Deferred Reference of Proper Names

Katarzyna Kijania-Placek
Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

Paweł Banaś
Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

First version received 15 February 2020; Second version received 15 November 2020; Accepted 19 January 2021

Abstract

In this paper, we argue that proper names have deferred uses. Following Geoffrey Nunberg, we describe the deferred reference mechanism by which a linguistic expression refers to something in the world by exploiting a contextually salient relation between an index and the referent in question. Nunberg offered a thorough analysis of deferred uses of indexicals but claimed that proper names do not permit such uses. We, however, offer a number of examples of uses of proper names which pass grammatical tests for deferred usage, as put forward by Nunberg.

1. NUNBERG’S HYPOTHESIS

Deferred uses of expressions are uses in which we refer to one object by exploiting another, and we do this by relying on the linguistic features of the expression (Nunberg, 1993). A typical example is referring to a person by pointing at a photograph of that person and using a personal pronoun. Geoffrey Nunberg proposed an influential analysis of deferred uses of indexical expressions (1993). In Nunberg (1992), however, he suggested that “unlike indexicals, proper names [...] don’t permit deferred reference” (p. 298, n. 15), a thesis we will refer to in this paper as Nunberg’s Hypothesis (NH). Our aim is to argue that, contrary to NH, some uses of proper names could be considered deferred uses.

The structure of this paper is as follows: First, we define and exemplify what Nunberg treats as deferred reference of indexicals and describe the grammatical tests he employs to argue for or against classifying particular cases as deferred reference. We then extend the definition of deferred reference to potentially include proper names and propose examples of the deferred use of names. We argue for treating those examples as cases of deferred reference by applying Nunberg’s grammatical tests to them. In conclusion, we consider possible objections to our analysis and draw philosophical consequences for the semantics of proper names in general.
2. WHAT IS DEFERRED REFERENCE?

2.1. Nunberg’s characterization of deferred reference of indexicals

Deferred reference is the linguistic counterpart of deferred ostension, where in the latter, according to Quine, “we point at the gauge, and not the gasoline, to show that there is gasoline” (1968, p. 195). In a typical case of the deferred use of an indexical, we might point to a photograph in order to talk about a person depicted in it and use a personal pronoun to refer to that person. But the phenomenon is ubiquitous. As Nunberg put it “[y]ou can point at a girl child to identify her father (“He is in real estate”). You can point at a book to identify its author (“She was my chemistry teacher”), or at an author to identify a book (“That is a wonderful autobiography”). In each case it is the sex or animacy of the referent that determines the gender of the pronoun” (1993, p. 26). This justifies the description of the phenomenon as deferred reference; the gender of the pronouns in these examples demonstrates that it is the absent referent that is being referred to, not the object that is being pointed at.

Nunberg offered the most influential analysis of deferred reference, one which is based on the distinction between the index and the referent he introduced in (1993). On this account, deferred reference is a two-stage mechanism by which a linguistic expression refers to something in the world by first picking out an element in the expression’s context of utterance (an index) and only then referring to another element (a referent or an interpretation) that corresponds to that index in a contextually salient way. Typically, the referent is an object or a property that the speaker has in mind, and the index is used to direct the addressee’s attention to the referent; the index is “the argument of a function to the interpretation” (1993, p. 10).

Nunberg proposed that deferred reference is constrained by three components of meaning which comprise the linguistic meaning of an expression: deictic, classificatory, and relational. The deictic component is associated with the index and is responsible for its identification. The identification is done through the Kaplanian character of the expression or, in the case of demonstratives, by demonstration. The classificatory component concerns the referent and includes features such as number and animacy, or grammatical and natural gender. The relational component of an expression constrains the relation between index and referent. As Nunberg put it for the word ‘yesterday’, “the meaning of ‘yesterday’ could be given as ‘The calendar day (classificatory component) that precedes (relational component) the time of speaking (deictic component).’ It differs from tomorrow in virtue of its relational component, and from yesteryear in virtue of its classificatory component” (1993, p. 9, n. 16). For ‘I’ the deictic component is more or less equivalent to the Kaplanian character and requires that the index is the speaker; the classificatory component indicates the animacy and singularity of potential referents, and the relational component requires the instantiation of the referent by the index. The deictic component of ‘we’ is identical to that of ‘I,’ which means that the index is still the speaker. Yet these expressions differ in the classificatory component, which for ‘we’ constrains the referent to plural collective entities which include an animate object. In the following example, uttered by a member of a sports team (Nunberg 1993, p. 10), the referent is the team to which the index belongs:

(1) We could have been the winners.

The salient relation that links the index and the referent – in this case, the relation of being a member of a particular contextually salient team – is not part of the propositional contribution of the expression, and neither are the components of linguistic meaning.
Deferred Reference of Proper Names

Nunberg calls the last feature ‘inductiveness’ and claims that it is definitive of deferred reference. This means that even though the referent in the case of (1) is a plural, collective entity, the resulting proposition is still singular, i.e. it is an object-dependent proposition whose identity conditions depend on the identity of at least the speaker (the index) (1993, p. 16–17).

Additionally, while the deictic component of ‘we’ requires that the index is always the speaker, the referent might even change in the course of one sentence, as another of Nunberg’s examples indicates (1993, p. 11):

(2) We do not know much about this part of the brain, which plays such an important part in our lives, but we will see in the next chapter...

Here, it is the change in discourse topic that is the source of the salient relations that supply the three different interpretation functions from the index to the respective referents of the three tokens: “the first token of the first-person plural refers to the scientific community; the second to humanity in general; the third, according to the ‘tour guide’ convention of academic writing, to the writer and the reader.” (Nunberg 1993, p. 11)

An important group of expressions is formed by so-called non-participant terms, i.e. those whose index is neither the speaker nor the hearer. For non-participant terms, i.e. mostly demonstratives, including third-person pronouns, the index is given by demonstration and the relational component leaves the relation between index and referent unconstrained. For example, the linguistic components of ‘this’ and ‘those’ differ in both the deictic component (for ‘this’ the demonstrated object must be relatively proximal to the speaker, while for ‘those’ it must be relatively distant) as well as in the classificatory component (requiring singularity vs the plurality of the referent). The relational component of non-participant terms is empty, which means that the relation between the index and the referent is unconstrained and fully given by the extra-linguistic context. These features make non-participant terms extremely versatile tools of deferred reference (Nunberg 1993).

In the grammatical tests deployed by Nunberg in arguments for or against classifying particular uses of indexicals as deferred, an important role is played by so-called $\phi$-features, i.e. number, animacy and gender. Since, according to Nunberg, in the case of demonstratives the index is solely determined by demonstration and the relational component is empty, gender, animacy or number features of expressions, as well as their descriptive content, are part of the classificatory component alone and thus only constrain the choice of the referent but not the choice of the index. The situation is quite different for indexicals other than demonstratives. For ‘I’ and ‘we’, the index is determined by parts of the linguistic meaning of the indexicals (‘being the speaker’). However, some of the grammatical properties of expressions - animacy, for instance - constrain both the deictic and the classificatory component. Similarly, for “yesterday” both index and referent is constrained to periods of time. Gender is no part of either the deictic or classificatory component of non-demonstrative indexicals and it cannot be, as gender is no part of the linguistic meaning of those expressions. The number feature is never an explicit part of the deictic component, although it may be argued that it is implicit in requirements such as being ‘the speaker’ (for ‘I’ and ‘we’), or ‘the time of speaking’ (for ‘now’, ‘today’, ‘yesterday’ or ‘tomorrow’). In contrast, number is always a part of the classificatory component if an expression is

1 See the analysis of examples (5) and (8) by Nunberg, reported below.
marked for number. These differences between demonstratives and other indexicals in the treatment of φ-features will turn out to be important in defining the meaning components of proper names (see Section 3.1).

2.2. Two notions of deferred reference: broad and narrow

Although Nunberg usually characterizes deferred reference as a linguistic process which “exploits correspondences between individual things” and “does not create new predicates” (2004, p. 361), in (1993) he tries to deploy his distinction between index and referent to the analysis of descriptive uses of indexicals. Descriptive uses are uses in which indexical expressions contribute to the expression of general propositions, like when someone pointing to John Paul II says (Nunberg 1992, p. 290):

(3) He is usually an Italian.

