INDEFINITE PROPER NAMES AND QUANTIFICATION OVER MANIFESTATIONS

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Abstract

Starting from the observation that in German proper names can be determined by the indefinite article without apparently shedding their original referent, this paper presents a range of "non-standard" uses of proper names, among them one we will call the "manifestation use". It will be suggested that certain occurrences of proper names cannot be adequately analysed without assuming manifestations as a basic unit of quantification.

1   Introduction

This paper aims at an analysis of a certain type of use of proper names that appears particularly widespread in German. While proper names are generally regarded as being inherently definite, in German one frequently finds proper names preceded by the *in*definite article. This construction is most popular when human beings of great public interest are referred to. Examples from a "Google"-search are given in (1):

(1)   a   *Ein George Bush* bricht nicht sein Ehrenwort.
        'a George Bush does not break his word'

        b   *Ein Lothar Matthäus* lässt sich niemals von seinem Körper besiegen.
        'a Lothar Matthäus will never allow his body to defeat him'

        c   Auch *eine Verona Feldbusch* muss sehen, dass sie im Gespräch bleibt.
        'even a Verona Feldbusch must work to stay in public consciousness'

This type of sentences forms minimal pairs with others in which the *definite* article appears, or else simply the bare proper name (the latter difference being basically a matter of dialectal variation). Thus, compare (1a) with (2a, 3a):

(2)   a   *Der George Bush* bricht nicht sein Ehrenwort.
        'the George Bush does not break his word'

(3)   a   *George Bush* bricht nicht sein Ehrenwort.
        'George Bush does not break his word'

(2a) and (3a) are judged to be semantically equivalent by German speakers, whereas (1a), while still being a statement about *the* George Bush, President of the U.S.A., adds a shade of

meaning which, intuitively speaking, has to do with the absoluteness or categoricity involved in the statement: (1a) appears to tie the fact that George Bush does not break his word to his invariable moral behaviour much more tightly than the two definite variants could. Similar remarks apply to (1b,c). This is one of the facts that are in need of an explanation.

Our analysis of indefinite proper names in sentences such as (1a-c) will assume that they involve generic quantification over "manifestations" of individuals. The role of the indefinite article is then to introduce a variable over such manifestations, and the categorical character that these sentences have will come out as a consequence of their genericity.

The body of the analysis is made up of two ingredients: First, we will specify a way of relating what we are calling manifestations to complete, "i-level" entities. To this end, we will assume a variant of Carlson's (1977) realization relation, which was designed to relate object readings of bare plurals, as in (4), to their kind readings, as in (5):

(4)   Gestern sind *Löwen* aus dem Zoo ausgebrochen.   <u>object reading</u>
        'Yesterday, lions escaped from the zoo.'

(5)   *Löwen* sind selten.   <u>kind reading</u>
        'Lions are rare'

As a second ingredient, we need an analysis of generic quantification, which will draw from the theory found in Krifka et al. (1995).

In the next section, there follows a non-exhaustive overview of other "non-standard" uses of proper names. Its purpose is essentially strategic: We will see that none of the uses presented there eventually meets the requirements for a proper analysis of the type of use exemplified in (1).

2   Uses of proper names with the indefinite article

2.1   Standard / primary uses of proper names

We will speak of the standard or primary use when a proper name refers directly to a unique individual. Such uses are rendered in the metalanguage as individual constants.

