
METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF THE LINGUISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Pavel N. Baryshnikov

Pyatigorsk State Linguistic University
Kalinin Avenue, 9, Pyatigorsk, Russia, 357500

Methodological issues of modern linguistic philosophy of consciousness are discussed in the article. A number of points of modern analytic philosophy of consciousness are considered and one can understand the whole complexity of the issue of correlation of mental and physical processes concerning the linguistic aspect. We pay much attention to the linguistic nature of intentionality and to the problem of reference; and we also describe intentional ambivalence of semiotisation of sensory experience.

Key words: linguistic philosophy of consciousness, mind-body problem, introspection, intentionality, concept, metaphor, reference.

Introduction

Before we pass straight to discussion of methodological problems, we should examine stages of formation of linguistic philosophy of consciousness as a specific field of knowledge; questions of linguistic philosophy are discussed here within the context of consciousness problems. The suggestion that problems of linguistic philosophy of consciousness trace back to the ancient question of correlation of language and reality, is probably right. Since the first time people tried to comprehend the correlation of objective reality and of thought contents, it became obvious that inner nature of linguistic processes is the main problem. So within the world philosophical thought there is a permanent question about some universals which can “add” a person — through a system of meanings — into the relationship with the world of things and even the world before things. Such dichotomies as idea and eidos, “reals” and “nominals”, notion and concept, word and thing, denotation and signification, etc. are quite well-known in the history of universals [1]. If we single out the main problem of this extensive range of philosophical questions, it would be: what is the essence and the ontological status of relations between sensory, signified, thought and pronounced things within a system of signs and things taken by consciousness as a result of physical and mental activity, i.e. integral system of objective reality? The answer to this question could help by linguistic actualization of consciousness through its own structure: from the primary qualia to will, emotions, self-knowledge, feelings, perception and speech-production. And it is obvious that the problem of consciousness is not only about its structure; “talking of consciousness is talking of our whole life”, as John Searle said [2. P. 128].

Within the philosophy of XX the whole range of its issues was brought to linguistic philosophy and philosophy of consciousness. Each of these sectors formed its own opposite traditions, methods and terminology. Having quite a few unsolved methodological problems, these philosophical sectors cooperate closely within a number of spheres. This article purposes to consider and to describe methodological problems of linguistic philosophy of consciousness and also to analyse their possible solutions. So we are to examine the process of transformation of consciousness concept within the linguistic philosophy of thought.

In what spheres could we have methodological difficulties? Among the most prevailing ones we may single out intentionality, representativeness and intersubjectivity of consciousness. All these three characteristics depend on the method of comprehension of the essence of the language and linguistic processes of consciousness. That means linguistic philosophy could relieve (or at least try to relieve) some contradictions within paradigms of modern philosophy of consciousness. We consider it reasonable to start examining the mentioned spheres with the help of the analytic philosophy of consciousness (which became almost classical nowadays), then we could pass over to the question of correlation of physical and mental concepts within the structure of consciousness and, finally, we analyse intentionality and referentiality of consciousness within the linguistic aspect.

1. Analytic philosophy of consciousness

Analytic philosophy of consciousness unites a number of theoretical and methodological approaches based on logical-semantic models of representatives of the analytic philosophy of consciousness (Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, Ryle, Frege, Schlick and their followers) and some paradigms which solve the consciousness problem. These paradigms settle the issue not within the scope of different types of linguistic relations, which effect the actualization of consciousness, but within phenomenological approaches. So the analytic philosophy of consciousness traces back from logical-semantic activity of linguistic processes of consciousness to its phenomenal nature. Theoretical attempts of such a synthesis (synthesis of principles of sense-creation and some material and mental base) engender such wide-spread theoretical trends of philosophy as behaviourism, reductionism, physicalism, mentalism, cognitive philosophy, etc. But two main problems still remain unsolved, these are: 1) the mind-body problem; 2) the ontology of sense. Actually both issues have something in common with the problem of correlation between consciousness and physical world of things and phenomena and proper material base, as in both cases the part of a mediator is played by some sign-generating system which sorts sensory experience and predicts most of all the signified qualities of the outer world. Actually all the analytic models within the scope of philosophy of consciousness try to answer the question posed by D. Dennett when he was very young: “How come that my thoughts and feelings coexist in the same world with the nerve cells and molecules which my brain consists of?” [3]

