

Deflating the paradox of the answering machine

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*Motto: “ My semantical theory is a theory of word meaning, not of speaker’s meaning. It is based on linguistic rules known explicitly or implicitly, by all competent users of the language.”*¹

Abstract: What motivates the quest for truth? Truth and language are intertwined. On the one hand you cannot have truth in the absence of language. On the other hand the lack of even a basic notion of truth is at odds with the way we employ language in our daily life. Moreover, truth is of great importance for science and mathematics. But, a conception of truth which is at odds with the way we use language puts us in difficulty and is a threat for communication. Efficiency at the communicative level is based on these two entwined themes: truth and language.

Our interest is to see how language works and why it happens that a wide shared view about a certain fact is rendered false by a semantic theory while considered true by the speakers of the language. An example of this sort is the so-called paradox of the answering machine.

¹ Kaplan, “Demonstratives”, footnote 13, p. 491

The so-called paradox of the answering machine is just an example in which it seems that the expressive power of indexicals is threatened by the ‘received’ logic² and the accompanying semantics.

Keywords: indexicals, paradox, truth-value, utterance, deflationism, semantics, pragmatics

I. Introduction

Indexical expressions are the most frequently used expressions in natural language. This motivates both a quest for a proper logical treatment of indexical expressions and of a proper semantical treatment as well.

A proper logical treatment and a proper semantical treatment would lead to less ambiguities and thus to an improvement of communication, as well as efficiency at the communicative level.

The logic and the semantics of indexicals should not be separated from the pragmatics. A proper semantical treatment is one which best approximates natural language. If we are to offer a semantics for indexicals then it needs to be one which helps us to establish their reference and the truth value of sentences which employ indexical expressions and which helps us explain all sorts of problematic uses of indexicals.

The aim of such a semantic account is to have a clear idea of what are we referring to when using words like ‘I’, ‘here’, ‘now’ in order to establish the meaning and the truth-value of sentences containing indexical expressions, i.e. sentences non-indexical free.³

² The so-called received view and hence the received logic and the received semantics are due to Kaplan.

³ I will refer to sentences containing indexical expressions as non-indexical free.

However, suppose we devise a logic which accounts for all indexicals and for sentences non-indexical free which will gain us precision and clarity over this field. Will this devised logic (accompanied by a proper semantics, of course) preserve the expressive power of indexicals and of sentences containing indexicals? Can we afford to lose the expressive power of the above-mentioned linguistic items/expressions?

The so-called paradox of the answering machine is just an example in which it seems that the expressive power (the pragmatics of indexicals) is threatened by the 'received' logic⁴ and the accompanying semantics.

In what follows I will briefly present the so-called received view, due to Kaplan, then I will show how the paradox of the answering machine has arisen in the literature (Section I) and I shall consider some solutions offered for solving the paradox (Section II). Furthermore, I will show that none of the solutions offered can be considered to be a proper semantical treatment for the indexicals 'I', 'here' and 'now' and that a deflationary approach to the paradox of the answering machine, or better said an attempt of deflating the paradox of the answering machine reveals how a semantic account of indexical expressions and of sentences non-indexical free can be shaped (Section III). Our purpose in this paper is to defend the kaplanian picture and to show that a deflationary approach not only is an extension of the kaplanian picture, but it is also conservative with the solutions offered to the paradox. Although we believe a deflationary approach is the proper semantical treatment of problematic uses of indexical expressions, space prohibits us to deal with other problematic uses and thus we aim only to show that deflating the paradox of the answering machine is the most

⁴ The so-called received view and hence the received logic and the received semantics are due to Kaplan.

reasonable solution to it and it is the first step in shaping a deflationary approach to indexical expressions.

I. The Received View: The Kaplanian Picture of Indexicals

According to Kaplan, indexicals are of two types: pure indexicals, linguistic expressions such as ‘I’, ‘here’ , ‘now’, and demonstratives, linguistic expressions which require a pointing gesture, ‘this’, ‘that’.