(6)   a   Goethe sprach mit Napoleon.
                'Goethe talked to Napoleon'

        b   talk_to(g, n)

(7)   a   Ludwig II. baute Neuschwanstein
                'Ludwig II built Neuschwanstein'

        b   built(l, n)

In some languages, the definite article can or even must be used with proper nouns:

(8) a   (*The) John came.   English

     b   (Der) Hans ist gekommen.   German

     c   (Il) Gianni   Italian

     d   *(O) Iannis   Greek

In German, the only determiner that the primary use of proper names admits is the definite article. It is obligatorily when the proper noun is modified:

(9) a   Neuschwanstein   *(das) schöne (Schloss) Neuschwanstein
                                 *(the) beautiful (castle of) Neuschwanstein

     b   Noam Chomsky   *(der) große Noam Chomsky
                                 *(the) great Noam Chomsky

If we associate the notion of a primary use with a syntactic criterion saying that the occurrence of a proper name in German is primary if the proper name phrase is or could be bare, then (9a-b) must be classified as secondary. From a semantic point of view, however, all of the proper names in (9) are primary despite the (non-restrictive) modifier, since they are all directly referential.[1]

In the next sections, we will present different uses of secondary uses of proper names. We will differentiate between denominative, metaphorical, stage- and manifestation-uses.

2.2 Denominative use

In the denominative use, proper names act as common nouns, i.e. they denote sets of individuals bearing the same name. Just like other common noun phrases, they can have specific, non-specific or generic readings, or they can function as nominal predicates.

(10) a   Dich hat gerade eine gewisse Carmen Müller angerufen.   specific
            'a / some / a certain Carmen Muller just phoned for you'

      b   Ich würde lieber mit einer Carmen als mit einer Gertrude reden.   nonspecific
            'I would rather talk to a Carmen than to a Gertrude'

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[1] Gary-Prieur (2005) discusses questions around the notion of "primary" vs. "secondary" use in connection with proper names in more detail.

c	Ein Lopez / Antonio kann niemals ein Engländer sein.	<u>generic</u>
	'A Lopez can never be an Englishman'	
d	Peter ist ein von Löwenstein.	<u>predicative</u>
	'Peter is a von Löwenstein'	

When used denominatively, names can be combined with all sorts of determiners and quantifiers (cf. Longobardi 1994, 636):

(11) a   I met a certain Mary.

     b   I visited the two Marys yesterday.

     c   every Mary I met in my life

     d   Marys are usually nice girls, according to my experience.

     e   During my visit to the U.S. I met Marys everywhere.

In contrast to the primarily used proper names (rendered in 12a), we propose to represent the meaning of denominatively used proper names as in (12b):

(12) a $\|PN\| = d$

     b $\|a\ PN\|_{denom} = \lambda x\ [x\ is\ called\ PN]$

     c   set of individuals that are called *PN*

2.3   Metaphorical use

In this type of use, the actual referent of the proper name shares salient properties of another, more prominent bearer of the same name.

(13) a   No serás nunca un Picasso, por mucho que lo intentes.

                                (Spanish; Fernandez 1999)

          'You will never be a Picasso, however hard you may try'

     b   Jede Generation hat ihren Elvis Presley.
          'every generation has its Elvis Presley'

     c   She's no Florence Nightingale. (Payne & Huddelston 2002, 521)

Metaphorical uses are often triggered by certain lexical items such as the following:

(14)   *ein authentischer ..., ein echter..., ein neuer..., ein ... des 20 Jhs.*
         'an authentic …',   'a real …',   'a new …', 'a … of the 20th century'

(15)   Er ist drauf und dran, ein / der James Joyce des 21. Jahrhunderts zu werden.
'he is about to become a / the James Joyce of the 21st century'

(16)   eine / die Margret Thatcher von Deutschland
'a / the Margret Thatcher of Germany'

(17)   ein / der Marlon Brando der Politik
'a / the Marlon Brando of politics'

The proposed meaning rule for metaphorical uses is given in (18):

(18)   a $\|PN\| = d$

       b $\|a\ PN\|_{metaph} = \lambda x\ \exists P\ [P(x) \wedge C(P,d)]$

       c   set of individuals that have some salient property / properties of the bearer of the name

"C" is a contextual relation linking salient properties to individuals. For instance, "C" could link the property *powerful woman* to the individual Margret Thatcher.