Nobody would claim that the speaker thus attributed a property of being Italian to John Paul II. Rather, what the utterance expressed is the proposition that most popes are Italian. It follows that the propositional contribution of the indexical ‘he’ in this case is not a singular object but a property. Nunberg thus claims that, in general, the deferred referent could be an object or a property and that the latter is supposed to account for descriptive uses of indexicals (1993, p. 20–23). There are several problems with this account, but since our point here is merely terminological we will leave the details for another paper. For our present purposes, we might agree that there are two kinds of deferred uses of indexicals: (1) uses in which the referent is an individual object and which therefore result in singular propositions; (2) uses in which the propositional contribution is a (distributive) property and which therefore result in general propositions. Although Nunberg (1993) used the notion of deferred reference in a broad sense, one which encompasses both of the kinds of uses above, in this paper we reserve the term ‘deferred reference’ solely for the former singular case and term the latter a descriptive use. The thesis we advance, namely that there are deferred uses of proper names, should thus be taken in the strong, narrower sense, according to which there are deferred uses of proper names that result in singular propositions with respect to the contribution of the name. We think this precisification of Nunberg’s Hypothesis agrees with Nunberg’s intentions, since otherwise the thesis would be easily falsified by descriptive uses of proper names, which are quite common in natural language. In (1993, n. 34, p. 39) Nunberg explicitly admits the possibility of what we call descriptive uses of proper names and offers the following example.

Suppose I am visiting you at your home in a dangerous neighborhood. There is a knock at the door and you open it without looking first to see who is there. It turns out to be only harmless old Jones, but I want to remind you that you have been rash. So I say “Be careful; Jones over there could have been a burglar,” meaning not that Jones himself could have been a burglar, but that there could have been a burglar filling the role he corresponds to.

Suffice to say that it is possible to refer in a deferred manner to properties conceived of as abstract objects while attributing second-order properties to the former. In that case, we have deferred reference where the referent is a property, but the resulting proposition is arguably still singular. Thus, deferred reference to a property does not explain just descriptive uses of indexicals, as descriptive uses should result only in contributions to general propositions. Compare Kijania-Placek (2012) and (2020).
Hence, in uses like:

(4) Jones over there could have been a burglar.

the propositional contribution of the name ‘Jones’ is the property of being a person knocking at the door in a dangerous neighborhood.³ The claim of the paper is that there are deferred uses of proper names whose propositional contribution is singular and which pass grammatical tests that are analogous to those deployed by Nunberg in his tests for deferred uses of indexicals. If we succeed in establishing the fact that there are deferred uses of proper names in the narrower sense of deferred reference, it obviously follows that there are deferred uses of these expressions in the broader sense.

2.3. Nunberg’s tests for deferred reference

It is important to note that not all uses of indexicals in which the actual referent is intuitively an object that is different from the referent of the expression in its directly referential use and where the latter is contextually related to the former are cases of deferred reference. To clarify this point, Nunberg (1995, p. 110) uses the following example:

(5) I am parked out back.

This is said by a customer who hands his key to an attendant at a parking lot. At first glance, and this was Nunberg’s own proposal in (1979), it seems that ‘I’ as used in (5) refers to the parked car. But Nunberg argues against this interpretation in (1995) and his arguments are based on grammatical considerations such as number and gender agreement. First, contrast (5) with (6), said while holding up a set of car keys:

(6) This is parked out back.

According to Nunberg, with ‘this’ “the subject refers not to the key that the speaker is holding, but to the car that the key goes with” (1995, p. 110). This claim is backed by linguistic evidence: “the number of the demonstrative is determined by the intended referent, not the demonstratum” (1995, p. 110). The speaker could say (6) if he was handing over a set of keys to one car, but he would say (7) if he had two cars:

(7) These are parked out back,

even if he was holding one key that fits both cars. Yet he could not say:

(8) ∗We are parked out back,

in the latter situation; according to Nunberg, this shows that the referent is not the car in (5).⁴ Additionally, in (5) “the verb […] is first-person, not third-person as we would expect if the subject referred to a car” (1995, p. 128, n. 3). This is a consequence of the classificatory component of ‘I,’ which requires that the referent be animate (1995, p. 128, n. 4). In (1995) Nunberg instead offers an analysis of (5) in terms of meaning transfer.

---

³ Examples of descriptive uses of proper names are also given in Böer (1975), Bach (2002), Matushansky (2006), Fara (2015b), Jeshion (2015a,b), Napoli (2015), Sæbø (2015), King (forthcoming), and Kijania–Placek (2018).

⁴ Compare Barrios (2013) and Mount (2008) for an alternative explanation of the infelicity of (8).
Nunberg uses gender agreement to make the same point. This can be seen in languages where demonstratives and adjectives are marked for gender. The example he uses is from Italian: “the word for key is feminine, la chiave, and the word for truck is masculine, il camion. If a customer gives the attendant the key to a truck, it will be the referent, not the demonstratum, that determines the gender of the demonstrative and the adjective for ‘parked’” (Nunberg 1995, p. 110). Thus, when holding up a key (Italian: la chiave, fem., sg.) to refer to a truck (Italian: il camion, masc.), he would say:

(9) Questo è parcheggiato in dietro.

‘This is parked in back.’

We will use the number and gender agreement tests to argue for the deferred reference status of some of the uses of proper names we introduce in the next section. Since there are not many grammatical features which are morphologically marked in English, the examples we will use in the tests are mainly from Polish. Being a highly inflected language, Polish is particularly useful for grammatical tests analogous to those deployed by Nunberg. In contrast to English, where only personal pronouns are marked for gender, and even to Italian, in which adjectives are also so marked, adjectives, demonstratives and verbs are sensitive to the gender feature in Polish. Nouns (and thus proper names) in Polish decline and their declension patterns are also sensitive to the gender of the noun. Since most proper names in Polish are morphologically marked for grammatical gender, it makes this language a particularly fruitful field for the analysis of proper names. We will also mention examples involving plurality that can be tested in English and we will propose ways that go beyond Nunberg’s tests in section 5.

3. DEFERRED USES OF PROPER NAMES

The way in which Nunberg explicitly defined deferred reference in (1993) applies only to indexicals if taken literally. However, the wording of his hypothesis implies that he had a more inclusive notion in mind, one which in principle could be applied to other singular terms. The general idea is that “a speaker can get away with pointing at an object to identify when it is common knowledge that stands in a certain relation to , and when the knowledge that stands in this relation provides a useful way of distinguishing from other things that the speaker might have intended to refer to” Nunberg (1993, p. 25). Yet Nunberg proposes a definition of deferred reference in the same paper that constrains this general idea by requirements based on the linguistic features of particular indexicals. Below, we propose a generalization of Nunberg’s notion of deferred reference to proper names.

5 Nunberg additionally uses the predicate conjunction and apposition tests to argue for divergent analyses of (5) and (6). Since we agree with Barrios (2013) and Mount (2008) that those tests are not conclusive, we will not rely on them in this presentation.

6 The knowledge requirement might seem too strong, and generally in linguistic communication it is rather manifest properties and relations – based on what speakers mutually take the world to be like – that are relied upon. Therefore, this is how we will understand the requirement here. Compare also Kijania-Placek (2012) and (2020).
3.1. Deferred reference of proper names

In deferred reference, the deictic component is responsible for the identification of the index, and in the case of indexicals the index must be an object that is present in the context. But the manner of identification of the index is not uniform among indexicals and depends on the different ways referents of different indexicals are identified in their typical, deictic uses. Thus, for the so-called pure indexicals ‘I,’ ‘now,’ or ‘here,’ the index is identified by their Kaplanian character, while for demonstratives the identification proceeds by demonstration (Nunberg 1993, pp. 4, 8, 23). When generalizing deferred reference to proper names, we will therefore take into account different mechanisms in their default, i.e. directly referential, uses. In the case of direct reference of proper names, and in contrast to indexicals, it is not necessary that the object referred to is present in the context of utterance. Thus, we treat the requirement that the index is present in the context as a by-product of deictic indexical reference and not as a general characteristic of deferred reference. Our proposal is that the deictic component is responsible for the identification of the index, but the specific additional requirements are expression-type relative. Since in directly referential uses the (non-deferred) referent of a name ‘N’ is the object that bears the (type) name ‘N’ (or is taken to bear that name) and is determined by a contextually salient convention relating the particular use of a name to one of its bearers, we propose that this forms a part of the deictic component of a name. What is present in the context in the case of proper names is thus not necessarily the index itself, but the social convention that determines it uniquely, exactly as it is in the case of direct uses of proper names. The question remains as to which grammatical features of names, if any, should be additionally included in the meaning components of proper names.

