

Hamburg Summer School *Truthmaker Semantics*

July 26, 2019

Handout 1

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Object-Based Truthmaker Semantics: Attitudinal and Modal Objects as Bearers of Truthmaking (Satisfaction) Conditions

1. Introduction: Motivations for object-based truthmaker semantics

Notions of truthmaker semantics

Exact truthmaking and falsmaking,

Truthmaking and falsmaking conditions for complex sentences

(Bilateral) sentence meanings as pairs consisting of a set of verifiers and a set of falsifiers

Partial content, subject matter and aboutness

Sentence-based truth maker semantics

Truthmaking (just) a relation between situations or actions and sentences

Object based truthmaker semantics

Truthmaking (also) as a relation between sentences or actions and objects

Attitudinal objects: claims, requests, promises, beliefs, judgments, decisions, intentions, fears

Modal objects: obligations, permissions, needs

Other, similar objects: purchases, searches, debts

Motivations for object-based truthmaker semantics

- General intuitions of what bears truth or satisfaction conditions or more generally content
- Explanation of differences of types of satisfaction predicates applying to different modal and attitudinal objects
- Applying truthmaker theory to the ontology of the mind

- New semantics of attitude reports without using propositions and without regarding actions (action types) as truth bearers (Soames, Hanks)
 - New semantics of modals, based on a variety of modal objects and their satisfaction conditions
 - New semantic of embedded sentences more generally
 - The semantics of intensional NPs: *the book John needs to write, the house John is looking fo, the bottle of wine John bought on the internet*
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2. The ontology of attitudinal and modal objects

2.1. Standard ontology for attitude reports

1. Propositions:
 - the meanings of sentences
 - truthbearers (primary truthbearers)
 - the shareable objects (contents) of attitudes
2. Events (acts)

Combining the standard view with Davidsonian event semantics:

- (1) a. John claims that S.
- b. $\exists e(\text{claim}(e, \text{John}, [\text{that } S]))$

Standard are assumptions

Claims and judgments are propositions or acts.

Beliefs are propositions or states.

Events (acts) and states taken for granted.

2.2. Standard linguistic view

Nouns like *judgment* and *claim* are ambiguous between standing for mental events or speech acts and propositions.

Event-related properties:

- (2) a. John overheard Mary's claim.

Proposition-related properties:

- (2) b. Mary's claim is true.

The present view

Nouns like *judgment* and *claim* always stand for objects of a third kind: ‘attitudinal objects’

Some evidence

1. Copredication (the weakest arguments):

- (3) a. John remembered his false judgment that S.
 b. Mary overheard John’s true claim that S.

2. Understanding of part-related expressions: *part of* picks out partial content with attitudinal objects, but does not really apply to propositions, with a clear intuitive understanding:

- (4) a. part of the claim / belief / judgment
 b. ??? Part of the proposition that John came and that Mary left is that John came / is John.

3. Truth predicates

- (5) a. The claim / belief is true.
 b. ??? The speech act / belief state is true.

4. Predicates of correctness conveying truth

- (6) a. John’s belief is correct.
 b. John’s judgment that S is correct.
 c. John’s claim that S is correct.

Correct conveys truth and nothing else with truth-directed attitudinal objects:

- (7) a. ?? John’s act / claiming that S is correct.
 b. ?? John’s belief state is correct.
 c. . John’s making a judgment / John’s judging / John’s raising an objection was correct.

Different reading for *correct* applying to sentences:

- (8) a. This sentence is correct.

Correct is inapplicable to propositions:

- (8) b. ??? The proposition that Mary left is correct.

Usual normative use of correct

Correct relates to a norm intrinsic to the object or else one that is contextually given

- (9) a. The dancer’s movements were correct.

b. John’s punishment was correct.

- (10) a. The signature is correct.

b. The act of signing is correct.

Predicates of correctness convey truth and just truth when applied to objects like beliefs, judgments and claims.

5. Predicates of satisfaction

(11) a. John fulfilled the request.

b. ??? John fulfilled the act of requesting / the speech act.

(12) a. John broke his promise.

b. ??? John broke the act of promising / the speech act.