2.4   Stage use

Suitably modified, proper names can serve to denote stages of the individual that is the bearer of the name.[2] Both the definite and the indefinite article are possible determiners here:

(19)   a   Der junge Isaac Newton zeigte keine Anzeichen von Genie.
'the young Isaac Newton showed no signs of genius'

       b   das Paris Balzacs
'the Paris of Balzac" / "the Balzacian Paris'

       c   Das England des 18. Jahrhunderts war das Zentrum der Industrialisierung.
(cf.: *England des 18. Jahrhunderts…)

              'the England of the 18th century was the centre of industrializaion'
'18th century England...'

       d   England war im 18. Jahrhundert das Zentrum der Industrialisierung.
'England was the centre of industrialization in the 18th century'

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[2] This is of course another element from Carlson (1977). The difference between his account and ours is that Carlson concentrates on the role of the verb for the creation of stage-level entities, whereas we are more interested in the sort-shifting functioning of modifiers *within* the noun phrase.

     e   Durch die Tür kam ein wütender Paul
               'a furious Paul entered'

     f   Nous avancions, mains dans la main, dans les rues d'un Paris ensoleillé.
               (French; Gary-Prieur 1991, 46)
               'we were walking hand in hand through a sunny Paris'

The stage use of proper names can be formalized as in (20b, d) for the indefinite and the definite case, respectively:

(20)   a $\|PN\| = d$

       b $\|a +(PN + MOD)\|_{stages} = \lambda x_s\ [R(x_s, d)\ \&\ \|MOD\|(x_s)]$

       c   set of stages which stand in a realization relation to the bearer *d* and for which the modifier holds

       d $\|the\ (PN + MOD_{temp})\|_{stages} = \iota x_s\ [R(x_s, d, \|MOD_{temp}\|)]$

       e   the (unique) stage of the bearer *d* at time *t* (= as specified by the modifier)

It follows naturally that individual-level predicates cannot be used to modify stage-level proper name variables:

(21)   ? Durch die Tür kam ein intelligenter Paul.
            '*an intelligent Paul* entered'

(22)   ? Wir spazierten durch ein großes London.
             'we were walking through *a big London*'

The next section will be dedicated to the kind of proper name use that is the focus of our study.

3   The manifestation use of proper names

The term "manifestation" in order to denote sub-individual aspects of proper name bearers can be found in Payne & Huddleston (2002, 521). The general idea behind it is not a novel one: Kleiber (1981, 2005) uses the term "facets" or "fractures" of individuals to capture the same phenomenon, Landman (1989) speaks of "aspects". We would like to propose that the article in front of a proper name can serve to introduce a variable over manifestations of individuals. This variable must then be bound by some operator. Here are a few examples from different languages:

(23)   a   We need *another Roosevelt*. (Payne & Huddleston 2002, 521)

     b   Pierre et Jean n'aiment pas *la même Annie Muller*. (French; Kleiber 2005, 120)
          'Peter and John do not love *the same Annie Muller*'

     c   Der Peter, den ich schätze, verhält sich anders.
          'the Peter that I respect behaves differently'

     d   This is *a United States* I prefer to forget. (Payne & Huddleston 2002, 521)

These examples are systematically ambiguous: either they presuppose the existence of two different individuals accidentally bearing the same name (see the paraphrases in (23'), or – and this is the reading we are interested in here – they are about a single name bearer, of whom it is asserted that (s)he has contrasting manifestations (23''):

(23')   a   We need another individual *called* Roosevelt.

     b   Peter and John do not love the same individual *called* "Annie Muller".

     c   The individual called "Peter" that I respect behaves differently.

(23'') a   We need another manifestation of Roosevelt / We need Roosevelt in another manifestation.

     b   Peter and John do not love the same manifestation of Annie Muller

     c   The manifestation of Peter that I respect behaves differently.

Here again, modifiers can be employed to specify manifestations.

