

Workshop *The Meaning of 'true'*
Bristol, September 6, 2022

Understanding the Normativity of Truth

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The overall aim of the talk

Enlarging and reconsidering linguistically reflected intuitions about truth and normativity.

Topics to be discussed

- Wider range of truth bearers: mental and illocutionary objects ('attitudinal objects')
 - Other truth-related predicates: predicates of satisfaction and correctness
 - Equivalences and divergences of sentences with *true* and *correct*
 - Understanding truth-conveying *correct*: *correct* conveying an object-related, non-action guiding norm
 - Correctness and truth in a world in which the truthbearer does not exist.
 - Correctness of emotions analogous to correctness of beliefs and claims?
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1. Philosophers' standard example sentences with truth predicates

- (1) a. That Mary is happy is true.
 b. The theorem is true.
 c. The sentence S is true.
 d. Something is true.

Redundancy and deflationist accounts:

- (2) a. [S is true] = [S].
 b. [S] is true iff S.

Issues that such examples raise

1. What is the range of truthbearers that *true* in natural language actually applies to?

2. That-clauses as proposition-referring terms is problematic in view of recent linguistic work on that-clauses on which that-clauses act as predicates of content: events, attitudinal objects, ... bearers (Elliott, Moltmann, Moulton, Kratzer).
 3. What other expressions besides *true*, convey truth in natural language
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2. What does *true* with NPs in general apply to?

Certain mental and illocutionary objects (attitudinal objects):

- (3) a. John's belief is true.
 - b. Mary's assumption / judgment is true.
 - c. Joe's claim / assertion is true.
 - d. What John believes / assumes / claims is true.

Locutionary objects?

- (4) a. ? John's thought is true.
 - b. ? Mary's comment is true.
 - c. ? Mary's remark is true.
 - d. What Mary said is true.
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3. Variants of *true*

Predicates of fulfillment and violation

- (5) a. John's request / demand / order was fulfilled.
 - b. The order violated / ignored
 - c. The law was fulfilled / broken

Agentive predicates of fulfillment and violation

- (6) a. John complied with the request / demand.
 - b. Joe followed the law.

Predicates of acceptance

- (7) a. The offer was taken up.
 - b. The invitation accepted.

Predicates of realization

- (8) a. John carried out his intention to work.
 b. John implemented his decision to build the house.
 c. Mary realized her plan to travel to Asia.

Attitudinal and modal objects have various sorts of *satisfaction conditions*, depending on their type.

4. The predicate *correct*

Basic observation about truth-conveying *correct*

Correct with mental and illocutionary objects with a word-to-world direction of fit conveys truth and nothing else in natural language:

- (9) a. John's belief is correct.
 b. John's claim is correct.

No implication of justification or warrant (pace Williamson (2000) and others)

- (10) John's guess / speculation / hypothesis is correct.

General lexical observation about *correct* and *true*

Sometimes a language displays only the normative predicate and no specific truth predicate, e.g. German has only *falsch* 'false, wrong' the antonym of both *richtig* 'correct' and *wahr* 'true':

- (11) a. Hans' Behauptung ist falsch.
 'John's claim was true'.
 b. Die Tanzschritte waren falsch.
 'The dance steps were incorrect'.

How should one conceive of the lexical relation between *true* and *correct* ?

1. *True* as a special case of *correct*?
2. *True* and *correct* have different conceptual meanings, but happen to coincide in their application conditions when restricted to mental or illocutionary objects with a word-to-world direction of fit.

With sentences, *true* conveys truth, but *correct* grammaticality (if anything):

- (12) a. The sentence is true.
 b. ? The sentence is correct

Perhaps *true* has a derivative meaning, based on *correct* applying to the things sentences can apply to.

4. The distinction between actions and products / results

Contrast between *mental or illocutionary acts* and *mental or illocutionary objects* – the *products or results* of the acts

- (13) a. ?? John claiming that S was correct. (= John was right claiming that S)
 b. John's speech act is correct.
- (14) a. John's guessing / speculating was correct.
 b. ? John's (mental) act was correct.

