‘I’ as a Pure Indexical and Metonymy as Language Reduction

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Abstract. Most direct reference theorists believe that ‘I’ is a pure indexical. This means that when ‘I’ is uttered, it contributes with the speaker to what is said. But, from some conceptions of metonymy as reference transfer, if ‘I’ is used metonymically, it has an improper meaning and the object referred to is not the speaker. We will show that all theories of metonymy as transfer are inadequate and so they cannot determine if the metonymic use of ‘I’ is a counter-example to its consideration as a pure indexical or not. We argue that the appropriate conception on metonymy is to consider it as a case of language reduction and that ‘I’, when used metonymically, is just a part of a non-textual complete noun phrase; ‘I’ has the semantic value that it usually has. The metonymic use of ‘I’ does not risk the consideration of ‘I’ as a pure indexical.

1 Introduction[1]

Most direct reference theorists believe that ‘I’ is a pure indexical. This means, among other things, that when ‘I’ is uttered, it contributes with an individual to what is said and this individual can only be the speaker.[2] But if it were possible to have a meto-

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[2] When we use the term ‘speaker’, we are thinking about the technical notion of the agent as a parameter of the context of utterance. This may be the writer, the producer or the speaker in the non-technical sense. We are also aware that this technical notion of speaker is rather controversial, especially when there is a dissociation of the three roles conflated under it: animator, author, and principal (see McCawley, J.D. (1999) Participant roles, Frames, and Speech Acts. Linguistics and Philosophy **22** 595-619). When the three roles are played by different persons, the principal is the agent. We are not going to take into account all these distinctions in our paper because the topic under discussion is not dependent on them.

nymic use of ‘I’, then ‘I’, from some standard conceptions of metonymy, would have an improper meaning and would not refer to the speaker. An example used to show the metonymic use of ‘I’ is (1).

[Mary, giving her car key to the attendant at a parking lot, tells him:] I am parked out back **(1)**

When Mary uses ‘I’ in (1), she refers to a car, her car, and not to herself, the speaker of (1). ‘I’ has an improper meaning that is equivalent to the proper meaning of ‘My car’ or ‘The car I drive’, etc. This use of ‘I’ spoils the argument that ‘I’ is a pure indexical.

Our objective is to show that, due to an inadequate conception of metonymy as reference transfer, the metonymic use of ‘I’ is sometimes wrongly conceived as a counterexample to the claim that ‘I’ is a pure indexical. This general proposal is not defended for the first time. For example, Nunberg has developed an explanation of metonymy as predicate transfer with which he intends to show that the metonymic use of ‘I’ is just an apparent counterexample to the conception of ‘I’ as a pure indexical [1], [2]. Nevertheless, we argue that the metonymic use of ‘I’ is not a counterexample for pure indexicals from another view of metonymy in which it is not considered as a transfer of meaning, no matter how transfer is described. As far as we are concerned [3], metonymy must be understood as a case of language reduction, and if this is the case, the metonymic use of ‘I’ does not entail a transfer from the semantic value of ‘I’ to another semantic value. ‘I’ means what it means and it has the semantic value that it usually has: the speaker. ‘I’ is only a part of the noun phrase (NP). From our proposal of metonymy, the metonymic use of ‘I’ does not constitute a counterexample to the claim that ‘I’ is a pure indexical.

2 Pure Indexicals in the Theory of Direct Reference

The term ‘pure indexical’ is introduced by Kaplan and makes reference to a particular class of directly referential expressions that are semantically complete such as ‘I’, ‘here’, and ‘now’ [4]. In general, a directly referential term indicates that the truth-conditions of the utterance in which it occurs involve its referent; it indicates that the proposition expressed by the utterance is singular. When we say that an expression is a pure indexical we are not only saying that it is a directly referential term but also that it is an expression highly restricted in its possibilities of reference in virtue of its conventional meaning and without considering the speaker’s intention. Indeed, when ‘I’ is uttered, it contributes with an individual to what is said and this individual can only be the speaker; once the context is given, the contribution of ‘I’ in what is said can be automatically decoded.[3]

[3] Although this is the most popular view in direct reference theory, there are also theorists within this frame that reject the existence of pure indexicals (see Predelli, S. (1998) I am not here now. Analysis **58.2** 107-115). For a relevant discussion on an opposite view, see Corazza et al. (Corazza, E., Fish, W., Gorvet, J. (2002). Who is I? Philosophical Studies **107** 1-21). This debate, however, is not related with the metonymic use of ‘I’.

