

FREGE AND RUSSELL ON DESCRIPTIVE THEORY OF REFERENCE

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ABSTRACT

The name of Frege and Russell are intimately related to the descriptive theory of reference. It is obvious that when we talk about a descriptive theory of proper name the concept of proper name came into existence. This is why in this article author discussed about Mill's theory of proper name and as well Frege and Russell's understand of proper names. We are using language to talk about the world. Frege's and Russell's views are obvious different, but because of certain superficial similarities in how they handle certain famous puzzles about proper names, they are often assimilated. In the case of proper names, both Frege and Russell are often described together as "descriptivist." But their views are fundamentally different. In this article author tries to analysis Frege and Russell controversy on descriptive theory of reference and analyzed a probable solution following Russell.

Originally criticizing the proper names related referential doctrine of the Mill, Frege presented his own doctrine. While talking about proper names one name begins with the J. S. Mill. The name Mill has come into existence whenever we implemented the seed of proper names. Although, Mill had not been recognized as a linguistic philosopher in the true sense of the term, but from his grammatical classification of proper names later philosophers had gained ample clues on the basis of which they developed the concept of proper name.

According to Mill, every name denotes an object or every name either denotation or connotation or in the form of the re or the dicta are associated with an object. In short, it can be said that to be a name is to be a name of an object. According to Mill, 'a proper name is an unmeaning mark which we connect our mind with the idea of the object.' According to Mill, a proper name like 'Paul' or 'caesar' is a singular name which is devoid of all connotations. According to Mill, the work of proper name is not to giving any general information, but to give the name so that we can use the name as a purpose; the name is connected to the object and is not dependent on the value of the object.

The obvious problem of this simple concept of the name related to the name is that if the name of the role is limited only to the direction of their carrier, the name without bearer becomes meaningless. But the name without bearer seems to be completely meaningful and it's used in a sentence as well as expressing in the

sentences. If it is not possible, then how we can say ‘Santa Clause does not exist’ is not the only meaningful sentence, but also truth. The proper name related descriptive theory of reference of Frege and Russell can make the solution of Mill’s view. Moreover, Mill’s theory can be used in some statements, but it is very difficult to use it in identity statements. An identity statement, for example ‘Hosperus is Phosphorous’—there are two proper names which refer to an object. According to Mill, these proper names can express the same meaning because they refer same object (planet Venus). But Mill’s theory is not acceptable because this statement is informative to us. In this way, Frege criticized Mill’s theory of proper names.

Frege makes a difference between proper names and predicate expressions. According to Frege, proper name means not only general names like ‘Socrates’ or ‘Kant’, but it means linguistic components like definite descriptions. For example, ‘The highest mountain peak of Nepal’—this definite description is also a proper name; it is marked up or refer an object. For Frege, proper name means something completely. The proper name is related to Sinn or sense, but all proper names do not have Bedeutung or referent. According to Frege, in an ideal language every name has particular meaning or idea and every name is always referring to an object. But in an ordinary natural language, there are many names which are nothing to refer and it will be a different view of a particular individual regarding the meaning of a particular name. And from Frege’s point of view, this is the weak point of ordinary language. In a complete scientific language, every proper name has sense and reference. From the sense of proper name we can know which individual or object such name is referenced. In an ordinary language, a proper name like ‘Kant’ has one or more senses or has a definite description instead of proper names. For example ‘Immanuel Kant’, we can use ‘The author of Critique of Pure Reason’—this definite description instead of such proper name.

One of the topics mentioned above is very clear which is in the theory of sense and reference Frege makes a difference between sense and reference. Frege discusses the problem of sameness or identity in his first published article ‘*Über Sinn and Bedeutung*’, which was published in 1892. Let’s talk about two common sentences: ‘Venus=Venus’ and ‘Venus=the morning star’. First one here is a tautologous sentence, which do not give us new information, but the second one is not tautologous and which is informative. But if two sentences tell about the exact same thing that identities with that object, then the question is: how can we say the second sentence as significant but do not the first? Do we repeat the same thing twice to identify the same thing?

This problem has been solved by Frege in this way: according to Frege, the concept of meaning is not clear. To analyze the concept of meaning Frege talks about three components of meaning: linguistic word, what do the words express and to whom the words express. Frege gave the name of these words about the use of connotation is Sinn and he called and Bedeutung of the referential use. Frege makes the difference of these two meanings in this way, ‘The greatest natural number’, it has a specific connotation or sense. We can

know what the word expresses because this word has a sense and it will translate in different language for our use. Since there is no such number, there is no referent. On the other hand, 'the morning star', it has both sense and reference. It expresses the sense, which is, that star which rise in the sky in the morning and its referent is the planet Venus. The main point of Frege is every meaningful word has the sense and sometimes it also has reference; there are such meaningful words which have sense but no reference. According to Frege, definite descriptions like proper names also indicate something.

