

# KNOWLEDGE TRANSMISSION AND LINGUISTIC SENSE

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ABSTRACT: Michael Dummett holds that the sense of a natural language proper name is part of its linguistic meaning. I argue that this view sits uncomfortably with Frege's observation that the sense of a natural language proper name varies from speaker to speaker. Moreover, the thesis under discussion is not supported by Frege's views on communication. Recently Richard Heck has tried to develop an argument which is intended to show that assertoric communication with sentences containing proper names is only possible if Dummett's thesis or a version of it is true. I will challenge this argument and argue that it does not support Dummett's thesis.

Keywords: Frege, modes of presentation, assertion, knowledge.

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## *Introduction*

Frege argues in 'On Sense and Meaning' that one must distinguish between the sense and the reference of a proper name. Although Hesperus is Phosphorus, the sentences "Hesperus = Phosphorus" and "Hesperus = Hesperus" have different epistemic properties: the first one 'contains' interesting empirical information, the second one does not. Frege describes this difference by saying that "Hesperus" and "Phosphorus", while having the same reference, differ in sense. Frege's distinction between the sense and the reference of a proper name and his argument for it are well-known and often discussed. Recently Frege's view has come under attack. Philosophers like Kripke take Frege to introduce a distinction that is of crucial importance for the theory of meaning of natural languages. They then go on to criticise

the view that proper names express senses. Here is a sketch of this line of argument.<sup>1</sup> The Fregean sense of a proper name is what determines the reference of the proper name and what is known by a competent user of the name. Following Frege's hints in 'On Sense and Meaning' the sense of a proper name like "Aristotle" is modelled on the sense of a definite description denoting the Greek philosopher, say, "the inventor of formal logic". The central point of criticism is that the ascription of Fregean sense to proper names gives sentences with proper names the wrong counterfactual truth-conditions: While (i) "Aristotle might not have been Aristotle" is true, (ii) "Aristotle might not have been Aristotle" is taken to be false. But if "Aristotle" and "the inventor of formal logic" have the same sense, this difference between (i) and (ii) should not exist. Hence, proper names do not have senses.

The argument just sketched is prominent in the literature, but it rests on controversial assumptions. For instance, it is unclear whether the difference in truth-value between (i) and (ii) really shows that "Aristotle" and "the inventor of formal logic" differ in Fregean sense.<sup>2</sup> A more fundamental criticism of Frege questions the relevance of the distinction between sense and reference for the theory of meaning in the first place. In this paper I will be concerned with this kind of criticism of Frege. I will motivate it and try to show that an interesting attempt to answer it fails.

Let us first outline the second sort of criticism. To do this, I will work with the assumption that a theory of meaning is a theory of linguistic competence: someone who knows a theory of meaning for a language L is able to understand utterances of L sentences. The question whether Frege's distinction between the sense and reference of a proper name is of relevance for the theory of meaning becomes then: *Does a proper name have a sense that one must grasp to understand an utterance of a sentence containing it?* According to Evans, Frege gives a positive answer to this question:

Frege's idea is that it may be a property of a singular term as an element of a public language that, in order to understand it, one must not only think of a particular object, its Meaning, but one must think of that object *in a particular way* that is, every competent user of the language who understands the utterance will think of the object in the same way (Evans 1982, p. 16).

Evans identifies the particular way in which one must think of the referent of a proper name with the sense of the proper name. If the thesis sketched by Evans is Frege's answer, then Frege's distinction between sense and reference makes a fundamental contribution to a theory of meaning. But Frege himself points out at various places that in the case of proper names of natu-

ral language there is not *the* sense of a proper name a competent user must grasp to understand an utterance containing the name, even if we assume for simplicity that we are only concerned with the practice of using a proper name, say "Aristotle", to refer to one person. If we understand by the Fregean sense of a natural language proper name the sense of a definite description or a family of definite descriptions competent speakers use to pick out the referent of a use of the proper name, there neither is nor need to be *the* Fregean sense of a proper name like "Aristotle". Different speakers will pick out the referent of "Aristotle" by different definite descriptions. *The sense of "Aristotle" varies from speaker to speaker.* The sense of a proper name of natural language may be and often is idiosyncratic.<sup>3</sup> If the sense of "Aristotle" varies from speaker to speaker, there is not *the* sense of "Aristotle" that I must grasp to understand an utterance that contains "Aristotle". Is there for every proper name utterance *a* sense that I must grasp to understand it? Even if a positive answer were plausible, the context-dependent sense itself would play no fundamental role in a theory of meaning. A plausible theory of meaning for a natural language should contain *general principles stating how a competent speaker determines* the sense of a proper name on an occasion of use, not a multitude of statements assigning senses to proper name utterances. Hence, Frege's basic notion seems to be uninteresting for the theory of meaning of natural language proper names.