Pure indexicals are semantically complete; their conventional meaning which governs its use fully determines a 'character', that is, a fixed function from context to content; in this case, from context to referent. The content is the semantic value that intervenes in the proposition. The linguistic meaning of a referential expression determines such a function only if the expression is a 'pure indexical'. The meaning of 'I' is a fixed function that takes us from the context of utterance to the semantic value of the word in that context.

The main difference between demonstratives and pure indexicals is that the reference of a demonstrative is determined by the speaker's intention rather than by a fixed function of external features of the context of utterance. Pure indexicals are different from demonstratives in the sense that it does not seem possible to find an example of a pure indexical so that a rational subject can think at the same time that 'α is P' and 'α is not P' and this is perfectly possible with a demonstrative. It seems that I cannot think of 'me' as of two different persons at the same time. The reason why this is so is that the mental counterpart of a pure indexical is an egocentric concept and an egocentric concept is based on a fundamental epistemic relation between the subject and the objects which fall under that concept. The egocentric concepts associated with pure indexicals have the property that the fundamental relation on which such concepts is based on uniquely determines an object, in the sense that one cannot bear that relation to different objects at the same time (see [5]).

3 The Standard Conception of Metonymy as Reference Transfer

According to the standard conception of metonymy, this is a figure of signification, a trope that exploits a figurative or transferred meaning. From this approach, (2)

The ham sandwich is waiting for his check **(2)**

would mean figuratively and metonymically the same as (3),

The customer of the ham sandwich is waiting for his check **(3)**

since 'the ham sandwich' is substituted by 'the customer of the ham sandwich' and it means figuratively what the latter expression means. In any case of metonymy, the expression used metonymically changes its meaning so that it can be applied to the object talked about.

As far as classical rhetoric is concerned, what characterizes metonymy is that it has a semantic referent which does not coincide with the actual referent but with which it has a relation of contiguity. That is, there is what we can call a "reference transfer", and (2) can be considered a case of referential metonymy.[4] Yet, if metonymy depends

[4] (2) belongs to a homogeneous group of examples, based on the referential criterion. Utterances of the sentences such as 'It won't happen while I still breathe', 'She turned pale', etc. are sometimes considered cases of metonymy. We won't take into account this type of examples because not all of them are equivalent from a conceptual nor a linguistic point of view. Even if we admitted that both the examples excluded and those included had a common cognitive basis, it can be still defended that within this group there are different types of meton-

on the existence of a transfer of the semantic value of the NP and (1) is considered as a metonymy, 'I' acquires a transferred meaning, the meaning of the expression 'the car I drive' and thus 'I' does not refer to Mary, the speaker, but to Mary's car. 'I' cannot be considered as a pure indexical.

But, how do we know, from this proposal, when an expression is used metonymically and how is its specific meaning derived? With respect to the identification problem nothing is said and with respect to the transfer of meaning it is argued that we have to resort to a relation of contiguity between the object which the words metonymically used, 'the ham sandwich', refer to, in this case, the ham sandwich, and the object actually referred to, the customer of the ham sandwich. But this strategy does not seem to let us go very far.

In the recent past, several answers to these questions have arisen from some pragmatic approaches. For instance, metonymy is conceived, following Grice's proposals on conversational implicature [6], as an implicature that is identified because the person who utters (2) in cases such as (4)

[In a restaurant, looking at the customer of the ham sandwich, a waitress says to another:] The ham sandwich is waiting for his check **(4)**

cannot commit herself with the truth of what is said, as it is clear that the ham sandwich cannot be waiting for his check. She says something which she believes false. With the metonymic use of language the speaker conversationally implicates something different from what is said which includes the semantic referent, the ham sandwich; the speaker conversationally implicates what is said with its paraphrase, what is said with (5).

[In a restaurant, looking at the customer of the ham sandwich, a waitress says to another:] The customer of the ham sandwich is waiting for his check **(5)**

If metonymy works in this way, we can consider the pronoun 'I' as a pure indexical. With (1), Mary says that she is parked out back, something that she does not believe because it is obviously false, and so she conversationally implicates what is said by (6),

[Mary, giving her car key to the attendant at a parking lot, tells him:] The car I drive is parked out back **(6)**

she conversationally implicates that her car is parked out back.