(24)   a'   We need a *resolute* Roosevelt. ("We've had enough of the indecisive R.")

     b'   Pierre aime la romancière Annie Muller, Jean *la linguiste* Annie Muller.
          'Peter loves *the novelist* A.M., John *the linguist* A.M.'

     c'   Der freigebige Peter verhält sich anders.
          'the generous Peter behaves differently'

The ambiguity of the sentences in (23) shows that ordinary predicates must systematically allow their arguments to be either individual-level or manifestation-level.

The difference between the two readings is read off from the surface form more easily in English than in German, because in English, proper names can be modified without needing a determiner. In that case, however, they can only be read as being individual-level. In (25b), the modifier is therefore non-restrictive.

(25) a   I prefer the cheerful Kerstin to the melancholic one.   <u>manifestation / individual</u>

      b   Cheerful Kerstin was at the Party, too.   <u>only individual</u>

A similar disambiguation can be brought about by certain adjectives in French. Schnedecker (2005, 88) points out that (26a) does not have a sensible reading, whereas (26b) does, namely under the interpretation we have dubbed "manifestation use".

(26) a   #L'infidèle Odile était détestable, l'autre Odile était adorable.
            'The unfaithful Odile was hideous, the other Odile was admirable.'

(26) b   L'Odile infidèle était détestable, l'autre Odile était adorable.
            'The Odile unfaithful was hideous, the other Odile was admirable.'

Thus, the position of the adjective "infidèle" ("unfaithful") before the proper noun results in a non-restrictive reading, and so it does not make sense to talk about "the other Odile" afterwards (assuming that there is not a second person called Odile as a possible referent). If the adjective is placed after the name, the restrictive, manifestation reading results and it makes perfect sense to talk about "the other Odile" – the manifestation of Odile that was faithful, as it were.

We think it is advantageous not to conflate stage with manifestation uses despite superficial similarities. For one thing, the original idea behind stages is that their identity is completely determined by their temporal extension. Manifestations are not temporally anchored in the same way. Note that the verbs in (23 a,b,c) at least are individual-level and thus couldn't possibly provide for a temporal identification of stages of their referential arguments. Rather, manifestations as we understand them represent more lasting, stable aspects of individuals - typical ways in which they are recurrently experienced by others. An individual can realize more than one manifestation at the same time ("Both the novelist Annie Muller and the linguist Annie Muller condemned this proposal at the meeting"), something that is logically impossible for stages.

(27) Both the novelist Annie Muller and the linguist Annie Muller condemned the dean's speech at yesterday's meeting

Syntactically speaking, there are several ways to construct manifestation-denoting proper noun phrases. Here are the four most common constructions used in German:

– PN + "als" + MOD   ex.: "Franz Beckenbauer als Geschäftsmann"
                                         („F.B. as (a) businessman")
– PN + def. article + CN   ex.: "Franz Beckenbauer der Geschäftsmann"
                                         („F.B. the businessman")

– article + CN + PN	ex.: "der Geschäftsmann Franz Beckenbauer"
	(„the businessman F.B.")
– article + ADJ + PN	ex.: "ein weltläufiger Franz Beckenbauer"
	(„a wordly-wise F.B.")

In line with the remarks in section 2, we propose the following meaning rule for manifestation denoting proper noun phrases:

(28) a $\|PN\| = d$

b $\|a\ (MOD + PN)\|_{manif} = \lambda x_m\ [R(x_m, d)\ \&\ \|MOD\|(x_m)]$

c   set of manifestations of the bearer *d* for which the modifier holds

d $\|the\ (MOD + PN)\|_{manif} = \iota x_m\ [R(x_m, d)\ \&\ \|MOD\|(x_m)]$

It seems natural to us to recycle the "realization"-relation here to link manifestations to complete individuals. An individual is the set of its manifestations in one perspective, the set of its stages in another. The first is a social, evaluative perspective, the second a matter of objective temporal sequence alone.