This argument encourages the so-called "hybrid view" which says that

Frege was right about belief, but wrong about the meanings of proper names. Something like Frege's notion of sense is needed in a proper account of belief (and other propositional attitudes), but no such notion is needed in an account of the meanings of sentences (except, perhaps, in an account of the meaning of intensional operators) (Heck 1995, p. 79).

The notion of sense helps to explain why I can believe that Hesperus shines bright, without *eo ipso* believing that Phosphorus shines bright. But a theory of meaning can do without the notion of sense.

Frege's own argument in 'On Sense and Meaning' for the introduction of the notion of sense does not show this negative conclusion to be mistaken. The assumption that speakers *associate* senses with the proper names "Hesperus" and "Phosphorus" is sufficient to explain the difference in cognitive value between "Hesperus is Hesperus" and "Hesperus is Phosphorus", although *different* speakers may associate *different senses* with "Hesperus" ("Phosphorus").

In this paper I will be mainly concerned to discuss an answer to the problem of sense variation developed and defended by Richard Heck in his article 'On the Sense of Communication'. He tries to show that if speakers aim to transmit knowledge with their utterances, there must be something like *the* sense of a proper name. So even if different speakers use different definite descriptions to pick out the same referent of "Aristotle", there is a conception of sense according to which these speakers grasp the same sense. If convincing, the argument would show that the sense of a proper name cannot be the sense of a definite description (family of definite descriptions) that a competent speaker uses to pick out the name's bearer. Heck does not say much about the invariant or 'linguistic sense' of a proper name. The aim of Heck's paper is to motivate that there must be such a sense, not to explicate the concept of a linguistic sense. I will try show that Heck's postulate of linguistic senses for proper names is not well motivated.

The plan of the paper is as follows: Frege imposes a normative requirement on proper names: they should express only one sense. In Section 1 I will argue that Frege imposes this requirement for a reason that has nothing to do with natural language communication or the notion of meaning. Section 2 prepares the ground for the Heck's argument by introducing the relevant notion of understanding. The argument will be presented and criticised in section 3.

### 1. *The Singularity Requirement*

Frege takes the variation of sense to be an imperfection of natural language proper names. Variations of sense "are to be avoided in the theoretical structure of a demonstrative science and ought not to occur in a perfect language" (Frege 1892, p. 58 Fn.). In his late essay 'The Thought' Frege imposes a normative requirement on proper names:

[I]t must really be demanded that a single mode of presentation associated with every proper name. It is often unimportant that this demand is fulfilled, but not always (Frege 1918, p. 25).

I will call the demand formulated here the "single-sense-requirement". Unfortunately Frege does not say explicitly for which purposes it is important that the single-sense-requirement is fulfilled. In this section I will show that the single-sense-requirement is not motivated by considerations about meaning or understanding. Frege does not think that natural language

proper names are imperfect means of communication, but that proper names that do not fulfill the single-sense-requirement cannot be used in the language of a demonstrative science.

To see this, let us take a look at Frege's foundational project in the philosophy of arithmetic. Frege's goal is to prove the propositions of arithmetic in a way that reveals their epistemic status. He thinks that there is for every proposition of arithmetic a 'secure grounding' that will reveal whether the grounded proposition is analytic or synthetic: if the proof only uses 'logical laws' or definitions the proved proposition is analytic, otherwise synthetic.<sup>4</sup>

Frege's foundational project would face severe difficulties if he would use a language which did not fulfill the single-sense-requirement to give his proofs. To see this, let us first assume with Frege that the sense of a singular term determines its reference: if two terms have the same sense, they have the same reference. Now take a look at this simple mathematical argument:

Argument A:

(P1) 2 is a natural number.