The first problem with the theory of implicature is that its identification criterion, to say something the speaker believes false, is not exclusive of metonymy and that some do not even require it. Furthermore, considering metonymy as a particularized conversational implicature is not totally correct to the extent that a particularized conversational implicature is relevant when the speaker says or makes as if to say something literally and with (1) and (4) it cannot be said or made as if to say anything literally

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ymy that respond to different restrictions and that, linguistically speaking, they behave differently (see Warren, B. (1999) Aspects of Referential Metonymy. In: Panther, K., Radden, G. (eds): Metonymy in Language and Thought. John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam Philadelphia 121-135).

because these utterances cannot fix any literal proposition. The sentences contained in (1) and (4) have no literal and textual compositional sense. This is so, for example in (4), simply because sandwiches are inanimate objects which cannot volitionally instigate any action. Our linguistic competence prevents us from constructing a literal proposition without previously changing the conventional meaning of some of the sentence constituents or recovering some non-textual information. In addition, how do we know that (5) is the paraphrase of (4) and that (6) is the paraphrase of (1)? Or how is the specific implicature calculated? This approach does not improve the classical one [7], [8].

Nevertheless, metonymy is not conceived as a case of conversational implicature in all the pragmatic proposals. Recanati, for example, argues that it is a context dependent process of transfer that operates locally or subpropositionally [5], [9]. The transfer of meaning is, for this author, a context dependent aspect that affects what is said and, in his first writings, this transfer affects the NP.[5] Recanati explains that the interpreter of (4) does not go from the concept of the ham sandwich to the concept of the customer of the ham sandwich after having conceived the absurd literal proposition, rather she goes from one concept to another as a result of a shift of accessibility due to the activation of the literal interpretation of the predicate that accompanies the NP 'the ham sandwich' in (4); the activation of the literal interpretation of the predicate 'is waiting for his check'. When (1) is produced, the interpreter goes from the concept of I to the concept of the car I drive as a result of a shift of accessibility that the literal interpretation of the predicate 'be parked out back' triggers. In this sense, the pronoun 'I' refers to the speaker's car, and cannot be a pure indexical.

But, although from this approach the context restricts the interpretation of referential expressions to eliminate the irrelevant interpretations, once a non-literal interpretation is activated, how do we know it is a metonymy and how can we determine its correct interpretation?

With respect to the explanation of how the metonymic meaning is achieved, there have been different proposals. The cognitive linguistics proposal stands out since Lakoff and Johnson [10]. In cases such as (7)

The Times hasn't arrived at the press conference room yet. (The reporter from the Times) **(7)**

an entity is used to refer to another by the relation between institution-person responsible. The examples of metonymy are framed in metonymic concepts that are systematic: OBJECT USED FOR USER in (2), INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE in (7), and so forth. From this point of view, 'I' in (1) gets a transferred meaning because it stands for something else, the speaker's car. So the pronoun 'I' cannot be a pure indexical.

Although the relations that cognitive linguists establish when talking about metonymy are relations with an important linguistic relevance, these relations are also present in the semantics of phrases and clauses without them having to be always cases of metonymy. Thus, to characterize metonymy is not to specify the types of contiguity

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[5] Nowadays, Recanati (Recanati, F. (2004) Literal Meaning. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge) sides with the position defended by Nunberg (see Sect. 4).

relations, but to point out that they are stands-for relations, and this is the only thing that all the metonymic examples have in common in the cognitive linguists proposals. In a stands-for relation the concept used to stand for the other gets a transferred meaning. The problem is to know which relation is the one exploited in every case. The interlocutor recognizes it because s/he understands the utterance but not because he knows what metonymic concept he has to appeal to so that one piece of information can be substituted by another. To specify the types of contiguity relations does not improve the classical approach with respect to the identification and interpretation of metonymic utterances.

