

# What does 'X is a Y' mean?

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## 1. Problems of the truth-conditional theory of meaning: non-truth-conditional conventional meaning

It has been generally assumed that sentence meaning is its truth-conditional content: the meaning of the sentence is a state of affairs it corresponds to when the sentence is true. This view, however, is not accepted without criticism. The criticisms mainly concern conventional implicatures, deixis, and context-dependency of truth-conditional content of meaning, each of which is discussed in the following subsections, 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3.

### 1.1 *Implicature*

Levinson (1983 : 127) explains conventional implicatures as follows:

Conversational implicatures are non-truth-conditional inferences that are *not* derived from superordinate pragmatic principles like the maxims, but are simply attached by convention to particular lexical items or expressions.

Let us take Grice's (1961) classic example: although the word 'but' has the same truth-conditional content as the word 'and', it implies that there is some contrast between the conjuncts. For example, there is a contrast between her being poor and her being honest in the following example:

- (1) She is poor but she is honest.

The implied meaning of contrast cannot be described as a part of sentence meaning because it is not truth-conditional. As a result truth-conditional theorists would say the sentence in (1) has the same propositional content as the following sentence:

- (2) She is poor and she is honest,

and, 'if they also identify sentence-meaning with propositional content, they would say that the two sentences [in (1) and (2)] have the same meaning.' (Lyons, 1981 : 208) This is difficult to accept.

More recently, Lycan (1991) makes a similar point using the word 'even'. Lycan shows, in the following examples, that there are significant similarities between 'even' and 'only': both can occur in almost any grammatical position, and which position they occur in significantly alters the meaning of the containing sentence:

- (3) (Even, Only) I hit him in the eye yesterday.

I (even, only) hit him in the eye yesterday.

I hit (even, only) him in the eye yesterday.

I hit him (even, only) in the eye yesterday.

I hit him in the eye (only, even) yesterday. (Lycan, 1991 : 133-134)

In spite of these similarities, the meaning expressed by 'even' cannot be described truth-conditionally, while the meaning of 'only' can be: it is a quantifier meaning 'none, except'. For example, the sentence 'I hit only him yesterday' can be paraphrased as 'I hit him

and no-one else yesterday'. Obviously the word 'even' makes some contribution to the meaning of the sentence in which it figures, which is shown as a difference between the sentences in (4) and (5):

(4) Even Mary knows the gossip.

(5) Mary knows the gossip.

'Even' in (4) implies the unlikeliness of Mary's knowing the gossip (since Mary is usually out of touch with things in the world) or the unusual scale of the spread of the gossip (which makes the unlikely event, Mary's knowing the gossip, happen). This meaning is, however, not truth-conditional, and, therefore, cannot be accounted for as part of the sentence meaning in the truth-conditional theory. Lycan (1991) tries a truth-conditional account of 'even' on the lines that, whereas 'only' is a quantifier meaning "none, except", 'even' is a quantifier meaning "every, including". However, Berckmans (1993) and Francescotti (1995) show that Lycan's truth-conditional account of 'even' does not work in a number of cases.

What these examples imply is as follows: some words have conventional meanings and contribute to the meaning of the sentence in which they figure, but since those meanings are not truth-conditional, they cannot be explained well in the truth-conditional framework. Using the examples of Japanese honorifics, vocatives, words of different registers, and T/V forms of the second-person pronoun, Oishi (1999) also shows that conventional, or even grammatical, meanings about the social relation cannot be explained well within the truth-conditional theory.

## 1.2 *Deixis*

Deixis is another aspect of sentence meaning which remains unaccounted-for in the truth-conditional theory. Cann (1993) explains as follows the standard interpretation of deixis within the truth-conditional theory:

The purpose of deictic elements is to link aspects of the meaning of the sentence containing them to the context in which it is uttered, either spatially, temporally or in terms of the participants in the discourse. (Cann, 1993 : 22)

Since the truth-conditional theory accounts for the propositional content of a sentence which is context-independent, the context-dependent meaning of deixis can be excluded from the scope of their study. This argument is, however, based on a very loose concept of *context-dependency*.

A deictic expression, say, 'she', is context-dependent in the sense that it is used in many different contexts to refer to different individuals. For example, by uttering the sentence in (6), I refer to my friend's baby, who is crying, or I refer to my mother, who has bought a lot of food for dinner, and describe something of her:

(6) She is hungry.

The hearer then has to take the elements of the context into consideration to identity the person I refer to by the pronoun 'she'. However, if the context-dependency is defined in terms of the

indeterminacy of the referent, the deictic expression 'she' is no more context-dependent than a proper name 'Ian' or a definite noun phrase 'the cat'. By uttering the sentence in (7), I refer to my friend, my friend's husband, or a janitor at the university, and describe something of him:

(7) Ian is a Scot.