The common feature of the above-mentioned linguistic expressions is their context-sensitivity feature. Thus, pure indexicals have a *character* which is preserved within any context, but their *content* (reference) varies from context to context. Demonstratives, on the other hand have no fixed character, nor a fixed content, their content or their character being established solely in virtue of the context in which they appear.

In this paper we will occupy ourselves only with the former type of indexicals, i.e. pure indexicals.

The Kaplanian picture or The Received View, maintains that ‘I’, ‘here’ and ‘now’ are pure indexicals. They have a fixed character, and thus a meaning, and only their content (reference) changes. Thus, any sentence containing such linguistic items will be context-sensitive and the truth-value of a sentence non-indexical free, will be established if and only if the reference of the pure indexicals can be established. The reference-determining context of sentences non-indexical free is, according to Kaplan, the context of the utterance. Furthermore, Kaplan holds that for pure indexicals

“no associated demonstration is required, and any demonstration supplied is either for emphasis or is irrelevant.”

Moreover,

“the linguistic rules which govern their use fully determine the referent for each context.”⁵

We may render the two main tenets of the kaplanian picture as follows:

K1. ‘I’ always refers to the utterer, ‘now’ always refers to the moment of the utterance, ‘here’ always picks out the location of the utterer (at the time of the utterance).

K2. The reference is established in a certain context , i.e. the context of the utterance.

Thus, the sentence ‘I am here now’, interpreted with regard to the context of the utterance is an analytically true sentence. It cannot be uttered falsely. Moreover, its contradiction, the sentence ‘I am not here now’ cannot be truthfully uttered. Or so it was thought until *the setting* of the paradox of the answering machine came into picture.

The Paradox of The Answering Machine (TPAM)

The paradox of the answering machine came off the ground as a counterexample to the received view. It was set as an objection to the kaplanian picture, i.e. the utterance context view.

Roughly described, the paradox is the following:

- 1) ‘ I am here now ’ cannot be uttered falsely.

⁵ Kaplan, On Demonstratives, p. 491

2) ‘ I am not here now ’ can be uttered truthfully (the case of the answerphone machine)

Which of the two sentences is true? Can both be accommodated in the same theory?

There have been proposed several accounts in the literature of the answering machine. I will, in what follows, consider the soundness of each of them and I will show that the deflationary approach is conservative not only with regard to the received view, but also with regard to the proposed solutions. Moreover, the deflationary approach has the advantage of bridging the gap between semantics and pragmatics. This means that the expressive power of the indexicals and the “[...] Moorean fact about use of natural language (and one made manifest by ordinary 1970s consumer technology)”⁶ are preserved within the deflationary approach.

II. Some solutions

The Ambiguity View

Before TPAM came into picture the received view was threatened by the so-called ambiguity view. According to this picture there are no such things as *pure indexicals*. This means that ‘I’, ‘here’, ‘now’ have no single character. They have multiple uses and thus multiple characters.

‘I’ does not always refer to a person (the agent of a context), ‘here’ does not always refer to a place (the place where the agent of the context is located) and ‘now’ does not always refer to a unit of time. This being the case, establishing the reference of an indexical expression would appear as a

⁶ Cohen [2012], p. 2

quite difficult task. But, according to Smith, the problem can be solved by referring to a metarule⁷ which tells us which rule is to be taken into consideration for establishing the context and thus the character of an indexical.

