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UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Est. 1640
36,500 students
8,600 staff
5,000 faculty
Philosophy in Finland

Finland Facts:

Population: 5.223.442
Languages:
Finnish 92% (official)
Swedish 5.6% (official)
Finland since 1917.
Previously a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire for 108 years, and a part of Sweden for 600 years before that.

188.000 lakes; 98.000 islands.

Beer drank / year 404.193.000 litres.
Philosophy of Logic, Action, Norms, Probability, Induction, Causation:
• *The Logical Problem of Induction* (1941)
• *Logical Empiricism* (1945)
• *An Essay in Modal Logic* (1951)
• *The Varieties of Goodness* (1963)
• *Explanation and Understanding* (1971)
• *Logic and Humanism* (1998)
• Many editions of Wittgenstein’s works

Cultural Essays:
• Like Spengler, vW believed in a decline of Western culture
  ("The Myth of Progress", 1993)
• Philosophy becomes fragmentary
  ("Logic and Philosophy in the Twentieth Century", 1994, Chinese translation by Prof. Chen Bo, *Philosophical Translation Quarterly* 2, 2000.)
Jaakko Hintikka (1929-)

Philosophy will thrive, if new opportunities are used well:
• There are new kinds of logics, new approaches to mathematics, new kinds of thinking,...

Over 30 books:
• Socratic Epistemology (2007)
• The Principles of Mathematics Revisited (1996)
• The Game of Logic (1979)
• Knowledge and Belief (1962)
• Form and Content in Quantification Theory (1953)
Over 300 papers...
"The ’Nobel Prize’ in Philosophy"
Eino Kaila (1890-1958)

- von Wright’s and Hintikka’s teacher
- Participated in the Vienna Circle in early 1930s
- Suggested the term “Logical Empiricism”
- Worked on metaphysics, philosophy of science and psychology.

- Kaila thought that logic is a “gateway to serious philosophising”
- Much of Finnish analytic philosophy tradition owes to his teachings
Linguistics in Finland

- In 1640, Chair in Latin and Chair in Languages (Hebrew & Greek)
- French, Italian, Germany, until 19th century
- 18th century the theory of Finno-Ugric family tree established, Finnish about 3500 years old
- Since 19th century Oriental, Greek, Russian,...
- 20th century: Semitic, African, East-Asian, computational, applied, translation, general linguistics
- Semantics, pragmatics, philosophy of language
My Areas of Research

• Analytic/Theoretical Philosophy (*Areas of Specialization*):
  – Philosophy of Language (game-theoretic semantics; metaphors; proper names)
  – Philosophy of Mind (cognitive semantics/semiotics)
  – Philosophy of Logic (diagrammatic reasoning, IF logic)
  – Philosophy of Mathematics (realist modal-structuralism)
  – Philosophy of Science (pragmatism, abductive reasoning)
  – History of Philosophy (Charles Peirce)
1. **Cognitive semantics** takes meaning to be in concepts, and in their embodiment, perspectival identification (perception) and intersubjectivity.

2. But it suffers from a *nominalist-internalist-essentialist* meaning: the *conceptual content* or mental spaces as organized by language.

3. **Cognitive semiotics** (in Peirce’s, not in Saussurean sense) is, on the other hand, can be a *realist* theory that takes the facts of the matter — that there are *objects of signs* — to determine the *propositional content*.

4. Yet the content need not be represented in symbols of natural language but can be *iconic*, which analytically means the precision provided by *diagram/topological* forms of representation.

5. Objects not external to the signs: both internal and external relationships obtain by virtue of a *pragmatic interpretation* mediated by signs.

→ Thus a realist cognitive-semiotic theory is neither *subjectivist* (“meanings are in the head”) nor *objectivist* (“ain’t in the head”). It caters for a *comprehensive theory of meaning* lacking in current-day cognitive semantics.
Aristotle’s categories of being

1. Substance
2. quality
3. quantity
4. relatives
5. place
6. time
7. direction
8. possession
9. action
10. being under influence

“All paid jobs absorb and degrade the mind”
- Aristotle

“The seat of the soul and nervous functions in general are to be sought in the heart. The brain is an organ of minor importance.”
– Aristoteles, *De motu animalium*
Supreme genus:

Differentiae:

Subordinate genera:

Differentiae:

Subordinate genera:

Differentiae:

Proximate genera:

Differentiae:

Species:

Individuals:
‘old Chinese classification of animals’
(J.L. Borghes, 1942)

1. Those that belong to the Emperor
2. Embalmed ones
3. Those that are trained
4. Suckling pigs
5. Mermaids
6. Fabulous ones
7. Stray dogs
8. Those included in the present classification
9. Those that tremble as if they were mad
10. Innumerable one
11. Those drawn with a fine camelhair brush
12. Others
13. Those that have just broken a flower vase
14. Those that from the distance look like flies.
Cognitive Linguistics and Conceptual Categories

Concepts

• collect ‘things’ or ‘experiences’ under the same universal type
• organize experience; guarantee understanding, learning and behaviour
• are prerequisite for communication
• create in the mind its conceptual categories

Kinds

• put together a certain body of knowledge concerning substances
  CAT, MONKEY, POLITICIAN, QUARK, 101, TANGHULU
• Our minds develop kind-detectors for concepts, esp. those of natural kinds (Ruth Millikan)
Conceptual categories

• Are they definable? Based on essential properties? Based on prototypes?
  – **CHILD**: young person (only in limited semantic domain)

• Unlike words, concepts are not public; yet communication and understanding is possible

• Concepts are **fuzzy**:
  – **VEHICLE**:
    BICYCLE? SCOOTER?? WHEELCHAIR???

