The meanings of indexical words

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The success of communication requires understanding by the listener the meanings of such expressions as "I", "Here", "This", "Now", "So", the denotations of which are different to the participants of the conversation.

All sentences including indexical are meaningful in every context, even they are false. We do not define one of these terms through another, but take them independently. Their meanings are considered as the centers of coordinate systems. The properties of each system correlate to the ontological category. The way in which the indexical words denote the objects differ from the way in which the expressions like “in Moscow”, “at 5 p.m. May 23, 1985” or “St. Basil’s Cathedral” refers to the individuals directly. Saying “Here”, “Now”, “It” one does not designate a point, an instant or a thing. One sets a central position of spatial and time coordinates and initial status of intentional object.

These positions may be occupied by various geographic places, historic periods or individual things, which can exist or cannot exist. The central positions exist because an agent points them out. Each category includes 3 systems of concepts.

Space:

1) Directions (left – here – right, front – here – back, up – here – down)

2) Distance (here – near – far)

3) Complement (here – there)

Time: 1) Directions (before – now - after)

2) Distance (now – recently - ago)

3) Complement (now – earlier or later)

Property: 1) Directions (0 dimensions)

2) Distance (this – similar - other)

3) Complement (this – that)

Entity: 2) Distance (it – another) “to coincide or not to coincide with it”

3) Complement (it – non-it) “to be or not to be it”

Comprehending an entity one divides the universe into two parts: the class of entities coinciding with the given entity and the class of entities not coinciding with it.

Every category yields a number of areas of it space. There are 53 spatial areas obtained by compositions of directions and distances, e. g. left, up, in front, far from the center.

There are 5 time intervals: a long time ago, recent past, now, near future, far future.

The categories of entity and property establish 2 areas: this and that. The more parameters the category has the less strict rules for the change of the direction of attention are. One can say “here” about a point of space for the first time and about another point for the second time without restriction. But to say “now” about an instant in the past one has to represent the past period in his memory. It is impossible to change at random the intention of a mental act related to the entities or properties. It is necessary to move from individual perception to the concept by logic inference (red – color) or from a cause to its result (bee – honey)

The denotation of indexical is not reduced to indicating acts or elements of space, time, exemplification of entity and property. They have general logic meanings in any contexts.

When we affirm “Greenwich is here” we make the central spatial position in our mind correspond to the place in the empiric world. Similarly the ostensive sentences “This color is red”, “It is Moon” connect the property and entity as the targets of intention with the empiric property and entity. Thus indexical designate transcendental conditions of the application of intellectual functions to their arguments (different types of phenomena). They introduce our consciousness into the world of objective knowledge.

The rules comparing the speaker’s and the reader’s coordinate systems are objective and depend on intrinsic features of categories of space, time, etc.

Indexicals do not denote the empiric phenomena only. They may denote an object of any ontological level. Using the pronouns “It” and “This” we distinct an object from the universe. The adverbs “Here” and “Now” are used in the statements about ideal facts which do not occur in space and time. The phrases “a definition given above”, “the contradiction obtained here”, “the theorem proved earlier” designate a status of the formula in the argumentation. Generally indexicals express objective information of the category of phenomena, its position in the system, the way from a point to another point in the same system and its relation to another system.