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Indexicality: Centers and perspective

Abstract:

I offer a new theory of indexicality in which indexicals are characterized as presuppositionally anchored to a doxastic center, of the general sort introduced by Lewis, Quine and Stalnaker to model de se attitudes. I argue that this theory is empirically superior to direct reference (and constant function) accounts of indexicality, and show how it accounts for a variety of puzzles for those accounts, including shifted indexicals, puzzles about de re belief, the behavior of indexicals in Free Indirect Style; bound indexicals, and so-called "fake indexicals", inter alia. This account draws essentially on the theory of Aloni (2001), accounting for de re belief attribution and counterpart relations under epistemic modality, and on Stalnaker (2008) for his modification of the account of Centers due to Lewis (1979). And it shares important features with Wechsler's (2010) recent theory of first and second person plural pronouns across languages.