Thus, if we consider TPAM, we find out there is a metarule which tells us that 'I' refers to the agent of the context, 'here' refers to a place and 'now' refers to some unit of time. But, addressing the metarule is of no help if what are we trying to do is establishing the reference of an indexical expression and moreover establishing the truth-value of our non-indexical free sentence. What are we after is the proper context of interpretation, the reference-determining context. So, if by saying that even pure indexicals have multiple uses and therefore they do not have an automatic reference, we conclude that given their ambiguity, (2) 'I am here now' cannot be a logical truth we still have not given a solution to TPAM. Positing an ambiguity or postulating entities does not offer a viable solution for solving TPAM. Nor is there a reason for believing that a viable solution cannot be found.⁸

The Deffered Utterance View

According to Sidelle TPAM can be solved if we think of (2) as expressing a deffered utterance and not a genuine one. A deffered utterance

⁷ Smith [1989], "I shall call this second-order rule of use a *rule-fixing rule of use* or a *metarule*. It is not the reference-fixing rule of use that remains constant from use to use, but the metarule. By remaining constant from context to context, the metarule (or "metacharacter") is able to determine which reference-fixing rule (character) governs the indexical in each context. " , p. 168

⁸ Kripke [1977], " Do not posit ambiguity unless you are really forced to, unless there are really compelling theoretical or intuitive grounds to suppose that an ambiguity is present. " p. 118

is the genuine utterance which occurs when someone calls and hears the recorded message. Thus, one is not expressing a falsehood at the encoding time (i.e. the time of the recording) , rather, one is arranging to make an utterance at some later time, i.e. the decoding time (i.e. the time when someone calls and hears the recorded message) .⁹

Therefore, sentence (2) will be rendered true if treated as a deferred utterance. In other words, a typical recorded message can be interpreted according to two principles :

S1: 'I' refers to the encoder, 'here' refers to the encoding location, 'now' refers to the decoding time.

S2: Indexical expressions are anchored to the context of the genuine utterance, i.e. the deferring of an utterance.

According to S1 and S2 we find that (2) is true. It would seem then that we can say that the indexical expressions are anchored to the context of the genuine utterance, i.e. the deferred utterance. What about a typical postcard message?

(3) I am having a great time here now. It stopped raining and I can start visiting Prague.

According to Sidelle, in (3), 'I' will refer to the encoder, 'here' to the encoding location' and 'now' to the decoding location. But this analysis seems wrong. How can 'now' refer to the decoding time? If the postcard is received by the decoder at some later time, than it might be the case that in Prague it started to rain again and the encoder is not visiting Prague, but stays at home and wishes to stop raining. Therefore, in (3), 'now' clearly

⁹ Sidelle [1991], " One is rather arranging to make an utterance at a later time, or, if one likes, deferring an utterance. The genuine utterance(s) will occur when someone calls and hears the message. Since it is the deferred utterance, and not the deferring of it, which is the genuine utterance,'now' refers to the time of the utterance, not the time of the recording. " p. 535

refers to the time of the encoding, because, as we already pointed out, at the decoding time it might be the case that it is raining cats and dogs in Prague and the encoder is having a terrible time. So, in this case it seems we cannot interpret the message according to S1 and S2.

It seems then, the siddelean account it is only a piecemeal account¹⁰ of indexicals and, even if it offers a relatively viable solution to the paradox of the answering machine, his treatment cannot be extended to “other problematic uses of indexicals”¹¹. We can conclude from this that not every non-indexical free sentence can be treated as a deferred utterance. So we move now to the next solution on the market: the intended context view.

The Intended Context View

Sentence (1) and others alike are to be interpreted with regard to the speaker’s intentions. In solving TPAM,

[...] the correct results are obtained by anchoring indexical expressions to the intended context of interpretation“.

Thus,

*“ when I record ‘I am not here now’ in my answering machine, I intend that the uttered sentence be evaluated with respect to the time of your call [...].”*¹²

Predelli argues that

¹⁰ Sidelle’s account is “a piecemeal account of indexical reference” “which is undesirable. “ (‘I’, p. 4) It deals only with a specific use of indexicals (as in premise c1) , but it fails to “deal satisfactorily with other problematic uses of indexicals”. (‘I’, p. 4)

¹¹ For a simillar objection see Romdenh-Romluc, “I”.

