

Singular Thought in Non-Singular Propositions: A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective

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Keywords: sense, reference, singular thought, construal, cognitive linguistics

Abstract

The Fregean ‘sense’, originally proposed to account for the cognitive significance of identity statements like ‘Superman is identical with Clark Kent’, lends support to descriptivism, according to which our view of the world would be entirely qualitative. This view seems to be supported by what is called the simple sentence puzzle. Given that Superman is Clark Kent, ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent’ would be equivalent to ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Superman’, an absurd proposition. This puzzle can be solved by assuming that ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent’ expresses a proposition about different aspects of the same individual, rather than a singular proposition. The fact that even unenlightened speakers (speakers who are not aware of the identity between Superman and Clark Kent) can ascribe the same truth-value to the sentence as enlightened speakers do suggests that it is in principle possible to access aspects directly. On this view, the meaning of proper names is essentially object-independent, as descriptivism claims. This paper will reject descriptivism by showing, drawing on the cognitive linguistic framework, that the same truth-conditional content expressed by ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent’ is construed differently by enlightened and unenlightened speakers. Enlightened speakers construe Superman and Clark Kent as two aspects of an individual, whereas unenlightened speakers construe them as two distinct individuals. Thus, whether enlightened or not, speakers must entertain a singular thought to understand the complete content of the sentence, as against descriptivism. This view enables us to define the meaning of identity statements without evoking Fregean senses, hence in an individual-dependent manner. As a basic cognitive ability, singular thought is indispensable for a proper understanding of non-singular propositions such as ‘Superman is identical with Clark Kent’ or ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent’.

1. Introduction

The definition generally accepted of the proper name is that it is a name used for a particular object; ‘Donald Trump’ is the name of a particular person, ‘Mt. Fuji’ is the name of a particular mountain,

‘the Beatles’ is the name of a particular group, and so forth¹. By using these names, we can think about, and talk about objects in the world. Thought about objects in the world is called ‘singular thought’. When you use a proper name, you think a singular thought about some object. This may seem obvious enough². But it is not.

Philosophers have a way of making the obvious seem absurd, the pervasive seem problematic, and the actual seem impossible. They deny, or at least raise grave doubts about or else render paradoxical, such things as causality and change, consciousness and free will, and knowledge of material objects. They use smoke and mirrors, I mean powerful arguments, to do this.

(Bach 2010: 39)

[...] the point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as not to seem worth stating, and to end with something so paradoxical that no one will believe it. (Russell 1956: 20)

Proper names are no exception. A first challenge comes from identity statements of the form ‘X is (identical with) Y’, illustrated in (1)³.

(1) Superman is (identical with) Clark Kent.

What does (1) mean? Neither ‘A = B’ nor ‘A=A’ properly represents the meaning of (1), as Wittgenstein (1922) puts it:

Roughly speaking, to say of *two* things that they are identical is nonsense, and to say of *one* thing that it is identical with itself is to say nothing at all.

(Wittgenstein 1922: 5.5303, emphases in the original)⁴

A well-known solution to the puzzle is proposed by Frege (1892/1960). On the Fregean view, ‘Superman’

¹ This paper is a revised and extended version of the paper presented by the author at the Australian Linguistic Society (ALS) Conference 2016, held in Monash University.

² This idea is clearly articulated by Mill (1843): “A proper name is but an unmeaning mark which we connect in our minds with the idea of the object, in order that whenever the mark meets our eyes or occurs to our thoughts, we may think of that individual object.” (Mill 1843: 43) Lycan (2000) summarizes it as follows: “[Names] have their meanings simply by designating the particular things they designate, and introducing those designata into discourse. (Let us call such an expression *Millian* name, since John Stuart Mill (1843/1973) seemed to defend the view that proper names are merely labels for individual persons or objects and contribute no more than those individuals themselves to the meanings of sentences in which they occur.)” (Lycan 2000: 31-32) Here Mill is committed to two claims which we must not confound. On the one hand, he claims that a proper name is connected to (the idea of) an object. On the other hand, he contends that proper names are meaningless, in that they are just labels for objects. The first claim has nothing unusual. Indeed, it is the claim that this paper is going to defend. The second claim, however, is highly controversial. In what follows we will argue against it by showing that the meaning of a proper name involves a certain construal besides its reference.

³ Throughout this paper, we take as examples ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ for the sake of clarity. In so doing, we put aside the problem of how to treat fictitious objects in semantics. The following discussion proceeds as if Clark Kent and Superman were real people to whom we have some acquaintance relation in Recanati’s (2012, 2017) sense. This hypothetical assumption is not uncommon, as seen from Heck’s (1995: 2) remark: “There can be different Thoughts that ‘concern the same object’ and ascribe the same property to it. For example, the Thought that Superman flies and the Thought that Clark Kent flies are different, even though Superman is Clark Kent.”

⁴ „Beiläufig gesprochen: Von *zwei* Dingen zu sagen, sie seien identisch, ist ein Unsinn, und von *Einem* zu sagen, es sei identisch mit sich selbst, sagt gar nichts.“ (Wittgenstein 1922: 5.5303, emphases in the original)

and ‘Clark Kent’ have the same reference, but have differing senses, which accounts for the cognitive significance of (1). Here emerges a challenge to singular thought. As Bach (2010: 60) points out, Fregean senses, though reference-determining, are essentially object-independent. Bach’s interpretation is confirmed by Frege’s (1892: 33/1960: 42) remark that “[t]he thought remains the same whether ‘Odysseus’ has reference or not”⁵. This conception of sense/thought opens the way for ‘sense/thought without reference’⁶. In principle, the understanding of (1) requires only the senses of ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’, their reference(s) playing no role at all. To the extent that in principle any proper name can occur in identity statements of the form ‘X is (identical with) Y’, it may be concluded that proper names in general have object-independent senses, which lends support to descriptivism as opposed to singularism (Russell 1910, 1956).

