

On how we use words¹

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“[Polonius]: What do you read, my lord?
[Hamlet]: Words, words, words!”
(Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene II)

Resumo

Este artigo considera a linguagem e suas mais importantes questões filosóficas, tais como a de que maneira a linguagem é estruturada e de como ela é relacionada com o mundo. Começa-se por considerar as entidades intrínsecas de um sistema lingüístico e como elas são relacionadas entre si. Considera-se a distinção que faz Frege entre *Sinn* e *Bedeutung*, que é desenvolvida na tentativa de se adicionar à discussão. Depois, este artigo debruça-se sobre a questão de se há uma realidade que pode ser apreendida pelas palavras. Mostra-se que há várias dificuldades filosóficas ao se tratar de tal problema, para cuja solução o artigo apresenta um mapa e uma direção em sua conclusão.

1. Introduction

Words are tools we use to communicate and, in a more philosophically sophisticated sense, to think. They are arranged in such a way to form language, about which it can be said that it is a way of making mutual relations easier. Yet, language has

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lots of peculiar problems which are, philosophically speaking, incredibly motivating. In order to take into account all these problems, the article falls into nine sections. Section 2 to 6 treat of certain aspects of Frege's *Ueber Sinn und Bedeutung* (1949), in which he develops the idea of how names (signs), sense and the objects of the world are related. We add to this discussion at some points, especially ones emerging from six graphic representations of aspects of language, presented below. Section 2 concerns the question whether sameness is a relation between signs or between objects. We believe that it is a very appropriate way of introducing the problems associated to intrinsic aspects of language. Section 3 relates how signs are linked to their references. Section 4 introduces a new entity to the system of language in order to solve a problem which we face in section 3. Section 5 concerns the three different manners in which words can be used, and falls into two subsections. Subsection 5.1 and 5.2, which concern direct and indirect discourse, respectively. Section 6 relates to how truth-conditions can be appreciated according to the three manners in which words can be used. Sections 7 and 8 concern the relation between language and reality. The former section falls into two subsections. Subsection 7.1 considers the idea according to which language pictures reality and subsection 7.2, the idea according to which it does not. Section 8 is the conclusion; here are sketched out some responses to former section. These responses are in order to solve the difficulty one would go through if he wanted to choose, in rational terms, the ideas presented in subsections 7.1 and 7.2. Section 9 is the bibliography, which is not meant to be exhaustive.

2. Is sameness a relation between signs or between objects?

Sameness, in the sense we use it here, has to be understood as a relation. That is, when one says "block 'a' is the same as block 'b'", for example, he is referring to an identity or even a coincidence between two blocks or, in a more sophisticated sense, between two names. This identity, in this specific case, is a relation the sentence establishes between two

blocks or between their proper names. In other words, as Frege says (1949, p. 85), sameness must be either

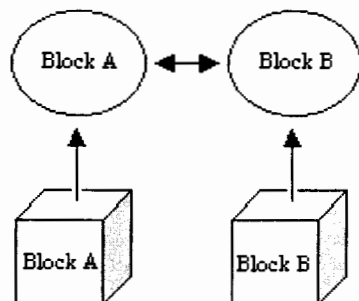
- i) between references (objects); or
- ii) between names or signs.

Frege assumes the latter based on the fact that “ $a = a$ ” and “ $a = b$ ” are sentences of evidently distinct cognitive significance, for “ $a = a$ ” is an *a priori* truth while “ $a = b$ ” is an *a posteriori* one. In other words, Russell, according to Rorty, seems to be right when he argues that “one can only talk about what is directly given in ‘knowledge by acquaintance’ (in the sense in which the intellect is ‘acquainted’ with universals and the senses with particular sense-data)” (Rorty, 1982, p. 112), but it could be said that sentences like “ $a = a$ ” are completely unimportant to our knowledge of the world, for they do not relate to anything outside the sentence itself. Sentences like “ $a = b$ ”, in their turn, have to relate to the world for there are no sufficient information inside the sentence to establish their truth-value.