The stages of theoretical development of the analytic philosophy of consciousness may be observed through the analysis of the criticism of behaviourist reductionism. Among the weak points we can mention the impossibility of verification of the natural language. According to this criticism, the behaviourist approach cannot reveal the verified mental processes. In the world, where some mental states cannot be expressed in signs and symbols (e.g. grimaces, behaviour, statements, etc.), without having such semiotic indicators, mental states lose their ontological status within the scope of behaviourism. There is something interesting in the criticism of the structure of behaviourist approach: to analyse the dichotomy “stimulus” — “reaction” one has to prove obviously the correlation between consciousness and behaviour, while consciousness processes represent a whole complex of extramental qualias, reminiscences, sensations, inner

speech, and body expression of behaviour (voice timbre, posture, gait and even utterance syntax) is mostly unconscious. The fact, that communication problem cannot be solved within the scope of behaviourism, is quite important. The matter is, we take a communication partner according to the presumption of semblance [4. P. 159—181] (i.e. the recipient of my message isn't an alien, he possesses the same physiological, mental and social manifestations of consciousness as I do), we expect comprehension, we “understand a message for somebody else” while encoding it, we adapt the message for the “recipient”. The problem is that we have no guarantee that the perceptual and receptor level of the recipient is identical to ours, and we never know, which contents he correlates with signifiers. And here we have a great problem of communicative interaction and a whole number of questions in the field of linguistic pragmatics.

Within the criticism of behaviourism there are a lot of thinking experiments which make obvious the fact that communicative behaviour may have free semantics [5]. Even verbal behaviour cannot fully correlate with some emotional states, and that indicates of some imperfection of behaviourist approach. The weak point of the mentioned theoretical and research approaches is, that the reason of behaviour is not beyond a communicative, but inside his interpretive sign and symbolic system, including memory, integral introspective self-identification, etc.; but there is still no strict logical link between consciousness and behaviour.

The criticism of physicalism is quite interesting within the problems of the analytic philosophy. It's well-known that representatives of this school of thought try to reduce consciousness to simple material base, and it logically provokes some contradiction within the correlation of physical and mental components. Physicalism requires finding out the identity between physical and mental components, considering that essential characteristics of the mental part (privacy, introspectivity) are logically irredundant to those of the material part (publicity, spatial position). Within the scope of physicalism this contradiction is relieved due to a nominal identity of a range of concepts, where the referential link is based not upon conventional meanings, but on the “correct causal connection” [6. P.135—164]. To all appearance, the principle of psychophysical identity is hard to realize within the physicalist reductionism as there are no rigid designata concerning mental phenomena. According to Kripke's approach, this situation is caused by nonidentity of mental objects to themselves on the strength of their own essential characteristics.

But the analytic approach, which defends the appropriateness of the physicalist approach, still exists, though some of its conclusions are rather queer. Nomological structures can resolve the problem of the logical irreducibility of mental processes to physical ones, as D. Davidson believes. According to this approach, mental phenomena are just described as such, as the researcher isn't aware of all the physical essential characteristics of its reason [7. P. 245—259]. So, the nomination of mental processes takes place in a “gap” between the declared and undeclared physical phenomena. It's obvious that all the resources of physics are not enough to declare mental processes, as the latter just name (mostly metaphorically) the undeclared physical referents. Under the circumstances Davidson has to solve quite an awkward question of endless correlates of the same physical action (e.g., a great diversity of greetings: nodding, winking, a num-

ber of conventional phrases, etc.). He had to determine the physical situation wider and to adjust the communicative context to it. In this case, culturological relativity is derived from physical environment, and any mental process becomes as such, only if it acquires value, intentional and communicative stress (a greeting becomes a greeting, only if it is a real greeting, not an involuntary nod).

The school of functionalism with all its diverse variations became one more violent and actually, fruitful reaction to attempted solutions of the problem of identity of mental and physical parts in philosophy of consciousness. The main postulate of this school says that all the processes of consciousness possess neutral functional states. Functionalism divides into several interdisciplinary spheres: machine-state functionalism (H. Putnam), social and biological approach (D. Dennett), eliminative materialism (P. Feyerabend), “anomalous monism” (D. Davidson), etc. Within the analytic philosophy of consciousness we are interested in the linguistic aspect of the issue.