In its weaker version, “[d]escriptivism is the view that our mental relation to individual objects goes through properties of those objects. What is given to us are, first and foremost, properties whose worldly instantiation we are able to detect, and only indirectly objects.” (Recanati 2010: 141) The weaker version of descriptivism is compatible with singular thought, in that it enables us to think and talk, albeit indirectly, about objects in the world by using proper names. In its stronger version, on the other hand, descriptivism maintains that “our view of the world would be entirely qualitative. We would never [= neither directly nor indirectly] be related in thought to anything in particular.” (Bach 2010: 39) The stronger version of descriptivism is a real threat to singular thought, since it severs the link between proper names and objects, and reduces all knowledge about objects to what Russell (1910) calls ‘knowledge by description’ (as opposed to ‘knowledge by acquaintance’)⁷. Thus, “[c]ommon words, even proper names, are usually really descriptions” (Russell 1910: 114)⁸. On this view, by using ordinary proper names, we are thinking and talking only about properties, our thought never bearing on objects in the world.

In what follows, we will reject the stronger version of descriptivism, by showing that, although a sentence like ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent’ expresses a non-singular proposition to the extent that ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ occurring in it refer to entities that are not individuals, the non-singular interpretation is only made possible by some singular thought underlying it. The same singular thought enables us to entertain ‘Superman is (identical with) Clark Kent’ as well, contrary to what descriptivism claims.

2. Yet Another Challenge to Singular Thought

In Section 1, we have seen that identity statements of the form ‘X is (identical with) Y’ lends

⁵ „Der Gedanke bleibt derselbe, ob der Name „Odysseus“ eine Bedeutung hat oder nicht.“ (Frege 1892: 33)

⁶ Frege (1892/1960) considers the sense of a sentence to be the thought expressed by that sentence. Accordingly, insofar as sentences are concerned, ‘sense’ and ‘thought’ are equivalent to each other. See Heck (2002) for some discussion.

⁷ Russell (1910: 113) defines knowledge by description as follows: “an object is known by description when we know that it is *the* so-and-so”, i.e. when we know that there is one object, and no more, having a certain property.” This definition leads Russell to exclude physical objects from what we know by acquaintance: “among the objects with which we are acquainted are not included physical objects (as opposed to sense-data), or other people’s minds. These things are known to us by what I call “knowledge by description” [...]. (Russell 1910: 112)

⁸ For Russell (1910), proper names in the true sense of the term only include ‘I’ and ‘this’: “The denotation, I believe, is not a constituent of the proposition, except in the case of proper names, i.e. of words which do not assign a property to an object, but merely and solely name it. And I should hold further that, in this sense, there are only two words which are strictly proper names of particulars, namely, “I” and “this”.” (Russell 1910: 121)

support to (both weaker and stronger versions of) descriptivism. Before going into the discussion as to how to regain singular thought, we will have a look at yet another challenge to it, i.e. the simple sentence puzzle (Saul 1997, 1999, 2007). Suppose that (2) and (3) are both true. Then we should be able to conclude (4) and (5).

- (2) Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent.
- (3) Superman = Clark Kent [= (1)]
- (4) ∴ Superman leaps more tall buildings than Superman.
- (5) ∴ Clark Kent leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent.

But (4) and (5) are indisputably absurd propositions, unlike the premises in (2) and (3). What is wrong with this inference? Forbes (1997, 1999), Moore (1999, 2000), and Fujikawa (2014) propose a promising solution to the puzzle, according to which (2) expresses not a singular proposition, i.e. proposition about an individual, but a proposition about aspects or properties of one and the same individual referred to here as ‘Clark Kent/Superman’. On their view, the proposition expressed by (2) is (6), which bears on two aspects or properties of the individual.

- (6) Clark/Superman’s Superman-aspect leaps more tall buildings than Clark/Superman’s Clark-aspect.

When we utter or understand sentence (2), in which two proper names occur, we talk or think about aspects or properties, rather than about an individual. Note, however, that this by itself does not establish the validity of the stronger version of descriptivism, to the extent that, under this approach, the interpretation of (2) involves the reference to the individual in question, as shown in (7).

- (7) reference to an individual → metonymic meaning shift → reference to an aspect of the individual

First, we refer to the individual, and then, by a metonymic meaning shift, we identify those aspects of the individual that are relevant to the state of affairs described by (2) (cf. Nunberg 1979). In this process, our mental relation to the individual object is maintained, as against the stronger version of descriptivism.