I refer to different individuals in different contexts, and, therefore, to identify the person I refer to by 'Ian', the hearer has to take the elements of the context into consideration. Similarly the hearer has to take the elements of the context into consideration to identify the referent of a definite noun phrase such as 'the cat' in the following sentence:

(8) The cat has not been in all day.

In the argument of the uniqueness of a singular definite referring expression, Lyons (1977) claims that a singular definite referring expression such as 'the cat' in (8) is 'sufficiently specific in a given context to identify uniquely for the hearer the referent [the speaker] has in mind.' (Lyons, 1977 : 184) This means that specificity of a singular definite referring expression depends on context, and to identify the referent, the hearer has to understand which entity in a given context is the one which is specifically referred to by the expression.

Context-dependency might not be a real reason for which the truth-conditional semanticists exclude deixis from their scope. Can

(1993) says,

... it is recognised that the context is almost always required to fix the reference of expressions, but we will proceed on the assumption that a theory of truth-conditional interpretation accounts for the meaning of sentences considered as abstract units of the language system. (Cann. 1993 : 23)

Cann (1993) claims that formal semantics accounts for only 'meaning of sentences considered abstract units', and, since the deictic expressions are disambiguated by the context-specific information, deictic meanings are outside their scope. However, it does not seem to be true that deictic expressions do not have meaning as abstract units. Kamp & Reyle (1993) analyse truth-conditional meaning beyond sentence boundaries and describe anaphora within the truth-conditional theory: a preceding sentence builds up a context for the following sentence, which allows the use of anaphora. This shows that we can analyse context as an abstract unit, like sentences, within the system of language rather than as a particular context in time and place. This allows us to analyse the anaphoric expressions and deictic expressions in general in terms of an entity in the context. So, if the truth-conditional theory of meaning cannot explain deixis as an abstract concept, it is not because of the unique nature of deixis but because of the deficiency of the theory.

### 1.3 *Metalinguistic negation*

The final criticism concerns the point that truth-conditional content

varies depending on the interpretation. The truth-conditional theory is based on the assumption that for every sentence there is a state of affairs which makes the sentence true, i.e., a truth-condition, and that the meaning of the sentence is its truth-condition. It is therefore absolutely vital for a sentence to have an unambiguous truth-conditional content. There is, however, a problem with what Horn (1985) calls *metalinguistic negation*. Let us take Kempson's (1986) example of numerals.

According to Kempson (1986: 80), numerals have two interpretations; 'at least n' and 'exactly n'. Consider the following examples:

- (9) a. Mark didn't eat three biscuits.  
b. John hasn't got two girlfriends.

It may seem that numerals behave as though they merely have the 'at least' understanding as part of their linguistically specifiable core meaning. However, (10) provides contrary evidence:

- (10) Mark didn't eat three biscuits: he ate four.

To keep the sentence from being a contradiction, only the 'exactly n' interpretation is allowed for the former numeral in (10) above. Kempson claims that the truth-conditional content of the sentence changes according to which of two interpretations is to be taken. She also claims that this problem extends to the whole set of scalar implicatures resulting in more ambiguous sentences than semanticists expected, as is shown by the following sentences:

- (11) a. Mark didn't eat some of the biscuits: he ate all of them.  
b. She isn't competent at linguistics: she's masterly at the subject.  
c. He didn't sleep until noon: he slept until one.  
d. He isn't patriotic or chauvinistic: he's patriotic and chauvinistic.  
e. I didn't invite John to supper: I invited John, Mary and Susanna.  
f. The house is in a terrible mess. We didn't have Lily in to play today—we had the whole street in (as well as Lily).  
g. She didn't lose a finger: she lost an arm.  
h. It's no longer a crime to hold left-wing views in Colombia: it's a crime to hold any views whatsoever. (*The Times*) (Kempson, 1986 : 81)

Kempson (1986) then comes to the conclusion that to determine the truth-conditional content of a sentence, contextual parameters should be taken into consideration. She uses Relevance Theory<sup>1</sup> to explain how the truth-conditional content of a sentence is determined by the interaction between the linguistic meanings of expressions and contextual parameters.

Horn (1985), on the other hand, explains metalinguistic negation in a different way: he claims that in this type of negation, the speaker is not asserting that some proposition is false, but is rather indicating his unwillingness to assert something in a given way or accept another's assertion of it in that way.

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<sup>1</sup> Sperber and Wilson (1986)



Whichever way the metalinguistic negation is interpreted, it causes a problem for the truth-conditional theory. If, as Kempson claims, the truth-conditional content of the sentence changes depending on the interpretation, it is a threat to the assumption that every sentence is correlated unambiguously to a state of affairs as its truth-condition. If Horn's interpretation of metalinguistic negation is correct, it is another type of threat. To describe metalinguistic negation, we have to hypothesise the speaker who indicates unwillingness to assert something in a particular way, and this is against the assumption that sentence meaning can be analysed in a dyadic relation between a sentence and a state of affairs it corresponds to, where the language users are abstracted away.