To sum up, from the proposals of metonymy as reference transfer that locate its process of interpretation at the level of what is said, we cannot defend both that the metonymic use of 'I' is a case of reference transfer and that 'I' is a pure indexical. Only the theory of implicature can. Nevertheless, all these versions of the standard conception of metonymy have several serious problems with the identification criteria of metonymy and with the description of the metonymic mechanism for its interpretation and, thus, we can consider them neither a threat to the claim that 'I' is a pure indexical nor a support to it.

Only if we solve these problems, can we get a proposal on metonymy from which to determine if the metonymic use of 'I' is a counterexample to pure indexicals theory or not. One attempt can be found in Nunberg's writings. However, his approach is directed towards saving the pure indexicals theory more than towards solving the problems that emerge from the conception of metonymy as reference transfer.

4 Metonymy as Predicate Transfer

Nunberg intends to show that the problem raised by (1) for pure indexicals theory depends on an inadequate conception of metonymy by which the transfer is always located at the referential level. He defends that, although the conceptual process of metonymy is always the same, that is, it is the same rhetoric figure, from a linguistic point of view, we have to distinguish between two different types of metonymic transfer [1], [2].

First of all, he speaks about deferred ostension or reference transfer 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 the semantic character of the expression or by a demonstration. So, if we consider (8),

[The manager at a parking lot, handing a car key to the attendant who is in charge of bringing the customer's car, tells him:] This is parked out back (**8**)

we can say that, as the property of being parked out back is predicated of a vehicle, 'this' in (8) refers to a car although the demonstration points to a key.

Nunberg considers (8) as an example of metonymy, in particular as deferred ostension, because in (8) the manager does not use the subject to refer to the key that he is holding, but to the car that the key goes with. Nunberg is assuming that the relation between 'this' and the car in (8) goes through the index, the key. But the demonstratum of ‘this’ is not the key. This is supported by the fact that, as Nunberg himself recognizes, we cannot get the kind of deferred reading involved in (8) when we use the description in place of which this pronoun is supposed to be. He shows this by saying that (9)

*The key I’m holding is parked out back **(9)**

is not available.

There are two tests that validate the analysis of (8) as deferred ostension: the number of the demonstrative is determined by the intended referent, the car, and in languages where demonstratives and adjectives are marked for grammatical gender, the gender will be the same as the gender of the intended referent. So, in Spanish (8) would be (8’).

[The manager at a parking lot, handing a car key (fem.) to the attendant who is in charge of bringing the customer’s car, tells him:] Éste está aparcado detrás (This (masc.) is parked (masc.) out back) **(8’)**

The analysis of the demonstrative in (8) as a case of deferred ostension is used by Nunberg to test if other examples of metonymy in which proper names, descriptions, or other indexical expressions are involved can also be considered as instances of the same kind. But, the gender test that validates the analysis for the demonstrative in (8) does not serve to validate the analysis of (1) in terms of deferred ostension. In Spanish, (1) would be (1’),

[Mary, giving her car key to the attendant at a parking lot, tells him:] Yo estoy aparcada detrás (I am parked (fem.) out back) **(1’)**

and in (1’) the adjective ‘aparcada’ is feminine while ‘car’ is masculine. So, the subject of (1) refers to the speaker, not to the car, and the transfer involves the predicate, not the indexical. The predicate ‘parked out back’ contributes with a property of persons, the property they possess in virtue of the locations of their cars. In this case, like in all cases of predicate transfer, the name of a property that applies to something in one domain can be used as the name of a property that applies to things in another domain, provided the two properties correspond in a certain way. Predicate transfer is indifferent to how the bearer of this new or derived property is referred to by an indexical or description or whatever. For example, the parking lot manager could say to the attendant (10)

The man with the cigar (Mr. McDowell, etc.) is parked out back **(10)**

to predicate of a person the property of having a car which is parked out back.[6] In (8), we can say that the property of being parked out back is predicated of a vehicle while in (1) and in (10) it is used to predicate something more complex, the property of

[6] Nevertheless, in the case of (4), where there is a definite description too, he explains predicate transfer in another way. It is not the description as a whole, but the predicate ‘ham sandwich’ in the description which has a derived, non-literal value; it is a case of predicate transfer but located at the NP. We cannot quite grasp why (10) and (4) are not explained in the same way.

having a car which is parked out back. Thus (1), according to Nunberg, must be interpreted as (1'').

