

Re: What is the history of relativity theory? (continuation of Poincare thread)

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 - *Date:* Sun, 28 Aug 2005 07:30:27 +0000 (UTC)
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On Sat, 27 Aug 2005 07:24:14 +0000 (UTC), "Javier Bezos" <see_below_no_spam@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

>Hello again,
>
> In this thread there are in fact four topics (very likely
> even more, but I think there are four important ones):
>
> 1) Many sources says Einstein was the sole discoverer of the
> PoR and the LT.
>
> 2) Einstein gave no references in his paper.
>
> 3) Einstein later said he didn't know the Lorentz and Poincaré's
> papers.
>
> 4) What Einstein said was just what Poincaré and Lorents said.
>
> These topics are independent and my personal conclusions are:
>
> 1) Many sources says Einstein was the sole discoverer of the
> PoR and the LT.
>
> That SR was the work of Einstein only is definitely false,
> as I said in a paragraph you have omitted in your answer. So,
> agreed.

OK, that's appears from the records to be true. Therefore 99% of all course & textbooks are historically incorrect. He didn't develop or discover Lorentz Covariant Relativity' (of which SR is one philosophical interpretation).

>) Einstein gave no references in his paper.
>
> This is definitely true. Just compare the Einstein's paper
> with Poincaré's to see the latter gives references for almost
> everything. None can claim this is false for obvious reasons.
>

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- > 3) Einstein later said he didn't know the Lorentz and
- > Poincaré's papers.
- >
- > I think we'll never know if that's true, but I'm convinced
- > (and this is just an opinion) he *did* know at least part of
- > their work, as well as the LT as proposed by Larmor in 1900,
- > and the 4D space and the local time as proposed by Voigt in
- > 1887.

I think most dispassionate rational people will agree with you. Thus, the question, what was the motive to claim otherwise? Further, why were there not references to their works in his? Apply Ockham's Razor to this question.

- > ... And I'm convinced Poincaré knew them, too. Very likely
- > he even knew the Poincaré idea that associates to the EM field
- > a fictitious fluid with mass density related to energy density
- > by c^2 , to preserve the principle of reaction (even if the
- > formula *looks* very similar, Einstein's $E=3Dmc^2$ is quite
- > different physically and appears in a different context).

How can they be different?

- > 4) What Einstein said was just what Poincaré and Lorents said.
- >
- > You are claiming this is true but I and most of researchers
- > and scientists don't think so, including Lorentz himself. In
- > fact, I find things like the relativity of simultaneity
- > in clear contradiction with Poincaré's PoR as he formulated
- > it (IMO). Point 4 a has *no* relation with the fact 1 is false
- > and 2 is true. Even if Einstein were the most vile being in
- > the universe, that won't change the content of his SRT and
- > the novelty of most (but not all) of it.

Well, as you say, we cannot read minds but, the context of Poincare' writing clearly indicate that he was quite aware of the issue of the inability to determine absolute simultaneity. Poincare' perspective was indeed different 'philosophically' (a.k.a. metaphysically) but all technical issues of relativity as known today were present and accounted for. Personally, I disagree with your assessment based solely upon the written historical evidence. What novelty was in Einstein's 1905 paper related to physics, and not of a purely philosophical perspective?

- > And somewhat OT...
- >
- > Formerly I sympathized with the idea that Poincaré was
- > the actual author of the SR, but after reading the originals
- > several year ago I changed my mind. Recently I read Science
- > and Method (1908) and while I was reading it I couldn't
- > avoid having the impression Poincaré was answering Einstein's

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- > thories (just an opinion, but I discovered I'm not alone and
- > that there are some people who had the same impression). Why
- > did Poncaré never cite them? Why did Poincaré return to the
- > ether? Why was Poincaré still concerned with light velocity
- > in relation to the ether (as classically a wave needs a medium,
- > which also affects its velocity)? Why does Poincaré still
- > consider the Abraham's theories after implicitly rejecting
- > them in 1905? Why does he still formulate the PoR in classical
- > terms? Why is he still saying the mechanical mass is different
- > from the EM mass? I think we'll never know, but this book
- > definitely convinced me SR was quite different from Poincaré
- > ideas.

Is it not considered that ideas not quantified by formal mathematical definitions which are testable, and falsifiable, are not science? To this day, the ether interpretation of Poincare' & Lorentz with respect to this particular branch of physics cannot be formally falsified. Thus this point would seem to be regulated to the subjective issue of personal tastes, not physical science. However, if one sticks to the issue of pure physics, if 1 is provably false it does not matter about 2, 3, or 4. By accepted convention priority must (ethically) go to those that formally presented the physics formalisms first. For, to do otherwise, distroys the very foundation upon which all scientific recognition is based, shattering the integrity (both perceived & real) of the whole system. No???

Paul Stowe

• **References:**

- ◆ **[Re: What is the history of relativity theory? \(continuation of Poincare thread\)](#)**
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 - ◇ From: Javier Bezos
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