Now we have to see how sentences “ $a = b$ ” and “ $a = a$ ” are related to (i) and (ii). Frege says that “if we wished to view identity as a relation between objects designated by names *a* and *b*, then “ $a = b$ ” and “ $a = a$ ” would not seem different if “ $a = b$ ” is true” (1949, p. 85). That is to say that if (i) were the case, then “ $a = a$ ” and “ $a = b$ ” would be completely indistinguishable in the sense that every true “ $a = b$ ” would be instantaneously understood as “ $a = a$ ”, and nobody would be able to apprehend a true “ $a = b$ ” in this form. That is, if (i) were the case, it would be impossible to utter two synonyms which were unknown by someone. Bearing this in mind, consider the following example: ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ “were names supposedly given by the ancients to Venus: ‘Hesperus’ was used for a planet which was first to be seen in the evening at certain times of the year; ‘Phosphorus’ was used for a planet which was last to fade in the morning at certain other times of the year. They did not realise that both appearances were of the same heavenly body” (Sainsbury, 1998, p. 665). Note that if the sentence “Hesperus is

the same as Phosphorus” were a matter of (i), it would be impossible to see them as different heavenly bodies, as the Greek did.

As another philosophical argument to defend (ii), it could be said that we have to understand (i) and (ii) as different statements and, therefore, that (ii) must be the case from the fact that a relevant philosophical problem can be raised from (i) and (ii). For the sake of clarity, let us come back to the example with which we started this section. Let one says that “block ‘a’ is the same as block ‘b’” and let us apply the idea expressed by (ii) to the situation. The schema of the assertion will be the following:

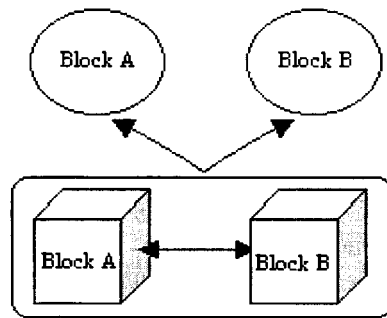


(Fig. 1)

Note that, according to (ii), sameness is a relation between signs, expressed by the balloons above the cubes. It is important to see that the cubes represent the references that are somehow grasped by the signs. The situation represented by Fig. 1 is a possible situation because one could be acquainted with “block ‘a’” and not with “block ‘b’” even if both names represented the same object. What is important is that, in the moment of the utterance of the sentence, “block ‘a’” and “block ‘b’” were not (and did not have to be) understood as the same object and there is no problem with that because sameness, in this case, is meant to be between names. The same argument applies to the case of Venus to which we alluded in this article.

Now, let us take (i) to be the case. The interpretation of the same statement, that is, “block ‘a’ is the same as block ‘b’”,

would be the following:



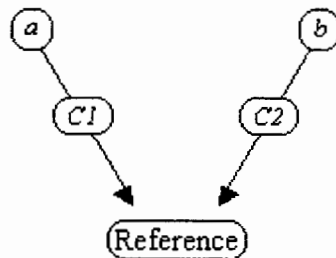
(Fig. 2)

It means that, if sameness were a relation between objects, the signs “block ‘a’” and “block ‘b’” would be indistinguishable and, therefore, it would be impossible to make statement “block ‘a’ is the same as block ‘b’” if they really were in fact. In other words, if (i) were the case, every “ $a = b$ ” would have to be pronounced as “ $a = a$ ” since they had to relate to the same reference. That is because, in that case, one would say “block ‘a’ is the same as block ‘a’” for every statement uttered in the form “ $a = b$ ” would be false, since the correct ones would be interpreted as “ $a = a$ ” and never grasped as “ $a = b$ ”.

3. How signs relate to references

We have established so far that sameness is a relation between signs, that is, we have argued that (ii) is the case. It should not be forgotten, however, that if sameness were a relation between names of objects (and we said it was), then the relation between the names themselves and their references (objects) would be conventional or arbitrary. The problem with this is that arbitrary connections would never be able to give important information, in the sense that the names could either refer to a given reference or to its negation, since the connection would be arbitrary. Reliable knowledge, therefore, if not impossible in this situation, would be rather rare.

