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DEFERENCE AND STEREOTYPES*

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I discuss Hilary Putnam's view of the conditions that need to be fulfilled for a speaker to successfully defer to a linguistic community for the meaning of a word she uses. In the first part of the paper I defend Putnam's claim that knowledge of what he calls "stereotypes" is a requirement on linguistic competence. In the second part of the paper I look at two consequences that this thesis has. One of them concerns the choice between two competing formulations of consumerist semantics. The other concerns the notion of deference, and in particular the question whether deference can be non-intentional. Although the standard view is that deference is intentional, it has also been argued (Stojanovic et al. 2005) that most common forms of deference are not. I argue that deference is best understood as intentional, given the possibility of failures of deference. Cases in which the requirement that the speaker know the stereotypes associated with a particular word is not fulfilled are examples of unsuccessful attempts to defer.

Keywords: *deference, Putnam, stereotypes, intention, default deference*

1. Introduction

Semantic externalism, broadly conceived, is usually understood as a meta-semantic, or presemantic (Almog 1984, 482), account of natural language. In Robert Stalnaker's (1997, 535) words, semantic externalism is a *foundational*, as opposed to a *descriptive*, theory of meaning. The aim of a descriptive semantic theory is to characterize the meaning of certain expressions. The aim of a foundations theory is to give an account of the facts that need to obtain in order for those expressions to have the meaning that they have. According to Stalnaker, a foundational theory

tells "what it is about the capacities, customs, practices, or mental states of a speaker or community of speakers that makes it the case that an expression has the semantic value that it has" (Stanlaker 1997, 542).

The paradigmatic externalist view concerning proper names, as formulated by Saul Kripke (1980) in his causal picture of reference, explains why proper names have the referent they have by appeal to three kinds of facts: 1) an initial baptism, in which the name is associated to the individual it is meant to name; 2) a chain of uses that preserves the reference over time; 3) and finally, certain facts about the way the speakers use the name (in particular, the intention with which they utter the word).

These meta-semantic considerations have been extended to natural kind terms such as 'water' and physical magnitude terms such as 'temperature' in Kripke (1980), Putnam (1975), Devitt (1981) and others. The idea is that the reference of these terms is fixed by mechanisms that have a social and historical dimension, in ways that are analogous in important respects with the case of proper names. Moreover, as Joseph Almog argued, the externalist considerations are even wider in scope. Externalism about proper names sets the basis for a socio-historical theory of linguistic *meaning*, and not only of reference:

> The historical chain preserves the linguistic meaning of any expression. In the case of names, all there is to this meaning is to stand for the given referent. *Ergo*, the chain preserves the fact that the name stands for that referent. (Almog 1984, 482)

If Almog is right, an externalist meta-semantic story can be told about linguistic meaning in general, both in case of typical referential expressions, as well as for other expressions.

Keith Donnellan (1993, 155) argues that in characterizing externalism it is important to distinguish two theses that are both proposed Putnam's "The Meaning of 'Meaning'" (1975). One of them might be called "physical externalism" (as in Wikforss 2008), and it concerns the semantics of natural kind terms. This is the thesis that the extension of such terms is set by the underlying nature of a set of paradigmatic instances of that natural kind. The rule for the use of the term sets the paradigmatic instances of that kind (e.g., water), and sets as extension anything that has the same internal structure as the paradigm instances, but does not identify the properties that form the underlying nature of these paradigmatic instances (e.g., having the chemical structure H_2O). The latter might be, and usually is, unknown to the speaker, and even to the whole linguistic community.

A second thesis that is to be found in Putnam (1975, 228) might be called "social externalism". Putnam formulates it as the Hypothesis of the Universal Division of Linguistic Labour:

> Every linguistic community… possesses at least some terms whose associated 'criteria' are known only to a subset of the speakers who acquire the terms and whose use by the other speakers depends upon a structured cooperation between them and the speakers in the relevant subsets. (1975, 228)