[Mary, giving her car key to the attendant at a parking lot, tells him:] I have a car that is parked out back **(1'')**

As far as we are concerned, the first problem in Nunberg's proposal arises in the very distinction between the two types of metonymic transfer. This distinction is dependent on the analysis of (8). But this is quite a dubious one, in the sense that, although there is a case of non-verbal ostension in (8), we do not think that there is a metonymic use of 'this'.

In (8) there is not a case of deferred ostension from the index of 'this', the key, to the referent, the car, simply because the index of 'this' is not the key but the car. Indeed, there is concord both in number and gender with the intended referent, the car, and a lack of concord, at least in Spanish, with the key. In Spanish, we cannot say '*este (masc.) llave (fem.)' nor '*Éste (masc.) es la llave (fem.) que va con el coche que está aparcado detrás'. A pronoun can never have as its index something with which it does not concord, and the pronoun 'this' which is marked for number [+SINGULAR] (in Spanish also for gender [+MALE]) concords with the car. Clearly, the index of 'this' is the car. The difficulty is how we can use the pronoun 'this' which is marked [+NEAR] in (8) to refer to a car that is not near.

From our explanation of (8), someone could argue, the problem of gender is solved but the problem of proximity arises and this would justify having the key as the index of 'this'. Yet, we want to maintain our explanation because this difficulty is overcome if we discover that it is possible to use demonstrative pronouns in a contrastive anaphoric way which dissolves the contrast between 'this' and 'that' [11]. When 'this/that' is used to refer to something already present in the verbal or non-verbal context we are using the pronouns in an anaphoric way.[7] In these cases, there is a special use of them in which the distinction between the physical relative proximity speaker-object vanishes. In a normal utterance of (11)

She offered him another tie, but this/that was no better than the first **(11)**

none of the ties are pointed deictically as they are not in the situation described. The choice of the pronoun is not motivated by the relative proximity of the speaker to the ties, the object denoted or referred to. There is a contrastive use of the pronoun, and either 'this' or 'that' can be used. Something similar happens in (8).

In (8), the mutual cognitive environment of speakers and hearers allows the contrastive use of the pronoun 'this'. In the situation described for (8), 'cars' is part of the given information among the interlocutors and this allows the speaker to use the pro-

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[7] "It is the interplay of new and not new that generates information in the linguistic sense. Hence the information unit is a structure made up of two functions, the New and the Given. […] by its nature the Given is likely to be 'phoric' – referring to something already present in the verbal or non-verbal context; and one way of phoricity is through ellipsis, a grammatical form in which certain features are not realized in the structure." (Halliday, M.A.K. (1985: 275) An Introduction to Functional Grammar. Edward Arnold, London, Melbourne, Auckland).

noun to distinguish the car in question from any of the other cars that the attendant should bring. However, the referent, the car, cannot be identified unless the interlocutor has more information from the non-linguistic context. In particular, the referent can be identified if, for example, the attendant is able to identify the cars by the keys. Let us take for granted that this is the case in (8), then, by handing the key to the attendant, the speaker is making a non-linguistic ostension that allows the identification of the car that goes with the key. But, the non-linguistic ostension is independent of the contrastive use of 'this'.

Let's take another example to clarify the idea that we can identify the referent by the use of a pronoun and by a non-linguistic ostension without understanding that the object pointed out by ostension is the index of the pronoun but part of its modifier. Let's take into account example (12).

[Pointing to an empty chair left by a person when she went to the toilet, someone at the same table says:] She is very intelligent (**12**)

This is a case by means of which 'she' is used to refer to her and to restrict its reference by pointing to the location she occupied in a previous non-verbal context which is cognitively relevant for the interlocutors. By pointing to that location and using 'she', the speaker makes reference to a female person previously present in the non-verbal context. But, in this situation, we would not like to say that the index of the pronoun 'she' is the location. 'She' does not refer to a place, nor does this expression have to undergo a process of transfer from location to female third person singular. 'She' both means what 'she' means and refers to a female person. The non-verbal ostensive stimulus helps to pick out the referent of 'she' but no transfer from the properties of the location to the properties of the woman is needed. It is a feature typical of indexicals that we have to resort to non-verbal contextual information (either ostensive or non-ostensive) in order for a pronoun to be saturated. But when we identify the referent of a demonstrative or indexical with a demonstration (that points to an object which is not the referent of the demonstrative), we do not have a case of metonymic use of this demonstrative. 'She' in (12) is not used metonymically[8], unless we defend that every indexical that has an associated demonstration whose demonstratum does not coincide with the referent of the indexical but identifies it is a case of metonymy. If this is so, we have lost all the intuitions about metonymy as a figure of speech.

