

The problem of naturalization of communication. Meaning and information in the world of causal relations [connections]

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The objective of the project of the naturalization of the communication process and its components, such as participants of the communication act, language, meaning of language expressions, content of the message, individual ability and communicated message is an attempt to locate them in causal chains of natural world and hence to determine both, the notional and ontological possibilities to perceive them naturalistically.

Such a task requires a reference to properly understood categories of naturalism /physicalism and cognate notions: reductionism, emergence, law and explanation. The very notion of causality is usually taken in its quotidian sense, i.e. as a permanent cause and effect relation.

Cognitive science provides assumptions suitable to confront the task of naturalization of the communication process. Cognitive science usually assumes individualism and naturalism (in both, ontological and methodological layers). The former assumes that communication takes place between individuals but not within e.g. a group. The latter, that description and explanation of the communication phenomenon must comply with methodological and ontological rules of natural sciences. In the communication theory important notions include: conveying information /knowledge, meaning of messages or thoughts, understanding of a message and also referring the communication to particular states of affairs, i.e. having semantic properties. Two categories crucial for describing the course of communication deserve scrutiny: meaning/reference and information.

The communication naturalization program refers to these concepts that allow defining numerous basic notions in a naturalistic manner. The notably important concepts include: the causal theory of reference and information theory that also draws from causal relations. The former is used to explain semantic properties of individual's thoughts and the meaning of a message in a naturalistic manner, whereas the latter constitutes a base for naturalistic description of information/knowledge communicated. In cognitive science it is also possible to define in a naturalistic manner the essence of language and shared content phenomena as well as their distributed processing. Furthermore, this method assumes externalistic (and not internalistic) approach to individuation of the content of mental states.

Attempts to approach different aspects of the functions of a natural language in a naturalistic manner encounter numerous problems. Some of them may be defined in cognitive science – adequately enough as regards the objective of the communication naturalization program. The paper presents such a naturalizing approach towards communication.