As we have already mentioned in section 2.1, number is not an explicit part of the deictic component for indexicals. We see no good reason for claiming that the situation is different for proper names. Additionally, since for the languages we consider here proper names are not classified for animacy, we do not propose to include this feature in either component. But in general there are reasons of a grammatical nature for a not necessarily uniform treatment of number, gender and animacy in deferred reference. Of these three, only gender and animacy are inherently determined grammatical categories of a noun, while number is a feature of a particular form of one noun, resulting from inflection for number in a way analogous to inflection for cases. So, while ‘poet’ and ‘poetess’ differ in gender and are thus different nouns, they both have plural forms and ‘poets’ is a plural form of ‘poet’. In the same vein, ‘Alexander’ and ‘Alexandra’ are different nouns, with different

7 In this way both direct and deferred reference of proper names are dependent on “an explicit indication of a feature of the context of utterance” (Nunberg 1993, p. 34): if no convention is active in a context, a name has no referent. Reliance on a convention mentioning a name is part of the linguistic meaning of that name and is part of its deictic component. We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for making us be more explicit about this issue.

8 If some names were classified for animacy in a language, we suggest that animacy should be treated in the manner we propose for gender below, and for similar reasons. See also footnote 13 below.

9 Provided these features are assigned to a noun. In English, for example, most nouns are not classified for gender. Compare https://glossary.sil.org/term/noun

10 Their Polish counterparts — ‘Aleksander’ and ‘Aleksandra’ — inflect differently for cases: e.g. ‘Aleksandrze’ is the dative form of ‘Aleksandra’, while ‘Aleksandrowi’ is the dative form of ‘Aleksander’.
plural forms, even though they may be considered forms of the same generic name. Since proper names do not constitutively rely on demonstration for direct reference (i.e. demonstration may facilitate direct reference but is not required for it), depending instead on the presence in the context of a specific convention which connects a particular use of a name with its contextual bearer, the deference model for proper names cannot be dependent only on demonstration, but must rather be analogical to that of indexicals other than demonstratives. We thus expect the social convention to be deployed in the determination of the index, in the way ‘being a speaker’ is deployed for index determination for ‘I’. Since the convention includes mentioning a particular name type, the grammatical features of the name should play a role in the deictic component. As it is for indexicals, the classificatory component must contain gender and plurality because these features are determined by the referent (Nunberg 1993, p. 26). An additional argument for including gender in both deictic and classificatory components comes from an analogy with non-demonstrative indexicals, such as ‘I’ or ‘you’ and the treatment of animacy in their components. We cannot directly rely on the treatment of gender, because non-demonstrative indexicals are not classified for gender. But animacy is a part of both components of these expressions. Analogously, we would thus expect gender to play a role in both the deictic and classificatory components, if it were a distinguishing feature of names. But is gender a grammatical feature of proper names? In many languages it is not, and English is a clear example here. In English, the gender classification of names is an exception rather than a rule (see the example of ‘Alexandra’ mentioned above). In Polish, almost all first names are classified for gender, as are most surnames. In Czech, all surnames are morphologically classified for gender. The upshot is that gender is not a necessary feature of proper names in general, but if a name is marked for gender, this strictly limits its direct reference potential. Gender thus being a distinguishing feature of only particular names, we propose to include this feature in the deictic component for those names on the pattern of animacy being included for first-person personal pronouns in both the deictic and classificatory components.

It follows that, as is the case with indexicals, the deictic component of proper names determines the index. It is based on contextual elements, i.e. on the contextually salient social convention that connects a token of a name with a particular object, where the object serves the role of the index in deferred reference:

11 What is important from the index-referent distinction point of view is that ‘Alexandra’ and ‘Alexandras’ are respectively singular and plural forms of the same name type ‘Alexandra’ and both singular and plural tokens are arguments of a convention that relates them to the same name type – both tokens concern bearers of the same name type. See example 12 below.

12 We will leave this issue open in this paper.

13 It should be noted that most of our examples concern reference to people, hence we use here a simplified formulation of the agreement requirement which does not directly apply to non-animate referents. In general, if names in a language are marked for gender even if applied to non-animate objects, we would follow Nunberg, who claims, regarding demonstratives, that the gender in question “is determined by the grammatical gender of the name of the basic-level category to which the referent of the expression belongs, or in the case of animates, usually by the sex of the referent.” (1993, pp. 25–26). The gender constraint in the deictic component allows for a natural generalization to languages in which proper names are marked for grammatical features subject to agreement requirements other than gender.
Deferred Reference of Proper Names

Deictic component of a proper name, ‘N’: the index is the bearer of ‘N’ that is determined by a convention salient in the context relating the particular use of a name to one of its bearers. The bearer’s gender must agree with that of the name if the name is so marked.14

The classificatory component constrains the choice of the referent and is both name and language relative. In some languages, names are specified with respect to gender, while in other languages most names are gender neutral. Singular proper names are marked for number, which means that the referent must be singular; however, if they exist in a language, their plural forms can be used to refer to plural collective entities.

Classificatory component of a proper name, ‘N’: the referent must agree with the name, ‘N’, in number, animacy and gender if the name in the form used is morphologically marked for these features; this component may be empty.

In some languages, the classificatory component is more complex. For example some names may be gender neutral in the nominative case but require divergent morphological forms for different genders in other cases.15 We will return to this point in section 4.2.

We suggest that, as far as the relational component is concerned, proper names are like non-participant terms in that they have no explicit relational component, or, in other words, that their relational component is empty and does not in principle constrain the relation between index and referent.

Relational component of a proper name, ‘N’: empty, i.e. the relation between index and referent must be salient in the context but is otherwise linguistically unconstrained.

3.2. Examples of deferred uses of proper names
We will now consider a number of examples of, as we intend to argue, deferred uses of proper names.16 Even though the relational component of a proper name, ‘N’, is empty,

---

14 We recognize that our position might strike one as consistent with the view that names are indexicals. Our definition, however, is intended to be general enough so that even, e.g., a Millian should accept that proper names possess the features we delineate in the deictic component. The only difference would be that a Millian would insist that the relevant convention relates a particular use of a name simply to its bearer, instead of, as we put it, “one of its bearers”. Nothing in our argument hinges on this difference. An anonymous reviewer insisted that it should be made explicit that we propose that proper names have Kaplanian characters. This we indeed do if one means by a character a truth-conditionally irrelevant linguistic meaning, one which determines content when set in context.

15 By saying that a name is gender neutral, we do not mean throughout the paper that its grammatical gender is neuter but that it is not morphologically marked for gender, i.e. it has identical forms in all grammatical genders.

16 Examples (11), (14), (29) and (30) we propose below have already been discussed in the literature but, to our mind, not in the context of the deferred reference of proper names. All other examples concerning proper names are new. The new examples are in English, Polish and Czech. Example (10) and (12) are attested examples. They all have been confirmed by a significant number of native speakers of the respective languages, who pre-read this paper and with whom we discussed our ideas extensively. This method of checking the validity of our examples parallels to that of Nunberg (1993) and many of other papers cited in this article. We do acknowledge though that there is no empirical study available that would confirm the validity of our examples which was a worry of one of the anonymous reviewers.
there is in fact a highly available relation between referent and index, i.e. that of physical similarity. Imagine two opera lovers listening to a choir performance in which one of the artists looks very similar to the famous opera singer Anna Netrebko (something clear to both opera lovers). One of them says to the other:

(10) Netrebko sings exceptionally well.

By this utterance the speaker refers to the particular choir singer (the referent) by picking out Anna Netrebko (here, the index) to whom the choir singer corresponds via the relation of physical similarity. Such a reference is possible because, as we assumed, both opera lovers recognize this physical similarity.

A relation that is at least partly based on physical similarity is exploited in a number of examples found in Barrios (2013, p. 264). In one of them, Bill Clinton visits a celebrity wax museum with his wife, Hillary. After a quick search, Bill finally finds the figure that represents him, which is situated between the figures of Charlie Chaplin and Groucho Marx. Since Hillary hasn’t spotted it yet, to help her find his figure, Bill might say:

(11) I am next to Chaplin.