Acts are *not* bearers of truth; they can be correct in the sense of fulfilling an action-guiding norm.

Other act – product/result distinctions displayed by the use of *correct*:

- (15) a. Joe's signing was correct. (= John was right in signing)
 b. Joe's signature was correct.
- (16) a. Mary's pronouncing 'Axel' was correct. (Mary was right doing the pronunciation)
 b. Mary's pronunciation of 'Axel' was correct.
- (17) a. Joe's performing of the dance was correct. (Joe was right performing it)
 b. Joe's performance of the dance was correct.

Also distinction between *locutionary act* (saying, speaking) and its *product* (even if no corresponding noun available)

Twardowski's (1911) distinction between actions and products

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

A judgment as the non-enduring , non-physical product of an act of judging

Products, not acts, are the things that are important for semantics and logic (truthbearers)

Twardowski:

Actions and products are two different aspects of the same thing.

Better: products of cognitive or illocutionary acts are that lack a material realization or a physical realization - 'abstract artifacts' (Thomasson 1999)

Properties of products (and attitudinal objects generally)

- are concrete particulars, agent-dependent
- are bearers of truth or satisfaction conditions
- enter similarity relations based on sameness in content
- have a part structure strictly based on partial content only
- endure only as long as the act that produces them, unless they come with an intended validity beyond the act

The notion of a product not applicable to all attitudinal objects

State-related attitudinal objects need not have been produced by acts: beliefs, intentions, fears.

Attitudinal objects may have the status of occurrences or results rather than products: conclusions, impressions, judgments

5. Divergences between *true* and truth-conveying *correct*

Divergence with attitudinal objects with word-to-world direction of fit:

1. 'Speculative' attitudinal objects

(18) a. John's guess that Mary is won is correct.

b. ?? John's guess that Mary won is true.

(19) a. The suspicion that Mary is guilty is correct.

b. ?? The suspicion that Mary is guilty is true.

Judgments from other European languages (French, Italian, and German) sharper:

(20) a. Die Vermutung, daß Maria gewonnen hat, ist richtig / ??? wahr.

b. L'hypothèse que Marie ait vaincu est correcte / ??? vraie.

c. La supposizione que Maria abbia vinto è corretta / ??? vera.

(21) a. Der Verdacht, daß Maria schuldig ist, ist richtig / ??? wahr.

b. Le soupçon que Marie soit culpable est correct / ??? vrai.

c. Il sospetto que Maria sia culpabile è corretto / ??? vero.

2. Future-oriented attitudinal objects

Do not easily accept *true*, are better with *correct*.

Data are stronger in German than in English:

(21) Die Vorhersage, daß es gestern regnen würde, war richtig / ??? wahr.

‘The prediction that it would rain yesterday was correct / true.’

3. Perceptual objects

Data clear in English and German:

(22) a. Mary’s impression was correct.

b. ??? Mary’s impression was true.

(23) a. Mary’s observation that it is raining S is correct.

b. ??? Mary’s observation that it is raining is true.

c. Marias Beobachtung, daß es regnet, ist richtig / ??? wahr.

‘The observation that it is raining is correct / true.’

4. Recollections

On a par with products of perception, as products of introspection?

Do not accept *true*, but only *correct*:

(25) a. ??? Mary’s recollection that it had rained on her birthday a year ago is true.

b. Mary’s recollection that it had rained on her birthday a year ago is correct.

5. Reactive attitudinal objects

E.g. explanations and answers

Correct better than *true*:

The judgments sharper for German:

(27) a. The explanation that Mary was not informed was correct / ?? true.

b. Die Erklärung, daß Maria nicht informiert war, war richtig / ??? wahr.