Not all members of a linguistic community possess all the criteria for the correct use of all the words. There are those members whom Putnam calls "experts" (1975, 228), who do have the capacity to discriminate instances of, say, water, from those that are not. Putnam writes: "the way of recognizing possessed by these 'expert' speakers is also, through them, possessed by the collective linguistic body, even though it is not possessed by each individual member of the body" (1975, 228). If 'arthritis' has a meaning in the linguistic community then, in accordance to Putnam's Hypothesis, some users must have good recognitional capacities of the instances of that kind that are presented to them in normal conditions. This is the case not only for natural kind terms, but also for words that refer, for instance, to artifacts, such as 'carburetor', Donnellan (1993, 162) notes. Although I might lack the capacity to discriminate carburetors from similar devices, the mechanic does possess this capacity, and, in virtue of this, the word has a meaning in the linguistic community. The individuation of meaning includes factors that are external to the speaker, and concern the existence of a linguistic practice of using that expression in the speaker's linguistic community. As Donnellan (1993, 162) explains, this idea is similar to Burge's (1979) "anti-individualism" and his claim that it is the linguistic community that provides the standard by which the speaker's *mastery* of a word is to be judged. According to Burge, the conventional linguistic meaning "may vary with the individual's environment, even as the individual's activities, individualistically and nonintentionally specified, are held constant" (Burge 1986, 273). The relevant environment includes the linguistic community to which the speaker belongs.[1]

The distinction between the physical and the social varieties of externalism has parallels in what concerns linguistic competence. Concerning the former, competence with proper names and natural kind terms does not require access to facts about the physical constitution of the individual or kind in question. The speaker needs not possess a uniquely identifying description of the essential properties of the referents. Similarly, social externalism supports the idea that an individual can achieve competence in using an expression even if she

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[1] Burge (1979, 1986) initially defends anti-individualism with respect to the content of cognitive states, and later, in Burge (1986, 1989), extends the view to semantic properties. He proposes an externalist view of the linguistic meaning of a large class of expressions applicable to empirical objects, stuffs, properties, and events. Burge (1989: 283) makes reference to expressions such as 'tiger', 'water', 'mud', 'stone', 'tree', 'bread', 'knife', 'chair', 'edge', 'shadow', 'baby', 'walk', 'fight'.

does not have access to a correct description of the relevant social facts on which the meaning of the expression depends. The speaker needs not know when or where the initial baptism took place, or how exactly the word was introduced in the language, and she needs not know much about the chain that connects her causally to that initial moment. Social externalism also entails that the competent user of an expression needs not be able to provide a uniquely identifying description of the linguistic practice, i.e., an account of the semantic rules that members of the relevant social community follow. As Burge puts it, speakers need not have the ability to offer a correct "explication" of the meaning of the words. A speaker's explication of meaning, or "what the individual would give, under some reflection, as his understanding of the word" (1989, 282), may be far from correct. Possessing the information needed for perfect mastery of the word is not required for meaningful use of a word (although a minimum of knowledge is, arguably, required, as we will see later). In other words, in order for a speaker's utterance of a word-form[2] to have the linguistic meaning that it has in the relevant linguistic community (that is, to be a *word* with that form) the speaker needs not have access to a complete characterization of the correct use of the expression.

2. The notion of deference

The thesis that semantic competence with proper names and natural kind terms does not require uniquely identifying descriptive knowledge of either the extension or the correct use does not yet tell us what competence *does* require. According to the standard externalist view, at least one condition must be fulfilled: the speaker must *defer* to the linguistic community for the meaning of the word. In relation to the notion of deference, it is important to distinguish, following Donnellan (1993, 163), *semantic* deference, which consists in relying on the linguistic community (in particular, on the "experts", in Putnam's sense of the word) for the exact meaning of a particular word from *epistemic* deference, which consists in deferring to a particular specialist, or to a community of experts (in the more usual sense of the term "expert") for the justification of a particular claim. Given that I have an incomplete mastery of the word 'arthritis', I defer semantically to the community of medical experts for the exact sense and correct use of the term. On the other hand, in uttering the sentence 'I do not have arthritis' I may defer, epistemically this time, to the physician that gave me this diagnosis, as I lack direct evidence in favour of this claim. If the physician is wrong about my condition my utterance is false, but still meaningful, in virtue of

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[2] By 'word-form' I mean a phonetic entity or mark on a paper that is a possible candidate to be an expression of a language, and which is non-syntactically and non-semantically individuated.

having semantically deferred for the meaning of the word.