In his article, Barrios focuses on how ‘I’ is used here. One can, however, notice that by uttering the sentence in question, Bill Clinton is able to successfully refer not only to his own figure but also to the particular wax figure of Charlie Chaplin (the referent) by deploying Charlie Chaplin himself (the index), whom the wax figure represents.

Many examples of the mechanism in question can be found in a BBC music documentary which tells the story of women taking part in a competition to impersonate the famous singer Adele Laurie Blue Adkins. One of the participants, Jenny, turns out to be the actual Adele. When the secret is revealed, the anchorman announces this fact to all the other participants:

(12) Adeles, […] meet your Adele.

By this use of ‘Adeles’, the anchorman refers to all the competition participants (the plural collective referent) who impersonate Adele (the index) in this show.

But the relation between a referent and an index need not necessarily be based on physical similarity. Imagine a situation in which a group of friends meet a person in a bar

17 We are grateful to Olga Poller for providing this attested example.
18 A fitting example involving physical similarity was also proposed by Predelli when he suggested that “you and I may smoothly […] exchange information about an oddly wailing new-born by tokening “Björk”” (2017, p. 52). He did not consider deferred reference.
19 Barrios offers a descriptive analysis of these uses.
20 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHXjxWaQs9o [last accessed: 7th Jan 2020]. Thanks to Olga Poller for drawing our attention to this movie.
21 As we have indicated in section 2.1, singular and plural forms of nouns are the results of inflection for number and are thus tokens of the same basic noun. As it is for ‘I’ and ‘we’, names in plural forms share the deictic component with their singular forms and the index is in both cases determined by the name-bearing relation, which mentions the basic, or generic form of the name and not the phonological type of the token. The deictic components for both ‘Adele’ and ‘Adeles’ include the same requirement of bearing the name (type) ’Adele’. We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for asking us to clarify this point.
who boasts about working in the White House between 1993 and 2001, having an affair with Monica Lewinsky, and having a wife named ‘Hillary.’ Everyone in the group of friends is perfectly aware that the boasting person is not Bill Clinton himself (they maybe think that he only tries to make such an impression). One of them (having heard all of this) goes to the restroom. On coming back, he notices that the boasting person is gone. He may ask:

(13) Where is Bill Clinton?

By exploiting Bill Clinton himself (i.e. by using Bill Clinton as the index), the speaker successfully refers to the boasting person. This is because it is salient for all of the participants of the conversation that it is Bill Clinton whom the boasting person has attempted to impersonate (excluding, perhaps, the boasting person himself).

It is important to note that in the case of deferred uses of proper names there is no need to be in a direct perceptual relation with the deferred referent, even though the examples presented above might suggest that this is the case. Compare another example from Barrios (2013, p. 266)22 in which a visitor to a wax museum asks a clerk at the information booth about the location of the (former) US President’s wax figure, to which the clerk responds:

(14) Obama is on the second floor, near the elevator.

Here the clerk’s use of ‘Obama’ is deferred, as the clerk is familiar with the figures and has a particular one in mind (we assume there is just a single figure of a given celebrity in that museum), even though he is not in perceptual contact with the referent at the moment of answering the question.

Or imagine a music competition where one is required to play music by a composer of one’s choice (everyone chooses a different composer). A woman who decided to play Bach wins this competition; it was a close tie, but she managed to beat a man playing Debussy. This may be commented on by an audience member who is ignorant of the names of the participants:

(15) Bach rightfully won the competition.

By exploiting the relation between a composer and the person who played that composer’s music, the speaker is able to refer to the relevant competitor even a week later when discussing the case with a fellow viewer from that evening.

Before we move on to deploying Nunberg’s grammatical tests to argue for the deferred character of some of the uses of proper names, we want to stress that what we have in mind are really particular uses of proper names, since even the same sentence may be used for both descriptive and deferred use, depending on the context. Consider an example analogous to (14), in which a visitor to a gallery asks a clerk at the information booth about the location of a painting by Picasso, to which the clerk responds:

(16) Picasso is on the second floor, near the elevator.

Assuming there is just one painting by Picasso in this particular museum, the clerk is again familiar with it, has a particular painting in mind and thus can use the name of Pablo Picasso to refer in a deferred way to this particular painting. But if the question has been addressed to somebody who only knows that the museum has a painting by Picasso but does not know

22 Barrios used this example to argue for a different point.
which one and just happens to know the location from a guide book, then that person’s use of ‘Picasso’ in the same sentence would be descriptive, i.e. the propositional contribution of ‘Picasso’ would in this case be the individual property of being a painting by Picasso, whichever object it turns out to be.

3.3. Testing for the deferred character of some uses of proper names

Returning to example (12), one may note that, despite the fact that here we have a singular index (there is only one true Adele), by uttering ‘Adeles’ the anchorman refers to a group of competitors. Here, the plural form of an otherwise singular term matches the plurality of the group referent. A similar phenomenon in the case of indexicals was treated by Nunberg as an argument for the deferred character of their use (Nunberg 1995, p. 110). Yet languages differ in their grammatical complexity and the number of grammatical features for which deferred reference of proper names may be tested. Compared to English, the morphology of Polish reveals more grammatical features and is thus more suitable for deploying Nunberg’s grammatical tests to particular uses of proper names. For this reason, in what follows we will often turn to Polish for our examples.

First, consider a case in which a Rough Collie dog appears in the garden where two children are playing. It looks like their neighbor’s new dog which visits them occasionally, but they do not yet know its name. On seeing the dog, one of the children may say in Polish:

(17) Lassie znowu przyszedł.
Lassie again come.past.3sg.msc
‘Lassie has come again.’

or

(18) Lassie znowu przyszła.
Lassie again come.past.3sg.fem
‘Lassie has come again.’

Note that while both sentences (17) and (18) are identical when translated into English, they are different in Polish; this is because verbs in the past tense in Polish are morphologically marked for gender agreement with the subject. In the situation described, the children are not aware of the actual gender of the original movie character which is used here as the index, but they either assume or know that the dog which paid them a visit (the referent) is either male (17) or female (18), which is reflected in the different forms used in the respective examples.

23 We mentioned this test in section 2.3 above.

24 An anonymous reviewer suggested that ‘Lassie’ is a name that comes to mind for dogs because of the famous movie and thus examples (17) and (18) are not cases of deferred reference but of “using common names for certain animals when encountering a new animal”, such as the way ‘Spot’ works. We must acknowledge that some of our examples are culture-sensitive and they may not function in the same way when translated into other languages. E.g. in Poland ‘Lassie’ functions only as a name of a particular character from a movie and is not a common or prototypical dog name (such as ‘Burek’ or ‘Azor’). An analogous example in English might be using the name ‘Garfield’ for a particular fat, lazy orange cat we have in mind in contrast to using ‘Puss’ for any cat whose name we don’t know.
To see even more clearly that it is the referent (not the index) that conditions the grammatical features of verbs in similar examples, compare the Polish translation of (15):

\[(15') \text{Bach słusznie wygrała konkurs.}\]

Bach rightfully win.PAST.3SG.FEM competition

‘Bach rightfully won the competition.’

In Polish, verb endings agree with the genders of subjects. In (15’) ‘wygrała’ is a feminine form (whereas ‘wygral’ would be masculine); it is thus evident that the verb’s inflection is governed by the gender of the deferred referent (the winner of the competition) and not that of the index (Bach, the famous male composer). This argument closely follows Nunberg’s, in which he argues for the deferred character of the use of ‘questo’ in (9).

Here is another demonstration of the same phenomenon. A woman is sitting in a bar and sipping a mojito. She is wearing a pair of distinctive “John Lennon glasses” and is being watched by two Poles. When the woman orders a second mojito, one of the Poles makes a comment, saying:

\[(19) \text{Lennon zamówiła kolejnego drinka.}\]

Lennon order.PAST.3SG.FEM another drink

‘Lennon has ordered another drink.’

Again, whereas the verb ‘ordered’ is not inflected for gender in English, in Polish the verb form ‘zamówiła’ matches the feminine gender of the mojito sipper rather than the male gender of John Lennon.

One might object that even if all the examples presented so far pass Nunberg’s grammatical tests for deferred reference, they do not necessarily work with all proper names. In the next section we will suggest that this is exactly to be expected if we take into account the constraints analogous to those that follow from Nunberg’s mechanism of deferred reference as defined by him for indexicals.