#### *1.4 How do we deal with these problems?*

So far we have argued that the truth-conditional theory excludes non-truth-conditional meaning which is conventionally attached to sentences, and therefore does not give a whole picture of sentence meaning in the language system. This problem has been long recognized, and the realization of the importance of non-truth-conditional meaning was one of the reasons for which the field of pragmatics was developed. People understood the problem as an indication that there are two types of meaning, i.e., truth-conditional meaning and non-truth-conditional meaning, and those meanings should be described in separate domains, i.e., the semantic domain and the pragmatic domain. This idea is clearly shown in Gazdar's (1979) and Levinson's (1983) definitions of pragmatics, which are as follows:

Pragmatics has as its topic those aspects of the meaning of utterances which cannot be accounted for by straightforward reference to the truth conditions of the sentences uttered. Put crudely; PRAGMATICS = MEANING – TRUTH CONDITIONS. (Gazdar, 1979 : 2)

Pragmatics is the study of all those aspects of meaning not captured in a semantic theory. (Levinson, 1983 : 12)

As a result, many different types of meaning which share nothing but non-truth-conditionality are described in pragmatics.

After three decades of development of pragmatics, however, it is reasonable to ask ourselves whether it was a right direction to take. Although many types of meaning were described in pragmatics and this enriched the study of meaning, pragmatics did not succeed in specifying in a coherent manner the pragmatic principles by which different types of non-truth-conditional meaning are described. This strongly implies that non-truth-conditionality is not a category of meaning which reveals an important feature of meaning: meanings in this category do not share an important feature. You can categorize books by color, but the books in the same color do not share an important feature.

The problem of the truth-conditional theory, i.e., only a very confined area of meaning is analysed as sentence meaning, can be tackled in a different way. Instead of developing another area of study to describe other meanings, as pragmatists did, the semantic domain can be extended. Extended domain semantics is defined as a field of study where we describe the linguistic conventions between words or sentences and things or types of thing. The extended domain

includes truth-conditional and other conventional meanings. On this assumption, Oishi (1999 and 2000) proposes a new approach to semantic meaning. Using Austin's speech act theory (Austin, 1963) and his concept of convention (Austin, 1950), Oishi defines meaning as a conventional act between the speaker and the hearer in the speech situation by means of the linguistic conventions. Within this model, we can analyse not only straightforward truth-conditional meaning where the speaker refers to something and predicates something of it by means of the conventional devices<sup>2</sup>, but also meanings of conventional implicature in which the speaker indicates a certain interpretation of things, events, situations and social relations in the world.

In the proposed framework, the problem of conventional implicature in 1.1 can be easily handled. The speaker indicates (i) contrast or incompatibility of two situations (which is conventionally correlated with the word 'but'), (ii) unlikeliness or unusualness of a situation (which is conventionally correlated with the word 'even'), and (iii) a particular social relation between the speaker and the hearer or between the speaker and the referent (which is conventionally correlated with Japanese honorifics, vocatives, words of different registers, and T/V forms of the second-person pronoun). The problem of deixis in 1.2 can be also handled: the speaker (i) indicates an entity in terms of its role in the speech situation, such as the speaker or the hearer (which is correlated with a word 'I' or

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<sup>2</sup> Austin (1950) classifies the linguistic conventions into two types: one is demonstrative conventions, which correlate words or utterances with particular things or particular historic situations; the other is descriptive conventions, which correlate words or sentences with types of thing, action, or situation.

'you') (ii) refers to the entity which has been already introduced in the speech situation (which is correlated with a word like 'he/she/it' or 'they'), or (ii) refers to the entity which is salient in the speech situation (which is correlated with a certain pronoun), which is often described as antecedentless anaphora. Within the proposed framework metalinguistic negation in 1.3 can be described in terms of the relation between a situation referred to and the predication or description given to it: metalinguistic negation is the case where the speaker claims the predication or description given to the historic situation in the former exchange is not accurate or proper.

Since our present purpose is not to explain the proposed theory, we will not go into the details of it any further. In this section, we have shown the problems of the truth-conditional theory and proposed that, to solve those problems, we can take a completely new approach to sentence meaning, such as the convention-based approach in Oishi (1999 and 2000).

## **2. Problems of the truth-conditional meaning: the diversity of the propositional content**

In the preceding section, we basically claimed that the truth-conditional theory of meaning deals only with a confined area of meaning, and fails to describe other types of meaning which are conventionally attached to words or sentences. In this section, we will show that the truth-conditional explanation of the propositional content of sentence, i.e., its truth-condition, is not perfect, either: the truth-conditional theory oversimplifies the propositional content by correlating one sentence with one state of affairs, and therefore

fails to explain the diversity of meaning expressed by the sentence. We will explain this diversity of sentence meaning by correlating it with Austin's (1953) idea that the speaker can perform four different types of speech act by uttering the sentence 'X is a Y'.

