

PRESUPPOSITION, FOCUS, AND LEXICAL SEMANTICS

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1 Introduction

Polysemous words pose considerable problems (cf., e.g., Bartsch 1984, Bierwisch 1982, Bierwisch & Bosch (eds.), 1995, Nunberg 1995, Pustejovski (ed.)1993, Saint-Dizier & Viegas (eds.)1995). Not only theoretically – because it is still far from clear how their semantic functioning must be modelled – but also practically, in the machine processing of natural language. This paper will not do much towards solving these problems, but it will argue a very minor point in this context: Without playing those problems down in the least, it will be argued in this paper that they are not quite as bad as is generally supposed. Polysemy problems become relevant only for about half as many expressions as one might think: only when the expressions are in focus position. – But before we come to this, we shall first survey some data.

The utterance represented in (1) may be understood in many different ways, depending on the context in which the utterance is placed.

(1) Is Fred working?

The verb *to work* should assume a different interpretation when this question is asked with the intention of finding out why Fred is not at home or why he hasn't turned up for a meeting or whether he is still sick. One way of demonstrating these different interpretations is by contrasting *to work* with other properties of Fred's, cf. the following possible answers to (1):

- (2)
- a. No, he isn't working. He's sick.
 - b. No, he isn't working. He's on vacation.
 - c. No, he isn't working. He's unemployed.
 - d. No, he isn't working. He stopped practising last year.
 - e. No, he isn't working. He's having his lunch break.
 - f. No, he isn't working. He's just PLAYing with the computer¹.

As the replies show, *be working*, as used in (1) may mean *be employed*, *be professionally active*, *be doing something that may qualify as "work"*, *be scheduled to work*, and many other things. We are concerned with a clear case of polysemy here, and one might even argue that the various interpretation options do not form a finite list (as I did, for the general case, in Bosch 1982).

¹ Capitals are used in the examples to mark accented syllables where this seems required.

Whatever the status of these differences in interpretation, we observe that, even though in (1) we have considerable freedom to adjust our interpretation to the context, this freedom is no longer present in the first sentence of the replies in (2). Here we do not repeat the procedures we employ in (1) to arrive at an interpretation of *be working*, but are bound to use the same interpretation as in (1). Any attempt to ignore this constraint leads to incoherent discourse, cf.

(3) Is Fred still sick or he is he working again?

(4) a. He's working in the garden

b. He's working on his thesis.

c. He's still sick and he's working in the garden.

The first two are not really satisfactory answers to the question; they do not allow for any inferences that would induce a clear choice between the alternatives of the question. Nor is the last, which, in addition, produces a slight punning effect through the re-use of *work* in a different interpretation than in the question.

These observations are not surprising. In fact, there is no need in a coherent discourse as in (1)+(2) - repeated below - to re-employ the verb *work* in (2). (2a), e.g., may just as well be paraphrased by either (2a') or (2a''):

(1) Is Fred working?

(2) a. No, he isn't working. He's sick.

a'. No, he isn't. He's sick.

a''. No. He's sick.

Verbphrase anaphora (VPA) in (2a') or verbphrase ellipsis (VPE) in (2a'') pick up, as it were, *the interpretation of work that is constructed in the course of processing (1)*. And since the lexical item *work* is not explicitly available in (2a') or (2a'') it cannot be interpreted or re-interpreted. In view of this identity of behaviour between VPA (or VPE) and certain occurrences of lexical items, such as *work* in (2), I call these occurrences *anaphoric occurrences* (AO). I shall attend to their workings below. - The other type of occurrence of *work*, which we find in (1), I call *focal occurrence* (FO). One point of this paper is to contribute to a clarification of the distinction between AOs and FOs and their relation to presupposition, anaphora, and focus.

2 *Previous work*

There is a similar, or at least related, distinction among referential items that I investigated in Bosch (1988). I argued that there is a difference between marked and unmarked referentially occurring forms, such as pronouns and full NPs, with respect to the role that their lexical semantics plays in their interpretation. This claim was summed up in what I called the *Descriptive Content Hypothesis*:

Whenever the interpretation of a definite referential expression requires search or selection, i.e. when there is currently no unique prominent referent, or there is a unique prominent referent

which is not the intended one, then markedness of the referential expression indicates that the descriptive content of the expression is used literally as a criterion for determining the intended referent. (Bosch 1988)

The Descriptive Content Hypothesis is supported by observations concerning epithet NPs² and the use of personal pronouns in gender languages. I shall summarise these observations here only briefly and refer the reader to Bosch (1988) for more detail.

