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The Problem of Meaning: A Road to Linguistic Philosophy

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Abstract:

Quine first derives the theory of meaning from Aristotle's handling 'essences', "Meaning is what essence becomes when it is divorced from the object and wedded to the word". Since Quine is strongly biased in his attitude to 'metaphysics', we can understand that this 'genealogy' of meaning makes him hostile to the categorical meaning; we will return to this point later. On the other hand, Quine admits that there are genuine semantic problems that stem from confusing "meanings with extensions". So we need a theory of meaning, but its primary business should be "simply the synonymy of linguistic forms and the analyticity of statements".

Keywords: Meaning, Linguistics, Philosophy, Analyticity etc

1. Meaning of Linguistics

William Sidney Allen denounces his bias in pungent term:

"Meaning, as at least one linguist has expressed it, has become a "dirty word"; but if the name tends to the avoided, there is no doubt that every linguist employs the concept, though some would be unwilling to admit to such improper thought. And surely without meaning linguistics cannot exist." (1957)

The meaning of a linguistic form as the situation in which the speaker utters it and the response which it calls forth in the hearer. According to Quine, meaning is already there; the problem is how to communicate with two different and imperfectly translatable languages. For Quine, linguistic meaning should be developed through the publicly accessible process of translation. But the function of Wittgenstein's argument as fundamentally after a different aspect of linguistic meaning than Quine's these are as follows:

- Analysis of linguistic meaning is constituted by either publicly accessible rules, or justified by publicly accessible facts.
- Analysis of linguistic meaning is constituted by either social customs, or justified by social practices.

3. A Pair of Problems of Meaning in Linguistics:

- The problem of making sense of the notion of significant sequence.
- The problem of making sense of the notion of synonymy.

The problem of meaning of significant sequence and the problem of synonymy are twin issue of the problem of meaning in linguistics.

Significance is the trait with respect to which the subject matter of linguistics is studied by the grammarian. But synonymy is the trait with respect to which the subject matter of linguistics is studied by the lexicographer.

Grammarian wants to know what forms are significant or have meaning. While lexicographer wants to know, what forms are synonymous or alike in meaning?

Actually a grammarian studies the syntax, pragmatics; phonetics etc. so the meaning of the sentence depends upon the context and the meaning of a sentence may varies from context to context. Because the meaning of the sentence of one context varies from another context. So there is a contextual as well as conceptual problem of the meaning of a sentence which is also called the problems of meaning in linguistics.

A lexicographer may be concerned with synonymy between forms in one language and from in another or he may be concerned with synonymy between in the same language.

For example: can you reach the salt? And please pass the salt. It means that both used to make the same request.

S₁ means S₂= DF. S₁ have the same meaning of S₂

Some discourses of the problem of making of the notion of synonymy. It concerned about interchangeability criterion for synonymy is obviously limited to synonymy within a language; otherwise interchange would produce linguist jumbles. Secondly ambiguity criterion for synonymy if *a* is synonymous with *b* and *b* with *c* then *a* is synonymous with *c*.

The third one is the lame synonymous plus stage direction. How to translate or paraphrase long speeches?

Quine locates that there is a parallelism between the grammarian's indirect reconstruction of the limitless class of significant sequences and the lexicographer's indirect reconstruction of the limitless class of genuine synonymy pairs.

Quine's view: lexicographer has no problem of meaning. According to him, the problem of making the sense of the notion of synonymy is not possible by monopoly in character. While grammarian's context it is possible.

4. Conclusion

I conclude that actually Quine has focuses that lexicographer's and grammarian's point of the problem of meaning in linguistics is paradoxical. And Quine concerned that the lexicographer's criterion for the problem of meaning in linguistics is moderate. But grammarian's criterion for meaning is strong.

My conception is that both lexicographer's as well as grammarian's problem of meaning in linguistics are not strong rather both are moderate. Because both side giving us peace-meal meaning not holistic meaning.

Therefore there are some problems arises in linguistics for meaning of sentences.

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