In order to use the word with its customary meaning, the speaker must rely on the community of competent speakers that engage in the linguistic practice on which the meaning of the expression depends. In order to do so, he must form a particular *intention*, which Kripke characterizes as follows: "When the name is 'passed from link to link', the receiver of the name must, I think, intend when he learns it to use it with the same reference as the man from whom he heard it." (Kripke 1980, 96)[3] Given that, as Burge (1979) puts it, it is the linguistic community that possesses the standards by which the speaker's *mastery* of a word is to be judge, semantic deference also requires the *disposition* to stand corrected in face of criticism coming from those he recognizes as having a better mastery of the word.

But is it sufficient to *intend* to use the word correctly, and to have the disposition to stand corrected? Semantic deference, at least in some formulations of it, requires more than the mere intention to use the word correctly. Kripke's formulation of the condition in the passage quoted presupposes that the speaker be aware of the semantic function that the expression serves in the language, i.e. that he be able to correctly identify the expression as a proper name, or at least as a singular referential expression. Otherwise he cannot "intend when he learns it to use it *with the same reference* as the man from whom he heard it." (Kripke 1980, 96; emphasis added) Scott Soames mentions such a requirement on competence with proper names explicitly:

> In order to be a user of a name n of an object o, two things are required. (i) One must have acquired a referential intention that determines o as the referent of n. […] (ii) One must realize that to assertively utter *n is F* is to say of the referent, o, of n that it 'is F'. (2002, 65)

For linguistic competence with names one must, apart from having the right deferential intention when using n, realize that n is a singular referential expressions.[4]

According to Putnam (1975), these conditions are sufficient for competence with proper names, but not for natural kind terms. He writes:

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[3] As Kaplan (1989: 602), among others, points out, and *pace* Soames's formulation in the passage quoted below, it is not the speaker from whom one learned the word that one must defer to, but the linguistic community as a whole. That speaker from whom one learned the word may have used it in non-standard ways, or even with non-standard intentions.

[4] In a plausible interpretation of Soames' second condition, this does not require that the speaker have *the concept* of a referential expression, or that of a proper names, but rather that he must treat the expression *n* as a referential one in his linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour.

> we don't assign the standard extension to the tokens of a word W uttered by Jones no matter how Jones uses W… One can use the proper name 'Sanders' correctly without knowing anything about the referent except that he is called 'Sanders' – and even that may not be correct... But one cannot use the word tiger correctly, save per accidens, without knowing a good deal about tigers, or at least about a certain conception of tigers. (1975, 246-7)[5]

Putnam (1975) proposes that the speaker must also associate with the natural kind term a minimum set of descriptive information, which he calls "stereotypes".[6] Stereotypes, he writes, are "conventional ideas, which may be inaccurate" (1975, 249), and which have come to be associated with the kind term due to a variety of historical contingencies. These are claims commonly held to be true about the instances that belong to a specific natural kind, but which are not analytically true, and might not even be true at all. Although they include criteria for recognizing if a thing belongs to the kind, they need not include the best criteria that the community has, or the criteria that the experts use to recognize typical members of the class. In our culture, Putnam (1975, 230) writes, the stereotype for 'elm' might just be that it is a common deciduous tree, and that for 'molybdenum' might be that it is a metal.

In the above passage Putnam mentions knowledge of stereotypes as a requirement on correct use of the word. Later on he writes that this is also a requirement on *word acquisition*:

> We shall speak of someone as having acquired the word 'tiger' if he is able to use it in such a way that (1) his use passes muster (i.e. people don't say of him such things as 'he doesn't know what a tiger is', 'he doesn't know the meaning of the word "tiger"', etc.); and (2) his total way of being situated in the world and in his linguistic community is such that the socially determined extension of the word 'tiger' in his idiolect is the set of tigers. (1975, 247)

In order for one's use of 'tiger' to mean tiger, i.e. for one to acquire the word 'tiger', one must (2) rely on the linguistic community for the meaning of the word, but also (1) count as "knowing the meaning" of the word. For (1) to be fulfilled, one must conform at least minimally to the correct practice of using the word. That requires a minimal level of knowledge about how people use the word 'tiger', which, in turn, requires knowledge of the associated stereotypes. If one lacks this know-

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[5] An anonymous reviewer pointed out that it is strange that Putnam does not use single quotes when he refers to the word 'tiger', unlike in other passages in the same paper. This is also inconsistent with his use of quotes in the same passage in the case of the proper name 'Sanders'. Most probably this is a typo.