R. Rorty sets the limits of linguistic approach to consciousness; he asserts that all phenomena, which belong to the psychologically and physically real space, always correlate to language, so the problem is purely linguistic. Within the context of psychophysical causal connections physical reality remains a “black-box”. So, the ontological status of sense is still not clear, though Rorty points out the breakthrough in the comprehension of symbol-creation as some physical state of neurons [8]. Ultimately, the functioning of our body, the atomistic and wholistic work of our brain were acknowledged unimportant; language work (production of sense, creation of metaphors) is effected within a gap, or a transition from a discrete particle to a linear function, which includes a whole set of logical-semantic, syntactic, semiotic procedures. And it is the language that is an indirect evidence of psychophysical unity. Consciousness is capable of representing senses both from the first and the third person through the language and meta-position. According to this approach, language is possible only if refused the deterministic materialistic monism.

In one of the chapters of his “Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature” R. Rorty — while quoting Sellars — formulates the main methodological problem of linguistic approach: a great number of subjective qualias are eliminated by language games and reduced to a common denominator, but the question of substance and of some metaphysical universal bases still remains burning [9. P. 74—75]. So, the integrity of consciousness is supported by communicative relevance and not by the correlation of knowledge and judgement to the reality. Perhaps, all the linguistic pictures of the world are also based upon the communication relevance. And it is the sphere where we may find a whole complex of reference problems. Neither the causal theory of Kripke, nor “knowledge by acquaintance” of Wittgenstein managed to clarify the semiosis process of mental premises and to describe principles of detection of objects’ characteristics. The problem of referential semantics is that the latter correlates to objects, which have something in common with existence quantifiers, while cognitive procedures of natural language are based on the non-referential objects which represent the result of the analogic projection of consciousness.

The latest linguistic works in the field of cognitive semantics and self-engendering grammars partly repeat the route of philosophy of consciousness. Considering the prob-

lem of consciousness through language helps to find out the problem of the minute physical base of sense and neurophysiological aspect of the problem of picture analogies; to say nothing of “possible statements about language” (it’s the key moment in the process of forming of the secondary signal system). We think, if we consider cognitive and semantic aspect within the modern philosophy of consciousness, we may find out some new side of the described methodological problems.

2. Intentionality of consciousness in the modern linguistic epistemology

As we know, the term “intentionality” appeared in the philosophic discourse at the time of medieval scholasticism, where the word “intentio” meant “something different from oneself”. Then Husserl based himself upon Brentano’s works, integrated this term into the scope of philosophic problems of consciousness and linked the intentionality to noetic supposition (from Greek νόημα — subject thought content). So, consciousness isn’t neutral — in the point of being noetic, and it’s always stressed — in the point of sense, it is focused on something. Later on J. Searle in his speech-act theory will use the intentionality as a fundamental property of consciousness. So, there exists a focus of consciousness, where one may find extramental qualias, associative images, metaphors, successive speech production (so-called syntactic structuring) and even signs of consciousness itself (self-consciousness). The questions are: 1) whether physiological signs of linguistic “focus-retention” consciousness exist? 2) which properties of consciousness provoke the process of forming of the basic linguistic concepts?

It is rather difficult to answer the first question. The matter is that the “focus of consciousness” is quite heterogeneous. There is a well-known example about a man who is going along the street and talking with passion to another person. Without forgetting the subject of the conversation, he successfully gets round puddles, steps over curbs, passes through doors, so, the brain controls the environment, controls, projects, decides “in advance”, though the active area of linguistic consciousness doesn’t work. It reminds of the unconscious control of breathing, heartbeat, blood pressure. Lexical and syntactic operations are also based on this mechanism of the unconscious control — a native speaker never thinks over the cases, categories of gender and number he uses, etc. In the given examples the person gets round puddles and curbs and avoids speech and grammatical mistakes unconsciously, just “keeping in touch” with the different types of the environment — physical, nomenclatural and linguistic ones. Both physical environment’s obstacles and grammatical categories are out of the intentional focus.

This quite simple example can demonstrate the operation of a complex mechanism developed throughout the evolution. Unlike a processor, the brain works not with certain signals but with vague data, and it is capable of creating neuron programs upon them in a flash. Due to associative memory our brain can also bring back a stimulation to information projections, which is really important; that is the base for the self-training of consciousness and for the geometric sequence in the process of obtaining experience of building of categorial connections. The next level based on the physiological structure “stimulus — reaction” is a range of higher brain functions; they are some non-physical mental complex units which can influence upon physiological commands.

Speech logic and grammar can control nerve impulses responsible for the articulation [10]. So, we may conclude that some physiological processes have mental bases.