Our focus is on indefinite articles with proper nouns, even though the examples we gave involve definite articles for the most part. But this is not due to semantics proper, but is rather a consequence of the fact that the familiarity presuppositions of proper names often carry over to manifestations: If you know the referent of a proper name, then you will often know its salient manifestations as well. But this isn't necessarily the case, as (29) shows:

(29)   Heute Abend werde ich dir ein Berlin zeigen, das du noch nie gesehen hast.
       'Tonight I will show you a Berlin that you have never seen before'

We note furthermore that manifestation uses of proper names usually trigger contrastiveness effects: the melancholic Kerstin is (implicitly or explicitly) compared to the cheerful one, the businessman Franz Beckenbauer is contrasted with the private person Beckenbauer, etc. This effect is easily explained, given that proper names are already complete referential expressions without the need for any modification. If a restrictive modifier does appear, its purpose can only be to draw a comparison internal to the individual.

At this point, we can summarize the various interpretations we have proposed for proper names. The class of secondary uses is demarcated by the following common element: there is a meaning shift from unique, direct reference to predicative meaning, and furthermore, this shift is enforced by the presence of a variable-introducing article.

(30)	a	$\|PN\| = \|$the $PN\|$	= d	primary use
	b	$\|$a $PN\|_{denom}$	$= \lambda x$ [x is called PN]	denominative
	c	$\|$a $PN\|_{metaph}$	$= \lambda x\ P$ [P(x) & C(P,d)]	metaphorical
	d	$\|$a (PN + MOD)$\|_{stages}$	$= \lambda x_s$ [R(x$_s$, d) & $\|$MOD$\|$(x$_s$)]	stages
	e	$\|$a (MOD+ PN)$\|_{manif}$	$= \lambda x_m$ [R(x$_m$, d) & $\|$MOD$\|$(x$_m$)]	manifestations

4 Generic sentences with indefinite proper names

4.1 Treatment of generic sentences

The formalization of generically quantifying sentences we will work with here is as laid out in Krifka et al. (1995). It assumes a tripartite structure, consisting of an unselective generic quantifier, a restriction, and a scope. Stage-level predicates contribute situation variables. Which other variables will be bound depends on the form the nominals in the domain of the generic operator take: singular indefinites contribute free individual variables, whereas unmodified proper names are not open to binding. Bare plurals, although being proper names (of kinds), are special: they can contribute quantifiable variables, because kinds can be decomposed into their instantiation sets via the Carlsonian "realization"-relation.

(31) a   A lion roars.

   b   Gen(x,s) [lion(x) & s contains x & C(x,s)] [x roars in s]

(32) a   Tommy roars when he smells food.

   b   Gen(s) [smells food in s (t) & C(t,s)] [t roars in s]

(33) a   Lions roar.

   b   Roar(LEO LEO)

   → accommodation triggered by sortal mismatch:
   (i) introduction of object-type variable x
   (ii) introduction of realization relation R$_{is}$:
       Gen (x,s) [R$_{is}$ (x, LEO LEO) & s contains x & C(x,s)] [x roars in s]

All generically quantifying sentences are implicitly restricted by the typicality relation "C", which makes sure that contextually inappropriate situations are excluded from the quantification. For instance, (33a) is not about atypical lions, such as lions with damaged vocal chords, or typical lions in inappropriate situations, such as lions in the state of sleeping, etc.

4.2   Generic quantification over manifestations

A proper name can only be part of a generic sentence if its bearer is described as being involved in a habitual activity, which leaves the "Gen" quantifier with only the situation variable to bind.

