

Sentences, propositions, statements

Notes

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Sentences

Sentences = grammatically structured collection of words

Sentences = well-formed or not, meaningful or meaningless, do not have a truth value (neither true nor false)

A: Caesar invaded Britain in 55 BC

B: Did Cesar invade Britain in 55 BC?

C: Abacinate, abaciscus, aback, abacus

D: Of out snakes lightly bottle unto over

A and B are sentences

C and D are not sentences

E: The sun rises in the east

F: The sun rises in the west

E is grammatical equal to F. What is the difference?? ...

Propositions

... the difference emerges when a sentence is used to assert **propositions**

Using a sentence **to assert a proposition** is to use that sentence **assertively**.

Someone **asserts a proposition** when declares that it is **true or false** (truth-value)

More than one sentence can convey the same proposition:

Frank: It's raining

Franz: Es regnet

... or the same sentence may be used to convey different propositions:

John (brave): I can beat anyone in the house

Paul (playing chess): I can beat anyone in the house

A sentence used **assertively** is an **indicative sentence** (*) → used to make statements

In opposition, we can have to interrogative and imperative sentences

Indicative sentences are divided into *performatives* and *constantives* (Austin, 1962)

(*) a declarative sentence is a sentence (in the indicative mood, or indicative mode) that makes a declaration

Statements

A statement is the verbal assertion of a proposition

Assert vs Utter vs Say

- Someone “asserts” the proposition when they declare that the proposition is true
- Something is “uttered” if it is spoken, written or transmitted: if someone makes an assertion, they also make an utterance; but some utterances are not assertions (e.g. exclamations)
- “Say” conveys some ambiguity between “utter” and “assert”