[6] Devitt (1981: 197-199) and Platts (1997: 288), among others, disagree with Putnam, as they see no reason why the conditions should be different for natural kind terms from those for proper names.

-ledge, then the intention does not guarantee success in word acquisition, that is, in using the word with the meaning it has in the community. Although Putnam does not put it in these terms, one could express this condition by saying that the *intention to defer* is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for successful deference. Only if the speaker also knows the stereotypes associated with the natural kind term she *successfully defers* to the linguistic community for the meaning of the word.[7]

According to Putnam's argument, as I understand it, knowledge of stereotypes is a requirement for minimally correct use of the word, and the latter is a requirement on word acquisition, i.e. successful deference. Let us focus on the last step of Putnam's argument. Why is correct use a requirement on successful deference? I find no answer to this question in Putnam's discussion of stereotypes, but a plausible one might be that a minimal level of mastery is itself needed for the possibility of rational interpretation of one's utterances, and the latter is required for successful attribution of meaning to the word-forms one utters. So, the justification of the condition concerning knowledge of stereotypes rests on the consideration of certain requirements on the general form of a theory of *interpretation* of linguistic behaviour. As Mark Platts (1997) writes:

> The aim of a theory of interpretation is to make sense of a person's linguistic behaviour as part of making sense of him. The constraint upon any such theory is that it makes sense to say of the person that he was then and there saying what our theory represents him as saying. (1997, 288)

Applied to semantic interpretation, this is the following principle: if we are not disposed to attribute to the speaker the speech act of having *literally said* what the word-forms literally mean within the linguistic community to which the speaker is intending to defer then deference is unsuccessful, and the word-forms fail to obtain that literal meaning. Such a case obtains when the speaker's ignorance of the correct rules of application of the terms is manifest. So, minimally correct use is a requirement on successful deference because it is a requirement on semantic interpretation, i.e. ascription of literal meaning to the speaker's utterance. If the speaker has no idea how to apply the word 'tiger' we will refrain from interpreting her as making assertions about tigers, and so as using 'tiger' with its customary meaning.

Let us consider a concrete example to illustrate this claim. Suppose J is a student of English at beginner level, and completely lacks knowledge of

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[7] Kim Sterelny (1996: 104-106) maintains a similar view about natural kind terms: apart from the deferential intention, a speaker must have a cluster of beliefs about the causal powers of the kind, and "the term will be grounded only if most of those beliefs, or perhaps certain central ones, are true". The speaker must also possess recognitional capacitates: she must be able to "discriminate, reasonably reliable, members of the kind".

the associated stereotypes for any of the expression-forms he is pronouncing and spelling. He is merely repeating words he has just heard and which he assumes to be meaningful in English when uttering 'I have seen tigers in the street today'. It would be incorrect, or at least misleading, to say that J is literally talking about tigers, even if he does have the intention to use the words with the standard meaning. As a result, semantic interpretation cannot proceed, and the sounds he made cannot be counted as meaningful tokens of the language he intends to speak. A child in the early stages of language acquisition, who imitates the sounds she hears, provides a similar example.

Another case relevant to our purposes is one that Burge (1979) discusses, involving a grossly nonstandard use of 'orangutan'.[8] He writes (1979, 191-120): "If a generally competent and reasonable speaker thinks that 'orangutan' applies to a fruit drink, we would be reluctant, and it would unquestionably be misleading, to take his words as revealing that he thinks he has been drinking orangutans for breakfast for the last few weeks." It would also be misleading to take him as having *asserted* (or said) that about orangutans. This case is different from the previous one in that now the speaker does have an identifiable communicative intention (e.g., he has orange juice in mind all the time when he uses the word-form 'orangutan'), and so we can retrieve a *speaker* meaning. We can make sense of his linguistic behaviour, and attribute to him the *intention to say* that he has been drinking orange juice for breakfast, but not the speech act of having literally said so. It was not orangutans that she was talking about. Whenever the use is systematically and grossly non-standard we count the speaker as having failed to say anything that might be judged literally true or false.[9]

Cases such as the above show that the intention to participate in a practice does not suffice; when the speaker's use of the word radically departs from standard use the intention to defer is frustrated. To use a common analogy, one can play a game even if one does not know all the rules and all the definitions of technical notions (i.e. one does not have perfect mastery of the game); but one cannot play a game if one believes the rules of the game are very different from what they actually are. And the same applies to a 'language game'. So, the speaker who systematically uses 'orangutan' in non-standard ways cannot count as playing the same language game the members of the community to which she intends to defer play. The deferential intention to play the language games of words such as 'tiger' and 'orangutan' is not sufficient.