As for physiological bases of the intentional focus, they are, probably, connected with the functioning of the hippocampus and mediobasal parts of temporal region which are responsible for the declarative memory. It is actually a unity of retention and projection, as Husserl called it, i.e. the consciousness prognosticates and “completes” the existential processes integrity. The neurophysiology data indicate that frontal cortex participates in forming of abstract concepts and speech production. Physiological status of sense contents of abstract structures remains quite obscure. But here we are in a danger to end up in panlinguism as we have no evidences of higher cognitive processes except linguistic sign and symbolic activity of consciousness. Modern neurophysiologists, of course, talk of information synthesis and project sensations’ synthesis onto higher processes; but again it is pure conjecture which brings to ineffective radical reductionism. The actualization of consciousness is effected through a system based on the universal physical laws; consciousness itself fills the intentional space with mental contents manifesting themselves through the language.

We consider essential to differentiate a “background” from an “active zone” within the active zone of intentionality. The “background” includes extramental qualias, and therefore, “non-articulated” by the inner speech, the “active zone” includes a system of referential designata, which are connected to the linguistic picture of the world, to the national mentality, archaic layers of consciousness, etc. It is quite important that the mechanisms of detection of objects’ properties are dictated to the consciousness by the cultural “matrix”. People, who live within the arctic climatic zone, can distinguish dozens of nuances of white colour just because of a natural necessity (this approach is called “geographic determinism” in the anthropology), but properties of a natural object, which are beyond of scope of other cultures’ representatives, can only take their position in everyday practice and linguistic picture of the world, due to the linguistic nomination.

In other words, in case of biological need the eyesight as a body’s function will effect the actualization of its characteristics (binocularity, pupil reactivity, adaptation), though some properties, determined by the linguistic picture of the world, will still depend on mental processes.

While thinking over, we came to a quite ambiguous linguistic relativity theory of Sepir-Wharf, which states that cognitive processes depend on structure of language. There are well-known research experiments concerning the influence of gender category of nouns upon the perception of its certain denotation: in 2004 in the south of France there was a ceremony of opening of Viaduct Millau (a guy traffic bridge), German newspapers wrote that “it soared elegant and light in the sky”, at the same time newspapers in France described it as a “huge concrete giant” [12]. Throughout the history of linguistics of XX the linguistic relativity theory provoked several theoretical and methodological „battles“: “Battles of colour” and “battles of time”. While in these oppositions, scientists tried to find out the correlation of the linguistic picture of the world to the modelling of concepts which are connected to the certain objects’ properties.

Today the problem of correlation of linguistic contents and psychophysiological processes still remains unsolved. But there are very few of radical adherents of the linguistic relativity theory within the professional linguistic environment. Semantics of the linguistic worlds may not influence the physiological perception processes, but it obviously corrects the information processed by the brain. We may suppose that within these fields and periods of processing appear cognitive metaphors, which enclose the cognized world within the scope of certain analogies, associations, and comparisons.

As we know, Sapir-Whorf's hypothesis provoked quite a protracted opposition (which still exists) of mentalists and physicalists. The first ones prove experimentally that the picture of the world, formed by the sign and symbolic language system, influences the ways of physical perception of the reality; their opponents insist hard that the language is just a system of metaphors which isn't connected anyhow to the biologically necessary processes. As to this issue, the conclusions drawn by D. Vinnik might be considered quite interesting. The author distinguishes the duality of consciousness nature and the triality of theoretical and methodological approaches (physicalism, functionalism, and mentalism) and concludes, that if we acknowledge the idea of some logical-semantic contents of primary physical processes, we will have to accept the contradictory theory of psychophysical identity as well. So, the consciousness functions within some "gap" between "physis", "logos" and "semantics". There is every reason to believe that indirect signs of the "gap" can be found in the language, and the intentionality of consciousness possesses bidirectional properties: external ones (semiosis which is meant by the properties of the object) and internal ones (cultural-historic matrix, texts, contents of the consciousness itself).

The question of primacy of physiological processes over mental ones is probably inappropriate within such a context. The consciousness processes are always dual and multilevel; they "reflect" the physical world of things and "are reflected" in the world of images and abstract concepts. So, to describe the universal linguistic nature of consciousness processes, we need to examine the connection between the internationality of consciousness and reference and interpretation processes within semantics.