(P2) 2 is prime.

(C) There is a number that is a natural and a prime number.

Is this a valid argument? If the language in which it is carried through does not realise the single-sense-requirement, it is not. It is enthymematic like:

Argument B:

(P3) John Smith is rich.

(P4) John Smith is handsome.

(C) There is a handsome and rich person.

Different occurrences of "John Smith" may have different senses that could determine different objects. Even if both occurrences of "John Smith" referred to the same person, we will need the additional information that the person referred to in the first premiss by "John Smith" is the person referred to by "John Smith" in the second premiss to assess the validity of the argument.

Someone who holds that proper names are rigid could object at this point that sameness of reference is enough to make the argument valid: if the occurrences of "John Smith" refer to the same person, they refer to this person in every possible world. So, the conclusion cannot be false, if the

premisses are true. But this is a sense of validity that is not connected to the idea of inferential justification. Although I may know that (P3) and (P4) are true or have a justified true belief that what they state is the case, I would not thereby be justified in a belief in (C).<sup>5</sup>

If the single-sense-requirement is not fulfilled, only the additional premiss (P5)

(P5) "2" refers to the same number in the first premiss as "2" in the second

would turn argument A into a complete and valid argument. (P5) expresses a contingent proposition that can only be known *a posteriori*. Consequently, if we have to establish the truth of (P5), *non-mathematical* knowledge would become relevant to justify a mathematical claim. The same problem will arise for Frege's foundational project. Some arguments that are intended to prove arithmetical propositions from definitions and logical laws will also be enthymematic. In many cases the justification of an arithmetical proposition would be based on additional knowledge about sameness of reference of singular terms. This is a most unwelcome result for a philosopher like Frege who believes in the analyticity of arithmetic.

Frege avoids this problem by using a language that fulfills the single-sense-requirement. In this language the additional premisses is not needed, because sameness of *singular term* guarantees *sameness of sense* and (thereby) *sameness of reference*. If we encounter different occurrences of the same proper name, the language used guarantees sameness of sense and reference, hence we do not need an additional premiss.

Now natural languages are not designed to conduct proofs of propositions that reveal the ultimate grounds of these propositions. Speakers of natural languages take for granted that the circumstances of their utterances ensure that the reference of an context-dependent expressions does not vary from one occurrence of such an expression to another in the course of an argument. Therefore the above consideration gives Frege no reason to demand that *natural language* proper names fulfill the single-sense-requirement.

Formal and natural languages differ in that in a formal language sameness of singular term entails sameness of sense and, hence, if the term is non-empty, sameness of reference. One becomes only a competent user of the formal language Frege envisages if one masters the formation rules of the language and the stipulations by means of which the logically simple expressions of the language are introduced. Hence, Frege's thesis that

[t]he sense of a proper name is grasped by everybody who is sufficiently familiar with the language or totality of designations to which it belongs (Frege 1892, 57)

is true for a *formal or ideal* language, but false for our natural languages. Frege gives us no reason to say that there *is* or *should be* a sense of "Aristotle" (taken as referring to the Greek philosopher) that every competent speaker user of this name grasps. Consequently, the Fregean notion of sense cannot play an interesting role in the theory of meaning.

Dummett has grappled with the problem posed by sense variation for someone who takes Frege's work as the starting point in the theory of meaning. Dummett concedes that in our linguistic practice proper names have no constant linguistic sense. But he thinks that is part of our practice that we systematise it and try to close the gap between our language and the Fregean ideal. The need for systematisation arises, because we face conflict situations which we cannot resolve even if we would be completely informed about matters of fact. Here is an example. The predicate "is solid" is paradigmatically true of middle-sized dry goods. But Physicist say that these things are not really solid: they are just swarms of tiny particles. So, is this chair solid or not? We cannot tell, says Dummett, before we have conferred a fixed and definite sense on "is solid".<sup>6</sup>

Dummett's proposal assigns a new role to the notion of sense:

The notion of sense is (...) of importance, not so much in giving an account of our linguistic practice, but as a means of systematizing it (Dummett <sup>2</sup>1980, p. 105).