Arbitrary connections are subjective. Every person could make up its own words and use them in the manner he wants. The possibility of communication and, in a deeper sense, knowledge, would be incredibly prejudiced. In order to get rid of this problem, it is necessary to create a level in the intricate system of language in which information is rather objective. That is why it is necessary to draw a more deeper and narrower interpretation of what connections between names and references are like. This has to happen, as we said, in order to save them from the aforementioned epistemological problem. Bearing this in mind, let us consider the following schema in which *a* and *b* stand for names (signs) of objects; *C1* and *C2*, for the connection between signs and reference and the latter, for the object itself:



(Fig. 3)

It would be by no means difficult to realise that even considering (ii), the assumption that sameness is a relation between names or signs, as the case, according to Fig. 3, the relationship between *a* and *b* would depend mostly on *C1* and *C2*, which still seem to represent arbitrary connections. Until now we are still in the epistemological problem, since *C1* and *C2* are arbitrary. But, as Frege (1949, p. 85) suggests, the relation between *a* and *b* would refer to one's manner of designation instead of to a matter of fact. What is important at this point is to argue that *C1* and *C2* are not totally subjective, even if it continued conventional, for if we fail in this attempt,

the expression of any genuine or trustworthy knowledge would remain impossible.

In other words, we are now to accept that the manner of designation of a reference, that is, *C1* and *C2*, interferes in some other connections, and there the possibility of knowledge resides. For instance, if one says “the cat is on the mat”, then this manner of designation has interfered in the way one would, in future, refer to the mat. Knowledge seems to be related to the dependence a statement has on other statements. If a completely independent statement is proffered, no knowledge can be obtained from it. This situation is what occurs when one utters a statement in a foreign language with which we have no familiarity. The manner of designation of what has been said has no dependence to our manners of designation, and here is why we cannot obtain any knowledge from it. The manner of designation, despite its conventional character, is inter-subjective.

It must, however, be clear that the manner of designation and the structure of presentation are different aspects. The former seems to have to do with the semantics of a statement, while the latter is related to its syntax. In order to clarify this difference, we shall consider the possibility of existence of two statements that have the same semantics but not the same syntax. Alternatively, considering the diagram presented in Fig. 3, it could be pointed out that *a* and *b* can only be distinguished if *C1* and *C2* are unlike. However, we cannot forget, there are cases in which *C1* and *C2* are indistinguishable and *a* and *b* are different only in their structure of presentation but not in their manner of designation. That is to say that,

if the sign “a” differs from the sign “b” only as an object (...) but not by its role as a sign, that is to say, not in the manner in which it designates anything, then the cognitive significance of “a = a” would be essentially the same as that of “a = b” (...). The difference could arise only if the difference of the signs corresponds to a difference

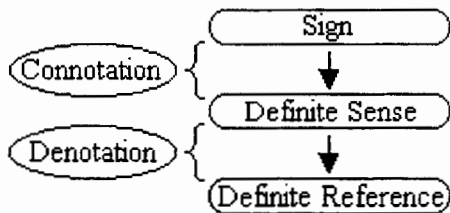
in the way in which the designated objects are given (Frege, 1949, p. 85).

For example, let “ $a = b$ ” stand for “ $3+1 = 1+3$ ”, where a stands for “ $3+1$ ” and b stands for “ $1+3$ ”. It seems obvious that both a and b equal the same concept, which is the concept of number four. But, it also seems to be obvious the fact that the structure of presentation of concept “four”, in this example, is different in both cases. But, the manner of designation seems to be the same: the summation operation of arithmetic.

4. How are sign, sense and reference related?

For clarity’s sake, let us repeat the concepts we have been using here. Sign (a and b in Fig. 3) means name, any word combination or expression that tries to picture the reference, and it has its structure of presentation. Sense is the connotation, the manner of reference that is used by the sign for grasping the reference; and reference is the designated object. As Frege says, “a sign expresses its sense and designates its” reference (1949, p. 86).