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[8] Burge (1979) uses this example to make a different point, one concerning attribution of mental states on the basis of the literal meaning of that the words uttered, and not concerning attribution of literal meaning to the words.

[9] If his use of 'orangutan' to mean orange juice becomes standard over time, then we might say that 'orangutan' obtains a new meaning within that new linguistic community, in the same way in which 'Madagascar' does, in Evans' famous example.

The language game analogy suggests that in order to use a word with its customary meaning some minimal level of familiarity with the basic rules of the language game is needed. But what is this level, and what are these basic rules? The English student example suggests that one cannot defer if one lacks knowledge even of the semantic properties of the word (e.g., being a common noun, in this case).[10] The 'orangutan' example suggests that one cannot defer if one *has false believes* about what the stereotypes are. But what if one identifies the semantic category of the expression, does not have false belief about stereotypes, but still does not have knowledge of the associated stereotypes? Would that allow for successful deference? Suppose I am a fluent speaker of English who has never heard the word 'carburetor' before. Does my utterance of it have the customary meaning when I ask what a carburetor is? Intuitively it might seems so, and it that case, whatever successful deference requires, it does not require any knowledge of stereotypes.[11]

However, there are good reasons to resist this conclusion. There is, indeed, a sense in which I *use* the word 'carburetor' even if I lack any knowledge about what the word stands for, and I am completely unfamiliar with how others use it. In the same sense, one might count as *playing* badminton when one is merely practicing the movement of the hand in hitting the shuttlecock as part of the learning process, even when one knows nothing else about badminton. But those are very loose senses of "using" the word and "playing" the game, respectively. The sentences in which I am disposed to use 'carburetor' are mainly questions about how the word should be used or what it means. I am aware that if venture to use it in other contexts I run the risk of using it in radically nonstandard ways, as our speaker in the 'orangutan' case does. Deference is unsuccessful in that case because use is radically nonstandard. Deference is unsuccessful here because use reduces to very little.[12]

To sum up, the speaker's expression-forms acquire meaning from a pre-existing linguistic practice only if the speaker *participates* in that linguistic practice, and so, only if she uses the expression-form in mini-

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[10] We have seen that Soames (2002) requires such knowledge for successful deference with proper names.

[11] According to such a position a better analogy than that of the language as a game would be that of language as a tool: a word has a meaning when I utter it in the same way in which, say, the blacksmith's tools I am contemplating in his workshop have specific purposes and uses for which they were designed, even if I am not knowledgeable of what they are. If this analogy were correct, the student of English in our first example, who lacks any syntactic or semantic knowledge of the use of the words she is pronouncing, would still defer successfully. If she does not it means the language game analogy is a better one.

[12] Consequently, one might view this case as one in which the word is not used, but mentioned, even if no quotation marks are used. In the same sense, in 'My name is Andrei', 'Andrei' is mentioned and not used.

-mal accordance with the rules of that linguistic practice. A minimum is required in terms of knowledge of the semantic rules that govern the use of that expression, and, in turn, this requires acquaintance with the associated stereotypes. As Putnam comments,

> This idea should not seem too surprising. After all, we do not permit people to drive on the highways without first passing some tests to determine that they have a minimum level of competence… The linguistic community too has its minimum standards, with respect both to syntax and to 'semantics'. (1975, 248-249)

3. Discussion: what is consumerist semantics exactly?

In what follows I explore a couple of consequences that Putnam's requirement on deference has with respect to closely related issues within the externalist picture of meaning. A direct consequence concerns the general formulation of the externalist view of meaning and meaning acquisition, sometimes called "consumerist semantics". Almog (1984), in the passage quoted at the beginning, notes that Kripke's account of initiation into the use of a proper name is an instance of a more general principle that is not concerned only with the preservation of reference, but also with the preservation of meaning in general. Kaplan (1989), who calls this view "Consumerism", offers the following formulation of it:

> we are, for the most part, language consumers. Words come to us prepackaged with a semantic value. If we are to use those words, the words we have received, the words of our linguistic community, then we must defer to their meaning. Otherwise we play the role of language creators. (Kaplan 1989, 602)

It is useful to distinguish, following Kaplan (1989), between a *producer/ creator* and a *consumer*. Acquiring competence as a consumer is a very different business from acquiring competence as a producer. A consumer of a pre-existing meaning of a word in a language is someone who successfully defers for the meaning of that word to the respective linguistic community. In contrast to a consumer, a producer is someone who does not rely on a pre-existing linguistic practice, but introduces a new word in the language.

Gareth Evans (1982) also uses the consumer-producer dichotomy.[13] The fact that "individual speakers exploit general practices" (1982, 387), he writes, is true of many other semantic properties besides that of referring

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[13] Evans (1982) gives a slightly different sense to 'producer': for him, in the case of proper names a producer is not only the person who introduces the name in the language, but also that user of the name who can identify the referent of the name.

and transmitting the reference of a referential term. He formulates the following "general principle" for being a consumer:

> if a speaker uses a word with the manifest intention to participate in such-and-such a practice, in which the word is used with such and such semantic properties, then the word, as used by him, will possess just those semantic properties. This principle has as much application to the use by speakers of words like 'agronomist', 'monetarism' and the like as to their use of proper names. (Evans 1982, 387)

Notice that, while Kaplan states a necessary condition, Evans formulates his "general principle" as a *sufficient* condition for one's use of an expression-form to have the linguistic meaning it has in a certain linguistic practice. So do other authors, such as, for instance, Adèle Mercier, who writes:

> Consumerism is the view that, so long as language users intend to defer to the linguistic community in matters of usage, their idiolect and the meanings of their words are individuated by reference to that community. (Mercier 1994, 500)

According to both Evans and Mercier, the *intention* (or the "manifest intention", as Evans puts it) to defer to a particular linguistic community is sufficient for *successful* deference. But if Putnam is right about natural kind terms, then there are reasons to doubt of Evans' and Mercier's formulation of Consumerism. Having the manifest intention to participate in the relevant linguistic practice of using an expression with a certain meaning is arguably not sufficient for one's utterance of that expression to have that meaning. A condition concerning knowledge of stereotypes must also be fulfilled.

4. Discussion: non-intentional deference?

Is having an intention to defer a *necessary* condition for successful deference? Although the authors discussed so far seem to think so, others have argued that it is not. In their paper "Deferential Utterances" (2005) Stojanovic et al. introduce a series of useful distinctions between different kinds of semantic deference followed by a number of interesting comments. The authors make an attempt to mitigate between Andrew Woodfield's claim that deferring is an "intentional act, done by a person for a reason" (Woodfield 2000, 449-450) and François Recanati's (2000) claim that we implicitly defer for most terms that we use in utterances, without this being always an intentional act. Recanati postulates the existence of a "deferential operator", which is an unarticulated constituent that affects the contribution to truth-conditions of any word that we use and for which we are not experts, that is, lack perfect mastery. According to Recanati (2000, 282), this is usually deference that we are not aware of and which is not intentional. In order to do justice to the two

perspectives, Stojanovic et al. (2005) introduce a distinction between "default deference" and "deliberate deference". The former is the kind of deference that Recanati (2000) seems to have had in mind (leaving aside his claim about the existence of an unarticulated constituent, to which the authors do not subscribe), while the latter is the kind of deference that Woodfield (2000) had in mind. They write that "default deference usually goes unnoticed by speaker and hearer", while "[a] speaker who defers deliberately must intend to do so, and her intention must be recognized by her interlocutors." (Stojanovic et al. 2005, 4) Deliberate deference is characterized by the intention to use an expression in the way in which it is used in some dialect, sociolect or idiolect. A simple example of deliberate deference into a common language that they discuss is the following sentence: "Barthes described the book as "un choc historique" and "un repère nouveau et un départ pour l'écriture"." (Stojanovic et al. 2005, 20) The authors comment that the language-shift into French is deliberate, a fact that is exhibited by the contextual features employed to mark the shift, in this case, quotation (but also special intonation or metalinguistic comments in other cases). The authors show that deliberate deference might be to a sociolect (e.g., the way a certain word is used in a particular community) or idiolect (e.g., the peculiar way someone uses a certain word).