As we pointed out, in the traditional conception, the trait of metonymy is to refer semantically to an object that allows the recovery of the object we are really talking about, but neither 'this' nor 'she' refer semantically to the key or the empty chair. In (8) and in (12), it is the non-verbal demonstration that points to the key or to the empty chair but the pronouns refer to the car and the woman respectively, although the demonstrations specify something relevant about the referents, to wit, the key that goes with the car in (8) and the location she occupied before in (12). This is similar (although a description is used instead of a pronoun) to what happens in (13),

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[8] Indeed, we would recognize a metonymic use of 'she' in the same context specified in (12), if someone said 'She is parked out back'. But, following Nunberg, this new example should be analysed like (1), as a case of predicate transfer rather than deferred ostension.

[Pointing to table 4, a waiter says to the owner of the restaurant:] The customer is waiting for his check at the cash register (**13**)

and there is not a metonymic use of language here.

(8) parallels (12), none of them are metonymies. But if (8) is not a case of metonymy, then the fact that (1) and (4) do not share the same syntactic conditions as (8) does not mean that they are two different types of metonymic transfer: they are two different types of phenomena. In this sense, the argument in favor of explaining some metonymies as predicate transfer vanishes.

Still, we might maintain that some metonymies are cases of predicate transfer but we have to recognize that this position is counterintuitive. It is curious that metonymy should depend on the use of certain noun phrases, of expressions which can be used to refer or denote, and that the change should be produced either in the meaning of the predicates for nouns and personal pronouns or in the properties of descriptions. In addition, Nunberg's proposal does not overcome the problems raised in the standard theory of metonymy as reference transfer: he does not offer identification criteria for metonymy and does not describe the metonymic mechanism for metonymic interpretation. So, Nunberg's support to the claim that 'I' is a pure indexical is not motivated.

5 Metonymy as a Case of Language Reduction. Detecting and Interpreting Referential Metonymy

If we pay attention to examples such as (1) and (4) and their traditional readings in (6) and (5), we see that the substituting element is always an abbreviated part of the substituted one which is wider. 'I' is included in 'the car I drive'; 'the ham sandwich' is included in 'the customer of the ham sandwich'.[9]

We conceive ellipsis as the omission of one or more necessary elements in a grammatical structure, specific elements that can be easily understood by the interlocutor in context (linguistic and extralinguistic) and, thus, can be explicitly recovered [12], [13]. Example (14)

[In a hairdresser's, a hairdresser tells another:] The blonde (lady) is waiting for her check (**14**)

is a case of ellipsis at a phrasal level. The head of the NP (in brackets), which is the obligatory element in a phrase structure, is missing.

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[9] As far as Quirk et al. (Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech G., Svartvik, J. (1985: 858) A Comprenhensive Grammar of the English Language. Longman, London) are concerned, reduction is "a grammatical principle by which the structure of a sentence is abbreviated". For them, there are two types of reduction: ellipsis and substitution by means of pro-forms. The motivation for the use of this principle is that, other things being equal, the users of a language will follow the maxim "reduce as much as you can". This preference for reduction is not justified only by a preference for economy but also because reduction contributes to clarity. By reducing given information, attention is focalized over new information.

Let us consider examples (1) and (4) again, both referential metonymies, and let us point out the elided elements by means of (1''') and (4').

[Mary, giving her car key to the attendant at a parking lot, tells him:] (The car) I (drive) am/*is parked out back **(1''')**

[In a restaurant, looking at the customer of the ham sandwich, a waitress says to another:] (The customer of) the ham sandwich is waiting for his check **(4')**

In these cases, there is an ellipsis at a phrasal level. In particular, the elided elements are the head of a complex NP (that includes a modifier also complex) and its determiner together with one or several elements of the modifier that go with it (prepositions, relative pronouns, …).