¹² Predelli [1998], p. 114

“ the notion of an utterance and the idea of a context of utterance do not play any semantically interesting role” instead, a proper semantical treatment can be given if “written and recorded messages are to be evaluated with respect to the intended context of interpretation, which need not coincide with the context of the utterance. “¹³

Thus, according to the intended context view, a typical recorded message, be it written or recorded, should be interpreted with regard to the following two principles:

P1: ‘I’ refers to the encoder of the message, ‘here’ refers to the encoder’s location, ‘now’ refers to the intended time of decoding.

P2: The proper context of interpretation is the intended context.

According to P1 and P2, sentence (2) will be true due to the speaker’s intention that his message be evaluated at some later time. The same goes for sentence (3) where the speaker intends to convey some information about his present location i.e. Prague and his presence there for a determinate period, or even better a specific unit of time. However, if the receiver of the written message or the decoder of the recorded message has no knowledge of the speaker’s intentions he falls short of recognizing the proper context of interpretation. The speaker can intend to convey a certain information but there is no guarantee that his target audience will manage to grasp the intended message of the speaker.

Although Predelli’s account seems very appealing and intuitive, it is an account which offers too much freedom to the speaker. The speaker can intend anything she wants.¹⁴ A drawback of the theory is that it allows

¹³ Predelli [1998], p. 115

¹⁴ Romdenh-Romluc, [2006] “ Predelli suggests that the reference-determining context is

utterances which do not have public meaning.¹⁵ So we need a more restrictive theory; one which must meet at least two requirements:

r1) the meaning of an indexical expression can be grasped, in principle, by any audience (i.e. an indexical expression should have public meaning) ;

r2) the reference of an indexical expression should be given in a certain context and recognized as such without postulating any ambiguities.

With this two requirements in mind, we move to another solution to TPAM.

The Conventional Setting View

According to Corazza et. al. TPAM can be solved by interpreting sentence (2) with regard to a certain setting. The setting is governed by certain conventions and thus sentence (2) is to be rendered true in virtue of the conventions associated with the use of recorded messages in an answerphone machine situation.

A typical recorded message (i.e. answerphone machine message, postcard, post-it) has certain conventions attached to it and *on a conventional basis* delivers some information which can be rendered true according to the rules.

The problem with this view is that it does not allow novel uses of indexical expressions. If the truth or falseness of a sentence non-indexical free is to be determined only in the presence of a convention, then it seems

the one intended by U, but as we saw, his proposal cannot be endorsed because it allows the utterer too much freedom to use an indexical to refer to anything she pleases.” p. 272

¹⁵ Romdenh-Romluc [2006] “ The problem with this move is that we should be extremely wary of any theory of language which divorces reference from communication in this way. The sort of language with which we are dealing here is public language, the uttered sentences of which have public meanings. Surely what it means to say that an utterance has a public meaning is just that the meaning can in principle be grasped – i.e. the utterance can in principle be understood – by more people than just the utterer. “ p. 265

that is not the *character*¹⁶ of an indexical expression which determines the reference and thus the lack of conventions leaves us with undecided truth-values for sentences employing novel uses of indexicals.

However, according to Corazza et. al. ,

“which conventions are delivered by a particular setting will be a straightforward and unambiguous matter”.

So, this view seems to account for the so-called problematic uses of indexical expressions by assuming we already have the conventions governing the uses of such expressions. Put it differently, we already know the language-game we are playing and thus we know how to use indexical expressions. The only difficult part is then to establish the truth-value of sentences non-indexical free. But, if we can identify the setting, then establishing the truth-value of sentences like (2) and (3) becomes a trivial matter. Still, as Romdenh-Romluc argues “ *it is not at all clear that this is the case*”. It is not at all clear that identifying the setting guarantees us the reference-establishing of indexical expressions. So, let us suppose we have the same setting, i.e. a television programme and two occurrences of the indexical expression ‘now’.¹⁷