### 4. LESSONS FROM DEFERRED INDEXICALS

As we have already stated in section 2, some indexicals are more constrained than others as far as potential deferred interpretations are concerned. For example, when discussing the professions of a child’s parents, we could refer to the child’s father by pointing at the child and saying,

\[(20) \text{He is in real estate.}\]

But, according to Nunberg, the child cannot refer to her parents by using ‘we,’ as in,

\[(21) \text{∗We are in real estate.}\]

Although the choice of an index for most demonstratives is less constrained than that of ‘we,’ the gender and number of the referent for personal pronouns is specified by their classificatory component. As a result, while we can refer to the girl’s father but not to

---

25 This is because the index of ‘we’ must be the speaker who is part of the interpretation of the deferred pronoun; compare Nunberg (1993, p. 9 and 26).
her mother or her parents as ‘he,’ the classificatory component of ‘they’ would allow for reference to parents in the same context:

(22) They are in real estate.

These observations suggest a reverse dependence between the richness of linguistic meaning of an expression and its versatility as a tool in deferred reference:

**Constraint 1:** the richer the linguistic meaning of an expression, the more limited its possible uses in deferred reference

Examples (20)–(22) show that even though we could not have deployed one pronoun in all cases, we eventually managed to find a different pronoun that allowed for the intended deferred reference. Both cases can rely on the same index because the index is determined by a demonstration and is thus independent of the changing grammatical features of the pronoun. Other personal pronouns, even if they are gender neutral and agree with their referent in terms of other grammatical features, may not be available for deferred reference from the same index (in the same context) because their deictic components do not allow the girl to be the index. This, for example, is the case with ‘you,’ which requires the index to be the addressee, and the girl is not the addressee in that particular context. This limitation will have important counterparts in deferred uses of proper names.

**Constraint 2:** an expression whose deictic feature is not satisfied (nor considered to be satisfied) by an index is not available for a deferred reference which deploys that index.

Additionally, there are indexicals that simply lack some grammatical forms, such as plurals. For instance, while ‘we’ may to some extent be considered a plural of ‘I,’ and ‘they’ a plural of ‘he,’ there is no plural of ‘here.’ These linguistic facts constrain the process of deferred reference in an obvious way.

**Constraint 3:** if there is no plural form of an expression in a language, this expression cannot be used in deferred reference to plural entities

The moral is that when considering deferred reference of proper names, we should expect it to be similarly constrained by the grammatical features of those expressions.

### 4.1. Predictions for proper names

While the components of linguistic meaning for indexicals are relatively stable cross-linguistically – ‘she’ is singular, feminine, animate in English, and so is ‘sie’ in German – the situation is quite different with proper names. In Polish, almost all first names are marked for gender (at least if considered as names of people), but in Russian some first names are gender neutral (e.g. ‘Sasha’). It is (almost) the opposite for surnames: many surnames in Polish are gender neutral while most surnames in Czech, for example, are marked for gender. In languages with rich nominal inflection it may also happen that a name has the same masculine and feminine form in the nominative case, but not in some other case. This is indeed so in Polish for names such as ‘Bach’ and ‘Nowak.’ Another important aspect that makes names’ grammatical features more language relative than that of indexicals is pluralization. An indexical expression either has a plural counterpart or does not, with little cross-linguistic variation, but whether a name has a plural form typically differs from language to language and even from name to name in the same language. While proper
names in English undergo regular pluralization (compare Sloat 1969, Matushansky 2008), in Polish some women’s surnames simply do not have distinct plural forms. We expect that these features will influence the process of deferred reference in the same way they did for indexicals. We can formulate the general thesis as follows: the meaning components of a proper name, ‘N,’ provides a grammatical constraint on the availability of this name for direct as well as for deferred uses. The particular formulations of the predictions are dependent of the respective components:

**Prediction 1:** If a proper name, due to its classificatory component, cannot in principle be used in a particular form to directly refer to a given object, it will not be available in that form for deferred reference to that object.

From this general thesis, we can make more specific predictions:

**Prediction 1.1:** If a proper name is marked for gender in a case, it will not be available for deferred reference to an object of a different gender in that particular case.

**Prediction 1.2:** If a proper name does not have a plural form in a language, it will not be available for deferred reference to groups of entities in that language.

Predictions concerning the choice of an index are analogous to those limiting its choice for indexicals but exhibit dependence on gender, if gender is a part of the deictic component of a name:

**Prediction 2:** if a proper name is marked for gender in a case, in that particular case it can only be deployed in deferred reference with an index of that gender.

The rich cross-linguistic variation in grammatical features of proper names additionally prompts certain meta-linguistic expectations concerning the translatability of examples:

**Prediction 3:** Many particular examples of deferred uses of proper names may not be felicitous in different languages if the name used has relevantly different grammatical features in those languages.

Here, ‘relevantly different’ are those features exploited in the particular case of deferred reference under consideration. In the following subsection we will show that these predictions are indeed fulfilled in Polish and, for Prediction 3, in Czech.

### 4.2. Testing the predictions in Polish and Czech

Consider a situation, quite similar to that described in (15), in which a woman took part in a competition about Polish philosophy in which everybody was required to present a Polish philosopher of their choice (everyone chose a different philosopher). The woman presented Tadeusz Kotarbiński and won the competition. Even though the relation between a philosopher and the person who presents him or her is (very) salient, an audience member cannot exploit Kotarbiński to refer to the winner by:

(23) *Kotarbiński słusznie wygrała konkurs.

Kotarbiński. sg.msc rightfully win.past.3sg.fem competition

‘Kotarbiński has rightfully won the competition.’

---

26 I.e. some feminine forms of surnames in Polish are indeclinable and in plural must be used with declinable gender-identifying words, such as “siostry” (sisters) or “panie” (misses), or with declinable first names.
This is explained by Prediction 1.1 because ‘Kotarbiński’ is marked as masculine and thus cannot refer to a woman.\footnote{27\textsuperscript{28}} However, a feminine counterpart of the surname exists in Polish. As it happens, Janina Kotarbińska, the wife of Tadeusz Kotarbiński, was also a philosopher and could have been chosen by a competitor. Yet, even if she had been chosen, the relation between philosophers and competitors would not have selected the winner (who chose Tadeusz Kotarbiński for the presentation) but a different person and thus could not be exploited for deferred reference to the winner. If, on the other hand, Janina Kotarbińska had not been chosen by any of the competitors, the feminine counterpart of the name ‘Kotarbiński’, i.e. ‘Kotarbińska,’ would still not have been available as a tool of deferred reference to the winner with Tadeusz Kotarbiński as an index, because the form ‘Kotarbińska’ is marked for the feminine gender and thus cannot be used with a male index (Prediction 2). The situation is different with examples (15’) and (19) because the names ‘Bach’ and ‘Lennon’ in Polish are gender neutral in the nominative case and thus allow for reference to both males and females.

But Polish is an example of a language with rich nominal inflection, and although ‘Lennon’ is gender-neutral in the nominative, it is marked for gender in the dative. As a result, if one of the Poles in the bar from example (19) decided to buy the woman wearing Lennon glasses a drink, he could not tell his friend about it by saying,

\begin{verbatim}
(24) *Postawię Lennonowi drinka.
     Buy.1SG.FUT Lennon.dat.sg.msc drink
     ‘I will buy Lennon a drink.’
\end{verbatim}

or

\begin{verbatim}
(25) *Postawię Lennon drinka.
     Buy.1SG.FUT Lennon.dat.sg.fem drink
     ‘I will buy Lennon a drink.’
\end{verbatim}

\footnote{27 We are considering here Polish surnames as used in Polish. Surnames of Polish origin are also used in other languages and there they follow those languages’ grammatical requirements. Thus, the surname of a female living in the US whose name is of Polish origin may not differ in English from the name of her husband; both could be named ‘Kotarbiński.’ Yet, if Janina Kotarbińska visited the US with her husband, her Polish name would remain ‘Kotarbińska.’ What this means is only that, on the one hand, proper names in English, being gender neutral, are more susceptible to the mechanism of deferred reference, but on the other hand are not suitable for testing if a particular use is a case of deferred reference, i.e. if they are sensitive to the linguistic features in a way characteristic of deferred reference.}