The metonymy-based approach, however, can be threatened by descriptivism if we take into account the distinction between enlightened and unenlightened contexts in which (2) is uttered (Forbes 1997, Moore 1999). In enlightened contexts, the conversational participants are aware of the relevant double lives of the individual, and they are in a position to make reference to aspects. If their focus is on these rather than individuals, the propositions expressed by their utterances will involve aspects. In unenlightened contexts, on the other hand, the conversational participants are not aware of such facts and they do not know that reference to aspects might be called for, and so utterances of the names refer only to individuals. Of particular importance here is the fact that the metonymy-based approach proposed by Forbes (1997, 1999), Moore (1999, 2000), and Fujikawa (2014) wrongly predicts that the utterer of (2)

communicates something about aspects only if she is enlightened and thinking about aspects (Braun and Saul 2002). As a matter of fact, whether she be enlightened or not, the utterer can refer directly to aspects, without applying any metonymic meaning shift (cf. Sakai 2017). To the extent that sentences containing proper names can directly express a non-singular thought, i.e. thought about aspects rather than individuals, it may be concluded that the meaning of proper names is essentially individual-independent, as the stronger version of descriptivism claims. It is because no access to any individual is required for the understanding of (2) that enlightened and unenlightened speakers can communicate with each other, despite their difference in epistemic state.

So far we have seen that identity statements like (1) can be considered to express propositions about senses, while sentences like (2) can be considered to express propositions about aspects. Insofar as both senses and aspects are object-independent, this may suggest that the use of proper names requires no singular thought, as claimed by the stronger version of descriptivism. In the next section, we will show on the contrary that singular thought underlies the non-singular propositions expressed by (1) or (2).

3. A Construal-Based Solution to the Simple Sentence Puzzle

What has been overlooked by the previous studies on the simple sentence puzzle is the fact that enlightened and unenlightened speakers do not understand (2) in exactly the same manner. To be sure, even unenlightened speakers who are not thinking about aspects can entertain the truth-conditional content of (2), namely (8).

- (8) Truth conditional content of (2): An entity X referred to by ‘Superman’ leaps more tall buildings than another entity Y referred to by ‘Clark Kent’.

Whether you may be enlightened or unenlightened, you can judge (8) to be true or false without any difficulty. This does not entail, however, that there is no difference in the way enlightened and unenlightened speakers understand (2), because the construal of (8) in Langacker’s (2008) sense may be different for them.

Most broadly, a meaning consists of both conceptual **content** and a particular way of **construing** that content. The term **construal** refers to our manifest ability to conceive and portray the same situation in alternate ways.” (Langacker 2008: 43, emphases in the original)⁹

For unenlightened speakers, ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ refer to distinct individuals, whereas for enlightened ones, the names refer to distinct aspects of one and the same individual. Their construals of the names are shown in (9) and (10) respectively.

⁹ Langacker’s (2008) view is consonant with the neo-Fregean conception of meaning, as put forward by Recanati (1993: 45): “[The neo-Fregean] uses a single notion of ‘proposition’ or ‘thought’ corresponding to what the utterance expresses (its semantic content) and insists on maintaining the mode of presentation as a constituent of that proposition or thought.” This view is at odds with the neo-Russellian view, which claims that the mode of presentation “is not part of the semantic content of the utterance” (Recanati 1993: 47).

(9) Construal 1 (unenlightened)

X = Superman	Y = Clark Kent
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(10) Construal 2 (enlightened)

Z = individual having X and Y as aspects	
X = Superman	Y = Clark Kent

To the extent that, as discussed above, both enlightened and unenlightened speakers succeed in referring directly to X and Y, they can be said to capture the truth-conditional content of (2) i.e. “X leaps more tall buildings than Y”. They construe the same content in different manners, however. Unenlightened speakers construe (2) as saying ‘individual X leaps more tall buildings than individual Y’, while enlightened speakers construe it as saying ‘individual Z leaps more tall buildings when Z is X than Z does when Z is Y’.

Even though enlightened speakers and unenlightened speakers equally reject the sentences in (4) and (5) above, the reason is different for them. For enlightened speakers, ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ in (2) refer to distinct aspects of an individual, while the identity statement in (3) expresses the identity between Superman and Clark Kent at the level of individual. (3) says that ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ are names of the same individual even though they refer to its different aspects as in (2). Since the references of the two names are different in (2), their substitution fails as in (4) and (5), even when (3) is known to be true. For unenlightened speakers, on the other hand, (3) is blatantly false, which would deter them from substituting one name for the other, just as normal speakers would never think of concluding (12)-(13) from (11), given that (14) is false.

(11) Donald Trump met Emmanuel Macron in 2017.

(12) Donald Trump met Donald Trump in 2017.

(13) Emmanuel Macron met Emmanuel Macron in 2017.

(14) Donald Trump = Emmanuel Macron

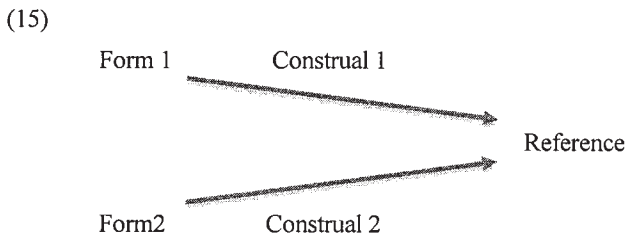
Unenlightened speakers construe Superman and Clark Kent as two distinct individuals, and they entertain a singular thought when interpreting (2). Enlightened speakers, on the other hand, construe Superman and Clark Kent as two distinct aspects of an individual. Although, in this case, the proposition they understand is not singular, they still entertain a singular thought about that individual Z which has Superman and Clark Kent as distinct aspects. Consequently, whether speakers may be enlightened or not, we can say that a singular thought is involved in the interpretation of ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent’, as against descriptivism.

