Dialogue Games and Incompatibility Semantics

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Abstract

Brandom analysis of the practice of giving and asking for reasons in terms of incompatibility semantics provides interesting insights on the relationship between logic and discursive practices. In this paper, I will propose a dialogical interpretation of Brandom's approach which shows several connection with the dialogical tradition in the foundational perspectives on logic (see [3]) and it allows to place logic within discursive practice as a peculiar form of language games.

The analytical pragmatism proposed by Brandom, stressing that "we must look at what it is to use locutions as expressing meanings – that is, at what one must do in order to count as saying what the vocabulary lets the practitioners express"[1], sheds new lights on foundational issues concerning logic, in particular, developing a strong connection between logic and inferential (pre-logical) practice or abilities, which are to be grounded in the general practice of giving and asking for reasons.

The notion of incompatibility, which is defined by Brandom as a constitutively modal notion, will be here interpreted as an inter-subjective agreement on the rules of a dialogues. More precisely, following [5], I will provide a foundation of incompatibility semantics based on an abstract form of agreement which can be seen as a deal between a proponent and an opponent in a dialog on what counts as a reason. The intuition leading the approach I am proposing is that a pragmatic account of the meaning of logical constants, suggesting that we should look at what it is *to use* logical connectives as expressing logical meanings, requires an interactive point of view on logic, since, as Wittgenstein puts it "it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately' "[1]. This aspect shows that the rules of logic depend on a form of agreement defining a particular language game. More precisely, we can show how the choice of a certain logic will depend on the rules of a dialogue which are to be shared by the agentes, according to the dialogical approach to logic in Lornenz [3]. Moreover, I will compare this approach with the recent purely interactive foundational perspective on logic provided by *Ludics* (see [4]).

In the model I am proposing, different language games are defined by the

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[1] [7], §202.

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form of the agreement shared by agents on what count as incompatible and we will show some application of this framework to the Dummett point of view on the opposition between realism and anti-realism as an opposition of logics (see [2]): in particular, I will propose an interpretation of it in terms of an overlapping of two different language games.

This approach shows also how the normative force of logical rules applies when the dialogical agreement on the propositional contents at issue obtains: it is necessary to agree on what count as the negation of a propositional content in order to define the usual notion of consistency and entailment. This last rermark leads to a further application of this modelling: we will point at a comparison with non-deductive forms of reasoning using tools from argumetation thoery [6].

References

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