But the crucial issue in the philosophy of language is whether one needs the Fregean notion of sense to give an account of the workings of natural language proper names. Neo-Fregeans and Neo-Russellians are divided over this question. The question whether we need the notion of sense to systematise our use of proper names is interesting, but orthogonal to the question discussed. Hence, I will not discuss Dummett's intriguing proposal in this paper. I will turn now to an argument which attempts to show that natural language proper names must have 'linguistic senses' in our practice.

## 2. *Understanding and The Transmission of Knowledge*

In contrast to Dummett, Heck argues that there is a reason to say that there is a Fregean sense (a family of Fregean senses) that someone who understands an utterance of a proper name must grasp. Heck argues that an independently plausible view of communication implies this thesis. Now although it is a commonplace to say that the main purpose of natural lan-

guage is communication, it is difficult to use this commonplace as a starting point of an argument for the ascription of senses to proper names, since the notion of understanding is slippery. Take an utterance of "John is coming to dinner". What is required to understand this utterance? Do I need to know who John is to understand it? In one sense of understanding the answer is YES, in another NO. Does understanding the utterance require that one identifies John in a particular way? In one sense of understanding the answer is YES, in another NO. Even if one agrees that one must know who John is to understand the utterance the concept of knowing who introduces further complexities. Does knowing who John is require that I had some causal contact with him or not, etc.? These points should make clear that *simply* appealing to the notion of understanding is not of much help in answering questions in the philosophy of language.

Heck's argument does not simply appeal to the notion of understanding. Heck builds on the work of Evans who takes the notion of understanding to have an epistemic point. Why do we care to understand each others assertions? Because we want to share the knowledge they possess:

(...) it is a fundamental, though insufficiently recognized point, that communication is *essentially* a mode of the transmission of knowledge (Evans 1982, p. 310).

If we focus on assertoric utterances, we can say that successful communication enables the transmission of knowledge. Evans' idea is to use epistemic intuitions to throw light on semantic issues. He accepts the following principle for communication:

If one has understood an assertion with the content that p made by one who knows that p, and if one has good reason to and does trust her, *ce-teris paribus*, then the assertion puts one in the position to know that p.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, we have in one sense of the word successfully communicated even if knowledge has not been transmitted (yet). Evans will agree for he is not proposing a (partial) analysis of the concept of understanding (Is there *the* concept to be analysed?) His point is that there is an important sense of understanding, let us call it "understanding<sub>E</sub>", that is fundamental among the senses in which an utterance can be understood.

The view that there is an epistemic dimension of understanding is supported by the independently plausible thesis that assertions aim to convey knowledge. My utterance of "It rains, but I do not know that it rains" is a defective speech-act.<sup>8</sup> Why? Because in asserting that it rains I present my-



self as knowing that it rains and I 'give others my word' for its being the case that it rains. If the transmission of knowledge is the point of assertion, it is plausible to suppose that one has understood an assertoric utterance only incompletely if one is not in a position to acquire the relevant knowledge.

### 3. *Transmission of Knowledge and Linguistic Sense*

Heck tries to exploit the idea that communication has an epistemic dimension in an argument for the ascription of Fregean sense to proper names. He argues that preservation of reference is not sufficient for understanding<sub>E</sub> an utterance with a proper name<sup>9</sup>: in order for R to understand<sub>E</sub> S' utterance of "a is F" it is not sufficient that R entertains a proposition he would express with a proper name co-referential with S's "a" and the predicate "F". Heck's argument is based on the following example:

Suppose Eric Blair were to become amnesiac and check himself into a hospital. The doctor, Tony, deciding that she needs to have *some* name by which to call him dubs him "George Orwell". And suppose further that Alex says *-not* intending to refer to Tony's patient- "George Orwell wrote 1984" and that Tony forms, in reaction to Alex's assertion the belief she would express to other members of her staff as "George Orwell wrote 1984". This belief is true: Tony's new patient happens to be Eric Blair. But surely it would not count as knowledge, even if Alex knows that George Orwell wrote 1984, it would not even count as justified. Thus, preservation of reference and means of expression is not sufficient for successful communication, since it does not enable the transmission of knowledge (Heck 1995, p. 95).

