

DEFINITENESS, PRESUPPOSITION, AND ANAPHORICITY IN *THERE*-  
SENTENCES AND ADJECTIVAL PREDICATE CONSTRUCTIONS

ZENON JARANOWSKI

*University of Łódź*

In the paper "Definiteness in there-sentences", *Language* 2, June 1978, E. Rando and D. J. Napoli suggested, with strong empirical support, that such terms most typically used to describe restrictions on there-sentences, as *definiteness* and *indefiniteness* be replaced by *anaphoricity* and *non-anaphoricity*.

To substantiate this suggestion, they tried to generalize the term 'non-anaphoric' as "the most accurate and syntactically testable" (309). In the concluding part of the paper they "would like to suggest that this type of analysis can be fruitfully applied to many other syntactic phenomena" (311).

In the present paper, my intention is to analyse the reliability of the above intuitions on the part of the authors when the chosen grammatical corpus is the *adjectival predicate constructions* (Rosenbaum 1967:100-108).

To start with, let us recall that, up to now, the syntactic classification of the corpus under discussion has been based on either syntactic (e.g. Rosenbaum 1967:100-108) or semantic (e.g. P. Kiparsky and C. Kiparsky 1971, or Jackendoff 1972) criteria. Putting aside the syntactic criteria for obvious reasons, the competing semantic criteria in our case will be *anaphoricity/non-anaphoricity*, on the one hand, and *factivity/non-factivity* as correlated with *presupposition placement*, on the other.

According to Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1971), syntactic differences among the variants of complementation are correlated with semantic differences. Most of the syntactic reality in a given sentential sequence can be explained and determined by such contrastive notions of semantic value as *factive/non-*

*factive*. In this way, semantic differences between factive and non-factive complement paradigms can be related to their syntactic differences.

The division into *factive/non-factive* is based on the deep-structure level of linguistic representation. As far as the grammatical corups chosen for the present analysis is concerned, closest to the factive deep structure are constructions of the type:

(1) a. John is happy about sth }  
John lives in London } ⇒ John is happy (about the fact)  
that he lives in London

b. I am aware of sth }  
John lives in London } ⇒ I am aware (of the fact) that  
John lives in London

— and, closest to the non-factive deep structure, might be, e.g.:

(2) a. Sth is likely }  
Tom lives in London } ⇒ It is likely that Tom lives  
in London

b. Tom is eager for sth }  
Tom to live in London } ⇒ { Tom is eager for Tom to live  
in London ⇒  
Tom is eager to live in London

It should be stressed, though, that the above mentioned controlling function of factivity/non-factivity is strictly correlated with *presupposition placement*. In sentences (1), with *factive* complement, the speaker first presupposes that the embedded clause expresses a true proposition, and then makes some *other assertion* (tells something else) about it — according to the interpretation: “I presuppose that John lives in London and assert that he is happy about it”. As the presupposition is the first-step judgement on the truth value of a given proposition on the part of the speaker, the only conclusion that may be drawn is that factivity depends on presupposition and not on assertion. In contrast to the factive variant, there is no presupposition on the part of the speaker in non-factive clauses (2) in which the speaker *first* asserts in the main clause that the proposition *Tom lives in London* is likely. In this way, the ‘likeliness’ of the proposition blocks any preceding presupposition placement; that is why the non-factive clauses are semantically simpler.

In contrast to the above interpretation, Jackendoff’s approach (1972) to the problem shows a variety of distinctions. First, presupposition placement is determined directly on the surface, and not in the deep structure, though it remains a purely semantic notion and retains all its semanto-syntactic relations and controlling potentialities which are characteristic of the system of ‘Fact’. Second, according to Jackendoff (1972:241), “a well-formed semantic interpretation of a sentence *must* be divided into Focus and Presupposition. “If so,

also non-factive variants (2), contrary to the theory of ‘Fact’, *must* have their presuppositions; hence the division into Focal and Inherent Presupposition in Jackendoff’s system — the former corresponding with the non-factive, ‘non-presuppositional’ variant of the ‘Fact’ theory, and the latter, with its factive counterpart.

According to its term, the *focal* presupposition and its placement are strictly related with the notion of *focus* and its *assignment*. “We use the term *focus* of a sentence to denote the information in the sentence that is assumed by the speaker not to be shared by him and the hearer, and *presupposition* of a sentence to denote the information that is assumed by the speaker to be shared by him and the hearer” (Jackendoff 1972:230). In this sense, our discourse is natural if successive sentences *share* presuppositions, that is, if the two speakers agree on what information they have in common. The ‘newness’ of the information denoted by the focus is formally explicated phonologically by a special *stress placement*, and semantically, by the observation of a special *Rule of Focus Assignment* (Jackendoff 1972:240): “the semantic material associated with surface structure nodes dominated by F is the Focus of the sentence. To derive the presupposition (focal), substitute appropriate *semantic variables* for the focussed material”.

