doctor in the county]. **[Predicational]**

b. *I consider [the best doctor in the county Susan] **[Specificational]**

c. *I consider [Mrs. Robinson Susan] **[Identity clause]**

Goals of this paper:

- examine Identificational class and argue that it is not semantically uniform
- characterize the two kinds of Identificational clauses
- integrate them into Higgins' taxonomy
- discuss further consequences

1 A split in Identificational class

(5) **That** is Susan.

(6) **That woman** is Susan.

Evidence for split

- Pronominalization (Higgins 1979:283):[1]

(7) That is Susan, isn't {**it**/*she}?

(8) That woman is Susan, isn't {*it/**she**}?

- Non-restrictive modifiers:

(9) *That, who everybody can see clearly, is Susan.

(10) That woman, who everybody can see clearly, is Susan.

- Grammatical gender in Danish: *det* (that-NEUTER), *den* (that-COMMON)

(11) a. **Det** er Susan.
that-NEUTER is Susan

b. ***Den** er Susan.
that-COMMON is Susan

(12) a. ***Det** **kvinde** er Susan.
that-NEUTER woman is Susan

b. **Den** **kvinde** er Susan.
that-COMMON woman is Susan

Interpretation of split

- *That is Susan* has a specificational semantics (cf. Hedberg (2000:901 fn. 17, 907 fn. 22, 917), Geist (2003:19)):
  - property-denoting subject (*that*)
  - individual-denoting complement DP (*Susan*)
- *That woman is Susan* has an equative semantics
  - individual-denoting subject (*that woman*)
  - individual-denoting complement DP (*Susan*)

[1] While no speaker variation has been reported for the tag in (7), some speakers accept *it* in the tag in (8) (the '*' on *it* in (8) represents Higgins' judgement).

How this accounts for the data

- Pronominalization in tags (7/8):
  - *it* → property-denoting subject[2]
  - *she* → individual-denoting subject
- non-restrictive modifiers (9/10):
  - non-restrictive relative clauses attach only to type $\langle e \rangle$ expressions[3]
- Grammatical gender in Danish (11/12):
  - *det* is the dedicated predicate anaphor:

(13) Tami elsker sushi og {**det** / *den} gør jeg også.
Tami loves sushi and {that-NEUTER / that-COMMON do I too
'Tami loves sushi and I do too.

Further evidence that *that* is not individual denoting in *That is Susan*:

- If individual-denoting, *that* would, presumeably, refer to Susan
- But *that*, unlike *that woman* can generally not refer to people:

(14) ***That** voted.

(15) That woman voted.

(16) *I gave the keys to **that**.

(17) I gave the keys to that woman.

(18) **That** is from Sweden.

(19) That woman is from Sweden.

[2]See Jespersen (1927:123–124), Kuno (1972:355–363), Doron (1988:282–286), Heggie (1988:67–71), Moro (1997:71–75), Zamparelli (2000:17–18), Engdahl (2001:132–133), Schlenker (2003:169–173), and Mikkelsen (2002b, 2003, in preparation: chapter 3) for data and discussion.

[3]Rothstein (1995:43), McCawley (1998:451), Potts (2002).

2 *That is Susan* as a specificational clause

The issue *That is Susan* does not "look" like a typical specificational clause:

(20) The lead actress in that movie is Ingrid Bergman.

(21) My best friend is Susan.

A resolution *That is Susan* is a specificational clause with an anaphoric subject.

Starting point *That/It is Susan* is a HIDDEN CLEFT[4]

- There is a knock on the door and I say:

(22) That might be Susan. (cf. Büring (1998:37, ex. (6)))

to mean:

(23) That might be Susan who's knocking in the door.