Regarding the definite descriptions Frege says that the proper name can be expressed in some description or the proper name is equivalent to the description. We can see Frege's reflection regarding this in his article on '*Über Sinn and Bedeutung*'. He said:

'The actual proper name such as 'Aristotle' may have disagreement with sinn. For example, 'Aristotle' one can understand it as 'the teacher of Plato and the great teacher of Alexander' and anyone else can add sinn to another sentence such as 'Aristotle born in Stagira' with the description of this sentence. Or, the other people cansinn the name (Aristotle) in this way, 'Aristotle was a teacher of great Alexander who was born in Stagira'. As long as referent or bedeutung is the same, the variation of this proper name sinn can be taken at tolerant levels, although such variants are prohibited in the demonstrative science of the intimate relationship and should not be done in a complete language.' (1980. P. 58)

Russell does not agree with Frege's view. In the '*Theory of Description*' Russell try to prove that definite description do not refer anything that means definite descriptions do not have any referent.

In the book '*Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*' which was published in 1903, Russell claim that a name is "a simple symbol, directive designating an individual which is its meaning, and having this meaning in its own right, independently of the meaning of all other words". '*On Denoting*', published in 1905, Russell makes a difference between proper name and incomplete symbol. Proper name, like 'Scot' which can refer an existential individual and incomplete symbol, like 'Appollo', which do not refer anyexisting individual, so it is incomplete. According to Russell the meaning of the proper name is the existence of these objects that refer to those names. But in the year 1918, in the article '*The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*' Russell makes a difference between logically proper name and incomplete symbol and he includes ordinary proper name (Mill and Frege used it only as a proper name) into incomplete symbol. According to Russell only logically proper name has clear meaning, which refers simple object or particular things.

Like Frege, Russell does not make a difference between sense and reference. In '*On Denoting*' Russell said, Frege "differentiates between two elements of a denoting phrase whom we can call meaning and denotation", on the other hand, that the doctrine "I support there is no meaning, only occasionally

denotation”. Russell makes an argument against Frege’s theory of the name which has both sense and reference. The focus of this argument is those examples there is a lack of denotation or reference. According to Russell:

If we say, ‘The present king of England is bold’, then this statement does not reveal any complex meaning regarding ‘The king of England’; rather pointing out a real person. But let’s take a similar statement about ‘The present king of France is bold’. Like the previous statement, this statement is also meant to refer to ‘The king of France’. The two statements like ‘The present king of France’ and the ‘The present king of England’-both are meaningful yet clearly there is no denotation or referent of ‘the king of France’. It seems to many people that the utterance ‘The present king of France is bold’ is meaningless. But in reality, this statement is not meaningless, because it is clearly false. (*‘On Denoting’*, p. 9)

Although Frege considers proper names and definite description as synonymous, but Russell feels it is important that it is necessary to differentiate between proper name and definite description. According to Russell, if proper name is meaningful, then it refers to an object, but there are many definite descriptions which have no reference or connotation, and in that sense they have no meaning. The importance of the definite description is not the same as name because when the putative denoting phrases analyze it is devastated. We do not find the meaning of definite description in any referenced objects. Although proper name is ‘complete’, the definite description is not ‘complete’; they have no meaning ‘separately’.

The role of definite description in a sentence is that they are not used for any person or object. Russell calls definite description as ‘incomplete symbol’, which means that they have no meaning separate from the context used in sentences. In the *‘Principia Mathematica’*, Russell has adopted the incomplete symbol as “It is a sign that does not have any meaning, rather it is only converged in a particular situation or context”. According to Russell we have to make a logical analysis in certain material parts in determining the meaning of definite descriptions. Through logical analysis, we can show that there is no need for any referent of definite descriptions.

Russell considers that Frege’s view (definite phrases have sense and reference) is wrong, because there are such statements of phrases which has no referent like ‘the king of France’. According to Russell all phrases are to be used in a statement that would be false; yet they are not non-sense according to Frege. Russell’s criticism against Frege can be answered in such a way: Russell has assumed the precedence that every utterance or statement is true or false. In addition, Russell has also asserted that according to Frege each referential phrase has a sense and a referent. But the prediction of Russell is not right. Because Frege clearly pointed out that some referential phrases have no connotation or referent. To make clear his view Frege used the word ‘Odysseus’ that word used in ‘Odysseus was deeply asleep when disembarked at Ithaca’.

Frege denies that the sentence related to 'Odysseus' which express an utterance or sentence, is clearly false (Russell's argument); according to Frege, the statement is not true and false too. Similarly, the same argument applies to the utterance 'the present king of France'. According to Russell, every sentence is true or false, but according to Frege some statements are true, some are false; there is nothing true or false again.

Now the question is: why Russell said that referential phrases have no sense, sometimes it has only referent? To answer this question now, according to Russell, 'the king of France' or 'the king of England'—these type utterances are actually not denoting expressions. These expressions are according to Russell is incomplete symbol. Incomplete symbol is that type of symbol which is not meaningful separately; they are meaningful only when they used in a sentence. The form of these types of expressions is 'The x is P', if we analyze this we can find 'a definite description like as 'There is one and only one thing x that is P'. The name 'Odysseus' does not have any referent; Russell called them disguised definite descriptions. Russell makes a distinction between ordinary proper name such as 'Barack Obama', 'Santa Claus' and logically proper name. According to Russell logically proper names are individual constant of formal logic. Russell mentioned in his article '*Knowledge by Acquaintance and knowledge of Description*' (1917) that ordinary languages, especially English, only logically proper names have 'this' and 'that' types of demonstrative (which refers to the present sense-data of an individual) and the pronoun 'I'. Russell said, "I believe that connotation or referent is not a part of proposition instead only proper name; that is, such which do not reflect the content of an object but only refers to the name of the object.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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