

A DRT-based account of two Russian expressive pronouns

1. The paper is about particular uses of the Russian pronoun *sam* (I will gloss it simply as “SAM” because I don’t know of any suitable English equivalent) and *celyj*¹ (‘whole’). I will take up a hypothesis that these uses can be characterised as expressives, i.e. that their meaning falls into the same class with that discussed in Potts (2007). Roughly, the expressiveness of *sam* and *celyj* consists in that a speaker, using one of them, expresses his high regard of some individual or some property. Potts (2007) identifies some important properties of expressives, among which there are nondisplaceability (non-embeddability under negation, modals, etc.) and immediacy (performativity). My overall point will be that all the peculiar properties of *sam* and *celyj*, and arguably of all other expressives, is due to their being performative. My account will be spelled out in terms of DRT, namely in its version called “the binding theory of presupposition” (Van der Sandt 1992): in this version the construction of a DRS proceeds in two steps – first, all the presuppositions of a current utterance are resolved, then the new DRS is added to the common ground. My analysis is not complete, but I think that in this framework the problems and questions that I have can be most prominently stated.

2. Co-occurrence restrictions

2.1. *sam* can only combine with definite NPs (cf. also (1-2)) or with specific indefinite ones. (5) can only be said about a particular president (not a generic one); in (6) *sudja* ‘judge’ can be interpreted as definite or as indefinite, but denoting a particular individual in the actual world, the same for (7). Finally, *sam* can’t combine with predicative NPs - (8). Thus, NPs modified by *sam* can only have wide scope interpretation. I will follow (Geurts 1999) who unites definites and specific indefinites on the ground that they introduce backgrounded information (i.e., they introduce their discourse referents in the main DRS). The difference is that definites introduce given information and specific indefinite – new. I will suggest that the reason why NPs modified by *sam* must introduce their discourse referents in the highest DRS is because the condition (in the DRT sense) triggered by *sam* can only be interpreted there; also, I suppose that the condition of *sam* is an atomic one, therefore the occurrence of a discourse referent (the one who is “admired”) must be bound – so this referent should be introduced not lower than the DRS where it is part of *sam*’s condition. For the time being I will use a label “Admire(*i*,*x*)” for the condition of *sam* (“*i*” is an index, say a speaker, which is an “experiencer” of admiration; “*x*” is a referent who is being admired). The reason for why Admire(*i*,*x*) must only be in the the main DRS is, I conjecture, due to its performativity: one of the prominent features of performatives is their non-embeddability - they are defined only on a current context. What is important, performatives don’t change common ground; rather, intuitively, they change the “Kaplanian” context. In DRT those conditions that can only be interpreted relative to a current context must be in the main DRS (because in the embedded ones the interpretation is not affected by a context).

2.2. The distribution of *celyj* is wider: it can combine with definites (3), specific indefinites (9), non-specific indefinites (10), predicative NPs (4). I will assume that *celyj* says something about properties, not individuals; *celyj* thus needs to be represented by a separate DRS, where an individual variable over which the quantification is established will be introduced; so, it should look something like this [*x*: director(*x*)](GEN*x*)[Admire(*i*,*x*)] (for ex. (4)). Here *x* is bound, so there is no need to introduce a discourse referent for *x* separately (consequently, we can get non-referential readings).

3. *sam*, *celyj* and focus. Another peculiarity of *sam* and *celyj* is that they are always part of a focused constituent (this can be checked by posing questions to different constituent of a phrase – I don’t do it explicitly here for the lack of space). I suggest that it is because they never want to be in the background. Why? In the literature backgrounded information is often understood as given information; Geurts and van der Sandt (2004) propose that an utterance abstracted over a focused constituent ($\lambda x.\phi(x)$) is presupposed by this utterance. Thus, having adopted this view, I will make a stronger statement: *sam/celyj*-constituents must be focused because their meaning cannot be presupposed. Intuitively it’s clear why it is so: presuppositions are constraints on the common ground against which a given utterance is interpreted; performatives change not the common ground, but the

¹ This use of *celyj* is not standart, but its examples are numerous on the Internet.

(Kaplanian) context of an utterance – moreover, they do it directly: it can not be done so as if they have changed the context without being uttered.

Potts's solution is to include a new parameter into a context - c_e : whenever an expressive is uttered it changes this contextual parameter. As I am trying to do my analysis within DRT, I will try to formulate the same idea in a more "representational" way. Zeevat (1999) extends the standard DRT by postulating that conditions that "describe" the current contextual setting should be explicitly introduced into a main DRS: namely, he proposes that each new DRS has a condition "utterance (e)" that says that e is the utterance which this DRS represents; he also notes that together with this one another conditions, like $\text{speaker}(e,x)$, $\text{time}(e,x)$, can be introduced. Actually, he calls them presuppositions, but they are quite different from "normal" presuppositions: they are triggered by the very speech act, not a linguistic expression; they cannot be resolved locally (just because they cannot be triggered by sub-DRSs or single atomic conditions), unlike "normal" presuppositions, - so, as a result, they are always in the main DRS (so, from the technical point of view, it doesn't really matter for the ultimate representation whether these conditions will be added during the first step (resolving of presuppositions), or during the second one (merging a new DRS with an old one)). Moreover, such conditions are, if I understand it right, "metaconditions" because they don't affect the common ground, but they determine how the common ground should be changed. So, as a first approximation to the solution, one can think of $\text{Admire}(i,x)$ as such a metacondition. The problem is, there is still nothing in the model that would prohibit it being presupposed. So far, I cannot think of a solution for it, so I will simply stipulate it and leave the problem open.

Examples

- (1) Ja videl samogo Petju! (2) Sam Petja ne reshil zadachu!
I saw SAM Petja.ACC SAM Petja not solved problem.Acc
'I saw SAM Petja!' 'SAM Petja didn't solve a problem'.
- (3) Celyj prins Charls napisal recenziju na etu knigu. (from www)
whole prince Charles wrote review.Acc for this.Acc book.Acc
'WHOLE prince Charles wrote a review for this book'.
- (4) On ne prosto ekspert-analitik, a celyj direktor. (from www, edited)
he not just expert-analyst but whole director
'He is not just an expert analyst, but a WHOLE director'.
- (5) Sam prezident oshibaetsja.
sam president makes_mistakes.
'SAM president makes mistakes'.
- (6) Kak bytj, kogda sam sudja ne znaet, chto delatj? (from www, edited)
how to_be when SAM judge not knows what to_do
'How to be when SAM judge doesn't know what to do?'
- (7) a. Sam nemec mozhet oshybitjsja. (8)*On –sam direktor.
SAM German can to_make_mistakes he sam director
b. Sam nemec inogda oshybaetsja. 'He is a (SAM) director'.
SAM German sometimes makes_mistakes
- (9) V shtat kompanii vkljuchen celyj direktor po diversifikacii. (from www)
in staff company.Gen is_included whole diversity_manager
'There is a WHOLE diversity manager in the staff of the company'.
- (10) Reklamnomu aginstvu trebuetsja ne mnogo, ne malo, a celyj
advertising.Dat agency.Dat need(Imprs) "no less than" but WHOLE
kommercheskij direktor. (from www, edited)
commercial manager
'The advertising agency needs no less than a WHOLE commercial manager'.

References

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