There is a regular connection between sign, sense (*Sinn*) and reference (*Bedeutung*). This connection can be appreciated in the following schema:



(Fig. 4)

It is important to note that the connotation does not warrant a denotation. In other words, one can grasp the way of designating something and, at the same time, he can be unable to grasp the reference. It is possible because the definite sense,

for definition, can be found in many different places in the net created by language. And thus, a sense of a “reference 1”, for example, can be grasped through the designation of a “reference 2” without any necessity of knowledge of the former reference.

Coming back to the relations between signs, senses and references, it has to be said that there are some irregular ones. Those connections depend mainly on the way words are used.

5. How can words be used?

As Frege says (1949, p. 86), words can be used in three different manners:

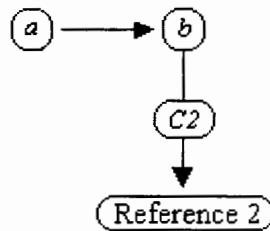
- iii) in the customary manner (Fig. 4);
- iv) in direct discourse (Fig. 5); and
- v) in indirect discourse (Fig. 6).

It is important to note that (iv) and (v) are the two possible ways of reporting what was said on any circumstance. In the case (iii), which has been treated here until now, words are picturing their reference directly. In the case (iv), words are used as meta-words in the sense that they are speaking about the words themselves. In the last case, words are speaking about their manner of designation.

5.1. Direct discourse

In direct discourse, one gives the other’s words. That is why one must use a reporting verb to introduce the other’s words. It follows that when one quotes someone else, the person who is quoting is not denoting, at first level, a reference, but he is just citing other’s words. If, for example, a person called Mr. Lügner says, “my brother said: ‘it is a beautiful morning’”, Mr. Lügner is not actually relating how the morning seems, but only what his brother said. That is to say that Mr. Lügner’s words are denoting the words of his own brother and only the latter have their proper reference. For the purpose of clarity, let *a* and *b*

stand for Mr. Lügner's words and for his brother's, respectively. Let *C2* stand for the manner of designation of Mr. Lügner's brother's words. The process of direct discourse can be represented as it follows:



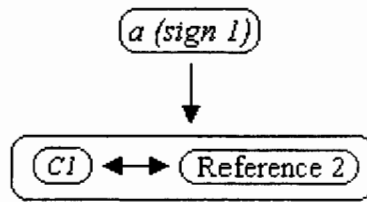
(Fig. 5)

Note that what is very peculiar in direct discourse is the fact that *a* functions as a meta-linguistic sign. It can be seen from Fig. 2 that in case (iv) there are signs of signs. Note that phrases like “Dr. John said, ‘the sky is blue’”; “Ms. Mary declared, ‘I do not like strawberry cheesecake’” and “‘Why should I do this?’ She complained” are examples of direct discourse.

5.2. Indirect discourse

Case (v) is the one related to indirect discourse. Indirect discourse, or reported discourse, reports what one said without using one's own words, that is, the words one uttered. What is peculiar about the reported discourse is the fact that in this kind of discourse there are always two clauses: the main clause, which contains the reporting verb and the reported clause, which reports the other's words. As it has been said, in indirect discourse, one uses the manner of designation of someone else's words. For example, if Mr. Lügner says “my brother said that it was a beautiful morning”, Mr. Lügner is somehow expressing the meaning of his brother's words. That is, one would only be able to speak truly in indirect discourse if he had properly understood the idea that was going to be expressed. It does not happen with the direct discourse.

Phrases like “Paul said that he preferred chips than rice”; “Sandra told me she passed the exam” and “Marta said she would do the ironing for him” are examples of indirect discourse. Let us consider the following schema to clarify the process undertaken in indirect discourse:



(Fig. 6)

Note that there is a direct arrow from the sign to both the manner of reference of other’s words and the reference itself. This means that the speaker, in this case, has grasped the meaning of other else’s words, and has communicated it through his own words.

