

Truth's Role in Understanding

The concept of truth plays an essential role in habits we must grasp and apply when aiming at understanding others and being understood. This accounts for the indispensability of the explanatory role of the concept of truth. Like other central concepts such as *identity* or *cause*, the concept of truth is primitive, but application of a primitive, unanalyzable concept may be indispensable in explanations, and its centrality is accounted for when it is shown that the proposed explanations are ineliminable in our cognitive lives. Overlooking the centrality of these truth-involving habits might be excusable due to a confusion between the role of the *predicate* 'is true' in stating a semantic theory for a language – and the role of applying the *concept* of truth in cognitive strategies that aim at understanding others – what they say, assert or implicate. From its central role other and better known features of the concept follow: its uniformity, its language-independency, but also its irrelevance in other explanatory projects, such as explanations of the success of science (Horwich 1990). I sketch the main lines of this novel approach to truth, suggest some applications and compare the project with minimalism about truth and some criticisms of the original Davidsonian program.