2.1 Epithets

Consider, first, epithet NPs as in (5), which are not marked, neither phonologically nor by their syntactic position, and which occur in positions that would normally be occupied by anaphoric personal pronouns:

(5) When Jones returned they ignored {him /the idiot /the bastard /the old goat /the pig}.

Now (5) clearly does not involve the literal lexical meanings of *idiot*, *bastard*, *old goat*, or *pig*. Jones is not represented as

- someone "so deficient in mind as to be permanently incapable of rational conduct"³,
- someone "born out of wedlock" (presuming this meaning of *bastard* still exists),
- an old specimen of a "hardy lively frisky usu. horned and (in the male) bearded ruminant of *genus Capra*", or as
- a "non-ruminant omnivorous ungulate bristly mammal of family *Suidae*".

However, when the relevant NPs in (5) are phonologically marked the picture changes: A coreference relation between the accentuated *HIM* and *Jones* in (6) is highly unlikely, and, accordingly, also a coreference relation between *Jones* and any of the epithets. At the same time, the expected referents of the epithet NPs are now more or less correctly described by the lexical glosses we just gave and hence, in the course of understanding (6), the question may arise, why a particular specimen of *genus Capra* or of family *Suidae* was ignored upon Jones' return. Cf.

(6) When Jones returned they ignored {HIM / the IDiot / the BAstard / the old GOAT / the PIG}.

2.2 Gender

The second type of evidence for the Descriptive Content Hypothesis comes from the use of personal pronouns in gender languages, such as French or German, where the grammatical gender of nouns may differ from the natural gender, or sex, of the referent of a noun.

Typical cases arise with the German noun *Mädchen* [girl], which is grammatically neuter, or the noun *Wache* [guard], which is grammatically feminine, even though the guard at hand is actually a man and the girl in question is indeed female. Relative pronouns attached to these

² "Epithet NPs" is in fact not the correct description (cf. Bosch 1983, ch.5.5); I still use it here as a shorthand expression without going into the details that are less relevant for our current topic.

³ These glosses are taken from the 1976 edition of The Concise Oxford English Dictionary.

nouns obligatorily use the grammatical gender. (German grammatical gender is given after the relevant nouns and pronouns in round brackets). Cf.

- (7) a. Das Mädchen (n), {*die(f)/das(n)} den Schlüssel vergessen hatte, kam zurück
[The girl who had forgotten the key came back.]
- b. Die Wache (f), {*der(m)/die (f)} den Schlüssel vergessen hatte, kam zurück
[The guard who had forgotten the key came back.]

Anaphoric pronouns (with some variation in speakers' preferences⁴) may pick up either the grammatical gender of the relevant antecedent or the sex of the referent, at least in the case of unmarked pronouns

- (8) a. Das Mädchen (f) kam zurück. {Sie (f) / Es (n)} hatte den Schlüssel vergessen.
[The girl came back. She had forgotten the key.]
- b. Die Wache (f) kam zurück. {Er (m) / Sie (f)} hatte den Schlüssel vergessen.
[The guard came back. He had forgotten the key.]

However, when for whatever reason, the pronoun is accentuated, the grammatical gender variant is ungrammatical in the same interpretation:

- (9) a. Das Mädchen (n) kam zurück. {SIE (f) / *ES (n)} hatte den Schlüssel vergessen.
[The girl came back. SHE had forgotten the key.]
- b. Die Wache (f) kam zurück. {ER (m) / *SIE (f)} hatte den Schlüssel vergessen.
[The guard came back. HE had forgotten the key.]

Marked pronouns, it would appear, require referents that are correctly described by the semantic content of the pronoun, i.e., have the sex that the pronoun describes. Accordingly (10) is plainly ungrammatical on the reading that assumes the stipulated coreference. Cf.

- (10) Wenn du die Mutter₁ (f) von dem Bolzen₂ (m) lösen willst, mußt du *IHN₂ (m) festhalten und *SIE₁ (f) nach rechts drehen.
[If you want to loosen the nut₁ from the bolt₂ you must hold it₂ and turn it₁ to the right.]

In the same construction no problems arise when the descriptive content requirement is fulfilled, as in (11):

⁴ Although in the following examples different speakers tend to have different preferences, the preference for gender vs. sex declines rapidly with increasing distance between antecedent and pronoun.