It's well-known that linguistic theories of reference are closely connected to some philosophical traditions and categories (identity and semblance, individuation, existence, analysis and synthesis, apriority and posteriority, etc). The belief in isomorphism between an utterance and the reality is included into the notion of reference per se. According to Kripke's causal reference theory, it's not due to some gnosiological preconditions that objects acquire their meaning, it's a result of an "indicating gesture" which takes out of the object its random properties. It's the continuation of Wittgenstein's nomination idea "by acquaintance". The problem is that the semantics of natural language worlds contains a great number of referents which cannot be "baptised" from the standpoint of nomination: for instance, utterances concerning belief, views, hypotheses, etc. Providing that the object reference, as a derivative from quantification and identity processes, find its focus within an utterance, it becomes possible to effect the actualization of the intentionality of the language sphere of consciousness [13]. As soon as an object turns into an utterance object, regardless of its own properties, it's going to be "loaded" with cultural, symbolic, pragmatic meanings. If there is any information beyond the utterance frames (it may be an inner speech, or a real dialogue, or even

some reading), it remains a psychophysiological supplementary material without any denotation, which is based just upon sensations and perception. In other words, we may close our eyes and imagine anything we wish, then we can open our eyes and see all around us, what is physically possible (real); as soon as we wish to tell, what we see or imagine at that particular moment, the referent of our utterance (even if the latter is obvious) will never be relevant to the reality. The issue is a “*linguaged*” world, “*grasped*” within the conceptual and metaphorical language net. But there is a more complicated intentionality level: the pragmatic aspect of a speech act. That is what “*I mean*” talking of the objects taken out of the neutral “*background*” and involved into the work of the language consciousness. Such issues as a null utterance referent, an “*eloquent silence*” effect and semantic and pragmatic asymmetry of a communication activity will be considered here.

Summary

What conclusions can we draw from the above?

First of all, it becomes obvious that while disputing over the correlation of physical and mental concepts within the consciousness work, researchers face the problem of linguistic bases again. Consciousness is a multidimensional phenomenon, and apparently it cannot be minimized to a primacy of some substance. It represents a complicated synthesis of physical impulses and mental linguistic superstructures, so it divides the reality into sensory and comprehension experiences. The sensory experience is represented by a range of subjective qualias, the comprehension experience — by the linguistic fixation at a syntactic and semantic level of categorisation. The consciousness dictates to the “*linguistic worlds*” the field of cognitive “*focus*” which is expressed in the utterance referent. The intentionality of consciousness may be classified in two groups: any type of mental contents (idea, imagination, abstraction, fantasy, sleep — within the scope of consciousness it is “*what*”) and linguistic nature (the point of communication activity — i.e. “*what about*”). As a result of our reasoning, we may conclude that the consciousness intentionality possesses bidirectional external and internal properties. The question of introspection principles remains still unsolved as the referent of conscious introspection is in both states at the same time (“*what*” and “*what about*”). Psychologists consider that as soon as a child means himself, while saying the pronoun “*I*”, the forming process of its secondary signal system is finished; but again, it’s rather difficult to describe physiological preconditions for that. Perhaps, promising achievements of the neurophysiology along with the laws of modern particle physics will take the work of consciousness to minute quantum-mechanical components and solve its riddle. But at present the language and the “*world of senses*” reproduced by the mentioned language still remain the main riddles of consciousness. The language like the consciousness is capable of introspection, i.e. the man unlike the representatives of other signal systems has a unique possibility to take a metaposition and to talk of his own signs.

We believe, it is within the sphere of linguistic processes, where we may find the solution of methodological problems of philosophy. Perhaps, the idea of cognition of the real phenomena’s nature through the linguistic facts of consciousness is not outdated yet, and philosophy is stepping towards a new round of a “*linguistic turn*”.

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МЕТОДОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОЙ ФИЛОСОФИИ СОЗНАНИЯ

П.Н. Барышников

Пятигорский государственный лингвистический университет
просп. Калинина, 9, Пятигорск, Россия, 357500

В статье обсуждаются методологические проблемы современной лингвофилософии сознания. Рассматривается ряд положений современной аналитической философии сознания. Раскрывается сложность вопроса о соотношении ментальных и физических процессов в языковом аспекте. Особое внимание уделяется лингвистической природе интенциональности сознания и проблеме референции, описывается интенциональная амбивалентность семиотизации опыта ощущений.

Ключевые слова: лингвистическая философия сознания, ментальное и физическое, интроспекция, интенциональность, концепт, метафора, референция.