

Intention Based Semantics

Relating Mind, Language and the
World

Concept of Representation

- Language and Forms of life
- Language and world
 - *Linguistic Representation of the World*
 - *The world is being articulated by language*
 - Within the semantic structure of all the sentences, the language world relationship is not fully settled.

Meaning

- Meaning as common element between language and the world.
- to bridge the gap *language and the world*

How the meaning of the sentence is fixed?

“meaning is the semantic clothing of the world and, for that reason, it is not the contingent product of our sense experience.”

The notion of *fitness*

- Representations as basic ingredients of language
- Searle refers to **indicative/ request/ command**
- *Language-to-the-world*
- *the-world-to-language*
- **Thought content and its directedness towards the world / the intentionality of language**

Direction of Fit

Is meaning a mental entity?

- Association of meaning with the psychological property of language
 - Representational semantics distances itself from psychologism
- Meaning is not a mental entity
- “The need for a comprehensible theory of meaning includes the need of taking into account the mental attitudes, beliefs and the intentions of the speakers who matters to language so much.”
 - (Pradhan 1996: 28)

Meaning and the Mind

- Speaker's intention is one of the basic features of meaning.
- Psychological states are entangled with language.
- Linguistic representation makes intention explicit.

Making an Intentional Expression

- “The expression of psychological life, which is the exclusive and primary aim of intentional speech. What is rather intended is to influence or to control the unknown inner life of the hearer. Intentional speech is a kind of action, which is essentially aimed at evoking certain psychological phenomena in the person.”
 - (“On Meaning and Expression: Marty and Grice on Intentional Semantics,” 1990)

IBS: *non-naturalistic account*

- x utters p knowing well that y would mean K
- P is intentionally produced so that y listening to p means K
- *Meaning of is informative or descriptive*
- *The speaker x **induces** the meaning*
 - *Grice's non-naturalistic account of ibs*

Representation

- The speakers not simply **utters** to induce, rather makes a **deliberate** attempt in telling and making the hearer *to think* over it in order to fulfill his **intention**.
- **Course of action**
- **Fixity of reason in the domain of communication**

Grice says

- “This points to the fact for x to have meaning, the intended effect must be something which in some sense of reason the recognition of intention behind x is for the audience a reason not merely a cause (reason for believing and reason for doing.)” (1969)

Schiffer on IBS

- **Speech**
- **Intention of the speaker**
- **Recognition of speech**

- Intention builds up a typical conventional framework , where both speaker and hearer share some **'mutual knowledge'**

Functional analysis

- *x intends to produce a reason R in the audience A. it means x knows about the responses in A.*
- Communication intention activates the process of knowing and recognizing each other's intention.
- **Truth supporting reasons.**

Schiffer

- “Let’s call reasons which are held in this way “truth supporting” reasons. One’s reason for believing p need not be truth supporting; one might have moral or prudential grounds for thinking that p.”
(*Meaning*: 1974)
- Morality and prudentiality is considered as the rational precondition for the intentional action.

Nature of utterances

– **Intentionally expressed statement**

- **Speaker's imposition intention in the expression**

– **Utterances Involve certain values**

- **Commitment and Obligation**

Communication Intention

- **Affective attitude (emotion)**
- **Intentional Attitude (deliberation and decision)**

- **. In the Gricean framework we fail to distinguish motive and emotion**

Schiffer on Utterance Meaning

- **Compositional semantics**
- **Noncompositional semantics**
- In the surest communicating circumstance the speaker's intention is not only a subjective factor in bringing out the effect in the audience, rather the circumstance itself is an important and unchangeable condition in bringing out the effect.
- Nothing to do with **habit** or **practice**

Does Schiffer disagree with Grice?

Firstly, For S, x may have some meaning other than p; so it cannot be S's policy to utter x only if he wants some A to think S thinks that P.

Secondly, S may have some other utterance type by which he also means that p; so it cannot be S's policy to utter x if he wants some A to think that p.'

For Schiffer IBS involves

- No subjective imposition of meaning in the conventional means of communication.
 - **Mutual knowledge**
 - **Perfect coordination (self perpetuating regularity)**
- **Strategic interdependence** to regulate agent's goal oriented behaviour
- **Coordination equilibrium** to standardize goal oriented behaviour

Emergence of New Convention

- Should not be an hindrance to determine the meaning.
- **Schiffer argues for Psychological Model of meaning that replaces conventional model**
- **Convention has be defined by psychological and non-semantic terms.**

Status of Intentionality

- **Defined by intentional attitude of mental states rather than by public language**
- **Structural explication is formed by micro-level constituents : words and syntactical mechanism**

Cognitive Version of Meaning

- “To know the meaning of mental representations is to know what one believes when s is stored in one as belief where one believes the content of one’s belief, is conveyed by ‘that’ → clauses of belief predicates true.” (Schiffer 1989: 75)

Structural correlation of mental states with expression

- Non-linguistic mental states
- Non-circular explication of content
- “A non-linguistic account of content provides an attractively flexible basis for sketching the manifold possible dependencies of thought upon language ; the key point is that the ascription of content to propositional attitude is more abstract level than ascription of meaning to the natural language. The point is if my functional account of belief-individuation is correct, intentions are not required in the theory of propositional attitudes and their intentional properties.” (Loar 1981: 203)

Functional Relationship and Plasticity

- Neurological functional states are syntactically connected
- Psycho-functional Approach to semantics
- Information processing Model

Searle on Meaning and Intentionality

- The meaning of a sentence is followed by rules, and those rules specifically include both condition of utterance and also what count to us.
- Meaning is a matter of convention.
- Intentional Representation
- A sentence is interpreted against a Background

Literal Meaning

- “Literal meaning determines the conditions absolutely in isolation. But literal meanings are vague and literal descriptions are always incomplete. Greater precision and completeness are added by supplementing literal meaning with collateral assumptions and expectations.” (Searle 1983: 183)

Linguistic Categories and abilities

- Practice/ usage
- Experience
- Consciousness attitude
- Self-reflectivity
- Intentional content – structural isomorphism
- Mental field and linguistic field

On Consciousness

- “Only from consciousness uniqueness of life arises; religion, science, art,
Consciousness is life itself.” (Wittgenstein 1979: 82)

Contemporary Issues in **Philosophy of Mind & Cognition**

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