Here is a first stab at Heck's argument:

1. R has understood<sub>E</sub> an utterance of "George Orwell wrote 1984" only if R's 'cognitive uptake' of the utterance places R in a position to acquire *the knowledge* that George Orwell wrote 1984.
  2. Even if R acquires on the basis of his uptake of "George Orwell wrote 1984" a true belief about George Orwell to the effect that he wrote 1984 that R would express by an assertoric utterance of "George Orwell wrote 1984", this belief might not constitute knowledge.
- Ergo 3. Thinking of the right person even under the right name is not enough for understanding<sub>E</sub>.
- Ergo 4: More than reference (and even name) must be preserved in understanding<sub>E</sub>.

*It seems* natural to continue this line of argument by saying that the additional thing that must be preserved in understanding<sub>E</sub> is, roughly, the linguistic sense of "George Orwell". If the linguistic sense of "George Orwell wrote 1984" is preserved, understanding<sub>E</sub> has been achieved. What is the linguistic sense of "George Orwell"? Heck does not say. He calls the sense of a description or family of descriptions the speaker uses to pick out the referent of a use of the proper name's "cognitive sense". He hints at a conception of linguistic senses as families of cognitive ones. Perhaps there is no other way to characterise the linguistic sense of a proper name than by saying that it is the collection of those cognitive senses representing the bearer of the name that enable the transmission of knowledge.<sup>10</sup>

But although natural, the above continuation misconstrues Heck's argument.<sup>11</sup> To take the clearest case: Preservation of reference *and* Fregean sense might not suffice for understanding<sub>E</sub>. Here is an example to make the point. Let us assume that S and R attach the same sense to the proper name "Hesperus". Both would explain their use of Hesperus by saying that Hesperus is the evening star. Now even if S and R both attach the same sense to "Hesperus", R might not come to *know* that Hesperus shines bright on the basis of S' utterance of "Hesperus shines bright". Upon hearing S assertively utter "Hesperus shines bright" R forms the true belief he himself would express with the same sentence that expresses the same Fregean thought for R and S. But that R grasps the thought that S expressed with his words might be a lucky accident. R does not know how S uses "Hesperus". He just hits upon the right thought hearing the utterance. Thus, preservation of reference *and* Fregean sense is not be *sufficient* for understanding<sub>E</sub> an utterance with a proper name.

Is preservation of reference and sense *necessary* for understanding<sub>E</sub> an utterance with a proper name? I think a negative answer to this question has great initial plausibility. To see this, let us return to Heck's example. Apart from her general linguistic competence and her possessing reasons for the reliability of Alex, all that is necessary to put Tony in a position to acquire the knowledge that George Orwell wrote 1984 solely on the basis of her hearing Alex say "George Orwell wrote 1984" is that she knows that Alex referred with her use of "George Orwell" to the person she calls by that name. *Prima facie*, *knowingly* preserving the reference seems sufficient for understanding<sub>E</sub>. By appealing to this 'knowledge-condition' we can explain why Tony does not understand<sub>E</sub> Alex's "George Orwell" utterance: Tony does not know that she refers with "George Orwell" to the same per-

son as Alex. Hence, her belief that George Orwell wrote 1984 does not constitute knowledge, although it is accidentally true.

The knowledge-condition on understanding<sub>E</sub> is independently plausible: If R does not know that his George Orwell is also the speaker's George Orwell, the beliefs he can acquire from understanding "George Orwell..." utterance are useless for him. For instance, he cannot use information about George Orwell already in his possession to assess the plausibility of what the utterer says with his assertions.

Heck accepts the knowledge-condition. Correctly construed, Heck's argument is based on the knowledge-condition.<sup>12</sup> Heck takes the knowledge-condition to provide a positive, if incomplete answer, to the question what is required for understanding<sub>E</sub>. At first sight it is difficult to see how the knowledge-condition can be a useful starting-point for Heck's argument, because Tony is able to know that she herself refers with "George Orwell" to the same person as Alex without there being something like a linguistic sense of "George Orwell" that she and Alex must grasp. The context of utterance, clues provided by Alex etc. will bring it about that Tony knows that Alex refers with "George Orwell" to the person she herself knows under this or any other name.

