



On the Applicability of Vice Versa

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The analysis suggested prevents the derivation of the unacceptable sentences in (12)–(16) because of the unacceptability of the conjoined sentence.

- (12) *Nancy smelled the fresh meat, and vice versa.
- (13) *The man who saw Harry's dog dropped dead, and vice versa.
- (14) *He earns more money than she does, and vice versa.
- (15) *The wind buffeted John and Mary, and vice versa.
- (16) *Max co-authored the book with Jinks, and vice versa.

Note that some comparative sentences are acceptable, such as (17)

- (17) John likes some people better than Harry, and vice versa (Harry likes some people better than John—not, John likes some people better than he likes Harry).

which is unambiguous. It is a curious fact about (17) that the noun phrase *some people* does not have the same referent in the two conjoined sentences.

When there are more than two noun phrases which could have been interchanged in a sentence followed by *vice versa*, people will permit two and sometimes even three interpretations. For example, in the sentence (18)

- (18) I expect John to hit Mary and vice versa.

the *vice versa* can have any one of the three interpretations in (19), although (19iii) is less frequently accepted.

- (19) (i) I expect Mary to hit John.
- (ii) John expects me to hit Mary.
- (iii) Mary expects John to hit me.

ON THE APPLICABILITY OF *Vice Versa*

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In the simplest cases, *vice versa* stands for a clause obtained by interchanging two elements of another clause, as in *Max loves Susan and vice versa* (= . . . and *Susan loves Max*). The sentences given below are of relevance to the as yet unsolved problem of what elements of a clause may be interchanged in this construction. Certain morphological differences are ignored in deciding whether one clause counts as “obtained from the other by interchange”, e.g. the difference between *-er* and *-ist* in (1) and between *Engl(ish)* and *Anglo-* in (7), although not quite everything

goes, e.g. *woman* and *gynec-* do not count as the same in (26). It appears to be bad to interchange something inside a definite description with something outside of it (10). This fact may be related to the impossibility of interchanging something in a nonrestrictive clause with something outside it ((12), cf. (11)).

The *'s and ?'s represent my own reactions to these sentences, assuming the interpretations given in parentheses. I have found great variation in the reactions of informants to these sentences. Sources are noted in square brackets after sentences which I did not concoct myself.

- (1) Few philosophers take biology courses, and vice versa. (= and few biologists take philosophy courses).
- (2) New Yorkers like Chicago, and vice versa. (= and Chicagoans like New York).
- (3) Westerners are fascinated by the Orient, and vice versa. (= and Orientals are fascinated by the West).
- (4) Glaswegians like Cambridge, and vice versa. (= and Cantabrigians like Glasgow).
- (5) Murderers are likely to commit rape, and vice versa. (= and rapists are likely to commit murder).
- (6) Virgins abhor prostitution, and vice versa. (= and prostitutes abhor virginity).
- (7) Many Frenchmen are Anglophobes, and vice versa. (= and many Englishmen are Franco-phobes). [Susan Houston]
- (8) Many Frenchmen have learned Italian, and vice versa. (= and many Italians have learned French). [George Lakoff]
- (9) *Many Frenchmen have learned Sanskrit, and vice versa. (= and many Sanskrit speakers have learned French). [Harold Koch, reported by George Lakoff]
- (10) *The Frenchman next door has learned Italian, and vice versa. (= and the Italian next door has learned French).
- (11) Frenchmen who can speak Italian are common, and vice versa. (= and Italians who can speak French are common).
- (12) *Frenchmen, who can speak Italian, are com-

mon, and vice versa. (= and Italians, who can speak French, are common).

- (13) *Air Canada has flights to India, and vice versa.
(= and Air India has flights to Canada).
- (14) On most harpsichords the white keys are black,
and vice versa. (= and the black keys are
white).
- (15) Many Baltimore fans live in Los Angeles, and
vice versa. (= and many Los Angeles fans live
in Baltimore).
- (16) *Many Oriole fans live in Los Angeles, and vice
versa. (= and many Dodger fans live in
Baltimore).
- (17) ?Many Catholics are anti-Semitic, and vice versa.
(= and many Jews are anti-Catholic).
- (18) In many languages, all nouns are deverbal,
but in Gwamba-mamba it's vice versa. (= all
verbs are denominal).
- (19) ?My big brother is little, and vice versa. (= and
my little brother is big).
- (20) It's common for a person's big brother to be
littler than him, and vice versa. (= and for his
little brother to be bigger than him).
- (21) ?Children who don't have fathers require frater-
nal love, and vice versa. (= and children who
don't have brothers require paternal love).
- (22) ?When my glass is empty, I fill it, and vice versa.
(= and when my glass is full, I empty it).
[François Truffaut]
- (23) (?) When the door is open, I close it, and vice
versa. (= and when the door is closed, I open
it).
- (24) Bus-drivers rarely travel in airplanes, and vice
versa. (= and airplane pilots rarely travel in
buses).
- (25) ?Bus-drivers rarely travel in submarines, and
vice versa. (= and those who steer submarines
[whatever they are called] rarely travel in
buses). [Is (25) any better for a person whose
vocabulary includes a word for someone who
steers a submarine?]
- (26) *Many women are gerontologists, and vice versa.
(= and many old people are gynecologists).