- (11) Der Mann₁ (m) stritt sich mit seiner Freundin₂ (f), weil SIE₂ (f) noch in ein anderes Lokal wollte und ER₁ (m) keine Lust mehr hatte.

[The man₁ had a row with his girl friend₂, because SHE₂ wanted to go on to another pub and HE₁ didn't feel like it any more.]

There are some additional complications to these data, which need not distract us at the moment (for more detail cf. Bosch 1988). The relevant conclusion I arrived at (Bosch 1988) is that there is a uniform interpretation for phonological markedness in these cases, i.e., the expression of contrast. In particular, two types of contrast are conceivable⁵:

Selectional Contrast: Marked reference to one of several objects in the set of salient referents⁶ contrasts the intended referent to its actual competitors in the set of salient referents;

Search-initiating Contrast: Marked reference to an object in the set of non-salient referents contrasts the intended referent to a more expectable and currently more prominent referent in the set of salient referents.

The Descriptive Content Hypothesis thus appears functionally plausible in the sense that descriptive content of a referential phrase becomes relevant when it is needed in order to draw certain distinctions required to enable successful reference.

3 The interpretation of anaphoric occurrences

3.1 Anaphora and reference

The marked occurrences of referential phrases discussed in the previous section are *focal* occurrences. And it is these occurrences for which the lexical semantics is relevant and where polysemy can play a role. For *anaphoric* occurrences, which are unmarked, we assume that no contrast is involved in the interpretation and hence the lexical semantics plays no role. They link up, as it were naturally, to a unique salient or expected referent and are not at the same time contrasted with any other referents from which they must be distinguished.

But are we not overlooking a crucial difference here? In Section 1 we were concerned with anaphoric vs. focal occurrences of the verb *work*, which is not usually regarded as *referential*, while in Section 2 we discussed *referential NPs*. Let's see whether this difference is actually important. - If indeed we can treat anaphoric occurrences as we encountered them in Section 1 on a par with the referential NPs in Section 2, then we have a good systematic argument for the main claim of this paper, i.e., that polysemy only concerns focal, but not anaphoric, occurrences.

⁵ I'm ignoring here a third type of contrast discussed in Bosch (1988), *Identificatory Contrast*: Marked reference to a *unique referent* contrasts the intended referent to any potential competitors, that is, to anything in the set of non-salient referents.

⁶ What was called *explicit focus* and *implicit focus* in Bosch (1988) is here re-labelled, with no change in content, to *the set of salient referents* and *the set of non-salient referents* respectively. In Bosch (1988) I was concerned with memory registers in a psychological sense, taking up a discussion from Garrod & Sanford (1982). In the current paper the labels *explicit focus* and *implicit focus* would lead to unnecessary confusion, since the notion of focus we are concerned with is not the one of memory registers but one that rests on the linguistic usage where *focus* contrasts with *background* or *topic*. See for a discussion different notions of focus Gundel (1999).

Suppose we follow a Fregean line of thinking and assume, for simple subject-predicate sentences, an ontology of object and concept, where a concept is predicated of an object, or, a function is applied to an argument. In this context one would typically want the subject expression to refer to the argument, or object, and the predicate expression to refer to the function, or concept. - But, as Frege himself pointed out (1892b), this correlation between grammatical predicate and functor or grammatical subject and argument expression is not a rigid one. Also a concept or function may assume argument status when we talk *about* this concept or function. What we say about it then receives the status of a function, albeit a second order function. - This is, of course, nothing very different from the mechanism of type shifting that was proposed more recently by Partee and Rooth (1983).

When we have a sentence like

(12) Fred is working.

we may assume, as a default analysis, one that takes the grammatical subject as referring to the logical argument and the verbphrase as referring to the function⁷:

(13') $\lambda x (x \text{ IS_WORKING}) \text{ fred}$

Alternatively, however, also the following analysis is possible:

(13'') $\lambda P (P \text{ fred}) (\lambda x (\text{IS_WORKING}))$

which, after application, would result in (13'). Still, I would like to consider (13'') not just as a notational variant of (13'). The difference is in the fact that in the course of interpreting (13') we require a referent for the argument expression *fred*, i.e., presumably a (representation of a) person, and a referent for the functor $\lambda x (\text{IS_WORKING})$, i.e., a (representation of a) concept. In interpreting (13'') we need the latter too, but we do not need a person as a referent for *Fred*; instead, we need a set of concepts (or properties) - intuitively all of *Fred's* properties - of which, if (13') is true, the property $\lambda x (\text{IS_WORKING})$ is one.