One might think that our conception of ‘construal’ departs from Langacker’s (1987, 2008) here, in that the former but not the latter applies to one and the same form. Indeed, the latter was first introduced to account for the difference in meaning between two (or more) forms which nonetheless have the same reference. Thus, Langacker (1987: 164-165) advances the view that “roe” and “caviar” are distinguished with respect to the relative prominence of certain domains evoked by these expressions, even though they

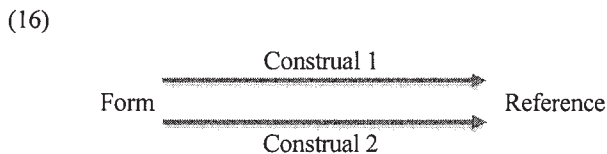
designate the same mass of eggs. The same holds for ‘snail’ and ‘escargot’, which designate the same creature (Langacker 2008: 49). With ‘escargot,’ the domain of fancy cuisine is ranked very high, while with ‘snail’, the domain of garden pests is more prominent. This allows us to say that the two words have different meanings, despite the identity of their reference. Likewise, the distinction between ‘the morning star’ and ‘the evening star’ can be ascribed to the difference in construal:

Classic examples illustrating the Fregean sense/reference distinction are treated similarly: *the morning star* designates an entity construed in relation to the stellar configuration of the morning sky, and *the evening star*, to that of the evening sky. For a person who knows that the morning star and the evening star are the same, both expressions include these abstract domains in their encyclopedic characterizations; they differ in their choice of primary domain, through which access to the overall knowledge system is achieved. *Venus* is yet another expression with the same designatum but a different primary domain. (Langacker 1987: 165, n13)

Obviously, Langacker has in mind a picture illustrated in (15).



This ‘different forms, different constrictions’ picture may be the standard one in the cognitive linguistic literature. However, when we claim that for unenlightened speakers, X and Y in (9) are distinct individuals, whereas for enlightened ones, X and Y in (10) are distinct aspects of one and the same individual Z, we have in mind a ‘same form, different constrictions’ picture as shown in (16), where construal 1 and construal 2 correspond to the ways enlightened and unenlightened speakers construe the form ‘Superman’ or ‘Clark Kent’.



Both types of speakers associate the same forms with the same references in question, the only difference residing in the ways they do so. The question which arises here is whether the picture in (16) is no less compatible with the cognitive linguistic framework than the standard picture in (15). Does a difference in construal entail a difference in form? If it does, (16) is not compatible with the framework. If it does not, (16) poses no problem for the framework. Although Langacker (1987, 2008) is reticent about the matter,

the answer is likely to be negative, i.e., a difference in construal does not entail a difference in form, and (16) is no less compatible with the cognitive linguistic framework than (15). As Kaplan (1990: 114-115) suggests, there is every reason to believe that different kinds of construal can be linked to the same form-reference pair.

[T]here can be distinct names which are phonographs [= both homophones and homographs] and which also have the same semantic value. [...] One evening, the mischievous Babylonian looked up and saw Venus, and he thought to himself “This one is just as beautiful as Phosphorus, so let’s call it ‘Phosphorus’ too”. [...] So he names, or perhaps we should say *renames*, Venus ‘Phosphorus’. [...] Now that it seems clear that we have two common currency names. (Kaplan 1990: 114-115, emphasis in the original)

Having the same phonological form and the same semantic value does not entail being one and the same name, to the extent that there is more than one mode of presentation of the reference involved¹⁰.

There is yet another fundamental difference between (15) and (16). In (15), one and the same individual construe the reference in two different ways. This is obvious since a single competent speaker knows both of the lexical items ‘roe’/‘caviar’, ‘snail’/‘escargot’, ‘the morning star’/‘the evening star’, and so on and so forth. This is not the case with (16), where construal 1 and construal 2 belong to different individuals. Enlightened speakers are committed to only one of the construals, unenlightened speakers being committed to the other. Even though enlightened and unenlightened speakers construe the names occurring in it in quite different manners, they still have no difficulty in communicating the proposition (2) expresses to each other. A question to be asked then is how the communicability between enlightened and unenlightened speakers is guaranteed. A similar question is raised by Recanati (1993) about utterances containing an indexical.

The notion of semantic content must satisfy various constraints, and among the constraints there is one concerning *communicability*. The semantic content of an utterance must be a property of that utterance which can be recognized by both speaker and hearer and which remains stable in the process of communication. But there is a sense in which *de re* [= singular] thoughts are not communicable, insofar as they involve subjective constituents.

(Recanati 1993: 48, emphasis in the original)

Suppose that person A says “I’m hungry” to person B. In so doing, A construes the utterance in the first-person way, while, on hearing it, B construes it in the second-person way. Accordingly, the thoughts

¹⁰ A similar remark is made by Evans (1980: 381): “A most vivid example of the second kind of case [= two name-using practices which concern the same individual] is found in R. L. Stevenson’s *Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde*, in which two names, believed to refer to different persons, are in fact used of the same person. But the distinctness of the names is not essential for the distinctness of the practices: Stevenson could easily have told the story with the same name used in two distinct practices, with no one having the least idea that the nice Mr Hyde and the terrible Mr Hyde are one and the same person. So what is it for there to be one rather than two ‘Hyde’-using practices? Intuitively, there exist two distinct practices involving the use of the name ‘NN’ if uses of the name can be associated with two distinct networks of communication in the community, such that information circulates through each network, but does not pass between the networks.”

they associate with the utterance are not identical in every respect. This point was suggested by Frege (1918-1919/1956) a hundred years ago.