6. Truth-conditions

It could be pointed out that the truth-conditions of a statement in indirect discourse are not the same as those in the customary manner, and they are slightly different from the direct discourse.

In direct discourse, for instance, when one says “John said, ‘the sky is blue’”, the truth-conditions do not concern whether or not the sky is blue, but, as can easily be agreed, it concerns whether or not John said “the sky is blue”. Although its simplicity, this result brings serious implications for the way speech is carried on. The point is that when one uses direct discourse one is not being responsible for the results of the meaning of other’s words. As it can be seen in Fig. 5, there is no direct arrow from one’s words to the reference of other’s words. The truth-conditions in this case seem to relate only to the fact that one has repeated the other’s words in a proper manner.

In case (v), that of indirect discourse, the speaker is under obligation with respect to what he says on the grounds that he

could only use indirect discourse as long as he had understood the other's words. Truth-conditions in this case are more complex than in case (iv). The reason is that, since one's words reveal one's understanding of other's words, and since one's particular understanding is a subjective matter, it can always be claimed out that one has misinterpreted the other's words. That is to say, an indirect discourse statement is true if one has properly interpreted the other's words. Yet, since the interpretation under consideration is subjective, it is a little bit more difficult to infer whether the statement is true or not. It seems however that an indirect discourse statement is taken as a true statement when there are no great discrepancy between "C1" and "reference 2" in figure 6.

7. How are language and reality related?

Humankind seems to picture reality using intricate systems of communication, which are called language. That is, language seems to recreate reality in its project of apprehension and communication. But it is by no means a matter of simple examination. First of all, it can be said that, at first sight, one realise that either

- vi) language is picturing reality; or
- vii) language is a kind of game with its own rules.

In order to make a judgement about the previous dilemma, it could be said that the manner expressed by (vi) presupposes a unique (necessary, *a priori*) world, while the manner expressed by (vii) presupposes a set of possible models of worlds, hereinafter possible worlds. Depending on the nature of the world: whether it is fundamental or simply one among many possible worlds, the strategies of treating language will change considerably. In other words, if (vi) is the case, language must be treated as an entity that in some sense touches the fundamental reality and, therefore, must be fundamental. If (vii) is the case, a meta-linguistic approach seems to be necessary because the strategies of thinking a language would

be characterised by the effort of finding the parameters of delimitation of this set of possible worlds.

It is important to note that the reality expressed by (vi) must be a metaphysical reality, otherwise (vi) would be indistinguishable from (vii). That is to say that if the reality expressed by (vi) was a possible (non-metaphysical) reality (world), then (vi) could be reduced to (vii) in the sense that (vi) would be only a particular case of (vii). In other words, (vii) expresses the idea that language that has been used by humankind is one among many possibilities of languages for there is no metaphysical reality to be pictured.

7.1. Does language picture reality?

Let us now take an assertion for the purpose of reinterpreting (vi). According to Rorty, "Bertrand Russell held various doctrines about both semantics and epistemology at various times during his life, but he did not waver from the view that

[viii] whatever is referred to must exist" (1982, p. 111).

It seems that (viii) is a good reason for prevent (vi) against naive critics as the one that says that (vi) is incorrect for it is not possible to picture what one does not know. What we are trying to say is that if (vi) is the case, whatever is said must picture the reality on the basis that it would be impossible to assert what is not in reality, according to (viii). In other words, if (vi) were the case, reality would be the scope of possible assertions. It is important to note that, if (vi) were the case, (viii) would not work out as a normative condition, but a descriptive one.

Nevertheless, even when one takes (viii) as a description instead of in a normative manner, it seems to be plausible that (viii) is not unquestionably evident. In spite of that, it seems to be appropriate to say that (viii) is true, not because one should be acquainted by reality for the purpose of talking about it, but because one is familiar with reality since, according to (vi), one

is part of it. In other words, it could be pointed out that we are talking about acquaintance with universals. It is advantageous to bring (viii) up on the sense that it seems that all critiques of (vi) could be taken as arguments against (viii). And, since (viii) is argumentatively speaking much more plausible than (vi), the latter could be taken, in some sense, as a reformulation of (vi).

