

Referential theory of meaning doesn't work, it seems, because of the four problems. Descriptive theories (Frege and Russell) deal with the problems, but there are devastating objections (Kripke)! So we're up a creek. The theory that explains informative identity etc is false. The seemingly true theory just reintroduces the original mysteries. Put this on hold for a while.

What do we want of a theory of meaning, anyway? The theory is going to have to explain "meaning facts" such as

- Some expressions are meaningful, others are nonsense,
- A single meaning can be shared by several expressions (synonymy).
- A single expression can have several distinct meanings (ambiguity).
- Some meanings are included in others (analyticity).
- What an expression means dictates its proper use (normativity)
- Disputes can be either substantive or "merely verbal" = ultimately about meaning.
- Sentence meanings can be either true or false.

Hidden assumption: meanings are "things" that one can count and investigate. Compare "lines" in "we're thinking along the same lines." Let's stick with meanings as things for a while.

THEORY 1: MEANINGS AS IDEAS....

Obj 1: What are ideas anyway?

- Images? Too specific. A triangle image has some particular shape — it's scalene or isosceles or — but the meaning of 'triangle' does not commit itself on this score.
- Concepts? Could be just another word for 'meaning.' Cognitive science approach,
- Thoughts? Act/object distinction. The act of thinking is subjective (see below). The object or content of a thought might work. But it's a proposition (see below).

Obj 2: Does every meaningful term have an associated idea? (James on 'and' and 'or;')

Obj 3: We mean the same thing by 'round.' But your idea is in your head and mine's in mine.

THEORY 2: MEANINGS AS PROPOSITIONS

The idea theory is bottom up: sentence meanings come from word meanings. Now try a top-down approach. First we say what sentences mean—"propositions," to have a word— then reverse engineer word meanings to be whatever it takes to yield propositions.

Propositions are abstract. They're what sentences that "say the same thing" have in common. Sentences *express* them, that-clauses *designate* them. ("What did they say? That it was too late to get a cab.") They're the ultimate bearers of truth and falsity. What are they?

Frege: Thoughts. The key notion is "express the same thought." A and B express the same thought just if it would be irrational to believe one and reject the other.

Kripke: Facts or property-attributions, e.g., Quisling's betraying Norway.

Stalnaker, The set of all possible scenarios where Quisling betrays Norway.

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