In order to understand the relevance of the distinction for the analysis of (12) consider two different discourse embeddings for (12), with a resulting difference in sentence accent:

(14) Where is Fred? - (13a) Fred is WORKing.

(15) Who is working? - (13b) FRED is working.

Thus (13a) analysed as (13'), takes the individual *Fred* as an argument and applies to it the function $\lambda x (\text{IS_WORKING})$; and (13b) takes the first-order function $\lambda x (\text{IS_WORKING})$ as its argument and applies to it the second-order function $\lambda P (P \text{ fred})$. - What is the difference?

First of all, the difference is presuppositional. For a sentence to refer to a proposition, i.e., to have at least the potential for a truth value, the argument expression must have a value, or must refer. This presupposition is trivially satisfied for *Fred* in (13a), embedded after (14); in (13b), embedded after (15), the presupposition is trivially satisfied for the predicate *is working*. Accordingly, common negation and cancellation tests for presupposition show that the existence of *Fred* is presupposed only in (13a), but not in (13b):

⁷ Variables and constants of level 1 (objects) are in small letters, variables and constants of level 2 (concepts, functions) are in capitals.

- (16) a. It's not true that Fred is WORKing. He's got his day off.
 b. It's not true that FRED is working. There is nobody of that name on the team⁸.

The second difference between the (a) and (b) variants of (13) concerns the interpretation processes for the constituents. In (13a), embedded as a reply to (14), the interpretation of the VP is constrained only by the semantic type of the subject expression (more correctly: the semantic type of the argument to which the subject expression refers), which would exclude, e.g., an interpretation in the sense of "be functioning" as we find it in *the engine is working*. For the rest, the interpretation is left to the discretion of the reader and most of the variants mentioned under (2) in Section 1 are available, and possibly more. - The reference of *Fred*, however, is anaphorically fixed by whatever interpretation is assigned to the name in the preceding (14). *Fred* in (13a) may just as well be replaced, with no semantic effect whatsoever, by the pronoun *he*.

Roughly the complementary story can be told about (13b): here the interpretation of the VP *is working* is anaphorically fixed by the concept with respect to which the same expression is interpreted in the preceding (15). Any change would make the discourse incoherent and would prevent (13b) from being an answer to (15). What is left to the reader's choice is the interpretation of *Fred*, limited only by the subcategorization options of *be working* and the discourse constraint that *Fred* ought to refer to an entity of a semantic type that is compatible with the semantic type of the question pronoun *who*.

3.2 VP anaphora

We have been assuming that the referent of an anaphorically occurring VP is a concept, and hence that in the course of the interpretation of a VP a concept is introduced into the discourse representation, which can be resumed by a subsequent anaphor. We have been considering only the case where a concept is introduced in one sentence and resumed by a VP in another sentence. Does this notion fit in with VP anaphora and VP ellipsis?

Not too long ago one used to think that VPA and VPE were closely tied up with linguistic expressions from preceding discourse, or were even transformationally related to expressions in the same sentence. The reason for thinking this is presumably in the fact that VPA and VPE cannot have non-linguistic antecedents (cf. Hankamer & Sag 1976). A preferable option - as I argued (in Bosch 1983, 1995, 1997) - would however be an analysis that works referentially: in the course of the interpretation of a VP a concept is introduced into the discourse representation that is resumed by a subsequent anaphor. The decisive argument for assuming concepts as referents of a VP, rather than working with identity of meanings or partial (or "sloppy") identity of expressions, comes from cases like the following, where the VP contains referential information:

⁸ Proper names make things perhaps unnecessarily difficult in the example. And since proper names are not our issue here, compare for a clearer result a variant with a descriptive definite NP (instead of *Fred* take *the new sales assistant*):

- (16') a. It's not true that the new sales assistant is WORKing. He's got his day off.
 b. It's not true that the new SALES assistant is working. There IS no new sales assistant yet.

Clearly, (16'b) does not suffer from presupposition failure and hence *the new sales assistant* cannot refer to the logical argument of (16), nor, by analogy, *Fred* in (16b).

(17) Andy wants to talk to her, and so does Bert.

When we ask what it is that Andy and Bert must have in common for (17) to be true, we see that they not only both must be wanting to talk to a woman, but to the *same* woman. The referential interpretation of the pronoun *her*, i.e., REF(her_1) is part of the identity of the concept.

