

Philosophische Semantik

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Vorlesung 5

Rechtfertigungssemantik (I)

Bestandteile

Bezüglich des hier verwendeten Ansatzes einer Rechtfertigungssemantik sind 5 Punkte zu klären:

1. Inwiefern eine Rechtfertigungssemantik einen *Realismus* einschließen kann
2. Wie sich der *Zusammenhang* von wahren Aussagen und Rechtfertigung ergibt.
3. Wie die zentrale *Identitätsthese der Rechtfertigungssemantik* (Rechtfertigungsregeln sind die Bedeutungsregeln) ergibt.
4. Wie sich solche Rechtfertigungsregeln bei Ausdrücken verschiedener *semantischer Kategorien* darstellen (singuläre vs. generelle Terme)
5. Wie konkrete *Prozeduren* der Rechtfertigung aussehen könnten

[(1) – (4) werden in dieser, (5) in der nächsten Vorlesung behandelt.]

Definition

Justificationist semantics are semantics that claim that – at some level of description – the meaning of a declarative sentence *is a rule which governs and justifies the usage of the sentence in making a statement in a given situation.*

Versions of justificationist semantics are traditional *verificationism* (cf. Carnap 1936/37, Schlick 1936) *game-theoretical semantics* (cf. Hintikka 1987), *anti-realist semantics* (cf. Tennant 1987) or radical versions of *semantic holism* which identify the meaning of a declarative sentence with another sentence (cf. Bremer 2005).

Realismus

The idea that truth, meaning and justification are tied together in our notion of successful assertions/statements is compatible with any version of realism needed for RTM. Justificationist semantics need not be ‘anti-realistic’ in any interesting sense. Justificationist semantics defends *realism about reference and content*. Its argument for realism runs as follows:

(Realism)

To some extent we have epistemic access to reality, which exists independently of us, as well as to its structures and relations.

Argument für den Realismus: Bestimmtheit der Bedeutung

Statements describe by means of the expressions occurring in them what would be the case if they were true. Statements which use different vocabulary describe, except in some cases of synonymy, different facts. Assume the statement “F(a)” is true. If we can intersubjectively refer to *a* as being describable as “F()”, we justify/verify the claim that F(a) is the case. We thereby claim that the thing which we consider to be *F* possesses the features, the *structure* mentioned in (Realism), to which the meaning of the expression “F()” refers. *Definiteness of meaning* is founded on this correspondence. *Definiteness of meaning* presupposes that different expressions have conditions of application separated by their meanings (it is, for example, clearly distinguishable whether to use “round” or “square”). The condition of this possibility is (Realism).

Ontological Realism explains the first aspect of definiteness of meaning: descriptions of facts (sentences) are definite because the expressions composing the description *refer* to components (parts) of reality. The difference of the reference *situations* guarantees the difference of the meanings of the descriptions, since an aspect of these meanings is reference. Linguistic expressions are referentially or extensionally definite. And we must in some way or other be able to discriminate the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of these criteria to use the expression definitely – thus *Epistemic Realism*.

Noch kürzere Fassung des Argumentes

1. Making statements works (sufficiently well).
[undeniable fact]
2. Intentionally stating something implies making distinctions.
Non-definiteness of meaning implies inability to make sufficient distinctions.
3. Definiteness of meaning.
[from (1)-(3)]
4. Intentional application of an expression is successful only if we employ the expression (dominantly) in specific appropriate situations to the structure of which we have (reliable) cognitive access.
[Meaning Principle]
- 5. We have (reliable) cognitive access to the structure of the situations we make statements about. ■**

Internalismus

One of the core arguments for this internalism about justification runs as follows:

(Internalism)

Our access to reality as well as its structures and relations is *limited* by *our* cognitive faculties (particularly our linguistic and our perceptual faculties).

ASSERTION is conceptually tied to JUSTIFICATION.

Argument für den Internalismus: Objektivitätsanspruch von Behauptungen

A. If truth were a *completely non-epistemic* concept there could be entities and qualities which *we* talk about without us *ever* being able reasonably to state this correspondence of language and reality. Truth could not even be *prima facie* established, since there would be no way of introducing *any* criteria of truth: to introduce such criteria we would have to judge them in their reliability against other candidates, but if we were not able to access truth in the first place, we could not establish anything as being truth conductive.

B. Nevertheless, we keep on claiming things to be true. And to claim that something is true requires justification. If a speaker A asserts α , she claims that α is the case, that it objectively obtains and is not merely A's opinion. To claim objectivity concerning α makes not only the difference between mere belief that α and α being the case, but also claims that α will be the case for any speaker B of the linguistic community. This is exactly what "objective" means in contradistinction to "(merely) subjective".

C. Thus: Two questions then have to be answered:

1. How is it possible to distinguish mere opinions from opinions to which facts correspond?
2. How can one decide between A's assertion α and B's assertion $\neg\alpha$?

There must be means to answer these questions if understanding is at all possible.

D. For any attempt of communication about what facts obtain to succeed, these questions must have been answered already.

E. The means sought for are reasons. We accept, ideally, those assertions which have been better justified than their competitors. To give reasons is beneficial to establishing the truth of a statement which claims that a certain fact obtains.

We are interested in assertions because we establish by their means that which we shall consider as being the case. To doubt that we are seeking objectivity is a move in the language game that undercuts itself. We call statements “true” or “well-founded” to distinguish between mere opinions and facts.

We are thus lead to (Internalism). Its concept of truth aims at correspondence but connects this idea with criteria of consenting to statements, and possession of *reasons*. We have, therefore, reached a dual aspect theory of truth which corresponds to (some version of) *internal* realism

Annahmen im internalistischen Argument

In dieses Argument gehen relative schwache Annahmen ein.