From what the rule says, then, the appropriate semantic variables are to be substituted for the Focus — to form a *focal presupposition*. The variable must be chosen in such a way that “it defines a coherent class of possible contrasts with the focus, pieces of information that could equally well have taken the place of the focus in a sentence, within bounds limited by *the language, the discourse, and the external situation*” (Jackendoff 1972:243). The condition on the choice of a given variable, then, is that the variable have the same semantic form as the focus. To show how it works, let us analyse our non-factive, ‘non-presuppositional’ examples (2 a, b), in the following discourse:

(3) a. A: Where does Tom live now?  
B: It is *likely* that he lives in London  
A: Well, it is *possible* that he does but I’m not quite certain.

b. A: Say, Tom is *eager* to live in London  
B: Oh, no! He is *unwilling* to live there.

In the above examples, the marker F dominates both *likely* and *possible*, on the one hand, and *eager* and *unwilling*, on the other. These are *contrastive variables* of the same *semantic form*. What is shared by the speaker and hearer in these sentences then, and what is presupposed as a result, is ‘the sameness’ of the semantic form. The information which is not shared by the speaker and the hearer, the ‘newness’, is represented by the respective, contrastive variables which are correlated with and dominated by the focal part of the utterance.





principle. As E. Rando and D. J. Napoli indicate "there are strong connections, and often only subtle distinctions among the members of each of the two contrasting sets: on the one hand, — topic, theme, presupposition, definiteness, anaphoricity, initial position, and old information; on the other, — comment, rheme, focus, indefiniteness, non-anaphoricity, final position, and new information" (1978:308). Although they refer this observation to the corpus of there-sentences, we may prove now that the same is characteristic of the corpus under discussion. Let us analyse, first, the surface-structure representations of the sequences:

There are tigers in India

It is likely that he lives in London

(13) a. There are tigers in India

{	{	
[	[	
+DUMMY	+SUBSTITUTIONAL	
+THEME	+CONCEPT	
+TOPIC	+'VERTICAL'	
+DEFINITE	+CHOICE	
+INITIAL	[-DEFINITE]	
]	]	
}	}	
]	]	
+COMMENT	+COMMENT	
+RHEME	+RHEME	
+FOCUS	+FOCUS	
+NON-INITIAL	+NON-INITIAL	
+NON-ANAPHORIC	+NON-ANAPHORIC	
+NEW INFORMATION	+NEW INFORMATION	
]	]	
}	}	

b. It is likely that he lives in London

{	{	
[	[	
+DUMMY	+SUBSTITUTIONAL	
+THEME	+CONCEPT	
+TOPIC	+'VERTICAL'	
+DEFINITE	+CHOICE	
+INITIAL	[-DEFINITE]	
]	]	
}	}	
]	]	
+COMMENT	+COMMENT	
+RHEME	+RHEME	
+FOCUS	+FOCUS	
+NON-INITIAL	+NON-INITIAL	
+NON-ANAPHORIC	+NON-ANAPHORIC	
+NEW INFORMATION	+NEW INFORMATION	
]	]	
}	}	

The analogy between these two structures being obvious now, let us observe additionally that both of them belong to the type in which the placement of the initial dummy arguments has been triggered by syntax and not meaning (see G. Leech 1974:185). In case of (13a), according to E. Rando and D. J. Napoli (1978:308), "there insertion, viewed functionally, is a transformation designed to provide a dummy theme or topic — definite in form (witness the *the* in *there*), in initial position — in a sentence which would otherwise have none. The comment is moved out of initial position so that it may be more strongly emphasized or focussed upon." (see also Thematization in G. Leech 1974:198). In the second sequence, (13b), 'it' duplicates the real theme "he lives in London" as a result of the application of extraposition transformation, for the same reason.

What the reader should observe now is that though the argument "he lives in London" consists of separate definite items, and though *definiteness* belongs to the same contrastive set as *presupposition* does (Rando and Napoli 1978:308), no presupposition can be placed on it in type (10). This happens because it is not the definiteness of the *individual items* in the argument (clause) that determines presupposition placement in type (10) but the *indefiniteness of the whole fusion of them* resulting from a primarily presupposed conceptual implication of the semantic form on the part of the speaker (in the main clause), and of his *choice* of one of the optional semantic variables. In this way, the definiteness of an isolated embedded clause has been 'indefinitized' and, in a sense, 'neutralized' — which may be confirmed by the neutrality of the 'dummy' initial argument 'it'. In this respect, a potential definiteness of the embedded argument has been blocked, together with its syntactic positional preverbal orientation:

(14) \*That he lives in London is likely

In this sense, both, there-existential structures and the ones represented here as type (10), are semantically oriented by focal presupposition exclusively and, in fact, belong to the same type.

As a result of the above argumentation, an important correlation may be inferred, namely, that the argument "that he lives in London" corresponds strictly to Milsark's hypothesis (1974, 1977) referring to there-existential sentences — that in list there-sentences what is predicated as existing is the *entire list* — so that the quantifiers (a, the) on the individual members are irrelevant, as it is in (Rando and Napoli 1978:301):

(15) a. A. What's worth visiting here?

B: There's *the* park, *a* very nice restaurant, and *the* library. That's all as far as I'm concerned.

— and, in our example:

(15) b. It is likely that *he* lives in London



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