## 2.1 *Generics*

Generic sentences are generally assumed to be the sentences where an entire class or kind rather than a particular individual is referred to and generalization about the class or kind is expressed<sup>3</sup>. For example, *a dog*, *the dog*, and *dogs* in the sentences in (12) do not refer to a particular dog or a particular group of dogs, but to the class or kind DOG:

- (12) a. A dog has four legs.  
b. The dog has four legs.  
c. Dogs have four legs.

However, since Carlson (1977), another interpretation of genericity has been generally granted:

- (13) Beavers make dams.

Let us take the explanation by Krifka et al. (1995) of the interpretation of genericity which concerns generalization over events:

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<sup>3</sup> See Lyons (1999 : 179).

The second phenomenon commonly associated with genericity are [*sic*] propositions which do not express specific episodes or isolated facts, but instead report a kind of *general property*, that is, report a regularity which summarizes groups of particular episodes or facts. (Krifka et al., 1995 : 2)

Krifka et al. (1995 : 3) say the sentence in (14) does not report a particular episode but a habit—some kind of generalization over events.

(14) John smokes a cigar after dinner.

It is notoriously difficult to describe generic sentences within the truth-conditional theory. Using the examples in (15)–(17), Lyons says:

(15) The lion is a friendly beast.

(16) A lion is a friendly beast.

(17) Lions are friendly beasts.

... The kind of adverbial modifier that suggests itself for insertion (either in initial position or immediately after the verb) in [15]–[17] is one that approximates in meaning to ‘generally’, ‘typically’, ‘characteristically’ or ‘normally’, rather than to ‘essentially’, or ‘necessarily’; and it is notoriously difficult to specify the truth-conditions for propositions containing adverbs of this kind (cf. Lewis, 1975). They certainly cannot be formalized, in any straightforward fashion, in terms of either universal or existential quantification; and, so far at least, there does not seem to be available

any satisfactory formalization of the truth-conditions of the vast majority of the generic propositions that we assert in our every day use of language. (Lyons, 1977 : 196)

We cannot equate the meanings expressed in (15), (16), and (17) with a state of affairs where every lion is a friendly beast ( $\forall x[\text{lion}'(x) \rightarrow \text{friendly}'(x) \ \& \ \text{beast}'(x)]$ ). This is simply too strong: the existence of a lion which is not a friendly beast does not immediately falsify the sentence. We cannot equate them with a state of affairs where there is a lion which is a friendly beast or there are some lions which are friendly beasts, ( $\exists x[\text{lion}'(x) \rightarrow \text{friendly}'(x) \ \& \ \text{beast}'(x)]$ ), either. The sentences in (15), (16), and (17) mean more than this. Similarly, the sentence in (14) does not mean that John always smokes a cigar after dinner: the incident in which John does not smoke after dinner does not immediately falsify the sentence. The sentence in (14) does not mean that John smokes/smoked a cigar after dinner at a particular time, either.

Generic sentences cause a problem for truth-conditional theory because within the theory a sentence is correlated with an entity or every entity, or an event at a particular time or every event in a certain period of time. The meaning of generalization over entities or events is simply not captured in the truth-conditional theory.

## 2.2 *Referential use and attributive use*

Donnellan (1966) distinguishes *attributive use* from *referential use* of definite descriptions. By using a definite description, a speaker either refers to a particular entity or whoever/whatever is of the

description. Consider Donnellan's famous example:

(18) Smith's murderer is insane.

Donnellan (1966) explains the referential use of the description 'Smith's murderer' as follows:

Suppose that Jones has been charged<sup>4</sup> with Smith's murder .... Imagine that there is a discussion of Jones's odd behavior at his trial. We might sum up our impression of his behavior by saying, 'Smith's murderer is insane'. (Donnellan 1966:103)

In the referential use of the definite description of 'Smith's murderer', a speaker refers to a particular person, say, Jones, by 'Smith's murderer' and describes him as insane. There is another use of the definite description of 'Smith's murderer', which Donnellan (1966) calls the attributive use:

Suppose that we come upon poor Smith foully murdered. From the brutal manner of the killing and the fact that Smith was the most lovable person in the world, we might exclaim, 'Smith's murderer is insane'. (Donnellan 1966:102)

Donnellan's referential and attributive uses of the definite description show that we can refer not only to a particular entity, such

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<sup>4</sup>It is inappropriate to call Smith's murderer someone who has been charged with Smith's murder. Presumably, Donnellan meant '... Jones has been *convicted* of Smith's murder'.



as a particular person, Jones, but also to a type of entity, such as a type of person who kills a lovable person in a brutal manner. The attributive use of 'Smith's murderer' is more clearly brought out by paraphrasing the sentence in (18) as:

(19) Whoever killed Smith is insane<sup>5</sup>.