1. That we take seriously the claim that statements are/can be *true* (i.e., we should not reinterpret truth as actually being assertability, or some kind of constructability).
2. That it must serve a *purpose*, when we claim truth, and that the purpose of asserting something to be true is truth itself (as an epistemological basic value) or something which we need it for (e.g., successful manipulation of our environment).
3. That we *can* realise this purpose; otherwise we would not persist in trying.
4. That we know about the contrast (merely) *subjective vs. objective*.

Noch kürzere Fassung des Argumentes

A shorter version of an argument for (Internalism) might concern the *felicity conditions* of assertions:

1. I assert α if and only if I claim α to be true.
[by definition]
2. For any speaker, sentence, event: if event e consists in A claiming α to be true and e is successful, then it is possible to justify α .
[*Felicity Condition* of Assertions]

In some steps we get:

3. For any sentence α :

If it is not possible to justify α , then there is no event e such that there is a speaker A such that e consists in A's claiming α to be true. ■

Damit werden *stark epistemisch transzendente* Aussagen *unbehauptbar!*

Die zentrale Identitätsthese der Rechtfertigungssemantik

1. The primary semantic unit (of appraisal) is the statement made (in assertions).
2. Assertion is conceptually linked to justification.
3. Justification has to use intersubjectively accessible procedures.
4. These procedures have to relate to the statement in question.
5. These procedures relate to the statement's connection to reality.
6. Thus these procedures concern the referring and the reference of the statement.
7. Rule governed procedures which concern the referring and the reference of the statement are the meaning of the statement.
- 8. Thus the intersubjective procedures *of justifying the statement are the meaning of the statement.***

Anmerkungen zur zentralen Identitätsthese der Rechtfertigungssemantik

- Premise (1) repeats a common observation, this being a starting point for semantic arguments from Frege on.
- Premise (2) links the evaluation of statements made (in asserting a sentence) to commitments of justification, a claim that stems from speech act theory.
- Premise (3) expresses the notion that ultimately only intersubjective agreement can distinguish mere opinion from shared reference.
- Premise (7), of course, will not be accepted by a conceptual atomist. It expresses the idea that meaning *consists* in semantic rules. Even if that is not the whole truth – especially if these rules are considered to be cognitively penetrable – still there is room for the presence of semantic rules, as argued above.

- The crucial step to (8) is *not* deductive, but appeals to plausibility and simplicity.

Rechtfertigungssemantik und CA

The relation between justificatory procedures and meaning cannot be *identity* if CA is true. The correlation is not as simple as the argument claims if there are no definitions.

Still even *analytic dependencies* express necessary conditions for a concept or lexical item to apply. [Vorlesung 6]

The argument can be understood – in light of the discussion here – as establishing that justificatory procedures are *intimately linked* to meanings.

D.h. selbst wenn der Kernbestandteil einer Wortbedeutung der ausgedrückte Begriff ist, welcher nicht einer Definition oder semantischen Regel entspricht, spielen Rechtfertigungsregeln (einer besonderen zu klärenden Sorte) eine Rolle, die sie in ein besonderes Verhältnis zur Semantik setzt.

Rechtfertigungsregeln dieser Sorte gehören nicht in die Epistemologie im Allgemeinen, sondern in Bereich der direkt an die Semantik (das Lexikon) angebunden ist.

The strength of this linkage bears emphasis:

1. For definable meanings justificatory procedures taking up the criteria used in the definition may come close to be the proper complete meaning.
2. For other lexical items the *analytic dependencies laid down in their lexical entries* link them to justificatory procedures making use of the conditions occurring in these analytic dependencies.
3. As there are *internal disquotational truth theories* for languages with disquotational truth conditions their right hand sides might be read as manuals for justification, if we possess knowledge about recognizing instances of the property referred to by a concept [cf. Vorlesung 6].

As mentioned, one criterion concepts and theoretical concepts (and the corresponding lexical items) provide a whole field for observation (1) to apply. For the majority of lexical items observation (2) might apply.

Regeln für Ausdrücke eine bestimmten semantischen Form: Singuläre Terme

1. Assertions are made to establish intersubjective reference, only thus we have objects.
2. A singular term has to *provide us with the object* of further determination.
3. Singular terms individuate (they *delimit something* according to the rule 'Find α !').
4. This delimitation presupposes (a) *conditions* to single out something, and (b) a *system of objects*.
5. On the linguistic level (a) and (b) correspond to *localisation by means of deictic expressions* and a *descriptive component* within the meaning of a singular term.
6. In as much as objects can be re-identified they have to have *conditions of re-identification*.
7. On the linguistic level (6) corresponds to the ability to *trace the objects* by means of a sortal predicate (covering the essential properties of an individual of some sort).
8. Thus the meaning of singular terms *incorporates some general terms* (or presupposes some sortal concepts).
9. Thus some singular terms are *more basic* in establishing a system of location beforehand (i.e. pronouns, deictic terms).
10. Non-basic singular terms are learned either by description relative to an already established system of localization or by local situations of baptism.

Regeln für Ausdrücke eine bestimmten semantischen Form: Generelle Terme

1. General terms provide the situational/empirical content of a statement.
2. Their function is to discriminate already identified objects.
3. Their basic semantic rule is ‘Check whether α is *so and so!*’.
4. Such rules contain criteria of justifying the presence of *so and so*.
5. These criteria, distinguishing general terms and analytic dependencies establish a system of general terms.
6. General terms are learned by encountering examples and employing some standard of similarity.