(4) “ Now Siddharta leaves the palace - of course, now tourists from all over the world come to see Siddharta’s home. “¹⁸

Romdenh-Romluc argues that interpreting sentence (4) according to the conventional setting view, the reference of the two occurrences of ‘now ‘ will not be delivered unambiguously :

¹⁶ The character of an indexical expression is, according to Kaplan, a use-governing rule. For example, the use-governing rule for ‘I’ is that ‘I’ always refers to the agent of the context. Only Peter can use ‘I’ to refer to himself, only Robert can use ‘I’ to refer to himself and so on. Robert cannot use ‘I’ to refer to Peter or to refer to someone other than himself.

¹⁷ This is the counterexample put forward by Romdenh-Romluc in the [2006] article “I” .

¹⁸ Romdenh-Romluc [2006], p. 268

“ [...] the setting does not unambiguously deliver the conventions needed to fix the reference determining context for each occurrence of ‘now’ in (4). “

However, this counterexample seems to us question-begging. We think Corazza et. al.’s view can be endorsed if we provide a proper interpretation to the counterexample offered by Romdenh-Romluc.

Even if it seems that the two occurrences of ‘now’ appear in the same setting it is not obviously so. The first occurrence of ‘now’ obviously refers to the 534 BCE whereas the second occurrence obviously refers to the time of the television programme. The second occurrence of ‘now’ cannot be placed in the same setting as the first occurrence of ‘now’. There were no tourists visiting Siddharta’s palace at the time of Siddharta’s residence, i.e. 534 BCE.

Thus, a more natural and intuitive way to interpret ‘now’ in its second occurrence is to be taken as the time of the television programme. There is a different force¹⁹ attached to it, even if the content of the two occurrences of ‘now’ seems to be the same. (This also fits into the Kaplanian picture, thus ‘now’ presents with the same ‘content’ but with different ‘characters’, due to the different settings).

Another line of attack pursued by Romdenh-Romluc is that of saying that Corazza et. al.’s account does not offer a sound explanation for indexicals in the absence of conventions. Thus, if we are to suppose that at the time of the first recording of a message on an answerphone machine, there were no

¹⁹ This suggestion comes from Stevens [2006], Utterance at a distance. From lack of space we will not take this discussion any further. Only briefly noted, Stevens suggestion is that if we make the distinction between force and content, there is nothing more to the paradox of the answering machine than realising that sentence (2) is simply false when uttered but it can be used, nevertheless to convey something true at some later time.

conventions²⁰ governing the use of (2) it seems we are left without the conventional setting and we cannot establish the reference of the indexicals occurring in the recorded message. This seems highly improbable because there are still some use-governing rules for indexicals available and Romdenh-Romluc seems to acknowledge their existence.

Romdenh-Romluc, argues further that,

*“ on the other hand, they can claim that the utterance of ‘I’ that occurs in (2) is governed by conventions that have been established by this point. Since there are not yet any conventional ways of using answering machines, the only convention to which Corazza et. al. can appeal will be conventions which have nothing to do with the use of such machines. ”*²¹

But this, we think, is not a very convincing argument and it has as a drawback the infinite regress. Following the same line of thought one can say that if we suppose there were no conventions governing the use of an answerphone machine, we can suppose further that there were no conventions governing the use of indexical expressions, and thus no rules for determining the reference of the indexical expressions involved in the utterance (2) “I am not here now”. Moreover, we can further suppose there were no conventions for establishing the truth-value of sentences non-indexical free and thus we will be left once more with undecided truth-values for sentences non-indexical free.