Donnellan (1966) then shows an interesting consequence when these two types of referring fail. When the first type of referring, i.e. referential use, fails, the statement might still hold, but when the second type of referring, i.e. attributive use, fails, the statement does not hold. Suppose that the person who is referred to by 'Smith's murderer', i.e., Jones, is in fact not Smith's murderer. This is incorrect referring in the sense in which Lyons (1977) uses the term: the entity is not Smith's murderer. However, it can be successful referring: if the hearer identifies the entity the speaker intended to refer to by 'Smith's murderer' and the entity is in fact of the type INSANE, the statement, 'Smith's murderer is insane', is true. However, the situation is different if the second type of referring, i.e. attributive use, fails. Suppose the police found out that Smith had killed himself. The speaker then fails to refer to a type by 'Smith's murderer'. The type of person who kills a lovable person in a brutal manner cannot be referred to by 'Smith's murderer' because Smith killed himself. As a consequence, the statement is about nothing.

In the truth-conditional theory of meaning, these two types of

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<sup>5</sup> See Lyons (1977: 185-186).

referring cannot be distinguished. Words are correlated with entities, and the distinction is not drawn between referring to an entity as an individual who happens to have idiosyncratic features and referring to the feature which is embodied by the individual. More recently, Burton-Roberts (1986) also shows that one can refer to different aspects of the entity by uttering the sentence 'X is a Y', which is explained in the following section.

### 2.3 *A-type and B-type utterances*

Burton-Roberts (1986) distinguishes two different interpretations of the sentence in (20) and describes the difference in terms of difference in discourse. He says that when 'Max' is not a theme, the utterance is either about a person who is dandy or the feature of 'dandiness':

(20) Max is a dandy.

The difference is clarified when the utterance is put into different discourses; (21) and (22):

(21) A: Who is a dandy?

B: Max is a dandy.

(22) A: What is a dandy?

B: Max is a dandy.

The example in (21) shows that 'Max is a dandy' is uttered as the answer to the question about the individual who has a character

of being dandy. The example in (22) shows that the same sentence can be uttered as the answer to the question about the feature of dandiness. This point becomes clear when we compare them with a sentence, 'A dandy is what Max is'. Let us see the following examples:

(23) A: Who is a dandy?

B: !A dandy is what Max is.

(24) A: What is a dandy?

B: A dandy is what Max is.

'A dandy is what Max is', which is overtly about dandiness, can be exchangeable with 'Max is a dandy' in (22), but not with 'Max is a dandy' in (21). Burton-Roberts (1986) calls 'Max is a dandy' in (21) *Type A* utterance and the one in (22) *Type B*, and analyses the difference between these utterances as a difference in discourse, i.e., *Type A* discourse and *Type B* discourse.

Burton-Roberts (1986) gives a further interesting observation: a question that initiates a B-type discourse, say, 'What is a dandy?' in (22), constitutes a canonical means of requesting a definition:

Canonical answer to that question should supply, or purport to supply, definitions, or at least partial definitions (Burton-Roberts, 1986 : 55).

In other words, to utter a sentence 'X is a Y' as a B-type utterance is to give a definition-like description about a type Y.

Burton-Roberts (1986) does not go so far as to say that the sen-

tence 'Max is a dandy' has two meanings: one is about an individual, Max, which happens to have a feature of being dandy; the other is about the feature of dandiness which is embodied in Max. This would be against the assumption of the truth-conditional theory that a sentence can be correlated with a state of affairs of the world.

These examples of generics, referential use and attributive use of definite expressions, and A-Type utterance and B-Type utterance above clearly show that the sentence is not only about a particular entity or situation but also about a type of entity or situation. The truth-conditional theory of meaning does not cope with this diversity of sentence meaning. Sentences are not always about a particular entity or a situation at a particular time, as they would like to claim. It is safely said that the truth-conditional theory deals with a very confined area of meaning, which excludes part of the propositional content of a sentence.

#### ***2.4 How do we solve these problems?***

In section 2 we have been criticizing the truth-conditional theory by saying that it does not explain the diversity of sentence-meaning which contributes to a proposition. We need a theory of meaning whose scope is wide enough to describe different aspects of sentence meaning. Austin's speech act theory is a promising theory to explain such diversity of sentence meaning because the theory allows different types of speech act for the speaker to perform conventionally. The speaker can perform not only a speech act which comes into being by the speaker's uttering a sentence, such as promising, naming, sentencing, and so on, but also a speech act about a particular entity

or situation, i.e., truth-conditional meaning, or about a particular interpretation of things, events, situations and social relations in the world, i.e., conventional implicature, which we discussed in Section 1. In the framework of speech act theory, it is more than possible to analyse as different speech acts different propositional contents; propositions about a particular entity or situation which happens to have a certain feature, and propositions about a particular feature which is embodied in a certain entity or situation. Austin (1953) in fact proposes such a theory, which is explained in the following subsection.