Now everyone is presented to himself in a particular and primitive way, in which he is presented to no-one else. So, when Dr. Lauben thinks that he has been wounded, he will probably take as a basis this primitive way in which he is presented to himself. And only Dr. Lauben himself can grasp thoughts determined in this way. But now he may want to communicate with others. He cannot communicate a thought which he alone can grasp¹¹. Therefore, if he now says "I have been wounded", he must use the "I" in a sense which can be grasped by others, perhaps in the sense of "he who is speaking to you at this moment", by doing which he makes the associated conditions of his utterance serve for the expression of his thought. (Frege 1918-1919: 66/1956: 298)¹²

The observations made by Frege (1918-1919/1956) and Recanati (1993) among others run counter to what Heck (2002) calls the Naïve Conception of Communication, according to which "what my words mean is precisely what I already believe and you come to believe: when you grasp the content of my assertion, you thereby grasp the very Thought I believe and am trying to communicate" (Heck 2002: 6)¹³. On this view, "communication is the *replication* of thoughts: the thought the hearer entertains when he understands what the speaker is saying is the very thought which the speaker expressed" (Recanati 2017: 111, emphasis in the original). What Frege (1918-1919/1956) says about 'I' in the above passage suggests rather that "one's placement in one's environment can affect the contents of the Thoughts one is capable of entertaining" (Heck 2002: 10).

In connection with the communicability of thought, Perry (1988: 5/1993: 231) advances the view that "[o]ne reason we need singular propositions is to get at what we seek to preserve when we communicate with those who are in different contexts." It is because 'I'm hungry' expresses the same singular proposition for the speaker and the hearer, despite the difference in construal, that they succeed in communicating with each other. In the case at hand, however, the requirement Perry suggests is still too stringent. For enlightened speakers, (2) expresses a singular proposition, whereas for unenlightened ones, it does not. Their epistemic relation to Superman and Clark Kent is so different that they even do not agree about whether (2) expresses a singular proposition or not. Still, they agree about the truth-conditional content of (2). Given this, we must make the condition for communicability less stringent to accommodate cases like (2). A solution is provided by Heck (1995) in a different context.

¹¹ As Heck (2002: 5) points out, grasping a thought, on Frege's view, means entertaining a thought without necessarily judging it as true or false.

¹² „Nun ist jeder sich selbst in einer besonderen und ursprünglichen Weise gegeben, wie er keinem anderen gegeben ist. Wenn nun Dr. Lauben denkt, dass er verwundet worden ist, wird er dabei wahrscheinlich diese ursprüngliche Weise, wie er sich selbst gegeben ist, zugrunde legen. Und den so bestimmten Gedanken kann nur Dr. Lauben selbst fassen. Nun aber wollte er anderen eine Mitteilung machen. Einen Gedanken, den nur er allein fassen kann, kann er nicht mitteilen. Wenn er nun also sagt: „Ich bin verwundet worden“, muss er das „ich“ in einem Sinn gebrauchen, der auch andern fassbar ist, etwa in dem Sinne von „derjenige, der in diesem Augenblicke zu euch spricht“, wobei er die sein Sprechen begleitenden Umstände dem Gedankenausdrucke dienstbar macht.“ (Frege 1918-1919: 66)

¹³ Despite what Frege (1918-1919/1956) says about 'I', he seems to be committed to the Naïve Conception of Communication, if only because "when he started to think about communication, the Naïve Conception was just what came immediately to mind" (Heck 2002: 7). This makes Frege's (1918-1919/1956) remark on 'I' somewhat mysterious, as Recanati (2017: 114) puts it.

Now, it may be correct that a given sentence can have different cognitive values for different speakers all of whom understand it, but how different can these be? At the very least, the different beliefs speakers would form, were they to accept the truth of a sentence they all understand, surely must concern the same objects: they must at least get the *references* of the names in the sentence correct. (Heck 1995: 88, emphasis in the original)

The communication of the proposition expressed by (2) can succeed if the speaker and the hearer get the references of the singular terms correct, whether they be construed as individuals or aspects. Positing two different construals as in (9)-(10) for one and the same sentence in (2) provides no obstacle for communicative interactions in which the sentence occurs¹⁴.

Finally, it should be noted that, appearances notwithstanding, the analysis developed in this section is not necessarily in conflict with the framework of Cognitive Grammar, where the construals encoded in linguistic expressions are viewed as conventional.

Lexicon and grammar are storehouses of *conventional* imagery, which differs substantially from language to language. (Langacker 1987: 47, our emphasis)¹⁵

An expression's meaning is not just the conceptual content it evokes – equally important is how that content is construed. As part of *conventional* semantic value, every symbolic structure construes its content in a certain fashion. (Langacker 2008: 55, our emphasis)

Crucial here is the fact that there is no compelling reason to think that the construals given in (9)-(10) are required by the linguistic convention of English. For any proper name NN, all competent users of a language must know that there is an entity x such that each utterance of NN uniquely identifies x. But no more is required. You need not always be able to identify x by yourself, nor are you required, even when you can identify x, to associate x with a specific sortal concept.

[...] two distinct levels of identification are involved in perception: an object is first identified – or rather localized – as a space-occupier, and then identified as a certain type of object (a plane, say, or a bird, or a black horse). The first, demonstrative type of identification enables one to think of the object – and to give it a proper name, if one wishes to do so – prior to any identification of it in the second, stronger sense. [...] Thus if we associate the proper name 'Bozo' with the temporary file corresponding to the first level of identification, we may discover that *Bozo was not a plane, after all, but a bird*. [...] to think of an object, and to dub it, only the

¹⁴ Perhaps this condition may be made still less stringent to accommodate the cases in which adults who do not believe in Santa Claus talk about Santa Clause with children who believe in it. The fact that children construe 'Santa Clause' as a name while adults construe it as a description which cannot be satisfied by anything does not prevent them from talking with each other about Santa Clause. In these cases, participants in the communication do not even agree on the reference of the singular term. We will not go into the matter here, however.