²⁰ Romdenh-Romluc [2006], “[...] it cannot be said that there are any conventions governing the use of indexicals occurring in messages left on them. “, p. 269

²¹ Romdenh-Romluc [2006], p. 270

So it would seem that Corazza et. al.'s account is the best candidate, so far, for solving not only the paradox of the answering machine but also some other problematic cases of written or recorded messages. Moreover, it is not at odds with the two requirements presented in the previous section. But, even if the counterexamples offered do not refute the conventional setting view, the problem of accounting for novel uses of indexical expressions still remains.

The Recognized Context View: Romdenh-Romluc

We now turn to another solution offered to TPAM. According to Romdenh-Romluc sentence (2) is to be interpreted by an attentive audience in order to be rendered true or false. The two tenets of the recognized context view are the following:

RR1: indexical reference must be fixed by an audience which is both competent and attentive

RR2: the reference-determining context for an indexical is the one identified by the competent and attentive audience by using the cues she reasonably takes the speaker to be exploiting.²²

The problem with this view is that we cannot be sure the attentive and competent audience will grasp the right context or even only one context. Also, the view is underspecified²³; it is not very clear what counts as a reasonable cue. Moreover, the notions of 'attentiveness' and 'competence'

²² Romdenh-Romluc [2006], p. 274

²³ Cohen [2012], "Grant, concessively, that the notions of competence, attentiveness, and what it is reasonable for a speaker to exploit as a cue can all be developed satisfactorily. Even so, it's not obvious that there is one unique context that would be identified by the idealized audience whose existence we are granting, or how the process of context-identification by such an idealized audience would work. This makes it hard to know just what the proposed theory predicts about cases." p. 14

attributed to the audience are also unspecified. What qualities or properties should an attentive and competent audience have is not at all clear.²⁴

III. Deflating the paradox of the answering machine

Let us try to attack the problem TPAM presents from another angle. Let us suppose one will try to record a message on an answerphone machine using no indexicals (5) or a message which makes explicit speaker's intentions (6).

5) If there is a message with Robert's voice which starts with a message with Robert's voice, then Robert is not at home at the time of hearing a message starting with "If there's a message..."

6) When I am recording this message I am here [at home/in the house], so I am not uttering a false sentence, even if it seems exactly so. My utterance is intended for the future, for the time when I will not be here. So, when I say 'I am not here now', my utterance should be evaluated by the hearer as true when he listens the recorded message.

In (5) Robert tries to record a message by avoiding any indexical expression. But someone who doesn't recognize Robert's voice might think it is a sham. Besides, (5) leads to infinite regress. Thus (5) will not do.

In (6) Robert is aware of Perry-Kaplan thesis, so he prevents the hearer that he is not making a false statement at the time of recording, because his statement is intended for the future, when he will actually not be there to

²⁴ For further criticism on 'why not appeal to the recognized context view' see Wheatherson [2002] and Cohen [2012].

pick out the phone. But even so, his utterance is false at the time of the recording, and that it should be interpreted at some later time does not impend the falsity of it.

Still, instead of this very long and [presumably] unambiguous sentences, why not stick with (2) 'I am not here now' or 'I am not here for the moment' and others alike for efficiency?

From a deflationist viewpoint, attributing truth-values to (2) would be no more than asserting 'I am not here now' which, at the recording time, will be false. So, the problem still remains. Even within a deflationary viewpoint, we still need to account for the falsity of (2).

Whenever somebody utters (2), even if it is intended to be heard at a future time when he is not at home, the speaker utters a false sentence at the time of the recording: he is in fact there, saying that he is not (and we are aware of the intended future reference of his absence). But I think, we can easily accommodate the falsity of (2) if we make the distinction between utterance and assertion. Not every utterance is an assertion, but every assertion is an utterance.²⁵

So, in the answerphone machine case, one is not making an assertion at the time of the recording, he is not truthfully asserting that he is not there, when he in fact is. He only records a false utterance by means of which it will be conveyed a truth at any proper context in which a token of the (initially false) utterance occurs.