#### 2.4.1 *Four different speech acts in Austin (1953)*

Austin (1953) claims that even in uttering a sentence as simple as 'X is a Y', a speaker can potentially perform four types of speech act. To explain basic speech acts Austin hypothesises what he calls 'Speech-situation  $S_0$ ': a simplified model of a situation in which we use a language for talking about the world. In  $S_0$ , the world consists of numerous individual items and each is of one definite type. Imagine the world consisting of numerous colour patches of the same pure red, the same pure blue or the same pure yellow, each of which has a number applied to it. Or imagine the world consisting of numerous pieces of paper in the shape of the same triangle, the same oval or the same rhombus, each of which has a number applied to it. The language in  $S_0$  permits only sentences of one form S:

(25) I is a T,

where 'I' stands for an item and 'T' stands for a type. The language contains an indefinite number of words inserted in the place of the 'I' or the 'T' in form S. Each of these words is either an I-word or a T-word in the language. For example, the following sentence is a grammatical sentence in the language:

(26) 1227 is a rhombus.

There are also two sets of semantic conventions. One is an I-convention, or a convention of reference, which fixes the item to which an I-word is to refer. The other is a T-convention, or a convention of sense, which correlates a T-word with the item-type.

We may inaugurate T-conventions by one or the other of two procedures of linguistic legislation: name-giving and sense-giving. Name-giving consists in allotting a certain word to a certain item-type as its 'name'. Sense-giving consists in allotting a certain item-type to a certain word as its 'sense'. For example, we might give the word 'dog' to an item-type which is an animal of canine as its 'name'. This is name-giving because the name 'dog' is given to the item-type. We might give an item-type, 'an animal of canine type', to the word 'dog' as its sense. This is sense-giving because the sense, 'an animal of the canine type', is given to the word.

When either procedure has been gone through, a specific type is attached by convention to a certain word, i.e., a T-word, and its 'name' as the 'sense' of that word. Then a satisfactory utterance (assertive) on any particular occasion will be one where the item referred to by the I-word (in accordance with the I-conventions) is of the type which matches the sense which is attached to the T-word

(by the T-conventions).

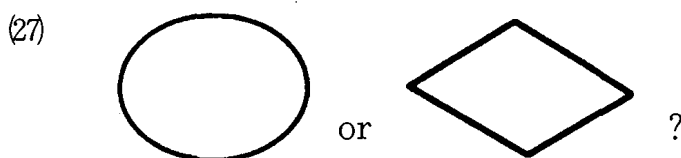
Austin (1953) then distinguishes four different speech acts, which are performed by the whole utterance of an assertion in the Speech-situation  $S_0$ : *placing* (*c-identifying* or *cap-fitting*), *stating*, *casting* (*b-identifying* or *bill-filling*), and *instancing*. How does this complexity arise? There is first a difference in direction of fit between fitting a name to an item and fitting an item to a name. The differences of fit here are as different as fitting a nut with a bolt and fitting a bolt with a nut. We may be given an item, and purport to produce a name with a sense which matches the type. Conversely, we may be given a name and purport to produce an item of a type which matches the sense of that name. There is also another distinction to be drawn. We fit the name to the item or the item to the name on the grounds that the type of the item and the sense of the name match. But in matching X and Y, there is a distinction between matching X to Y and matching Y to X. Austin calls this the difference in the onus of match.

These two distinctions generate four different performances in uttering the sentence, '1227 is a rhombus'. To explain first the choice of terms, we use the useful word *identify* in two opposite ways. We may speak of 'identifying it (as a daphnia)' when you hand something to me and ask me if I can identify it. We also speak of 'identifying a daphnia (or the 'identifying the daphnia') when you hand me a slide and ask me if I can identify a daphnia (or the daphnia) in it. In the first case we are finding a cap to fit a given object: hence the name 'cap-fitting' or 'c-identifying'. In other words, we are trying to 'place' it. But in the second case we are trying to find an object to fill a given bill: hence the name 'b-identifying' or 'bill-filling'.

In other words, we ‘cast’ this thing as the daphnia. The terms ‘stating’ and ‘instancing’ are used in their usual senses, and the details will be explained in the following.

*Placing* and *stating* have the same direction of fit, i.e., fitting names to given items. Also *instancing* and *casting* have the same direction of fit, i.e., fitting items to given names. *Placing* and *instancing* have the same onus of match: the type of the item is taken for granted and the question might be whether the sense of the T-word is such as really to match it. In both *stating* and *casting* the sense of the T-word is taken for granted and the question might be whether the type of the item is really such as to match it.

We will explain each of these speech acts, *stating*, *placing*, *casting*, and *instancing*. Let us start with the act of *stating*. Imagine someone asks: ‘What is 1227?’ The speaker asks himself what item-type this item has:



Uttering the sentence in (26), the speaker refers to the item by ‘1227’ and asserts that it is of the type on the right, which is correlated with the word ‘rhombus’ as its sense. If someone disputes the speaker, the point of the dispute is whether 1227 is of this item-type or another.