(28) a. The answer that Paris is the capital of France is correct / ? true.

b. Die Antwort, daß Paris die Hauptstadt von Frankreich ist, ist richtig / ??? wahr.

Cases where ‘true’ is applicable, but not ‘correct’

(29) a. The story the children were told is true.

b. ?? The story the children were told is correct.

7. Non-action guiding norms

A common philosophical view

Truth is constitutive of the norm associated with believing (i.e. adopting a belief) (Boghossian 2003, Gibbard 2003, Velleman 2000):

(30) ‘If one ought to believe p , then p ’

But equally common criticisms of the view:

Truth is not the aim of believing in the sense of fulfillment of moral values as what actions and decisions should aim for (Gluer/Wikforss 2009)

Norms for actions of adopting or maintaining a belief may also be contextually given norms.

Not applicable to guesses, assumptions etc.

The alternative view

Truth as a norm is not action-guiding, but as an intrinsic norm or purpose associated with the representational object (Jarvis 2012).

Applicable to mental and illocutionary objects (beliefs, judgments, and assertions)

8. A normative account of the notion of direction of fit

Attitudinal objects with a word-to-world direction of fit

Correctness imposed on attitudinal object:

Attitudinal object is correct in case it fulfils its intrinsic norm

Attitudinal objects with a world-to-word direction of fit

Correctness imposed on the satisfier, as an action-guiding norm or purpose:

A satisfier of an attitudinal object o is correct in case it satisfied the norm imposed by o .

(31) Characterization of direction of fit in terms of correctness

- i. An attitudinal object 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 object 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 .

9. Truth predication with *correct* and the existence of the truth bearer

- (32) a. Mary's belief that two is prime would have been true even if she had not believed that two is prime
- b. Mary's belief that two is prime would not have existed if she had not believed that two is prime.

Two possible responses

1. *Mary's that S* stands not for a particular attitudinal object, but for a kind of attitudinal objects, which exists even in worlds in which Maey does not have the belief..
2. *Is true* need not be viewed as an ordinary property, e.g. deflationist philosophical views – but needs to be made to work for attitudinal objects!

The intuition does not generally hold :

(33) ? Your claim that 2 is prime would be true even if you had not claimed that.

Still worse with *correct*:

(34) a. ?? Your claim that S would be correct even if you had not claimed that S.

Also bad predicates of fulfillment:

(35) a. ?? John's request to be able to leave would have been fulfilled even if he did not request that.

b. ??? I would follow your advice to publish the book even if you had not advised me to publish it.

c. ??? Joe would carry out his decision to publish the book even if he did not decide to publish the book.

Conclusion

Predicates of correctness and fulfillment express properties that require the existence of the truthbearer (bearer of correctness or satisfaction) in the truthmaking world.

Reason in the case of *correct*: association of an intrinsic norm with an attitudinal object

In the case of predicates of fulfillment: satisfaction requiring recognition of the request being made (satisfaction by way of recognizing the request Searle 1983).

10. Correctness for emotions

‘Pure’ emotive attitudes: *happiness, anger, amusement,*

Pure emotions do not have satisfaction conditions.

But they arguably have *correctness conditions* or *conditions of fittingness*

The attitudinalist theory of emotions (Deonna/Teroni)

Emotions as reactions to evaluations:

(36) a. John fears that S

b. John reacts to his evaluation of the state of affairs that S being dangerous.

Correctness conditions of emotions are not conditions of their justification: Correctness also includes conditions like the factivity of a state of affairs that the emotion is directed toward.

Is correctness or fittingness of emotions analogous to correctness of beliefs and claims?

Less obvious linguistic reflection of correctness conditions of emotions:

(37) ?? John’s anger is appropriate / correct / suited.

Be right conveys justification, not correctness:

(38) a. John is right in being angry that that Mary lost the race.

b. John is right in believing that it is raining (but it is not actually raining)

Conclusion

Linguistically reflected intuitions about correctness shed a considerably different light on the notion of truth and its relation to normativity.

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