

24.251 – Intro to the Philosophy of Language
Problem Set 8: Quine on Radical Interpretation

1. Which of the following is distinctive of radical translation, according to Quine?
 - (a) All one has to go on is forces impinging on the native's surfaces, the native's observable behavior and cultural similarities.
 - (b) All one has to go on is forces impinging on the native's surfaces and the native's observable behavior.
 - (c) No individual interpreters are available, only chains of interpreters.
 - (d) The native language corresponds to a primitive culture.

2. When Quine explains (on page 32) what it is for a stimulation to belong to the 'affirmative stimulus meaning' of a sentence for a given speaker, why is the auxiliary stimulation σ' needed?
 - (a) to avoid the result that the stimulations typically caused by an elephant passing by on its own belong to the affirmative stimulus meaning of 'Lo, a rabbit'.
 - (b) to avoid the result that the stimulations typically caused by a fake rabbit belong to the affirmative stimulus meaning of 'Lo, a rabbit'.
 - (c) to avoid the result that the stimulations typically caused by a passing rabbit belong to the affirmative stimulus meaning of ' $2+2 = 4$ '.
 - (d) to avoid the result that the stimulations typically caused by a passing rabbit belong to the affirmative stimulus meaning of 'Lo, a rabbit'.

3. According to Quine, the sentence 'Lo, a unicorn' and the sentence 'Lo, a goblin' have the same stimulus-meaning.
 - (a) true
 - (b) false

4. According to Quine, which of the following is a reason for thinking that radical interpreters ought to focus on stimulation patterns, rather than objects in the world?
 - (a) Because of possible cultural differences between speakers.
 - (b) Because one would expect the same linguistic dispositions if the world were different but stimulations were the same.
 - (c) Because total ocular irradiation patterns that differ in centering also differ in limits.

- (d) Because different speakers might have different beliefs about the world.
5. What, according to Quine, is the difference between an occasion sentence and an observation sentence?
- (a) The stimulus-meaning of observational sentences is more closely linked to forces impinging on the natives surfaces.
 - (b) Whereas observability depends on insensitivity to collateral information, occasionality does not.
 - (c) 'Elephants are gray' is naturally thought of as an occasion sentence but not an observational sentence.
 - (d) 'Elephants are gray' is naturally thought of as an observational sentence but not an occasion sentence.
6. According to Quine, why does 'Lo, a rabbit' have a higher degree of empirical adequacy as a translation of 'Gavagai' than 'Lo, an undetached rabbit part'?
- (a) Because 'Lo, a rabbit' is the simpler hypothesis.
 - (b) Because 'Lo, a rabbit' is more naturally thought of as an occasion sentence than 'Lo, an undetached rabbit part'.
 - (c) Because 'Something is a rabbit if and only if it is a fusion of undetached rabbit parts' is naturally thought of as stimulus-analytic.
 - (d) Quine does *not* think that 'Lo, a rabbit' has a higher degree of empirical adequacy.
7. On page 71, Quine claims that, when one considers the case of a bilingual translator, (1) can be extended to (1'). Why is this?
- (a) Because a bilingual translator is in a position to assess questions of stimulus-synonymy between a non-observational occasion sentence and a candidate translation.
 - (b) Because the enterprise of radical interpretation relies essentially on the framing of analytical hypotheses.
 - (c) For the reason explained in the first paragraph of page 69.
 - (d) None of the above.
8. Quine believes that it is in principle possible to come up with incompatible analytical hypotheses for translating the utterances of speakers of one's own language.
- (a) true
 - (b) false