

A Survey

1. Introduction

As mentioned by way of introduction (section I 3): The diversity of directions in which questions of the form “What is x ?” point, shows the diversity of types of proposition about what something is, with which we operate. – In the present Chapter II, I shall discuss and establish concepts about types of proposition, taking as a starting point the main aim of the work (Chapter I above): the aim of demonstrating, and creating an awareness of, the existence, content and factual significance of a specific critically reflexive form (I 4–6); and thereby, of demonstrating, and creating an awareness of, the factual significance of analysis of dis/agreement on the basis of this critically reflexive form.

In relation to this aim, the *in-depth discussions* in sections B–G below are important in themselves. In addition, they lay much of the conceptual foundation for subsequent discussions. To assist readers wishing to go straight to one or more of the topics in Chapters III–V, I shall outline in the rest of the present section A the *main part* of the conceptual foundation that is subsequently presupposed. In addition, the present section A serves as an *introduction* to sections B–G; see the schematic survey in section 7 below.

2. Definitions; analytically un/true propositions; characterisations. Possibility and desirability of distinguishing. – “What is meaning?”

(1) *Definitions*

The word “*definition*” I use of propositions that contribute to determining the meanings of linguistic entities (contribute to determining concepts). Consequently, I use it for example of the proposition expressed in the preceding sentence: a proposition that contributes to determining the meaning of the word “definition” (contributes to determining the concept of ‘definition’) in the present work.

The rest of the present item (1) makes the connection between the individual elements in the definition just presented and the topics that are to be discussed in the work’s definition theory. As part of this I shall explain why the individual elements in the definition are formulated as they are.

The formulation “the meanings of linguistic entities (... concepts)” signals two questions on which definitions can take a standpoint. First, there is the question of how the world is to be *structured* in thought: “meanings (... concepts)”. Secondly, there is the question of how these areas-in-thought are to be *named*: “linguistic entities”. – One part of the work’s definition theory will consist in a more detailed mapping of the structuring function and naming function of definitions (section 3 below).

Another matter is whether definitions are formulated in *concept terminology*¹ (“the concept of ‘law’ covers ...”, “Kant’s concept of ‘law’ covers ...”) or in *word terminology*² (“the word ‘law’ is used of ...”, “Kant used the word ‘Recht’ of ...”). There will be seen to be only a weak connection between, on the one hand, whether definitions are formulated in concept terminology or in word terminology, and on the other hand, the occurrence of structuring function or naming function (sections B 4.4.1–4.4.2 below). – My including “concepts” as an *alternative* to “the meanings of linguistic entities” in my definition is to signal that the work’s definition concept covers both definitions formulated in concept terminology and definitions formulated in word terminology.

¹ By “concept terminology” I mean words like “concept”, “conception”, “notion”, “idea” and their derivatives (or their equivalents in other languages).

² By “word terminology” I mean words like “word”, “term”, “expression” and their derivatives (or their equivalents in other languages).

The formulation “the meanings of linguistic entities (... concepts)” covers both propositions about the *connotation* of words or concepts and propositions about the *denotation* of words or concepts (section 4 below). A feature of the work’s definition theory will be to bring into focus specifications of denotation on a par with specifications of connotation, in their capacity of means of definition (section 4 below).

In some contexts it is more common to use “*meaning content*” than “meaning”; see for example the final paragraph of the present item (1) and otherwise numerous places in the present work. To attempt to reform language usage on this point would no doubt simply lead to confusion. I shall therefore stick to the customary use of “meaning content” and state herewith that in this use there does *not* lie any delimitation against the denotation of words or concepts.

The formulation “propositions that contribute to determining” refers to *descriptive* propositions, *normative* propositions, and *fused* descriptive and normative propositions (section 5 below). Further, “to determining” signals a delimitation *against* propositions about the *origins or effects* of concepts (present section 2, item (4) below).

In addition to the features now outlined of my concept of ‘definition’, features which will be discussed in the present section A, before being treated in depth as part of my definition theory in section B, I shall mention certain other features of my concepts of ‘definition’ and ‘concept’, features which will be established and justified in more detail in the definition theory:

- The concept of ‘definition’ in the present work has been established out of a desire for insight into analysis and argumentation *occurring in fact and formulated in everyday language*. An aim of my definition theory is to map the diversity of modalities, functions and means within the definition field of everyday language, and to show the system character and dynamics of this definition field (section B in its entirety, with further references to other parts of the work: see in particular sections F and III 2).
- My concept of ‘concept’ is not a separate topic but an auxiliary concept in the definition theory (section B 4.1 (6)).
- My concepts of ‘definition’ and ‘concept’ are corresponding concepts (section B 4.1 (1)↔(2)).
- I do *not* lay down *determinacy* as a definitional requirement in my concepts of ‘definition’ and ‘concept’ (sections B 2.2 cf. 2.1; 3.2.2; and 4.1 (3), (6)). This is signalled by my writing “contribute to determining” and not simply “determine” in the definition of ‘definition’.³

³ I use the formulation “the definition of ‘x’”, e.g. “the definition of ‘definition’” (in contrast to “the definition of “x””, e.g. “the definition of “definition””) when the main emphasis is on the structuring

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