• **Family resemblance**:
  – **GAME**. No defining characters, no transitivity, only similarity

• **Concept** is a combination of *actions* of the recognizing agents and his or her *conceptions*

• Does not presuppose names:
  – ‘a suitable birthday present for a 10-year old boy’
  – ‘animals that have just broken a flower vase’
  – ‘that what can contain tea inside’
Levels of conceptual categories

1. **Superordinate level**
   - Inclusive, high distinctness from sister categories, low internal cohesion
   - Less defining characters
   - Mass terms

2. **Basic level**
   - Behavioural interaction
   - Clear images
   - Part-whole relations relevant
   - Familiar, common, neutral, simple, informative,…

3. **Subordinate level**
   - Low distinctness from sister categories, low information compared to the basic level
   - Differs from higher levels by specific properties

1. **BUILDING**
   - FOOD
   - VEHICLE
   - RETAIL
   - CUTLERY
   - FURNITURE

2. **HOUSE**
   - NOODLE
   - BUS
   - SUPERMARKET
   - CHOPSTICKS
   - CHAIR

3. **TOWN HALL**
   - 长沙米粉
   - MOUNTAIN BIKE
   - WALMART
   - BAMBOO
   - CHOPSTICKS
   - ARMCHAIR
A possible semantic network between concepts
Nice, but where is the semantics?

**Semantic theory**

1. What are meanings?
2. How are the expressions and meanings related?
   - Truth conditions? Practices? Norms?
3. How do the meanings get communicated?
   - Intentions? Beliefs?
4. How expressive is the theory?
5. How are those relations learned?
   - Compositionality? Evolution? Action?

**Cognitive semantics**

1. Mental entities
   - Meanings are elements of the cognitive structure of language users (“meanings are in the head”)
   - Language is part of that complex structure
2. Semantics is associative mappings of language to that structure
3. Those structures largely shared among users (social norms)
4. ???
5. ???
“Spoken words are the **symbols** of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words. Just as all men have not the same writing, so all men have not the same speech sounds, but the **mental experiences**, which these directly symbolize, are the same for all, as also are those things of which our experiences are the images.”
"A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound-image."
Ups and downs of cognitive semantics

**Ups**

1. Embodiment of meaning

2. Meaning from geometry, topology; not from symbol manipulation or syntax

3. Cognitive models image-schematic
   - Handles conceptual metaphors, polysemy, metonymy

**Downs**

1. Conceptual spaces adequate for semantics
   → Nominalism

2. Relies on a theory of perception
   → Psychologism/internalism

3. Models not propositional (true/false, better/worse meanings not separable)
   → Non-expressive
   → Essentialist (prototypes)
Embodiment & Polysemy
Metaphors, extended meaning,...

1. What *position* does he have in a company?
2. She was dragged into a difficult *position*.
3. What *position* does that idea have?
4. Which *position* is the best to listen the concert? (perspectival)

”He gave a heat-seeking look, like a missile” (creative metaphors)

“animals that have just broken a flower vase” (concepts lacking a word and so lacking a sense)
Alternative: Realist cognitive semiotics

A linguistic sign only a special case of all signs

Nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign

C. S. Peirce

Grammar
- The art of combination and construction

Logic
- The art of thinking and reasoning

Rhetoric
- The art of interpretation and communication
THIS IS NOT A SIGN
Sign as a triad

Semantics/logic
Icon-Index-Symbol

Icons
Images-Diagrams-Metaphors

Pragmatics/Rhetoric
Rhema-Proposition-Argument

Syntax/Grammar

Sign

Object

Interpretant

represents
determines
determines by
mediation of sign

determines

Sign-internal-Sign-external objects

Immediate-Dynamic-Final interpretants
A realist cognitive semiotics

Cognitive semiotics

1. Diagram representations are embodied
2. Iconic signs + observations on relationships
3. Image-schemas propositional
   – Handles, in addition, metaphoric meaning
   – Handles the expressivity of language (quantifiers, negations etc.)
4. Observation of new material in conceptual schemas

Cognitive semantics

1. Embodiment of the meanings of linguistic signs
2. Meaning from space, geometry, topology; not from symbol manipulation or syntax
3. Cognitive models image-schematic, not propositional
   – Handles conceptual metaphors, metonyms
   – Doesn’t handle expressivity well
4. Perception
The End. Loppu. 终.

Thank you. Kiitos. 谢谢！