Thus, the principal arguments against (viii) are similar to the following: if everything one says must exist, and since contradictory entities are not likely to exist, how could one utter contradictory affirmations? Or, still: if everything one says must exist, and since it seems that there is no horse that flies and eats stars, how could one easily talk about one? If one analyses the two prior questions, one would probably arrive at the conclusion that most of the difficulties of accepting (viii) are related to the difficulty one has empirically to experience or observe all the potential content expressed by language. In other words, the objections against (viii) could be written as it follows:

- ix) contradictory affirmations can be easily proffered; and
- x) affirmations about non-existent entities can be effortlessly proffered.

There are two ways of comprehending the opposition between (ix) and (viii). That is to say: two are the consequences of saying that the idea that whatever can be said must exist is, if not implausible, at least problematic because if it were true, then, insofar as one can say contradictory affirmations, there would be contradictory facts in reality. The first consequence of it is the following:

- xi) the logic behind reality must be consistent.

If that is the case, (ix) and (viii) are incompatible. The second consequence is:

- xii) in fact, there are contradictions.

Thus, (ix) and (viii) are compatible and the former is not an objection against the latter. However, it should not be forgotten that, with the advent of heterodox logics, and, in some

sense, since with the advent of non-Euclidean geometries, the idea of a consistent logical system behind reality became not so evident. Therefore, it seems that we are permitted to discard (xi) and take (xii) for narrower consideration.

When one faces (xii), it seems that a difficulty arises: if there is a fundamental reality, and even if there is an absolute logic behind it, and even if this logic accepts contradictions, it seems that this logic must not be trivial. Since, according to (vi), reality is fundamental, and, according to (viii), it is not possible to affirm what does not exist, and since (vi) and (viii) consider the same reality (or have the same reality as presupposition), then what is taken into account are the possible declarations about reality. Thus, it seems that, in fact, (ix) is true: contradictory affirmations really can be easily proffered, but it is not an objection against (viii), because the logic behind the reality asserted by (viii) could without any problem be a heterodox logic. It must be emphasised that we are not saying that, from the argument that claims that the logic behind reality is a non-classical logic, one could infer that reality is not fundamental or necessary. This inference is fallacious. It is important to remember that we have not yet abandoned the idea according to which if the case is that reality is not fundamental, both (vi) and (viii) could be reduced to (vii), as it was said.

In what concerns (x), which claims that affirmations about non-existent entities can be effortlessly proffered, it would be useful to consider one of the Rorty's conclusions from (viii): "statements apparently referring to something which does not exist must really be abbreviations for, be 'analysed as', statements referring to existents" (1982, p. 112). Of course, Rorty is trying to maintain (viii), the idea that it is impossible to affirm what does not exist. This tentative is, in some sense, a rhetorical one. A sentence would only be understood if at least the majority of the parts of this sentence refers to well-known objects. Otherwise, the sentence would not have a grammatical coherence and could not even be undertaken for consideration. For instance, if one says "minotaurus", one is apparently referring to what does not exist, but it could be argued that it is only possible to affirm that "minotaurus" does not exist because

it could be grasped. In other words, “minotaurus” exists in the sense that it is an abbreviation for “man plus bull”, which are concepts that refer to existent entities. If one says something unintelligible, it would be difficult to argue that what was said was an abbreviation for statements referring to existents. However, such an argument would be unnecessary because unintelligible statements, since they do not have grammatical coherence, are not taken for consideration, which seem to save Russell’s argument. Therefore, one could say that the Russell’s argument makes (x) rather naïve, for when one is proffering a concept that seems not to exist, one is really proffering abbreviations for what exists. In conclusion, we could say that (vi) is both difficult to deny or to accept fully.