What examples (1''') and (4'), examples of metonymy, have in common with (14) is that they all need a non-textual element to be interpreted. In all cases there is ungrammaticality. But, what do they not share? Cases of ellipsis such as (14) are syntactically incomplete; there is an obligatory element with an obligatory grammatical category missing in the phrase structure, thus the syntactic slot is left empty. In (1''') and (4'), there is also ungrammaticality but this time it is revealed just semantically. When ellipsis occurs at a phrasal level it might be the case that apparently there is a complete sentence structure as in (1''') and (4'). In metonymy, although the obligatory element is also missing, the syntactic function is apparently filled by an element which does not really correspond to that function. The head of the modifier takes over the head of the phrase. There is an ellipsis by means of which only the noteworthy part of a restrictive modifier remains.

The use of a restrictive modifier is appropriate in a context of discourse in which there is more than one entity which can be included in the semantic value of the head of the NP and a modifier is required to distinguish the entity being referred to from other entities of this type. The task of the modifier 'of the ham sandwich' is to identify one entity from this set. It is possible, then, that the set of entities which can form a part of the semantic value of the head constitutes a piece of 'given information' (see Footnote 7). In a restaurant, it is well known that waiters' work consists in serving customers, thus, 'customers' will be given information for the waiters in a restaurant when talking about the goods and services that they have to offer them. When waiters are communicating at work, it is essential for them to pick out the specific customer in order to get him attended. In this case, a restrictive modification may be required as in 'the customer of the ham sandwich'. As 'the customer of' is given information in 'the customer of the ham sandwich', we can omit it without any problem of recovery, making a metonymic use of the NP 'the ham sandwich' as it is the case in (4). 'The ham sandwich' can be used to function as the syntactic head of the complex NP through a process of language reduction, provided that some syntactic adjustments take place. In particular, the rules of grammar do not allow the syntactic mismatch that the reduction produces in certain occasions. In the reduction from (5) to (4) there is no problem of concord between subject and verb phrase. But in the reduction from (6) to (1) several syntactic adjustments are required. We cannot have '*I is parked out back' as a result of it. The reduction produces a contextual abnormality which sometimes requires a semantic anomaly but this cannot deprive the sentence from a syntactic well-formedness. Thus, we have to change from '*I is parked out back' to 'I am parked out back'.[10] The abnormality produced in (1) entails a breach of a semantic restriction, such as the need to have a subject with the features [-HUMAN, +VEHICLE] if we consider the predicate, since the subject has to be an entity that can be parked. The lack of agreement between 'the car' and 'am parked' is but a part of the semantic abnormality that arises when the NP 'I' [+HUMAN] functions as the apparent syntactic (though not semantic) subject of the predicate 'be parked'.

The fact that the syntactic function is filled by an element which does not correspond to this function generates, from the point of view of the identification, a contextual abnormality. Indeed, the metonymic interpretation is triggered because, unlike other utterances, metonymic utterances are identified when the speaker perceives a contextual abnormality and a veiled restricted nominal element. In general, the contextual oddity or abnormality we refer to here must be understood as the use of an expression in an unusual linguistic or extra-linguistic context. If we understand the contextual abnormality in this way, we can distinguish between two modes of appearance of this abnormality in metonymy: mode (a), an oddity between the terms uttered, and mode (b), an oddity between the occurrence of an expression in the actual unusual context and the implicit context associated to a normal use of this expression [14].

Mode (a) can be illustrated by example (4). In the metonymic utterance (4) the normal interpretation of the predicate, 'is waiting for his check', is incompatible with the normal interpretation of the NP 'the ham sandwich' functioning as its subject. It is also a type of abnormality found in (1). Nevertheless, the rules of grammar do not allow this abnormality to affect the syntactic well-formedness of the sentence, thus, as we have just said, the metonymic reduction is possible only if several syntactic adjustments are produced when needed.

Mode (b) can be exemplified by (15). In the metonymic utterance (15)

[In a restaurant, a waiter asks a waitress, who had just served a steaming ham sandwich to a customer who is shivering, why she is closing the window, and she answers:] The ham sandwich is cold **(15)**

the abnormality is presented by the confrontation between the semantic value of 'the ham sandwich' in a possible usual context and the actual and unusual use of the expression in this specific situation in which both interlocutors know that the ham sandwich is warm and it is clear that when the speaker uses the expression 'the ham sandwich', he cannot be speaking merely about the ham sandwich in this context.

