Abstract

In order to get clear about linguistic meaning, we need to get clear about the concept of knowledge or grasp of linguistic meaning, i.e. the concept of linguistic understanding. A step towards this goal is made by considering the question whether understanding properties, i.e. the properties attributed by sentences of the form ‘A understands E’, are internalistically or externalistically individuated. It is argued that Putnam’s discussion of this question in “The Meaning of 'Meaning'” is misleading and has suggested to many the false conclusion that understanding properties are externalistically individuated only for a certain restricted class of linguistic expressions. Against this, two arguments are offered for the view that understanding properties are externalistically individuated for all linguistic expressions. In addition, a diagnosis is offered of the confliction that afflicts Putnam’s discussion and a satisfactory reinterpretation of his view is suggested.