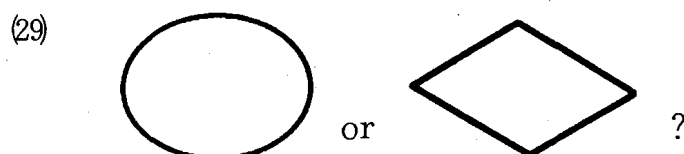
When a speaker performs a speech act of *placing* by uttering the sentence in (26), the speaker refers to an item-type, not an item, by ‘1227’, and the question is: which T-word is correlated with this item-type:



(28) rhombus or square ?

The speaker asserts that the word which is correlated with the item-type as its sense is 'rhombus'. If someone disputes the speaker, the point of the dispute is whether the word 'rhombus' or the word 'square' is correlated with the item-type as its sense.

When a speaker performs a speech act of *stating* or *placing*, the direction of fit is the same; producing a T-word to match the given item or item-type. In the act of *casting* and *instancing*, however, the direction of fit is producing an item to match the given T-word. Let us start with *casting*. If someone asks: 'What is a rhombus?', the speaker asks himself what item-type is correlated to the T-word 'rhombus' as its sense:



By uttering the sentence in (26), the speaker asserts that the item-type which is correlated with the word 'rhombus' as its sense is the diagram on the right, which is referred to by '1227'. If someone disputes the speaker, the point of dispute is whether it is the item-type on the right or the one on the left that is correlated with the word 'rhombus' as its sense.

The last one is a speech act of *instancing*. Imagine someone asks the speaker, 'Which is a rhombus?' The speaker then asks himself which item has the item-type correlated with the word rhombus:

(30) 3327 or 1227 ?

By uttering the sentence in (26), the speaker refers to an item by '1227' as the one with an item-type which is correlated with the word 'rhombus' as its sense. If someone disputes with the speaker, the point of dispute is whether the item '1227' or the item '3327' has the item-type correlated with the word 'rhombus' as its sense.

Austin (1953) restates these four speech acts as follows:

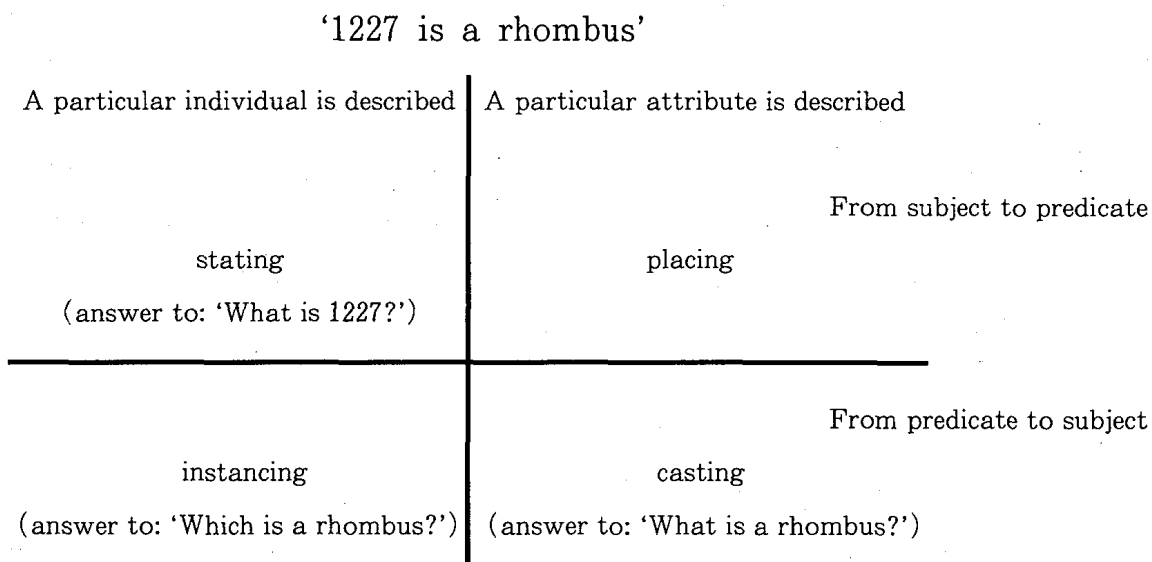
To *state* we have to find a pattern to match this sample to.

To *place* we have to find a pattern to match to this sample.

To *cast* we have to find a sample to match to this pattern.

To *instance* we have to find a sample to match this pattern to.

Since Austin (1953) does not clarify these four types of speech act any further, let us try to clarify them in the following diagram:



Austin (1953) proposes a framework of semantic theory in which we can describe different propositional contents expressed by the same sentence as different speech acts. This allows us to describe

propositional contents in general in a much wider scope than that of the truth-conditional theory, and solves the problems of the truth-conditional theory.