¹⁵ Langacker's (1987) 'imagery' is intended to refer to the same thing as Langacker's (2008) 'construal'.

first level of identification is required. (Recanati 1993: 171-172)

If this conception of proper names is on the right track, you may be considered to be a competent speaker of English whether you may construe ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ as names of aspects or as names of individuals. All that is required is that each of the names be construed, in some way or other, as referring to an entity bearing that name¹⁶. Note, however, that this does not make the notion of construal useless for proper names.

It is often said that proper names are associated with no particular way of thinking of their reference. [...] [This claim] means that there is no unique mode of presentation (or unique sort of mode of presentation) such that, whenever a proper name is used, its reference is thought of under this mode of presentation (or under a mode of presentation of this sort). This is consistent with the view that, whenever a proper name is used, *there is* a mode of presentation, although not always the same one, under which its reference is thought of.

(Recanati 1993: 169, emphasis in the original)

What we have claimed in this section is that, whether one may construe ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ as names of aspects or as names of individuals, one must entertain a singular thought, in some way or other, in order to capture the complete proposition expressed by (2).

4. Non-Descriptive Interpretation of Identity Statements

As we have seen in Section 1, within the Fregean framework, the cognitive significance of an identity statement like (1) is accounted for in terms of ‘senses’, a notion which potentially gives rise to descriptivism. On our view, on the other hand, accepting (1) entails accepting the construal illustrated in (10), and vice versa. This enables us to define the meaning of an identity statement without evoking Fregean or purely descriptive senses, as in (17).

(17) An identity statement of the form ‘X is (identical with) Y’ is true if and only if there is an individual Z such that X and Y are aspects of Z.

The meaning description in (17) involves a singular construal of Z. Accordingly, if you do not think singularly about Z, you do not understand what ‘X is (not identical with) Y’ means. The meaning of an identity statement is essentially individual-dependent, contrary to what descriptivism would claim. Now, (18) follows from (17).

(18) The negation of an identity statement, i.e. ‘X is not (identical with) Y’, is true if and only if there is no individual Z such that X and Y are aspects of Z.

¹⁶ In Recanati’s (1993) terminology, linguistic modes of presentation associated with linguistic expressions must be shared by all competent users of the language to which the expressions belong. In the case of a proper name NN, the linguistic mode of presentation is ‘x is called NN’ or ‘x is the bearer of NN’.

(18) says that ‘X is not (identical with) Y’ is true if and only if X and Y are two different individuals. The claim that Ludwig Wittgenstein is not Gottlob Frege amounts to the claim that Ludwig Wittgenstein and Gottlob Frege are two different individuals. This kind of claim involves a singular construal of the terms X and Y. Consequently, whether they may be affirmative or negative, identify statements do not lend support to (the stronger version of) descriptivism. The basic insight underlying our solution is that whereas Frege’s (1892/1960) ‘sense’ is largely a descriptivist notion¹⁷, Langacker’s (1987, 2008) ‘construal’ is highly compatible with singularism as opposed to descriptivism. The notion of construal is consonant with what Recanati (2012) calls ‘non-descriptive modes of presentation’¹⁸.

Reference is not enough: without a level of sense or mode of presentation in addition to the objects thought about, one cannot account for the Fregean data regarding cognitive significance. Or rather: one cannot account for cognitive significance phenomena within a purely referential (monostratal) semantics à la Russell *unless*, like Russell, one is prepared to buy Descriptivism. To be sure, Frege himself was a descriptivist, but the strongest argument I can find in favour of his distinction between sense and reference is (paradoxically) the need to account for cognitive significance without buying Descriptivism. The key, then, is to make room for *non-descriptive* modes of presentation. (Recanati 2012: 243, emphases in the original)

Under the construal illustrated in (10), the term ‘X’ or ‘Y’ can, in principle, refer to Z by metonymy, i.e. ‘X’ or ‘Y’ can have singular references, just as ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ can refer to that girl even when she does not wear a hood. In this case ‘X’ and ‘Y’ are perfectly equivalent to each other, both referring to Z. Accepting ‘X is (identical with) Y’ thus amounts to recognizing that ‘X’ can be substituted for ‘Y’ and vice versa *salva veritate*¹⁹, if and only if ‘X’ and ‘Y’ have singular references by metonymy²⁰. Thus, by accepting (1), Lois Lane comes to believe (20)-(21) besides (19).

¹⁷ The descriptivist flavor of Frege’s view is felt in the well-known passage from Frege (1892/1960: n.2): “In the case of an actual proper name such as ‘Aristotle’ opinions as to the sense may differ. It might, for instance, be taken to be the following: the pupil of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. Anybody who does this will attach another sense to the sentence ‘Aristotle was born in Stagira’ than will a man who takes as the sense of the name: the teacher of Alexander the Great who was born in Stagira.” (Bei einem eigentlichen Eigennamen wie “Aristoteles” können freilich die Meinungen über den Sinn auseinandergehen. Man könnte z.B. als solchen annehmen: der Schüler Platons und Lehrer Alexanders des Großen. Wer dies tut, wird mit dem Satze “Aristoteles war aus Stagira gebürtig” einen anderen Sinn verbinden als einer, der als Sinn dieses Namens annähme: der aus Stagira gebürtige Lehrer Alexanders des Großen.)