Heck disagrees. He claims that the knowledge-condition implies that there are linguistic senses.<sup>13</sup> Here is the crucial part of Heck's argument:

According to this view [that understanding requires knowledge of reference], to understand an assertion of 'George Orwell wrote 1984', it is not that one may think of George Orwell in any way one likes, so long as one gets the reference right; one must think of George Orwell in such a way as to know that he is the object to which the speaker is referring (no knowledge *about* ways of thinking being required). There are thus limits upon how one may think of George Orwell if one is to understand the utterance. If one does not know that George Orwell is Eric Blair, one cannot think of George Orwell as Eric Blair and yet understand an utterance containing 'Eric Blair'. That is say, there will be a (more or less) vague collection of ways in which one may think of George Orwell if one is to understand such an utterance (...) (Heck 1995, p. 102).

Heck takes the knowledge-condition to imply that there is a specific way in which the speaker must think of the bearer of a proper name to understand<sub>E</sub> an utterance containing the name:

- (H) R knows that S refers with "a" to the object a  $\rightarrow$   
 $\exists(x)$  (x is a collection of ways of thinking of a & R thinks of a under a mode of presentation belonging to x).

One problem of (H) is that the antecedent of (H) requires that R thinks of a. This already implies that there is a collection of ways to which the way R thinks of a belongs. For instance, every way in which I think of you belongs to the collection of my ways of thinking of you. We must consequently think of the collection of ways as ways in which R can gain knowledge of a.

Heck assumes in his argument that not every way of thinking of George Orwell is a way of knowingly getting the reference right. The collection of ways that are relevant for understanding "George Orwell" utterances is not just the collection of ways of thinking of George Orwell. Heck's argument takes this claim for granted, but this claim is controversial.

First -The preservation metaphor suggests that R can only come to know that S refers with a proper name to an object a that R can identify himself if there is a similarity in the ways S and R think of a. But why should R not come to know that he names with "George Orwell" the same person as S, although R's and S's understanding of the name is radically different? We can illustrate that by using the now popular dossier-metaphor: why should R not know that his George Orwell is the speaker's George Orwell, although the name "George Orwell" labels "George Orwell" dossiers 'in' R's and S's 'cognitive architecture' which contain different information about George Orwell? What S says about George Orwell might justify and initiate in R the belief that his George Orwell is S's George Orwell. This does not imply that there is a special collection of ways in which R must think of George Orwell in order to understand<sub>E</sub> S's "George Orwell" assertions. For instance, during a conversation S might characterise George Orwell as the author of *Animal Farm*. Given R's background knowledge, this utterance might initiate and justify in him the true belief that S's George Orwell is his George Orwell. Nonetheless, S and R might think of George Orwell in different ways when they refer to him. R's "George Orwell" dossier might not contain the information that George Orwell is the author of *Animal Farm* at all. For he thinks that this is widely disseminated piece of *misinformation* about George Orwell. Consequently Heck's premisses do not imply that, as he later on puts it, "relevant similarity of epistemic values [i.e. ways of thinking] is (...) a necessary condition of understanding" (Heck 1996, p. 152).

Second -What is even more important is that another person T might think of George Orwell in a way radically different from R when he understands the same "George Orwell" utterance made about George Orwell. For T a different piece of information initiates and justifies his true belief

that the utterer is making assertions about his George Orwell. Every way of thinking of George Orwell will, *given the right background knowledge*, be a way of thinking of George Orwell that enables one to fulfill the knowledge condition. The collection of ways in which a competent speaker may think of George Orwell in order to understand<sub>E</sub> "George Orwell" utterances is thus just the collection of ways of thinking of *George Orwell*. Hence, Heck's argument gives us no reason to reject the thesis that

the single main requirement for understanding a use of proper name is that one thinks of the referent (Evans 1982, p. 400).

