Truth, paradoxes and supposition in medieval terminist logic[1]

A. O. Kopylova, HSE
a.o.kopylova@gmail.com

Many ideas of medieval logicians became well-known recently and are not considered nowadays as something just archaic and old-fashioned. Medieval logicians elaborated difficult and specific language that sometimes is interpreted as an extremely sophisticated and non-natural one. Medieval ideas are partly determined by the boundaries of this sophisticated language but they can be useful for modern research.

This presentation deals with the concept of truth and its interpretation in the 13-14 centuries. Some scholastic authors (for example, T. Bradwardine) wrote that proposition is true when the things are the same as they are signified in this proposition. Signification was a relation that described how a real thing and a term are connected. The term signifies a real thing (in other words, it is a sign of that thing and the result of cognition). The notion of signification was disputable among scholars: there were different definitions of signification, different descriptions of cognition and etc. Then the concept of truth was defined by the property of supposition (it was especially important part of Buridan's and Ockham's logics). The propositions is true when a subject and a predicate supposit for the same thing. Thus, the truth-conditions of different types of categorical propositions were determined by supposition (roughly said, the relation which is close to reference). Buridan understood by a cause of truth 'whatever is enough for the proposition to be true'. However, there are some challenges with supposition: what does it mean that the term supposit something? Is supposition always depend on the signification? That epistemological foundations has this property? Etc. Buridan and Ockham assert that the proposition can be true only when it exists. The proposition is not a some ideal abstract thing, it is a sign that can have different nature – written, spoken or mental. Thus, if the proposition is neither a spoken and written word, nor a mental term, according to Ockham an Buridan, it does not exist. For them logic and grammar are not distinct yet, the language of logic is a nature language. This understanding of truth influences on the conception of consequence and interpretation of paradox. In my presentation I will suggest detailed description and reconstruction of this account. Situation become interesting when we deal with tensed and modal proposition. Is it proper to understand "supposition " as a 'theory of reference' and, thus, is it proper to make the conclusion that medieval theory of truth is the theory of reference? Medieval truth-theory is not a correspondence theory of truth and that step is very important.

The main idea of this presentation is to show how the medieval conception of truth works by considering the idea of insolubilia (e.x., epistemic and logical paradoxes) and the conditions of modal and rensed propositions. The authors which are the ground of the research mainly are Burley, Buridan and Ockham.