¹⁸ Recanati (2012) calls the non-descriptive modes of presentation ‘mental files’: “Such [non-descriptive] modes of presentation [...] are mental files. Linguistic expressions refer via the mental files with which they come to be associated.” (Recanati 2012: 243)

¹⁹ In Frege (1879), Frege advocates the view ‘X = Y’ expresses the substitutability of the terms ‘X’ and ‘Y’. This view is endorsed by Wittgenstein (1922: 6.23) as well. In Frege (1892/1960), however, he abandons the view in favor of a well-known sense-reference approach. The motive for his conversion is that the approach based on substitution is considered to be at odds with the fact that ‘X = Y’ bears upon a state of affairs which holds in the external world, rather than a relation between the two signs. As against Frege’s conception of it, however, this approach is compatible with the sense-reference approach, insofar as (i) ‘sense’ is construed non-descriptively as Recanati (1993, 2012, 2017) suggests, and (ii) ‘X’ and ‘Y’ can refer to individual Z by metonymy. Under these conditions, that X and Y are (different) aspects of some individual Z, i.e. X = Y, entails that the terms denoting X and Y can be substituted for each other *salva veritate* if and only if the terms are employed to refer to Z. Construed in this manner, Frege’s (1879) position is equivalent to Frege’s (1892/1960). Incidentally, Sakai (2012) defends Frege’s (1879) view by construing ‘X = Y’ as a generator of various propositions rather than a bearer of a proposition.

²⁰ The qualification “if and only if ‘X’ and ‘Y’ have singular references by metonymy” is crucial here, since (ii) does not

- (19) Superman [=X] leaps tall buildings.
 (20) Sometimes, Superman [= Z] leaps tall buildings.
 (21) Sometimes Clark Kent [=Z] leaps tall buildings.

A change in belief state of this sort would never occur to Lois Lane if she were a descriptivist. Recall that according to descriptivism, “our view of the world would be entirely qualitative. We would never be related in thought to anything in particular.” (Bach 2010: 39) To the extent that Superman and Clark Kent are qualitatively different, those who live in entirely qualitative worlds would never understand the equivalence of (20) and (21), hence the identity statement in (1). Within the Fregean framework, it is generally held that identity statements like (1) can only be accounted for in terms of ‘sense’, a notion which lends support to descriptivism. The argument we have developed so far, on the contrary, suggests that the very existence of identity statements is at odds with the stronger version of descriptivism. To be sure, in ‘X is (identical with) Y’, ‘X’ and ‘Y’ must be construed as terms which usually refer to aspects rather than individuals. So, there is a sense in which an identity statement expresses a non-singular proposition. But you can only understand the identity statement when you entertain a singular thought about Z, an individual that has X and Y as distinct aspects. In this respect, we can say that a singular thought about Z underlies a non-singular proposition expressed by ‘X is (identical with) Y’.

5. A Descriptivist Objection

The descriptivist might object to the view defended here by saying that the singular construal of Z, shown in (10) above, would be equivalent to the descriptive or qualitative construal of Z such as ‘the person that is sometimes Superman and sometimes Clark Kent’. You can have this kind of construal if you believe that there is one (and only one) person that is sometimes Superman and sometimes Clark Kent. Since this is a general rather than particular proposition, you need not have any particular individual in mind when entertaining it. Indeed, ‘Z is the person that is sometimes Superman and sometimes Clark Kent’ counts as ‘knowledge by description’ as defined by Russell (1910: 113): “an object is known by description when we know that it is “*the* so-and-so”, i.e. when we know that there is one object, and no more, having a certain property.”

A descriptive or qualitative construal of this kind, however, has difficulty in accounting for the equivalence of (20) and (21) above. The descriptive construal qualitatively distinguishes ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’, to the extent that these terms are associated with distinct descriptions. Then, why can one

follow from (i).

(i) Superman [=X] leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent [=Y].

(ii) Superman [=X] leaps more tall buildings than Superman [=X].

In (i) neither ‘Superman’ nor ‘Clark Kent’ can refer to Z; otherwise (i) would lead to a contradiction. To the extent that (i) expresses a non-singular proposition, the terms occurring in it are not interchangeable. This is nothing but the simple sentence puzzle discussed in Section 2. But now it should be clear that it is not a puzzle at all. Since ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ are not co-referential, there is no reason to believe that one can substitute for the other. Complicating the issue is that you can accept (iii) at the same time.

(iii) Superman is (identical with) Clark Kent. [= (2)]

Statements as in (iii), however, do not mean that X is literally identical with Y, i.e. $X = Y$, but that X and Y instantiates one and the same individual. This construal is only possible, as we have said in the text, if ‘X’ and ‘Y’ refer to different aspects, i.e. $X \neq Y$ (in a mathematical sense). This is why the substitution fails in (i), despite the truth of (iii).

draw (21) as well as (20) from (19)? In general, for any predicate P, you can learn from P (Superman) that it is (sometimes) the case that P (Clark Kent), and vice versa. If Superman and Clark Kent were always qualitatively distinct entities, this flow of information would remain mysterious. Only under the non-descriptive construal of Z shown in (10) can we understand the flow of information in question. Under the non-descriptive construal, Z is not defined qualitatively, or satisfactorily in Bach's (1987) terminology. Rather, Z is defined through what Recanati (2010, 2012, 2017) calls 'epistemically rewarding (ER) relations', i.e. "relations to entities which make information flow possible between the subject and these entities" (Recanati 2017: 71). Those who are committed to the construal in (10) are, by definition, related in thought simultaneously to X, Y and Z. Thus, if they learn something about X for instance, you learn something about Z and Y as well.

