

# 行政院國家科學委員會補助專題計劃成果報告

## 奧斯汀的真之約定論與奎因的語意昇揚

Austin's conventional account of truth and Quine's semantic ascent

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### 一、中文摘要、計畫緣由與目的

關鍵字：語意昇揚；真/意義；真之述詞；描述性/指示性之約定俗成；實用主義的真之概念

*真之概念的來源在於對宣稱之  
語言行為的一般概念*

*達美特 M. Dummett*

奎因在 *Word and Object* 一書中提出語言上的創見，即其所謂的語意昇揚，藉由此概念，我們視語辭為整體並予以命名，而非僅當作語句的一部份來使用。如此，我們視這種語辭為某一類型的實例，即語言上的實體，使的量辭得以涉及之。特別是，奎因宣稱將語意昇揚之概念運用到語句上，便可合法地使用真之述詞 “is true”。然而，如此使用真之述詞似乎與真之去引號論不一致，因為依去引號之意，真之述詞是多餘的，或者充其量做同一函應之解釋，奎因 ((1986): 12) 為了解消此潛在的不一致，他試圖論證「當我們為了普遍化的緣故重建語意昇揚，則需要真之述詞以重建客觀指涉之效力」。就現況而言，此論證並不相當具說服力。在此篇論文中，筆者將說明奎因語意昇揚之策略本質上是對日常對話中真之述詞的使用提供一實用主義的處理方式，甚者，此實用主義的處理方式還可擴及普通述句，例如，「『雪是白的』為真」。而這樣的處理方式意味著，真 (truth) 應以實用主義概念解釋之，而非一純粹的語意概念。為了證成此論點，筆者比較了奎因對真之述詞的處理方式及訴諸描述性之約定俗成與指示性之約定俗成二概念的奧斯汀真之約定論。因為這使我想到了，若語句的真可藉由如奧斯汀所論證的指示性之約定俗成而刻劃之，那麼真本質上

是一實用主義的概念。事實上，當我們藉由指示性之約定俗成認定某一述句為真，此必要的指示性之約定俗成並未告訴我們真的本質，也未增加其他的要素於原本述句。簡言之，使述句為真的指示性之約定俗成並不意圖成為語意規則，如此表徵下的真不應以語意概念待之，代而替之的是，相關的指示性之約定俗成以普遍原則為務，旨在解釋，當一說話者說一述句為真時，是如何使用真之述詞。

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## 二、英文摘要

Keywords: **semactic ascent; truth/meaning; truth-prdicate; descriptive/demonstrative conventions; pragmatic conception of truth**

*The source of the concept of truth lies in  
our general conception of the linguistic practice of assertion.  
—M. Dummett*

In *Word and Object*, Quine proposes a linguistic device, what he calls *semantic ascent*, by virtue of which we can *name a linguistic expression*, taken as a whole, rather than *use it* as part of sentences. In doing so, we treat linguistic expressions of the kind as objects of a certain type, i.e. linguistic entities, so that the quantifier can range over these objects. In particular, Quine claims that applying semantic ascent to sentences, we could legitimately use the truth predicate 'is true'. Nonetheless, this usage of the truth predicate seems to be inconsistent with his disquotational account of truth. For on the disquotational account, the truth predicate is superfluous, or can be at most construed as an identity function. Quine ((1986):12) attempts to dissolve this latent inconsistency by arguing that the truth predicate is needed 'to restore the effect of objective reference when for the sake of some generalization we have resorted to semantic ascent.' This argument, as it stands, is not so convincing. In this paper I shall propose that Quine's resort to semantic ascent provides in essence a pragmatic treatment of the use of the truth predicate in ordinary discourse. Moreover, this pragmatic treatment can be extended to ordinary statements, e.g. '*Snow is white*' is true. And this treatment suggests that *truth should be construed as a pragmatic concept*, rather than a purely semantic one. To justify this thesis, I draw a comparison between Quine's treatment of the truth predicate and Austin's conventional account of truth, which resorts to descriptive conventions and demonstrative conventions. For it strikes me that if the truth of a statement can be characterized by virtue of demonstrative conventions, as Austin so argued, then truth is essentially a pragmatic concept. As a matter of fact, when we ascribe truth to a certain statement by means of demonstrative conventions, the required demonstrative conventions tell us nothing about the nature of truth, nor do they add any extra ingredients to the original statement. In short, the set of demonstrative conventions which would render the given statement to be true is not intended to serve as a semantic rule. Truth,

thus characterized, should not be treated as a semantic concept. Instead, the set of demonstrative conventions involved would serve as a general principle or principles, which explain how to use the truth predicate when a speaker says that a statement is true.

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