- The content of the missing cleft clause may also be linguistically given:

(24) Context: *Upon coming back to your hotel, you learn from the receptionist that one of your accomplices has had an accident down at the harbour. You are supposed to go to see him or her in the hospital, but in the hectic course of events the receptionist forgot to take down the name of your friend, and since there is a bunch of you, it is unclear which of your friends is the actual victim. You call your house mate to tell her what happened and you say:*

A friend of mine had an accident. **It might be Susan**. (cf. Büring (1998:36–7))

(25) Carla heard the car coming before it topped the little rise in the road that around here they call a hill. **It's her**, she thought. Mrs. Jamieson — Sylvia — home from her holiday in Greece.[5]

(26)

Jeg lagde mig på sengen	*I laid down on the bed*
og græd så bitterligt	*and cried so bitterly*
og hver en gang at døren gik	*and every time the door opened*
jeg troede **det var dig**[6]	*I thought* ***it was you***

[4] Poutsma (1916:732), Jespersen (1958:149), Prince (1978:897), Nølke (1984:74ff), Declerck (1983:223–240), Büring (1998:42–43), Merchant (1998:§4.1), Hedberg (2000:898–902), Ward et al. (2003), Bachrach (2003:chpt. 4).

[5] Opening lines of Alice Munroe's "Runaway", published in *The New Yorker*, August 11, 2003, p. 63.

[6] Second verse of *Det var en lørdag aften* (It was a Saturday evening), a traditional Danish song.

My articulation of this idea

- no actual ellipsis, missing cleft clause is simply unexpressed
- subject (*it/that*) is property-denoting anaphor, cf. (27):

(27) They said that Sheila was beautiful and she is **that**. (Ross 1969:357)

- antecedent property made salient by:[7]
  - preceding discourse: (24) – (26) or
  - physical context: (22)
- property is predicated of referent of post-copular DP.
- *That is Susan* is a specificational clause with an anaphoric subject.

Overt clefts

(28) That might be Susan who is knocking on the door.

The *wh*-clause provides the denotation for the property-variable introduced by *that/it* (exactly how depends, among other things, on assumptions about syntax of clefts).

3 *That woman is Susan* is an Identity statement

Not a hidden cleft

- There is knock on the door, but I **don't** say:

(29) That woman/person might be Susan.

- Similarly, (30) is infelicitous[8]

(30) A (girl)friend of mine had an accident. #She might be Susan.

No overt clefts The *wh*-clause can only be interpreted as an (extraposed) appositive, if at all:

(31) ?That woman might be Susan who is knocking on the door.

(32) #She might be Susan who is knocking on the door.

No complex demonstrative property anaphor

(33) *They said that Sheila was beautiful and she is **that beauty**.

[7]Cf. Erades (1949:304–305) Karlsen (1965:5ff), Wolter (2003).

[8]Or means something implausible, namely that who Susan is contingent on who had the accident, cf. Büring (1998:fn. 3), responding to Groenendijk et al. (1996a,b).

4 Conclusions and Consequences

Conclusions Higgins' Identificational class is not semantically uniform:

- *That is Susan* is a specificational clause
  - property-denoting subject (*that*)
  - individual-denoting complement DP (*Susan*)

  with the distinguishing characteristic that its subject is anaphoric.

- *That woman is Susan* is an Identity clause
  - individual-denoting subject (*that woman*)
  - individual-denoting complement DP (*Susan*)

Consequences

- Provides account of the contrasts in (7) – (12): pronominalization in tag questions, non-restrictive modifiers, and grammatical gender in Danish.

- Simplifies assumptions about *that*
  - Before:
    * Higgins (1979:236–237): two kinds of *that*

      "common gender" (*That is Susan*) vs. "inanimate" (*That is heavy*)

      Plus property-denoting *that* to account for Ross' sentence.[9]
    * Maclaran (1982:99): *"Demonstrative pronouns can refer to people only in the equative constructions where the identity of the referent is at issue"*
  - Now:
    * individual-denoting *that* (which cannot refer to people)
    * property-denoting *that*

[9] We also need to acknowledge propositional *that/it*, cf. Asher (1993:225ff).

- Focus position of cleft = focus position of specificational clause (Kiss 1998)

  (Hidden) Cleft: *That/It* BE DP_{focus} (*wh*- ...)

  Specificational clause: DP BE DP_{focus}

- Suggests a simplification of Higgins taxonomy (cf. Sharvit (2003:387–391) on pseudoclefts):

(34)

CLAUSE TYPE	EXAMPLE	SUBJECT	COMPLEMENT
Predicational	*Susan is a doctor.*	$\langle e \rangle$	$\langle e,t \rangle$
Specificational	*The winner is Susan. / That is Susan.*	$\langle e,t \rangle$	$\langle e \rangle$
Identity	*She is Susan. / That woman is Susan.*	$\langle e \rangle$	$\langle e \rangle$

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