7.2. Is language a game?

Let us now take (vii), the idea that language is a kind of game with its own rules, for consideration. As we said, since (vii) claims that there is no fundamental world, but only possible ones, it is necessary to define the parameters that delimit the set of possible worlds. As we said above, it would be difficult to find a necessary parameter for the delimitation of possible worlds, because only in a fundamental world fundamental parameters could be found. Thus, it seems that another way of examination should be taken. There is a way, which seems to be adequate for these purposes. This way is based on the idea that certain characteristics of a possible world are able to delimit the set of possible worlds in which those characteristics could occur. For example, from the fact that it seems that there are cats in this world, we could infer that there would only be cats in a possible world in which the conditions for the existence of cats could be met. Of course, there could be a possible world in which it would be possible for cats to exist but not for human beings. That is why instead of cats we will think about the conditions for human existence. In other words, we would only be able to write an article like this in a possible world in which we could exist. This simple idea is very useful in the sense it delimits the set of possible worlds; and, without

this idea, the number of possible worlds would be infinite, and therefore, if not impossible, at least considerably difficult to be treated.

In other words, it seems that the question “why do we use language in this and not in that way?” is to be answered with the affirmation that we use language in this way not because it is a fundamental way, but because this is the way in which the conditions for the existence of language as we know are satisfied. Bearing this in mind, the question of how language is related to reality can be seen as a question concerning how language relates to its reference. The idea of truth, in this sense, suffers a huge transformation. It makes no sense to ask whether a given statement pictures reality anymore. Yet, the concept of truth, even in this situation, has to be defined. In other words, instead of seeing the truth of a statement as the assertion that a given statement is in some sense connected to reality, one could arise at the idea that the truth of a statement has to do with some aspect of the relation between the statement and its reference. For instance, when one says “the cat is sleeping”, one could argue that what one means is the fact is that there is a fact in the space-temporal progress of facts in a possible reality that has somehow been pictured by the mentioned statement. For clarity’s sake, it has to be repeated that the question of truth has to be about the statement and its reference, for the purpose of avoiding problems which are raised from the assumption of a metaphysical reality.

Another precaution has to be taken: to say that the truth of a statement concerns itself and its reference is not to say that all truth-conditions of a statement can be found in its scope. It follows that it is important to highlight this because, as Frege (1949) seems to have cogently pointed out, to consider the truth of a statement as a matter of its subject and predicate is a tempting and inviting deliberation. Based on this, it is important to conclude that the question of whether or not a statement is true must not be only related to its predicate and subject. That is to say that a statement *a* is sometimes the same statement *Ta*, where *T* is a predicate that asserts the truth of *a*. For example, “today is a sunny day” has the same epistemological value than

the statement “‘today is a sunny day’ is true”. Therefore, both statements give the same cognitive information.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, it could be said that humanity seems to be unable to decide whether there is a reality to be picked out and, if it is the case, how it happens. Humankind’s inability, nevertheless, brings up the possibility of coming up with a pragmatic solution to (vi) and (vii) in order to establish not an ideal relation but an admissible and acceptable one between the ideas expressed by (vi) and (vii). It is not the question of reducing (vii) to (vi), assuming that there are no verification mechanisms to determine which one is the case. It must not be forgotten that, as we said before, even if we assumed that (vi) is the case, the possibilities of cognition of the reality expressed by (vi) would not seem different from the possibilities of cognition of the reality expressed by (vii). That is what permits us to interpret (vi) and (vii) as the same, for pragmatic purposes. Thus, we are, in some sense, allowed to talk about language without being concerned with the fundament of a possible reality behind it. It means that, reality, if there is any, has to be understood as a conventional complex, which is supposed to be pictured by language.

Abstract

This article considers language and its main philosophical questions, such as how language is structured and how it relates to the world. It begins by considering the intrinsic entities of a linguistic system and how they are related to each other. It considers Frege’s distinction of *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* and develops them trying to add to the discussion. Subsequently, it enters into the question whether there is a reality that can be

picked out by words. It shows that there are lots of philosophical difficulties in approaching such a problem, to whose solution the article presents a map and a route in its conclusion.

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