(18) $\lambda x (x \text{ wants to talk to REF}(her_1))$

And since the reference of a constituent expression cannot sensibly be taken as part of an expression's meaning, it can't be the meaning of *wants to talk to her* that is anaphorically resumed by the anaphor *so does*, but we need another kind of entity for this purpose. This entity is the contextual interpretation, or *contextual concept*, to which the expression *wants to talk to her* refers in the context at hand. So what is predicated of Andy and Bert in (17) is that they satisfy the concept given under (18).

When the discourse of (17) continues with (19), it becomes obvious that, again, that we are not concerned flatly with the meaning of the VP *has no time on Wednesdays*, but that the truth conditions of (19), as embedded after (17), require a concept that may be paraphrased as *has no time on Wednesdays to talk to her₁*.

(19) Andy has no time on Wednesdays, nor has Bert.

A simple sketch of the mapping from lexical expressions to concepts is provided by Frege (e.g. Frege 1892a). He assumed that a predicate expression, in virtue of its meaning (*Sinn*), refers to (*hat als Bedeutung*) a concept (*Begriff*) where a concept is a straightforward truth function.

This model was simplified by Carnap in the sense that he correlated a predicate expression directly with an *intension* (which he regarded as a concept or truth function) and took the intension to be the meaning of the predicate expression. This notion was challenged only in the Seventies, most prominently by Stalnaker (1976), Kaplan (1978), and Lewis (1981). The observation central to their work is the fact that indexical expressions make the truth of a declarative sentence depend on the context of utterance, and that this kind of parameter cannot sensibly be regarded as of the same sort as the dependence on the state of the world with respect to which the sentence is evaluated. Lewis (1981) distinguishes the *theory of indexicality* from what he calls the *theory of contingency*. What a speaker expresses by uttering a declarative sentence in a particular context is a proposition and it is this proposition that is then evaluated with respect to various possible worlds, or, if you prefer, to various states of the world.

This approach comes close to Frege's ideas again in allowing the semantic interpretation of a sentence (i.e. the proposition expressed) not only to depend on the meanings of words in the sentence and their mode of composition, but also on other, contextual or situational, influences that are not syntactically explicit. The prime case motivating this notion of context dependence was the case of indexical expressions, whose contribution to the truth conditions of sentences is a matter of their reference in the utterance context. - The point here (and arguably already in Frege) is that not only the interpretation of indexical expressions is context dependent in this way, but in principle the interpretation of *all lexical expressions*.

However, when an expression is used anaphorically its reference is retrieved from the discourse representation, no matter whether it is an NP referent or a VP referent (i.e., a *contextual concept* in the sense of Bosch 1995, 1997).

4 *Lexical semantics and anaphoric occurrences*

4.1 Presupposed lexical content

Assuming that we have made plausible our claim that both NPs and VPs can be used referentially and both can be employed anaphorically, we still have to account for our hypothesis that anaphoric occurrences make no use of the lexical semantics of their constituent expressions.

Typically - and this would already support our hypothesis - anaphorically used expressions are drawn from a set of very general and semantically rather attenuate expressions. Using, instead of the pronoun *he*, expressions like *the man* or *the guy* seems like mere stylistic variation. Their descriptive content in any case is the same as for the pronoun *he*. “Epithet” NPs used as anaphors under the same circumstances don’t have their literal semantic content, as we saw in our discussion of example (5), but rather insinuate or suggest an attitude of the speaker, and their literal semantic content certainly does not enter the truth conditions of sentences in which they occur. - So far, our hypothesis seems to be supported by the data.

But how about the common journalistic usage in which anaphoric phrases are burdened with additional information that is new to the discourse, as in

- (20) Jones said that he was delighted with his new position. {The 57-year old former CEO of Bananas Corporation / Peachcorp’s new president / The executive} is facing a difficult job nonetheless.

The phrases *the 57-year old former CEO of Bananas Corporation* or *Peachcorp’s new president* are intended as resuming the reference of *Jones*. But this usage seems quite different from the simple anaphoric resumption that we find in *he* or *the man*, which could be used instead. And one may also argue that it is different from the less informative *the executive* in the same position. The writer of (20) would typically assume that the reader is supplied with additional, even though uncontroversial, and hence presupposed, information that can be accommodated with the preceding discourse.