In what follows I leave aside what the authors call 'deliberate deference' and focus on what they call 'default deference'. In contrast to deliberate deference, default deference is ubiquitous, as it "is involved in every communicative act. When interpreting and evaluating an utterance, we must take into account a language parameter." (Stojanovic et al. 2005, 6) Usually, default deference is deference to one's own linguistic community, while deliberate deference usually involves a language-shift. But, as in the case of deliberate deference, not all default deference is deference to a language: it might be deference to a sociolect (e.g., the technical definition of 'walk' in the official regulation of race walking), or even someone's idiolect. What distinguishes deliberate from default deference is that in the case of the latter no special recourse is made to contextual features in order to make salient the linguistic parameter. In contrast, with deliberate deference the speaker "exploits certain contextual features in order to make salient the linguistic parameter" for the interpretation of her utterance, and "wants her exploitation of contextual resources to be recognized as part of her communicative intentions by the audience" (Stojanovic et al. 2005, 20).

The authors also claim that default deference usually involves no intention to defer, as opposed to deliberate deference, which does: "a speaker who is deferring deliberately must be aware of what she is doing" (Stojanovic et al. 2005, 6). Default deference usually passes unnoticed by both speaker and hearer. However, they add, the existence or inexistence of a conscious intention to defer is not criterial in making the distinction

between the two kinds of deference:

> this does not make the default/deliberate distinction collapse into the self-conscious/unconscious distinction, for in the case of default deference, too, the speaker may be perfectly aware of the fact that she is deferring by default. (2005, 6-7)

Instead, it is the appeal to contextual factors in conveying what language, sociolect or idiolect the speaker is deferring to that is criterial in making the distinction. Such appeals characterize deliberate deference and lack in cases of default deference.

Let us focus on the authors' remark that "[a] speaker who defers by default most often does not have the intention to defer." (Stojanovic et al. 2005, 4) Is it possible to defer semantically without a specific intention to do so? The claim that it is contradicts the standard view on what deference requires. Kripke, we have seen, writes that "[w]hen the name is 'passed from link to link', the receiver of the name must, I think, intend when he learns it to use it with the same reference as the man from whom he heard it." (Kripke 1980, 96) Others, such as Evans (1982) and Mercier (1995) take such an intention to be not only necessary, but also sufficient.

Contrary to Stojanovic et al. (2005), I think that deference is always intentional. The argument that I present in what follows is suggested by the above discussion of Putnam's approach. If successful deference requires knowledge of stereotypes, then we need to distinguish between *successful* and *failed* deference. Cases such as the ones discussed above in the section on stereotypes help to make this point. In Burge's (1979) example the speaker uses 'orangutan' to speaker-mean orange, but she uses it in ways that are sufficiently nonstandard so as to provide us with a clear example of failed deference. The reason why she uses it non-standardly is that she is confused about the meaning of the word, and associates the wrong stereotypes to the word. However, intuitively we would say that the speaker *intends* to use 'orangutan' as it is used in English. The problem is that he lacks the necessary knowledge concerning how the word is to be used in English. As a result, we cannot grant that the word in his mouth means orangutan. In order to characterize what is going on in such a case we need to talk about *intentions* to defer that do not achieve their aim. When deference is not successful we are left with is a failed attempt to defer. In general, in all cases in which the goal of an action is not achieved there is a need to distinguish between attempt and achievement.

In Burge's example, failure is due to the fact that the speaker associates the wrong stereotypes to the word. In other cases, failure of deference might not involve stereotypes at all. Suppose the word-form the speaker uses does not exist at all in the source language. Imagine a non-native speaker of a language who is led to believe that 'clorange' is the generic name of soda drink that tastes like orange but does not contain orange

juice. The speaker believes the word exists in English and uses it with the meaning she believes it has. But deference is, of course, unsuccessful. There is no question here of whether the speaker associates the right stereotypes with the word, given that 'clorange' is not a word, and so *a fortiori* it has no associated stereotypes. Even if we can retrieve a speaker meaning once we realize the communicative intention with which the speaker uses the word, this is a case in which the speaker forms an intention to defer but deference is unsuccessful.