There is another aspect of Heck's argument that needs to be discussed. Heck is right to point out that someone who does not know that George Orwell is Eric Blair, can understand<sub>E</sub> "George Orwell" utterances only if he thinks of George Orwell in ways he knows to represent George Orwell. Even if he knows that certain modes of presentation are modes of presentation of Eric Blair, he is not in a position to think in these ways of George Orwell alias Eric Blair in understanding<sub>E</sub> a "George Orwell" utterance. Doesn't that show that not all ways of thinking of George Orwell enable a speaker to fulfill the knowledge-condition? Yes, it does, but it does not show that proper names have linguistic senses. For I may acquire the knowledge that George Orwell is Eric Blair. The acquisition of knowledge will change my possibilities to understand "George Orwell" utterances: for the speaker enlightened about the identity there is not one collection of ways of thinking of George Orwell and another collection of ways of thinking of Eric Blair, there is just one collection of ways of thinking of George Orwell alias Eric Blair. If the linguistic sense of a proper name "a" is the family of cognitive or idiosyncratic senses one must think of a if one is to understand<sub>E</sub> an utterance containing "a", the change just described results in a change of the linguistic sense of the proper name. Consequently the problem of sense variation will rear its head again: The Fregean sense of a proper name varies from speaker to speaker, the linguistic sense of a proper name can vary from occasion of utterance to occasion of utterance if the background knowledge of the speakers change. A theory of meaning should accordingly not specify the utterance relative linguistic senses but utterance independent ways of determining which object a speaker refers to with a use of a proper name.

Heck has been building on Evans' thesis about the epistemic point of communication to establish the thesis that proper names have linguistic

senses. Evans himself rejects in several places the view of proper name understanding that Heck defends. I will close my discussion with a short comparison of Evans' and Heck's views. Evans gives a "very limited vindication of Frege"<sup>14</sup>. Evans only vindicates the use of the notion of sense for indexicals and demonstratives (Evans calls them 'one-off' devices). If someone says "That man is blond" and there is no bystander who gives me the relevant information, I *and everyone else* can only come to *know who* is referred to by the use of "that man" if I perceive the man demonstrated myself. The speaker can expect this and his use of "that man" manifests that he relies on my gathering knowledge in that way. Based on this observation one can say that there is a way  $\phi$  of thinking of an object for which the following holds: a speaker understands<sub>E</sub> an one-off device only if he thinks of its referent in the way  $\phi$ . The way one must think of a man to understand a demonstrative remark about him can be characterised in a rather coarse-grained way: one must perceptually discriminate the man. But the use of proper name does not appeal to a capacity to gain knowledge who or what is referred to in a specific way. The requirement that one must know which object a singular term refers to in an utterance to understand this utterance does not impose conditions on the understanding<sub>E</sub> of proper name utterances that would lead to a full vindication of Frege.

Evans tries to explain why this is so. I could know who is mentioned in the remark "That man is blond" without perceiving the man if an authoritative third party told me who is talked about. Evans pictures the introduction of proper names as a practice in which experts act as such authoritative third parties that let other people know who is referred to by the use of the name:

[W]e can think of the person (or persons) who introduced the audience to the name in question, and reinforced his pattern of use in it, as just such an authoritative third party -letting the audience know (something that can be done in countless different ways) which individual a speaker is referring to (Evans 1982, p. 399f.).

Hence, there is no need to assume that there is a way  $\phi$  in which a proper name user must think of the referent of a proper name to understand assertions made by using the proper name. The sense of a proper name is not, to use Dummett's apt phrase, an 'ingredient of its meaning'.

*Notes*

- 1 Cp. Kripke <sup>2</sup>1980 and Soames 1998.
- 2 Cp. Stanley (1997).
- 3 Cp. Burge 1979, S. 404.
- 4 Cp. Frege 1884, §4.
- 5 Cp. Campbell 1994, p. 75.
- 6 Dummett <sup>2</sup>1980, pp. 104-105.
- 7 Cp. Evans 1982, p. 311, Heck 1995, p. 92.
- 8 Cp. Unger 1975, S. 256ff.
- 9 Cp. Heck 1995, p. 85.
- 10 Heck 1995, p. 102.
- 11 Cp. Byrne and Thau's criticism in Byrne/Thau 1996, p. 147 and Heck's reply in Heck 1996, p. 152f. Heck uses a couple of interlocking principles to show that the thesis that more than reference must be preserved in communication bears on questions of linguistic meaning. Byrne and Thau criticise these principles. I will not investigate whether the principles are plausible. In this paper I am only interested in the truth of Heck's basic assumption about understanding<sub>E</sub>.
- 12 Heck 1996, p. 153.
- 13 Cp. *ibid*, p. 100.
- 14 Cp. Evans 1982, p. 316.

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