6. Attitudinal objects enter similarity relations strictly on the basis of being the same in content, provided they are of the same type:

(13) a. John's claim was the same as Mary's.

b. John's act of asserting was the same as Mary's.

2.3. Sharing of content

Either similarity of attitudinal objects or sharing of a kind of attitudinal object

(14) a. John's belief is the same as Mary's.

b. John and Mary share the belief that S.

Kinds of attitudinal objects

(15) a. The claim that S is true.

b. The claim that S is widely believed / has never been maintained.

Kind reference in linguistic semantics: Carlson (1977)

2.4. Intuitive roles of attitudinal objects

Objects of memory

We do not remember propositions, but rather our judgments, intentions, thoughts,...

Content-based causation

Propositions do not cause intentions, decisions, behavior,

Attitudinal objects do: desires, decisions, fears

2.5. Twardowski's (1911) distinction between actions and products

A claim as the nonenduring, non-material product of an act of claiming

A judgment as the nonenduring , non-material product of an act of judging

Products of cognitive or illocutionary acts: ‘abstract artifact’ (Thomasson 1999)

Properties of products:

- agent-dependent endure only as long as the act that produces them
- are bearers of truth or satisfaction conditions
- enter similarity relations based on sameness in content

Notion of product not applicable to all attitudinal objects:

‘States’: beliefs, intentions

Emotions: fears, hope, anger,

‘Occurrences’: conclusions, impressions, judgments

2.6. Differences among modal and attitudinal objects and common characteristics

Differences

- Endurance:

Modal objects naturally may endure past the act that may have set them up

- Physical realization: products of speech acts
- Conditions of validity (correspond to the truth of the corresponding modal sentence): not for illocutionary products

Predicates of validity: *hold, is valid, obtain*

(16) a. The obligation for Mary to work still holds.

b. The permission / offer for Mary to use the house is still valid.

Three important content-related characteristics of all attitudinal and modal objects

1. Truth or satisfaction conditions
2. Partial content, partial truth, partial satisfaction
3. Similarity based on sameness of content only

2.7. Dependence of satisfiers on the attitudinal or modal object

Searle (1983): Intentions, decisions, promises, and requests do not have as satisfiers actions as such, but rather actions ‘by way of’ satisfying the intention, decision, promise, or request, i.e. actions whose intention is to fulfill the modal or attitudinal object in question.

3. Different predicates of satisfaction with different types of modal and attitudinal objects

3.1. Satisfaction vs truth conditions

Some attitudinal objects have satisfaction conditions, rather than truth conditions:

(17) a. John's requests / demand / promise was satisfied / fulfilled.

b. Mary's desire was fulfilled.

(18) a. The demand was as ignored.

b. The promise was broken.

(19) a. John fulfilled the demand by handing in the paper in time.

b. John followed / ignored the advice by staying home.

What characterizes attitudinal objects that have satisfaction conditions rather than truth conditions?

Attitudinal objects that require the world to fit the representation, rather than the representation fit the world – a 'world-word/mind-direction of fit', rather than a 'word/mind-world direction of fit' (Searle 1969, 1983)

But what exactly is a direction of fit?

3.2. A normative account of the notion of direction of fit using truthmaking

An attitudinal object with a word-world direction of fit is *correct* in case there is a part of the world that makes it true. An action performed in recognition of an attitudinal object with a world-word direction is *correct* in case it satisfies the attitudinal object. A word-world direction of fit means that the attitudinal object itself needs to fulfil a norm (can be correct). Attitudinal objects with a world-word/mind direction of fit come, by contrast, with an action-guiding norm or purpose (imposed on a satisfier of the attitudinal object).

(20) Characterization of direction of fit for illocutionary products (Moltmann to appear)

i. An illocutionary product *o* has a *word-world direction of fit* just in case *o* satisfies its intrinsic norm (is correct) in a world *w* iff *w* makes *o* true.

ii. An illocutionary product *o* has a *world-word direction of fit* just in case any action *a* performed in recognition of *o* satisfies the norm imposed by *o* (is correct) in a world *w* iff *a* is part of *w* and satisfies *o*.

Nonfactive future-oriented emotive attitudinal objects:

(21) John's hope / desire that he would win was fulfilled / ??? true.