The abnormality is not a sufficient identification condition for metonymy as there are other examples in which it can be detected, for example, in metaphors, nonsense, fiction and so on. To identify metonymy we also have to detect a veiled restricted

[10] Similarly, in cases of tough movement such as 'they are easy to teach', which comes from 'to teach them is easy', some syntactic adjustments are needed in order to prevent the ungrammatical expression: '*them is easy to teach'. In particular, the objective form 'them' changes into the subjective 'they', and the verb form 'is' changes into 'are' so that subject-verb agreement is maintained. For a detailed analysis of the correspondences between thematic structures and metonymy, see Romero and Soria (Romero, E., Soria, B. (forthcoming) Metonymy as a Syntactic Strategy in Assigning Informational Prominence within the Noun Phrase. XXIII AESLA, Palma de Mallorca).

nominal element: the NP used abnormally is identified as the restrictive modifier of an implicit nominal element.

The contextual abnormality in (1) shows that we are not just talking about the speaker, and the context, Mary speaking to the attendant at a parking lot, gives the information that cars are the set of entities which can form a part of the semantic value of the head and that they constitute a piece of given information. (1) includes the expression 'I' that refers to the speaker. When we take into account contextual and not linguistic information alone, we realize that the object referred to by this singular term, the speaker, is not the type of object that the utterance of the explicit singular term must refer to or denote.[11] Given the utterance (1), there is no doubt that we are talking about a car. 'I' is just part of the description that serves to pick out the referent. The head of the NP must be 'car'. We detect that, in spite of being the notional head of the NP that functions as subject of the sentence, the topic talked about, a car, does not realize the syntactic function of the explicit NP. This syntactic function is realized by the expression 'I'. The slot left empty by the elided head of the NP is filled by this piece of new information 'I'. 'I' is recognized as part of the modifier restricting 'car'. It points to the specific car not because this expression acquires a new and transferred meaning but because the missing elements that this expression restricts are recovered. The metonymic use makes the hearer recover some non-explicit but required sub-propositional and sub-phrasal element in order to have the intended proposition, but once we recover what is non-explicit ('The car … drive') both terms ('the car I drive' and 'I') can refer to their respective normal referents.

Metonymy is a non-textual use of language in which there is at least one non-explicit sub-phrasal constituent, a veiled restricted nominal element. So, the ellipsis that characterizes metonymy can be understood in theory of meaning as a mandatory pragmatic process that operates at a subpropositional level. To interpret (1), the NP 'I' must be completed and it becomes a more complex NP: 'The car I drive'. Now we can reconstruct what is literally said with the utterance, although what is said is not textually said. What is literally said is that the car I drive is parked out back.

6 Conclusion

In the most extended theories of metonymy, it is argued that, if used metonymically, singular terms change their meanings. From these theories, 'I' cannot be a pure indexical because in its metonymic use the meaning changes and it refers to an object different from the speaker. Our paper shows that these proposals have too many problems.

Nunberg's account of metonymy as predicate transfer seems to offer an alternative view that can explain the type of transfer that characterizes some metonymies, included the metonymic use of 'I', without risking the proposal of 'I' as a pure indexi-

[11] Nevertheless, here there is not a referential use of a singular term whose meaning does not describe the object even when both the speaker and the interpreter believe it does. This is not one of the cases of referential uses of definite descriptions by Donnellan (Donnellan, K. (1966) Reference and Definite Descriptions. Philosophical Review **75** 281-304).

cal. But the distinction between deferred ostension and predicate transfer as two different ways of explaining metonymies is not right, and the predicate transfer explanation of metonymy is not motivated.

Our proposal accommodates the data we have been discussing, by introducing the conception of metonymy as a case of language reduction. The term used metonymically, we argue, is just a part of the modifier of the singular term that really refers or denotes. To interpret (1), the NP 'I' must be completed and it becomes a more complex NP, 'The car I drive'. 'I' means what it means and it has the semantic value that it usually has, the speaker. So, if we consider that somebody who utters a sentence including a metonymic use of 'I' is prompting the hearer to understand a non-textual meaning of this utterance, we can argue that the metonymic use of 'I' does not risk the consideration of 'I' as a pure indexical.

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