A third kind of cases of failed deference is identified in Cappelen (2013a, 59; 2013b). The author proposes a strategy for identifying nonsensical uses of expressions generated by a failure of deference. He applies this strategy of diagnosis in order to argue that the use of the notion of 'intuition' in contemporary philosophy is confused and nonsensical. Cappelen's proposal is that there is evidence for a potentially meaningless use of an expression E if that use satisfies the following three conditions:

> (i) The speaker is a member of a number of distinct subcommunities in which E is used in significantly different ways; (ii) The speaker is unaware of (i); and (iii) The speaker defers to the use it has in 'the community' without any particular subcommunity in mind and with (broadly speaking) causal connection to a multiplicity of communities. (2013a, 39)

Independently of whether Cappelen's case for the meaninglessness of the philosophical use of 'intuition' is successful or not, Cappelen does identify a particular strategy for generating failures of deference. One example less controversial than that of a philosopher's use of 'intuition' could be the use of 'liberal' in some contexts of political debate. Consider a speaker who utters: 'When it comes to same-sex marriage I am a liberal.' Now suppose the speaker is insufficiently familiarized with the differences between the political terminologies on the two sides of the Atlantic, and, at the same time, has causal connections to both linguistic communities. She fails to realize that those who identify as 'liberals' in Europe tend to have more conservative views on the issue, while those who identify as 'liberals' in the U.S. tend to be more open. Even if we could retrieve a speaker meaning, it is doubtful that the sentence uttered has identifiable truth-conditions. The case is, rather, one in which the speaker fails to defer properly for the meaning of 'liberal'. The problem, as in the previous case, is not with the condition on stereotypes, but with the condition on the deferential intention, which is not correctly formed. However, intuitively we would say that the speaker does have an intention to defer, even if it is, in some sense, incorrect. This case is best described by saying that the speaker has the intention to mean by 'liberal' whatever experts in political theory 'in the community' mean by the word. The intention is incorrect because it falsely presupposes that there is a *unique* community and a unique use of the word in political contexts, when in fact, there are various.

The above cases show that we sometimes need to postulate an intention to defer when deference is unsuccessful. For parity of reasons, it is natural to think of deference as intentional also in those cases in which it is successful. This is exactly how Kripke (1980), Evans (1982), Mercier (1994), Soames (2002), among the authors quoted above, conceive of it. Of course, this is not to say that the speaker always forms a *conscious* intention to defer to a linguistic community. The actual process might often be readily characterized as unconscious, habitual, and automatic. It usually does not have the phenomenological features of conscious control. Nevertheless, it is still rational, and apt to receive a personal-level explanation in terms of attribution of propositional attitudes such as intentions. David Lewis (1975) makes this point with respect to action in general:

> An action may be rational, and may be explained by the agent's beliefs and desires, even though that action was done by habit, and the agent gave no thought to the beliefs or desires which were his reason for acting. A habit may be under the agent's rational control… (1975, 25-26)

To sum up, we have seen several cases that we can best make sense of by attributing to the speaker an unsuccessful intention to defer.[14] Endowing an expression-form with meaning through deference is not a feature of an utterance of that expression-form that is obtained *by default* (in contrast to, for instance, causing a movement of particles: one cannot utter a word without implicitly causing the particles in the air or in some other environment to move). Instead, it requires that certain conditions be satisfied. It often requires choosing the language, sociolect or idiolect to which one defers, and any choice is intentional. For similar reasons, the correct interpretation of an utterance of an ambiguous word depends on what intention it is reasonable to attribute to the speaker in using the word-form in that context. And the same applies to proper names: here the speaker is not only required to defer to the source language, but also to choose a particular naming-practice (i.e., the use of the name to refer to a particular individual) out of the various ones that the name-form has.

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[14] An anonymous reviewer insists that the claim that deference can be both intentional and unconscious is not a *prima facie* intuitive one, so it requires some elucidation. However, I do not find the claim unintuitive at all. There are many examples of actions that are done without the full conscious of the presence of a clear formulated intention, but are best interpreted as performed with an intention. Walking home on a familiar route or grabbing your keys when leaving the house are such examples.

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