

BA EXAMINATION 2002

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

PHILOSOPHY

Optional subject (e): Philosophy of Language

Tuesday, 7 May 2002: 10.00 – 1.00

Answer THREE questions. Avoid overlap in your answers.

1. 'Quine's argument for the indeterminacy of translation establishes no more than that correct translation is underdetermined by evidence.' Discuss.
2. EITHER (a) What problem do belief reports pose for theories of direct reference? How, if at all, could the problem be solved?
OR (b) Is the notion of sense indispensable in providing an adequate semantic account of belief reports?
3. 'The meaning of a sentence is its truth conditions. "Close the window" has no truth conditions. Therefore: "Close the window" has no meaning.' Can a proponent of the truth-conditional theory of meaning escape this argument?
4. 'Whatever one knows in knowing a language it is not a theory'. Discuss.
5. What role do descriptions play in the interpretation of proper names?
6. EITHER (a) Is 'That man is a man' a logical truth?
OR (b) 'Unlike the use of the word "I", there is no linguistic rule for the use of the word "here".' Discuss.
7. What constraint, if any, does compositionality impose upon theories of meaning?
8. 'Speakers cannot mean by their words more than they can be known to mean.' Discuss.

TURN OVER

9. What, if anything, can be taken to show that a theory of truth, constructed along the lines of a Tarskian truth-definition, provides a correct interpretation of a speaker's language?
10. What grounds the vagueness of vague expressions, such as 'red'? Is it a matter of meaning, a matter of the extra-linguistic world or a matter of our epistemic limitations?
11. EITHER (a) 'What speakers communicate is fully determined by the meanings of the words used and the way those words are put together.' How adequate is this as an account of communication?

OR (b) Do we need to appeal to a communication-intention theory to supplement truth-conditional theories for natural languages?
12. Is it true that the notion of public language has no role to play in linguistic theory?
13. When we say of Smith, 'Jones is raking the leaves', what have we said?
14. Is it true that everything that could be expressed metaphorically could also be expressed literally?
15. 'The meanings of declarative sentences in natural language are fixed by their assertibility conditions, not by their truth conditions.' Discuss.

END OF PAPER