*“As what is communicated by an answerphone recording
is not communicated by an assertion, it falls outside the*

²⁵ This idea is pursued also by Graham Stevens in his 2006 article “Utterance at a distance” , but with slightly different results.

confines of formal semantics to explain. From the perspective of semantics, answerphone message occurrences of (2) are simply recordings of false utterances. That they can be used to communicate truths has no impact on their truth-conditions. ²⁶

What we have in mind is an endorsement of the kaplanian picture with the harmless modification of the analysis of the indexicals involved in (2). Thus we will take them (i.e. ‘I’, ‘here’, ‘now’) as having the kind of “character” which is that meaning property²⁷

“ that is explanatory basic: the one that best explains all the other use properties of the term”²⁸

Thus, our sentence would then be assessed as conveying a false information at the time of the recording and a true one whenever tokened. Moreover, we recognize that (2), whenever tokened, the true sentence conveyed would be no more than the utterer drawing the attention of the hearer, on a conventional basis, that he cannot be reached at that place, in that unit of time.

So, we will employ a basic explanatory apparatus: where ‘I’ is to be the utterer, ‘here’ the location of the answering machine at the time when the recording takes place²⁹, and ‘now’ to be the unit of time corresponding to

²⁶ Stevens [2006], p. 9

²⁷ Horwich, P. [1994] p. 21 , [...] the simplest explanation is to say that the meaning is the use -to say, in other words, that there exists a range of use properties (i.e. ways of using expressions, rules for the use of expressions) and to identify these use properties with meanings.”

²⁸ Horwich [1994], p.21

²⁹ We need not be concerned here with other uses of ‘I’, ‘here’, ‘now’ (as pointed out by Quentin Smith). Although we acknowledge other uses of the so-called pure indexicals, our only concern here is to deflate the paradox of the answering machine, thus employing only the use as posited in the original puzzle.

the recording of the message. It is basically the same apparatus Kaplan uses, although we do not extend our analysis to other cases except to the case of the answering machine.

Thus, at the moment of the recording:

2) will be equivalent with :

7) It is not the case that I [Robert] am here [the location of the answerphone machine] now [the time of the recording].

Attributing the truth value true to this would be to have Robert asserting the following:

8) It is the case I am not here, at the location of the answerphone machine, now, when I record this message

Or with

9) It is not the case that I am here now when I am in fact at the answering machine location, at the moment of the present recording and I truthfully assert that I am not here now (even though I am).

It seems highly improbable that anyone would make truthfully such assertions. Instead, it seems that one is recording a false sentence by means of which he can later on convey a truthful information. Hence, instead, (2) should be taken to be true whenever someone calls and hears Robert's recorded message.³⁰

Thus, (2) can be taken:

It is not the case [that] I [Robert] am here [the answerphone machine location] now [at the time of the tokened playback, be it any unit of time].

³⁰ We think that the case in which Robert is at home and he refuses to answer the phone does not threaten our analysis. He might not answer for several reasons, but we do not think that by not answering he intends to be taken as uttering something false at the time of the playback.

So our solution seems not to be at odds with the kaplanian picture, neither with Corazza et. all. (or Sidelle). Moreover, it is conservative over both the intended context view and the recognized context view.

Kaplan says that linguistic rules give us the object, Cohen [2012] maintains 'I' does not shift its reference in the answering machine case. Zemach [1972], maintains, in a wittgensteinian spirit that 'I' is non-informative in the sense that one can successfully use 'I' to refer to oneself, without knowing anything about "that which may be referred to by 'I' ". All of the accounts mentioned point to rules and avoid the postulation of all sorts of intensional entities or ambiguities. Thus, with the normativity constraint in play, we can easily accommodate sentence (2) " I am not here now" within a deflationary view.

Therefore when one says 'I am not here now', one only tries to draw the attention of the hearer that he is not able to answer the phone, that he is not in the house at the time of the call. One is making no assertion at the time of the recording. However, the proposition expressed by the encoder's utterance is false at the time he records it.

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