6. Conclusion

It is generally held that the interpretation of 'Superman is Clark Kent' or 'Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent' involves senses or aspects, and proceeds without passing through any individual. This view may appear to do justice to (the stronger version of) descriptivism, according to which "our view of the world would be entirely qualitative, and "[w]e would never be related in thought to anything in particular (Bach 2010: 39)". We have shown on the contrary that the interpretation of these utterances is only made possible if a particular individual is thought about, in some way or other. Unenlightened speakers construe Superman and Clark Kent as two distinct individuals. In this case, they entertain a singular thought (wrongly, from enlightened speakers' standpoint). Enlightened speakers, on the other hand, construe Superman and Clark Kent as two distinct aspects of an individual. Although, in this case, the proposition they understand is not singular, there is a sense in which they nevertheless entertain a singular thought, i.e. a thought about that individual Z which has Superman and Clark Kent as distinct aspects. Underlying the reference to the aspects or properties, one might say, is a singular thought. It can then be concluded that, whether speakers may be enlightened or not, singular thought is involved in the interpretation of 'Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent', as against descriptivism.

Those who live in entirely qualitative worlds would never be related in thought to Z, to the extent that it cannot be defined qualitatively. All that we know about Z is that it is qualitatively distinct from both Superman and Clark Kent. This poor description would not enable the inhabitants of the entirely qualitative worlds to identify Z. Even if the inhabitants somehow identified Z, they would construe it only qualitatively, which would prevent them from understanding why Superman (X), Clark Kent (Y), and Z, qualitatively so different from each other, can be identified by the same description, as in 'Superman/Clark Kent sometimes leaps tall buildings'. Insofar as Z is not fully accessible to the inhabitants of the entirely qualitative worlds, it is not possible for them to understand the complete proposition expressed by 'Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent', as enlightened speakers do. To put it differently, the inhabitants of the entirely qualitative worlds can never be enlightened about the identity of Superman and Clark Kent.

As regards utterances containing indexicals such as 'I'm hungry', Recanati (1993) claims, following the (neo-)Fregean framework, that "utterances containing referential terms do express singular propositions, but the semantic content of such an utterance includes more than merely a singular

proposition (Recanati 1993: 46)”. What we have shown in this paper is the inverse of Recanati’s (1993) claim, namely: utterances containing referential terms sometimes express non-singular propositions, but the semantic content of such an utterance includes more than merely a non-singular proposition. Far from being incompatible with each other, these perspectives are of equal importance for the semantics of referential terms. As a basic cognitive ability, singular thought is indispensable for a proper understanding of non-singular propositions such as ‘Superman is Clark Kent’ or ‘Superman leaps more tall buildings than Clark Kent’, as well as of singular propositions such as ‘Clark Kent sometimes leaps tall buildings’ or ‘I’m hungry’.

N.B. This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 18K00551.

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非単称命題における単称思想: 認知言語学的観点から

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キーワード: 意義 意味 単称思想 捉え方 認知言語学

要旨

「スーパーマンはクラーク・ケントだ」のような同一性文の有意味性を説明するために導入されたフレーゲ的「意義」は、「世界は対象ではなく性質のみから成り立っている」という強い記述主義を帰結しうる。記述主義はいわゆる単文のパズルによって補強される。「スーパーマン = クラーク・ケントだ」と「スーパーマンはクラーク・ケントより多くの高いビルを飛び越える」を認めると、「スーパーマンはスーパーマンより多くの高いビルを飛び越える」が帰結するはずであるが、実際にはそのようなことはない。このパズルの有力な解決案として、「スーパーマンはクラーク・ケントより多くの高いビルを飛び越える」に登場する二つの固有名詞は個体ではなくアスペクトを指す(それゆえ個体レベルで同一だからと言って両者を入れ替えることはできない)とするものがある。個体レベルの同一性「スーパーマン = クラーク・ケント」を知らない話者でもこの文の真理条件を正しく理解できるという事実は、固有名詞が個体を経ることなく直接アスペクトを指すことができることを物語っている。これは世界が個体ではなく性質から成っているという強い記述主義の考え方と整合的である。この論文では、「スーパーマン = クラーク・ケント」を知っている話者と知らない話者とでは「スーパーマンはクラーク・ケントより多くの高いビルを飛び越える」という文の捉え方が異なることを示すことにより、強い記述主義を退ける。「スーパーマン = クラーク・ケント」を知っている話者はスーパーマンとクラーク・ケントを同一個体の異なるアスペクトとして捉えているのに対して、両者の同一性を知らない話者はそれらを異なる個体として捉えている。それゆえ、どちらの認識的状态であろうとも、「スーパーマンはクラーク・ケントより多くの高いビルを飛び越える」という文の捉え方の中には、個体に関する思考(単称思想)が含まれていることになる。この考え方を応用することで、「スーパーマン = クラーク・ケント」の認識価値をフレーゲ的意義に訴えることなく説明することが可能になる。文の真理条件だけでなく捉え方まで考慮するならば、「スーパーマン = クラーク・ケント」や「スーパーマンはクラーク・ケントより多くの高いビルを飛び越える」のような非単称命題の理解においても、単称思想が不可欠である。

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