\footnote{28 In this case the sentence is ungrammatical - the subject and verb have mismatching morphological features - and the infelicity seems to be independent of issues about deferred reference. But the situation would be the same if we considered other positions of the name which are not governed by gender agreement requirements. (23a) *Nagroda należy się Kotarbińskiemu. [The prize should go to Kotarbiński.MSC] considered as deferred reference to a woman (in the same context as that of (23)) is infelicitous even though grammatical, because a name in the masculine form cannot be used with reference to a woman, while (23b) Nagroda należy się Kotarbińskiej. [The prize should go to Kotarbiński.FEM] – still grammatical – is infelicitous as long as Tadeusz Kotarbiński is the intended index (for reasons explained below with reference to (23)). We would like to thank the proofreader of this Journal for making us clarify this point.}
Both are incorrect for different reasons. In the first case, it is because ‘Lennonowi’ is a dative case of a masculine form of the name ‘Lennon’ – a feature that is morphologically marked in this case. As such, it cannot refer in the dative to a woman (Prediction 1.1). In the case of (25), even though ‘Lennon’ is a dative feminine form and thus in principle can be used with women, it cannot be used with John Lennon as an index in this case because this is not an appropriate form of his name (in masculine in the dative) (Prediction 2). It is important to note that (25) – the sentence type – could in principle be used with reference to a woman if we based the interpretive process on a different index: a woman named ‘Lennon’ who is a mutual friend of the speaker and the audience. This is in accordance with the fact that (25) (the sentence type) could in principle be used with direct reference to a woman if she was named ‘Lennon’. Thus, (25) is especially instructive in exemplifying the explanatory power of the postulated deferred reference interpretation, i.e. the interpretation based on the index-referent distinction.

None of these restrictions apply to the above examples in English, in which surnames are not marked for gender and both (24) and (25) translate to (26):

(26) I will buy Lennon a drink.

which is felicitous in English. The situation is also different in Czech, where ‘Lennon’ is marked for gender in all cases. As a result, and in agreement with Predictions 1.1, neither the analogs of (24) and (25) (considered in the same contexts),

(24’) *Koupím Lennonovi drink.
Buy.1SG.FUT Lennon. DAT.SG.MSC drink
‘I will buy Lennon a drink.’

nor

(25’) *Koupím Lennonové drink.
Buy.1SG.FUT Lennon. DAT.SG.FEM drink
‘I will buy Lennon a drink.’

nor the following version of (19) (in Czech) will work:

(19’) *Lennonová si objednala další drink.
Lennon. NOM.SG.FEM self. DAT order. PAST.3SG.FEM another drink
‘Lennon has ordered another drink.’

These differences between languages are in agreement with Prediction 3.

4.3. The influence of extra-linguistic facts on deferred reference with proper names

In some cases, even if a name is not grammatically marked for gender, the fact that the only prominent bearer of that name is male or female may influence the felicity of the deferred reference. This is arguably the case in example (15’):

(15’) Bach słusznie wygrała konkurs.

We would like to thank Marie Duží and Ondřej Majer for their help with the Czech examples. It is important to note that (24’) would be felicitous in reference to a man wearing round glasses.
Interestingly, even though the name ‘Bach’ is gender neutral in the nominative in Polish, this utterance may seem awkward for some Polish native speakers, for whom ‘Bach’ is not a typical surname and who are thus only used to hearing ‘Bach’ as a name of the famous male composer and expect it to be followed by a masculine (‘wygrał’) rather than feminine (‘wygrała’) verb form. However, that this kind of case differs from those discussed above, where gender is a lexicalized feature of the names, can be shown by considering a longer sentence:

(15") Debussy świetnie zagrał, ale Bach słusznie wygrała

‘Debussy played well but Bach has rightfully won the competition.’

The increased felicity of (15") is arguably due to the priming effect of the first part of the sentence, in which the relation between composers and performers is made more salient and ready to be exploited in the remaining part of the sentence; the increased salience overcomes the pragmatic association of ‘Bach’ with maleness.

5. GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF ENGLISH THAT TESTIFY TO DEFERRED REFERENCE OF PROPER NAMES

5.1. Nunberg’s tests applied to examples in English

In contrast to indexicals, proper names in English do not exhibit many grammatical features susceptible to the tests applied by Nunberg to the former. Even though most proper names in English are gender specific, they are rarely morphologically marked for gender and, what is more important, they all combine with third-person verb forms which are insensitive to this difference. This is why we turned to Polish in section 4 when testing for the gender of names. Out of those considered by Nunberg, the only grammatical feature of names that is morphologically marked in English is plurality (compare example (12)).

As we have already mentioned, Nunberg used example (7) to argue for the deferred character of this use of the demonstrative:

(7) These are parked out back.

Subject-verb agreement dictates that the verb must be plural if the subject refers to more than one entity. Since the speaker is holding one key in this example, the subject must have referred to the two cars which the key fits and not to the key itself. We analyzed example (12) in an analogous way in section 3.3. Another grammatical feature used by Nunberg (1995, p. 128) in testing indexicals for deferred uses is animacy, but since proper names are not marked for animacy in English (or Polish), we did not employ this feature in our examples. Below, however, we suggest that both anaphora and the choice of preposition used with verbs may testify to deferred uses of proper names in a way analogous to the tests deployed by Nunberg.

30 Priming will not ameliorate examples like (25), where the masculine and feminine forms of “Lennon” in the dative case do not match. In contrast, the masculine and feminine forms of “Bach” in the nominative case, as used in (15’) and (15”), are identical.
5.2. Beyond Nunberg’s tests

5.2.1. Anaphora Since gender agreement governs the choice of an anaphoric pronoun – the gender of the pronoun must agree with the gender of the person referred to by the anaphoric antecedent\(^{31}\) – there is a possibility to test for deferred reference in cases in which there is a discrepancy between the gender of the index and the gender of the referent. This is the case in an example analogous to (19). In a sequel to the story about two friends watching the woman wearing a pair of “John Lennon glasses” a following conversation takes place:

(27) A: Lennon has left.
    B: I believe she must have had one too many.

The anaphoric antecedent of ‘she’, as used in (27), is ‘Lennon’, and the pronoun must agree with the gender of its referent. Since, according to the mutual knowledge of both speakers, John Lennon is male, he cannot be the referent of this use of ‘Lennon.’ Additionally, if the person commented upon was a man wearing the characteristic glasses, B would have used a male pronoun, as in (28):

(28) A: Lennon has left.
    B: I believe he must have had one too many.

The gender of the pronoun changes with the gender of the person commented upon, while the gender of the index (John Lennon in both cases) remains the same, which shows that ‘Lennon,’ as used both in (27) and (28), refers to the relevant persons at the bar, and that they are the deferred referents determined by their respective salient relations to John Lennon.

5.2.2. Eventive verbs and prepositions Another test that can be used for deferred reference of proper names concerns the use of eventive verbs with these expressions. Eventive verbs, when combined with a preposition like ‘during’, require eventive complements. The use of such phrases with proper names as complements should thus be infelicitous because proper names in their directly referential uses refer to objects rather than events. However, consider the following example, based on Frisson and Pickering (1999):

(29) My parents protested during Vietnam.

Here the use of ‘Vietnam’ is felicitous, which indicates that the name does not refer to the country. In this case, the country constitutes not the referent but the index, and the deferred referent is the Vietnam War (an event), i.e. the war which is in salient correspondence with the country. We thus conclude that (29) forms another example of a deferred use of a proper name.\(^{32}\) In contrast to most of the examples presented in previous sections, the proper name

\(^{31}\) See footnote 13 for the application of this requirement to non-animate referents.

\(^{32}\) An anonymous reviewer objected that if our analysis was correct, it should work for “My parents protested during Iraq”, which seems, however, to be infelicitous. We agree with this judgement and propose the following tentative explanation: for deferred reference of any kind we need a functional, one-one correspondence, in this case a correspondence between a place and one event. This requirement is clearly satisfied for ‘Vietnam’ or ‘Maidan’ (“My friends protested during Maidan”), but is not for Iraq - if the utterance is taken out of context - perhaps because there has been more than one war in Iraq in recent times. We expect, however, that in a context in which a particular war
in (29) is not in the subject position, which shows that the phenomenon is not restricted to that syntactic position for a name. \(^{33}\)

6. POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS

6.1. The objection from \(\varphi\)-features\(^{34}\)

It could be objected that the present proposal delegates the name-bearing property to the deictic component, while it may be argued that the property is part of the linguistic meaning of the name and thus belongs with other \(\varphi\)-features, such as number, gender, or animacy. \(^{35}\)

If so, it seems to follow that the name-bearing property should characterize the deferred referent. This is obviously not the case in the examples proposed in section 3.2.