Throughout Section 2, we have been claiming that there are meanings which are directly related to propositional contents of sentence, and, nevertheless, cannot be described well in the truth-conditional theory. They are meanings of generics, attributive use of definite expressions, and Type-B utterances. Unlike meanings which are explained well in the truth-conditional theory, these meanings are not about a particular entity or a particular situation at a certain time and place: they are the meanings about a type of entity or situation. It seems very promising to describe these meanings as different types of speech acts such as *placing* or *casting*.

We have shown that we can refer to either a particular item in the act of *stating* or a particular feature or attribute in the act of *placing*. This distinction seems to be the distinction between generic sentences and non-generic sentences. For example, uttering the following sentence:

(30) The dog has four legs,

the speaker refers to a particular entity by 'the dog' and describes something of it. Imagine the speaker is a farmer who keeps many kinds of animals and is informed that one of his animals lost its leg. He might check all of his animals by saying, 'The dog has ....', 'The cat has ...' and so on. The same sentence can be uttered to perform a different type of speech act, i.e., the act of *placing*. The speaker refers to a feature or attribute, or an item-type in Austin's

(1953) terminology, by 'the dog', and explains it. For example, uttering the sentence in (30), the speaker refers to the item-type, that is, the thing which is a dog or being a dog, by 'the dog', and explains it as having four legs. This is a generic interpretation of the sentence. Austin (1953) does not say that there are also four different types of speech act about a situation, but it is possible to develop his theory so that we can distinguish different speech acts about a situation. Then we can describe in a similar way generic sentences about a situation such as the one in the following:

(31) John smokes a cigar after dinner.

The distinction between Donnellan's referential use and attributive use of definite expressions also corresponds to the distinction between the act of *stating* and the act of *placing*. By uttering the sentence in (32):

(32) Smith's murderer is insane,

the speaker can refer to a particular person, such as Jones, and describe his odd behavior at the trial. This is the act of *stating*. The speaker can also refer to a particular type of person, or a particular item-type, by 'Smith's murderer', and explains it as insane. This is the act of *placing*.

Burton-Roberts's distinction between Type-A utterance and Type-B utterance corresponds to the distinction between *instancing* and *casting*. We can explain Type-A utterance as follows: as the answer to speaker A's question, 'Who is a dandy?', speaker B refers to a

person, Max, as an entity which has the item-type which is correlated with the word 'dandy' as its sense (in (33)). This is the act of *instancing*.

(33) A: Who is a dandy?

B: Max is a dandy.

Type-B utterance can be explained in terms of the act of *casting*. As the answer to speaker A's question, 'What is a dandy?', speaker B refers to the item-type which is embodied in Max as the one which is correlated with the word 'dandy' as its sense (in (34)).

(34) A: What is a dandy?

B: Max is a dandy.

As we explained in 2.3, Burton-Roberts says Type-B utterance purports to supply definitions, or at least partial definitions. This is because the purpose of Type-B utterance, i.e., the act of *casting*, is to give an item-type which is correlated with the T-word, such as 'dandy', as its sense: it is to explain what kind of thing it is which is correlated with the T-word as its sense. This is to explain a sense of the T-word, and to give a definition of the T-word.

### 3 Conclusion

We have claimed that the truth-conditional theory of meaning analyses meaning in a very confined area, and, therefore, it does not give a full picture of sentence meaning. Our criticisms concern

two areas of meaning. One is the area of conventional implicature. Conventional implicatures are conventional or even grammatical meanings of the sentence. They are, however, not described as sentence meaning in the truth-conditional theory because they are not truth-conditional meaning. We claim that conventional implicatures share more important features with meanings concerned with propositional contents of sentence, i.e., truth-conditional meanings, than other context-dependent meanings. Therefore, we claim, we should develop a theory where we can describe both types meaning in a consistent manner. We show that Oishi's model of meaning, which is developed from Austin's theory of speech act and his concept of conventions, can explain those types of meaning successfully. In Oishi the meaning is described as a speech act the speaker performs by means of linguistic conventions. These conventions include not only those by which the speaker refers to something and describes something of it, i.e., truth-conditional meanings, but also those by which the speaker indicates a certain interpretation of the world, i.e. conventional implicatures.

Second, our criticism concerns the propositional contents of sentences. We claim that within the truth-conditional theory the propositional content of sentences is explained in term of an entity or situation in the world. Therefore generic meanings, the distinction between referential and attributive use of definite expressions in Donnellan, and the distinction between A-type utterances and B-type utterances in Burton-Roberts cannot be explained well. We have shown that we can describe the propositional contents of sentence in a much wider scope than that of the truth-conditional theory by using Austin's idea of four different speech acts which are performed

by the sentence 'X is a Y'.

From what we have discussed above, it is clear that Austin's theory of meaning, or the extended theory in Oishi, is a promising theory to explain meaning in a wider scope in a consistent manner, and clarifies what meaning we express or understand conventionally in communication.

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