(34)   a   (=3a) George Bush bricht nicht sein Ehrenwort.
          'George Bush does not break his word'

       b   Gen(s) [gb in s & C(gb,s)] [gb does not break his word in s]

This is the situation we now have to compare with our initial sentence (1a), repeated here as (35):

(35)   a   (=1a) Ein George Bush bricht nicht sein Ehrenwort.
          'a George Bush does not break his word'

Let's quickly sum up the assumptions we have gathered until now:

1. The indefinite article introduces a variable of a certain sort; there is a choice between one of $\{x, x_s, x_m\}$
2. There is a hidden generic quantifier: Gen
3. Generic quantification is confined to "representative" (ordinary, salient) instances
4. Predicates are lexically ambiguous between taking stage / individual level arguments or manifestations

Putting all of this together, the analysis for (35a) looks like in (35b):

(35)   b   Gen(x_m,s) [R(x_m, gb) & s contains x_m & C(x_m, s)] [x_m does not break his word in s]

       c   "For every manifestation of George Bush in all relevant situations, the manifestation does not break his word in that situation."

The contrastiveness effect we mentioned in section 3 is absent here due to the generic quantification, which lets through the whole set of representative manifestations of the name bearer. At the same time, we can explain why the indefinite proper name construction of the manifestation type differs intuitively from its definite variant in the way alluded to above: It is the very genericity of the sentence that brings the element of typicality into play: What is expressed in generic noun phrases with indefinite singular subjects must refer to law-like, non-accidental generalizations (Krifka et al. 1995, 13f.). The same is not true of habitual sentences with simple names as subjects.

To recap, we claim that the initial sentences with indefinite proper names are best analyzed as quantifying over manifestations, because:

- the primary = uniquely referential use would not allow the name to be determined by an *in*definite article in the first place.
- the sentences under consideration are clearly not about a set of individuals bearing the same name (denominative) or sharing some property (metaphorical), but about a unique individual: the very (most salient) bearer of the name.
- the sentences under consideration do not involve quantification over temporal stages of the bearer. Temporal aspects are mostly irrelevant to the interpretation of sentences such as (1).
- only the application of manifestations allows us to reconcile the intuition that the sentences under consideration are about a specific individual (the bearer of the proper name) with the theoretical requirement that the indefinite article functions as a variable-introducer.

5   Extension: Predicative use of common nouns with and without indefinite articles

Our analysis would be substantiated if we found other constructions besides argumental proper names in which the indefinite article serves to introduce manifestations. Predicate nominals might be a candidate. In German, use of the indefinite article is optional with certain predicatively used common nouns (mostly the ones denoting professions, nationality, and ethnicity). It could be that the indefinite article with this group of nouns introduces manifestations, whereas the bare nouns denote ordinary sets of objects.

(36)   a   Xaver ist Professor.   'Xaver is a professor'

      b   Lara ist Diplomatin.   'Lara is a diplomat'

      c   Anselm ist Bauer.   'Anselm is a farmer'

(37)   a   Xaver ist ein Professor.   'Xaver is professorial'

      b   Lara ist eine Diplomatin.   'Lara is diplomatic'

      c   Anselm ist ein Bauer.   'Anselm is a boor'

The key observation here is that the examples in (36) without the article are true iff Xaver, Lara and Anselm are professor, diplomat and farmer by *profession*, whereas the examples in (37) do not necessarily imply this: They can also be true as long as Xaver, Lara and Anselm *behave* like a typical professor, diplomat, farmer, respectively, without actually earning a living by exercising these professions. So we could say that in (36), it is asserted that the proper name bearers are members of a kind (in the wider sense of "kind" of e.g. Chierchia 1998), whereas the sentences in (37) are not about being an instance of the kind, but rather

about displaying salient manifestations of the kind. And it is once again the indefinite article that is responsible for the shift from the standard to the derived denotation.[3]

To broaden our notion of manifestations so that it includes manifestations of kinds besides ordinary individual makes good sense: Kinds are a sort of individuals, too (cf. Krifka et al. 1995, 66ff.), and we conceptualize kinds by making use of their salient properties, or manifestations. It is these salient, culturally determined manifestations that allow the non-literal readings in (37).

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[3] Cf. de Swart, Winter & Zwarts (2004) for a similar proposal relating to Dutch predicate nominals.

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