Replying to this objection, we turn to Nunberg’s original formulation of deferred reference, in which the properties that form the linguistic meaning of an indexical are already divided between deictic and classificatory components. Nunberg explicitly allows for this division of labor – and especially that features which are part of the linguistic meaning of an expression determine the index – by characterizing deferred reference as “a process that allows a demonstrative or indexical to refer to an object that corresponds in a certain way to the contextual element picked out by a demonstration or by the semantic character of the expression.” (1995, p. 111; emphasis added) This division can be seen in comparing the linguistic components of ‘these’ and ‘those,’ which differ solely in the relative proximity vs. remoteness of the index from the speaker. Those properties are thus parts of the respective deictic components. The example Nunberg uses to clarify this point is the following:

(43) These are over at the warehouse, but those I have in stock here.

in Iraq is salient, the deferred reference to the war may be felicitous. This works both ways – (29) would probably not be felicitous for Vietnamese. We agree with the reviewer that in general more should be said about the required correspondence between a place and an event. This aspect of the proposal requires further research. An attested example of a deferred use of a name triggered by ‘during’, in which the connection between a place and an event is particularly salient is a comment concerning a director of the movie “Pearl Harbor”: “Well he was quoted as saying that this movie is not a history lesson. So why set it during Pearl Harbor? I don’t get that.” [http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0105/25/tl.00.html accessed on June 27, 2020].

33 In (forthcoming, n. 20 p. 14) King seems to suggest that descriptive – in the sense defined in section 2.2 above - uses of both indexicals and proper names are only possible on subject position or at least that uses in non-subject positions cannot be embedded under ‘could’. An example analogous to (29) can be argued to disprove King’s hypothesis: (“) My parents protested during Maidan and could protest during another Vietnam as well. Here ‘Maidan’ has a deferred use, while ‘Vietnam’ - a descriptive one and the latter is embedded under ‘could’.

34 This objection was raised by Manuel Garcia-Carpintero during a presentation of this proposal at Institut Jean Nicod in Paris on April 28th, 2017 (Jean Nicod Colloquium).

35 By “linguistic meaning” we mean here - and we believe that this was the intention of the person who objected - what Nunberg or Kaplan mean by “character”, i.e. “the common meaning which each language user can deploy” Kaplan (1989, p. 568) or “what is set by linguistic convention and known by competent users of the language” Ackerman (1989, p. 18).
If I had “really” been pointing at the referents of the terms, it would have made more sense to have reversed *these* and *those*. (1993, p. 24)

Arguably, distance properties are part of the expressions’ linguistic meaning. Another example are the properties of being the speaker and the addressee, respectively for ‘I’ and ‘you’, which form the dominant part of the linguistic meaning of these expressions but form rather the deictic instead of the classificatory components. It follows that being part of the linguistic meaning does not exclude the name-bearing property from belonging to the deictic component.

6.2. *Is the notion too broad?*

Another objection that perhaps should be considered is that the proposed notion of deferred reference as applied to proper names is too broad to be of theoretical interest. There seem to be many different kinds of uses of proper names that in some pre-theoretical sense involve using an identification of *a* to make reference to *b*. We can use the name ‘Washington’ to refer to the city, its citizens, or to the American government, like in the example cited in Barrios (2013):36

(30) Washington fears that the enrichment activities, some of them initially conducted in secret, could service a clandestine bomb program.

Is this a case of deferred reference? As we have indicated in section 2.3 in connection with indexicals, not all uses of singular expressions in which the actual referent is an object different from the referent of the expression in its directly referential use are cases of deferred reference but only those uses which are in accordance with the linguistic constraints imposed by the respective expressions and dictated by their meaning components.

In English, the names of cities and countries, even if semantically plural, are grammatically singular and not marked for gender. To check if an interpretive process is sensitive to grammatical features of a name that are characteristic of deferred reference, we again need to turn to more inflected languages such as Polish. Examples analogous to (30) that deploy reference not to the city itself but to its citizens and involve names of cities with divergent gender and plurality requirements are the following:

(31) Utrecht zagłosował przeciwko organizacji olimpiady.

‘Utrecht voted against hosting the Olympics.’

If (31) were a case of deferred reference, we would expect (32) to be infelicitous.

(32) Kopenhaga zagłosowała przeciwko organizacji olimpiady.

‘Copenhagen voted against hosting the Olympics.’

That is because, whatever one assumes about the ontology of the collective objects (i.e. respective citizens) that are described or referred to in (31) and (32), the grammatical features imposed by them37 are clearly the same. Hence, one should expect identical forms of the verbs in (31) and (32), on the assumption that in deferred reference the gender and

---

36 Time, 8/21/ 2010. Cited after Barrios (2013, p. 267).
37 Imposed by them in the sense of footnote 13.
the plurality of the verb is governed by the actual referent (see the classificatory component of a name in section 3.1). Yet, (32) is felicitous, which falsifies the hypothesis that (31) is a case of deferred reference.

A similar mechanism applies to Polish names that are pluralia tantum, such as (33):

(33) Katowice zagłosowały przeciwko organizacji

Katowice.nom.pl.nmscpers vote.past.3pl.nmscpers\(^{38}\) against hosting

Olimpiady.

38 In Polish, masculine personal (MSCPERS) is a gender of nouns which in plural are used to refer to groups of entities containing at least one male person, whereas nouns of non-masculine personal (nMSCPERS) gender are used for all other groups.

‘Katowice voted against hosting the Olympics.’

In (32) and (33) it is clear that the grammatical forms of the verb change as they are governed by the grammatical features of the respective names – not by the features of the intended referents. These grammatical patterns testify against treating (31)–(33) as cases of deferred reference.\(^{39}\)

None of these grammatical features, however, can be tested in English, because all three examples translate to the same grammatical form of the verb:

(34a) Utrecht voted against hosting the Olympics.
(34b) Copenhagen voted against hosting the Olympics.
(34c) Katowice voted against hosting the Olympics.

Unless we want to conclude that the interpretive process changes from deferred reference to some other process when we translate an example to a different language, we must conclude that neither (31)–(33) nor (34a)–(34c) are cases of deferred reference of proper names.\(^{40}\)

Thus, the examples presented in this section show that deferred reference as defined in the present proposal is a discriminating notion and thus, we hope, might be of theoretical importance.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have argued, pace Nunberg, that there are good reasons to think that certain uses of proper names should be considered deferred reference. In our argument, we paralleled the way Nunberg defended deferred reference for indexicals: we deployed a number of grammatical tests that allowed for a clear differentiation between referents and indices for our examples of uses of proper names. Based on the analysis of Nunberg’s notion of deferred reference as applied by him to indexicals, we formulated predictions concerning the availability of deferred uses of proper names. The most important prediction is that an expression cannot be deployed in deferred reference to a particular object if (due to its linguistic meaning) it is in principle grammatically ill-suited for direct reference to that object. We have shown this and some more detailed predictions have been fulfilled.

38 In Polish, masculine personal (MSCPERS) is a gender of nouns which in plural are used to refer to groups of entities containing at least one male person, whereas nouns of non-masculine personal (nMSCPERS) gender are used for all other groups.

39 For a positive suggestion of how to interpret examples such as (31)-(34a,b,c) in the framework of dot-type semantics see Kijania-Placek (forthcoming).

40 Nunberg used analogous arguments based on examples from Italian to argue against deferred reference interpretation of (5); see section 2.3 above.
This prediction is easier to test in languages with rich, morphologically marked nominal inflection, such as Polish.

One important difference between deferred uses of indexicals and proper names is that the former are more ubiquitous. This should not be surprising, however, if we take into account, first, the very high accessibility of indexicals; they are in the repertoire of all competent language users and are constantly available. The same concerns the indices, which for indexicals need to be present in the immediate context of utterance and are thus easy to be made mutually salient to both speakers and hearers, together with at least some of their properties. The situation is very different with proper names, which are typically not shared by all language users and even if they are shared in a particular context, i.e. if both the speaker and the hearer use the same name to refer directly to the same object, it can easily happen that no relevant properties of those objects are mutually salient for them. And they are those mutually salient properties, not the indices per se, that form the basis for the functional relation between the index and the deferred referent in a particular context. It follows that, once again, divergent requirements for direct reference of indexicals and proper names respectively influence the availability of the deferred uses of those expressions.