Such attitudinal objects also have a world-word/mind-direction of fit:

They require part of the world to trigger a positive emotive response in the subject, which in this case is the norm/standard to be fulfilled.

(Deontic) modal objects

obligations, needs, permissions, offers, invitations, laws, rules

Have satisfaction conditions, with a world-word/mind direction of fit:

(22) a. The obligation was satisfied / fulfilled / complied with / ??? was taken up / ??? was accepted.

b. The offer was taken up / accepted / ??? satisfied / ??? fulfilled / ??? complied with.

A modal object produced by an illocutionary act shares its satisfaction conditions with the illocutionary product that the same act produces, but it generally has a different lifespan.

3.3. Modal and attitudinal objects of possibility and their satisfaction predicates

Attitudinal and modal objects that have a world-word/mind direction of fit can be 'satisfied' or 'fulfilled' only if their modal force is that of necessity.

Proposals, permissions, offers, and invitations cannot be 'satisfied' or 'fulfilled'; instead an offer may be 'taken up' and an invitation 'accepted'.

What does the difference consist in?

Unlike requests and obligations, proposals, permissions, offers, and invitations cannot be *violated*:

- Not taking up an offer or accepting an invitation is not a violation, but not satisfying a demand or fulfilling a promise is.
- Whatever action is performed in virtue of which the demand or request fails to be satisfied, that action is a violator of the request or demand.
- Offers and invitations can be declined or refused, but that does not amount to a violation.
- *Ignore* conveys violation with modal objects of necessity; but with modal objects of possibility it conveys simple failure to satisfy it. Ignoring a permission is not violating it; by contrast, ignoring a command or request is.

An account in terms of truthmaker theory

Attitudinal and modal objects of necessity come with a set of satisfiers and a nonempty set of violators.

Attitudinal and modal objects of possibility come only with a set of satisfiers (and an empty set of violators)..

3.4. Intentions and decisions and their satisfaction predicates

Do intentions and decisions have a world-mind/word direction of fit (as Searle would have it)? Perhaps not.

What distinguishes intentions and decisions from requests, promises?

The normative aspect that goes along with the former, but not the latter. Requests and orders impose a kind of social norm on actions performed in recognition of them, in the sense that they impose a norm or purpose on another person's actions. This is not so for decisions and intentions: not realizing a decision or intention does not violate a norm imposed by someone else, but simply frustrates the aim of one's own intention or decision. Social norms are imposed only when an addressee is involved in the satisfaction of the attitudinal object. Requests can be 'fulfilled' because here one agent (the speaker) sets up a norm to be fulfilled by another (the addressee). Promises can be 'fulfilled' because with a promise a speaker declares and thus shares with the addressee a norm that his/her actions will be subject to.

4. Partial truth and satisfaction for attitudinal and modal objects

- (23) a. John's belief is partly true.
 b. John's claim is partly correct.
 c. Mary's desire was partly satisfied.
 d. The offer was partly taken up.
 e. The offer is now only partly valid.

Partly relates to the content-based part structure of an attitudinal object.

- (24) a. Part of John's belief is true.
 b. Part of John's claim is correct.
 c. Part of Mary's desire was satisfied.
 d. Part of the offer was taken up.

Agent-related predicates of satisfaction:

- (25) a. John partly satisfied the demand.
 b. John partly followed Mary's advice.

Modal objects:

- (26) a. John partly fulfilled his obligation.
 b. John partly followed the law / the rule.
 (27) a. Part of John's obligation is to help Mary.
 b. Part of the offer is to use the house in summer.

Truthmaker semantics provides a straightforward notion of partial content:

- (28) For sets A and B of situations or actions, B is a *partial content* of A iff every satisfier of A contains a satisfier of B and every satisfier of B is contained in a satisfier of A.

Notion of partial content of an attitudinal and modal object

- (29) A set B of situations or actions is a *partial content* of an attitudinal or modal object o iff B is a partial content of pos(o).
 (30) a. An (attitudinal or modal) object o is *partially satisfied* iff there is an actual situation or action s and a partial content B of o such that $s \in B$.
 b. A (potential) modal object o is *partially valid* if there is a partial content B of o such that some modal object d such that $B = \text{pos}(d)$ exists.

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