Intuitionism continued

András Máté

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Natural numbers; Heyting arithmetics HA

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HA is capable of Gödelisation, therefore incompleteness theorems are valid for it.

Real numbers

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Real numbers

'Let us consider the concept: "real number between 0 and 1." For the formalist this concept is equivalent to "elementary series" of digits after the decimal point," for the intuitionist it means "law for the construction of an elementary series of digits after the decimal point, built up by means of a finite number of operations." And when the formalist creates the "set of all real numbers between 0 and 1," these words are without meaning for the intuitionist, even whether one thinks of the real numbers of the formalist, determined by elementary series of freely selected digits, or of the real numbers of the intuitionist, determined by finite laws of construction.' (Brouwer)

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Intuitionist theory of real numbers is *incomparable* with classical real analysis. Some true propositions of classical analysis are not true intuitionistically, but there are theorems of intuitionist analysis which are not true classically.

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Weak counterexamples: classically true propositions that are neither true nor false in intuitionistic analysis

András Máté Intuitionism continued

Be A(n) a decidable predicate of natural numbers for which we don't know whether $\forall nA(n)$ is true or not; say, '2n is the sum of two prime numbers'. Let us define a sequence of real numbers:

$$r_n = \begin{cases} 2^{-n} & \text{if } \forall m \le n.A(m) \\ 2^{-m} & \text{if } \neg A(m) \land m \le n \land \forall k < m.A(k) \end{cases}$$

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This sequence defines a real number r. Bu we don't know whether r = 0 (the Goldbach conjecture is true) or not. Therefore, the proposition $(r = 0) \lor (r \neq 0)$ does not hold.

András Máté Intuitionism continued

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Most of the classical concepts have an intuitionistic counterpart based on choice sequences. E. g. the intuitionistic counterpart of the (sufficiently small) neighborhood of a real number is the set of choice sequences having a (sufficiently long) common initial segment with the given choice sequence.

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There are statements that are (definitely) true in intuitionistic mathematics although classically false ("strong counterexamples"). A simple but very important example:

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The intuitionist version of Bolzano's theorem

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The classical theorem:

Let f be a continuous real-valued function on the interval [a, b] such that f(a) < 0 < f(b). Then there is a $c \in [a, b]$ for which f(c) = 0.

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Intuitionist version (or surrogate):

If f is a real-valued function with the same conditions, then

 $\forall n \in \mathbb{N} \exists c \in [a, b] (|f(c)| < 2^{-n}).$

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In general, instead of existence theorems intuitionists often have theorems about the existence of approximations within arbitrary precision.

Continuity and choice axioms

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The classical axiom of choice (AC) says that if we have an F family of non-empty sets, then there is a (choice) function that assigns to every member S of F a member of S.

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The classical axiom of choice (AC) says that if we have an F family of non-empty sets, then there is a (choice) function that assigns to every member S of F a member of S.

This is unacceptable for the intuitionist. But there are weaker versions of AC which are acceptable (and important for classical mathematics, too): countable choice, dependent choice.