In general, deferred uses of either indexicals or proper names are not typical uses. Prima facie, both direct reference and reference via description are expected to satisfy the least effort principle and, as such, constitute the default mechanisms of reference. There are, however, situations in which these referring mechanisms are either not available to language users or fail to satisfy the principle in question. The idea is that speakers may deploy either indexicals or proper names in a deferred way when they do not know the names of the objects they want to refer to, or they cannot point at those objects (e.g. the objects are not present or it is not polite to point to them), and, importantly, the available definite descriptions are not a very efficient way to refer (e.g. they are too long). For indexicals, the prediction would thus be that complex demonstratives with very long descriptors would rarely be used for deferred reference. In the case of proper names, the relation deployed in deferred reference may be so salient that employing a definite description would take more time and thus be less efficient. Consider our example (13): the speaker could also refer to the person in question by saying “the person who impersonated Bill Clinton”, but if the same result could be obtained by simply saying “Bill Clinton,” it is the deferred reference mechanism that would rather be deployed.

The aim of the present paper has been to establish that there are systematic uses of proper names in natural language which are deferred in the narrow sense, i.e. whose propositional contribution is an object different from its default, direct referent and which in typical cases is not called by that name. There are other systematic uses of proper names which are not directly referential. Predicativists point to plural or quantificational predicative uses of names (“There were three Annas in my class in high school”; see e.g. Burge 1973, Fara 2015a, b, Matushansky 2006, 2008), while others mention anaphoric uses (“If John insists on calling his next son Gerontius, then his wife will be annoyed and Gerontius will get made fun of because of his name”; e.g. Elbourne 2005, Geurts 1997, Rami 2014), bound uses (“Every woman who has a husband called John and a lover called Gerontius takes

---

41 Compare Mount (2008), who treats deferred reference of demonstratives as a “fallback strategy” (p. 162).
only Gerontius to the Rare Names Convention”; e.g. Elbourne 2005, Geurts 1997, Gray 2018) and descriptive uses (“Many felt that Bergoglio should have been from Africa”; e.g. Saibo 2015, Böer 1975, Jeshion 2015a,b). Even if one does not agree with the unificationist thesis of the predicativists, and argues for the primacy of the directly referential uses of proper names, the existence of non-referential uses of names is hardly deniable. We share an inclusive approach to semantics that aims to incorporate all systematic uses of expressions of a type in the analysis of its meaning (compare Levinson 2000). The contribution of the present paper is just an addition to the repertoire of systematic types of uses of proper names that should be taken into account in proposing a theory of the semantics of these expressions. Such an approach might require a slight revision of the tasks of semantic theories in general. In contrast to the search for a uniform semantic mechanism for a given type of expression, we would instead aim to delineate a list of semantic mechanisms available for expressions of that type. According to such a conception, a semantic theory would provide concrete predictions of interpretive possibilities but would not give concrete interpretations without the contribution of the pragmatic mechanisms at play in the context of a particular utterance. In the case of proper names, such an approach naturally leads to proposing a polysemous account of proper names.42 This, however, exceeds the aims of the present paper and requires further research.

Acknowledgements
We are very grateful to Olga Poller for comprehensive discussions of all our theses and examples. Katarzyna Kijania-Placek would also like to thank the audience at the Institut Jean Nicod Colloquium on April 28th, 2017, especially François Recanati, Manuel Garcia-Carpintero and Michael Murez. This work was supported by the (Polish) National Agency for Academic Exchange (grant no. PPI/APM/2018/1/00022).

Funding
This study was funded by Polish National Science Center (grant number 2015/19/B/HS1/01068). This article is made open access with funding support from the Jagiellonian University under the Excellence Initiative – Research University programme (the Priority Research Area Heritage).

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

References
Ackerman, Felicia (1989), ‘Content, character, and nondescriptive meaning’. In Joseph Almong, John Perry and Howard Wettstein (eds.), Themes from Kaplan. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 5–21.
Bach, Kent (2002), ‘Giorgione was so-called because of his name’. Philosophical Perspectives 16: 73–103.
Barrios, Edison (2013), ‘Meaning shift and the purity of “I”’. Philosophical Studies 164: 263–88.
Böer, Stephen E. (1975), ‘Proper names as predicates’. Philosophical Studies 27: 389–400.
Burge, Tyler (1973), ‘Reference and proper names’. Journal of Philosophy 70: 425–39.
Elbourne, Paul (2005), Situations and Individuals. MIT Press. Boston.

42 See Leckie (2013) for a proposal which concerns only directly referential and predicative uses of proper names and Kijania-Placek (2018) for a preliminary proposal encompassing all of the above mentioned types of uses.
Fara, Delia (2015a), ‘Names are predicates’. *Philosophical Review* 124: 59–117.
Fara, Delia (2015b), “Literal” uses of proper names. In Andrea Bianchi (ed.), *On Reference*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 251–77.
Frisson, Steven & Martin J. Pickering (1999), ‘The processing of metonymy: Evidence from eye movements’. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 25: 1366–83.
Geurts, Bart (1997), ‘Good news about the description theory of names’. *Journal of Semantics* 14: 319–48.
Gray, Aidan (2018), ‘Lexical-rule predicativism about names’. *Synthese* 195: 1–21.
Jeshion, Robin (2015a), ‘Referentialism and predicativism about proper names’. *Erkenntnis* 80: 363–404.
Jeshion, Robin (2015b), ‘Names not predicates’. In Andrea Bianchi (ed.), *On Reference*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 225–50.
Kaplan, David (1989), ‘Demonstratives’. In Joseph Almong, John Perry and Howard Wettstein (eds.), *Themes from Kaplan*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 481–563.
Kijania-Placek, Katarzyna (2012), *Pochwała okazjonalności. Analiza deskryptywnych użyć wyrażeń okazjonalnych* [Praise of Indexicality: An Analysis of Descriptive Uses of Indexicals, in Polish]. Semper. Warsaw.
Kijania-Placek, Katarzyna (2018), ‘Can minimalism about truth embrace polysemy?’ *Synthese* 195: 955–85.
Kijania-Placek, Katarzyna (2020), ‘Descriptive indexicals, deferred reference, and anaphora’. *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric* 62: 25–52.
Kijania-Placek, Katarzyna (forthcoming), ‘Names of places’. Forthcoming in *Semiotics*.
King, Jeffrey C. (forthcoming), ‘Descriptive readings’ of noun phrases. In Ernest Lepore (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Language*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.
Leckie, Gail (2013), ‘The double life of names’. *Philosophical Studies* 165: 1139–60.
Levinson, Stephen C. (2000), *Presumptive Meanings: The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature*. MIT Press. Cambridge, MA.
Matushansky, Ora (2006), ‘Why Rose is the Rose: On the use of definite articles in proper names’. *Empirical Issues in Formal Syntax and Semantics* 6: 285–307.
Matushansky, Ora (2008), ‘On the linguistic complexity of proper names’. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 21: 573–627.
Mount, Allyson (2008), ‘Intentions, gestures, and salience in ordinary and deferred demonstrative reference’. *Mind & Language* 23: 145–64.
Napoli, Ernesto (2015), ‘Names as predicates?’ In Andrea Bianchi (ed.), *On Reference*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 211–24.
Nunberg, Geoffrey (1979), ‘The non-uniqueness of semantic solutions: Polysemy’. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 3: 143–84.
Nunberg, Geoffrey (1992), ‘Two kinds of Indexicality’. *Semantics and Linguistic Theory* 2: 283–302.
Nunberg, Geoffrey (1993), ‘Indexicality and deixis’. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 16: 1–43.
Nunberg, Geoffrey (1995), ‘Transfers of meaning’. *Journal of Semantics* 12: 109–32.
Nunberg, Geoffrey (2004), ‘The pragmatics of deferred interpretation’. In Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward (eds.), *The Handbook of Pragmatics*. Blackwell. Oxford. 344–64.
Predelli, Stefano (2017), *Proper Names: A Millian Account*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.
Quine, Willard Van Orman (1968), ‘Ontological relativity’. *Journal of Philosophy* 65: 185–212.
Rami, Dolf (2014), ‘The use-conditional indexical conception of proper names’. *Philosophical Studies* 168: 119–50.
Sæbø, Kjell J. (2015), ‘Lessons from descriptive indexicals’. *Mind* 124: 1111–61.
Sloat, Clarence (1969), ‘Proper nouns in English’. *Language* 45: 26–30.