It seems difficult, however, in view of such examples, to uphold the position that the lexical content of anaphoric occurrences is irrelevant. After all, the additional information that is accommodated with the discourse representation of Jones derives from the lexical content of the anaphoric phrases *the 57-year old former CEO of Bananas Corporation* or *Peachcorp’s new president*. The situation then would suggest, rather, that these phrases function both anaphorically and, as far as their semantic content is concerned, as focus phrases.

We find a similar situation with relative clauses inside anaphoric NPs, as in

- (21) Jones said that he was delighted with his new position. The executive, who did excellent work restructuring Bananas Corporation only two years ago, is facing a difficult job nonetheless.

The focus of the second sentence in (21), just as in (20), is the VP, *is facing a difficult job*. And it is the contents of this phrase that is asserted in these sentences. The NP, in both sentences, is anaphoric and its contents are presupposed.

So we must accept the conclusion that our initial claim, i.e., that the lexical semantics of anaphoric phrases is irrelevant, despite initial plausibility, is not correct as it stands..

Where then lies the difference between the anaphoric phrases in (2) or (5) vs. those in (20) or (21)? The difference is in the role that these phrases play for the truth conditions of the sentence. The anaphoric phrases in (2) and (5) don't contribute to the truth conditions. They do not, as it were, *use* their lexical semantic content, but only link up to their already salient discourse referents - by repetition of a phrase that was used in reference to the discourse referent before, by pronominal or “epithet”-like reference (*he, the man, the old goat*, and possibly even *the executive*), or by VP anaphora. And it is just in those cases where the anaphoric phrase is intonationally unmarked.

The semantic content of an anaphorically used expression - and here I want to understand anaphoric use in a wide sense, including indirect or so-called bridging anaphors at one end and regular personal pronouns at the other - enters the truth conditions of the sentence *if and only if the expression is focused*. And it is only when the expression is focused that its lexical content can give rise to polysemy.

So we must revise our hypothesis: the correlation is not that lexical semantic content is irrelevant whenever the expression is used anaphorically, but whenever the expression is not focused. Unfocused, phonologically unmarked, anaphoric phrases do not contribute their lexical semantic content to the truth conditions of the discourse but figure only in keeping track of the reference.

4.2 Presupposition, anaphora, and focus

This conclusion introduces a more differentiated role for anaphora and presupposition. Although definite NPs presuppose the availability of a suitable referent, the lexical content of these phrases may either

- A. play a crucial role in determining the properties of the referent (either by adding conditions to the discourse representation of the referent via accommodation or by accommodating a discourse referent when there is no antecedent discourse representation) – or
- B. it may have no truth-conditional role and merely keep track of already salient referents.

In condition A the description of the discourse referent is focused - and accordingly it is accent-marked and, possibly, also syntactically focus-marked. In condition B the referential phrase is not focused, and it is not accented, nor does it occur in a syntactic focus position.

The consequence of these more differentiated notions of anaphora and presupposition is that we will need to amend the otherwise highly attractive views of a close correlation between presupposition and anaphora as proposed in van der Sandt (1992). If anaphoric occurrences do not make use of lexical semantic content, then there is no way of allowing them to accommodate any presupposed information in the discourse representation. So we need – apart from the wider notion of anaphora that correlates closely with presupposition – also a very narrow notion of anaphora that takes care of processes of reference – and without the involvement of lexical content. It is this notion of anaphora that *contrasts* with focus, while the

wide notion of anaphora would have to *include* focused expressions. Without some such differentiation we would be at a loss explaining the difference between (22a) and (22b):

- (22) a. When Jones returned from his holiday, the old grocer retired.
b. When Jones returned from his holiday, the old GROcer retired.

The phrase *the old grocer* in (a) may refer anaphorically to Jones (or to someone else mentioned in preceding discourse). But there is no implication that the referent of this phrase is either old or a shopkeeper – there is only the (truth-conditionally irrelevant) suggestion that the referent is notorious for what is regarded as typical grocer’s behaviour. The focused phrase *the old GROcer* in (b), however, must refer to somebody who is both old and a shopkeeper (which is part of the truth conditions of (b)), and the reference cannot be identical to Jones.

We have to leave a proper account of the revised notion of anaphora in its relation to focus and presupposition to another paper. The point of the current paper has only been in showing that lexical semantic content and polysemy do not play a role for anaphoric occurrences in the narrow sense but are limited to focused occurrences.

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