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Definitions—A Monotonous Leisure Time of Analyses in Philosophical and Intellectual Search for Meanings

Nditsheni Emmanuel Tshikwatamba

National School of Government, Pretoria, South Africa
Email: emmanuel.tshikwatamba@thensg.gov.za

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Abstract

The article provides for the critical analyses of definitions applied in the use of language connecting the definiendum with definiens to demote ambiguities and vagueness. Analysis of definitions is supplemented by terminological scrutiny in order to provide for applicable meanings within the regime of sentence construction in a specific context taking into account the technical application of terms. Conceptual analyses is provided in order to distinct terms from concepts that are mental category of objects, ideas and events sharing same properties, grouped together for comprehension and easy application. The complexity of meanings in contextual relations pertaining phonetics, grammar, lexicography and semantics is provided in the analyses. The analytical model of meaning is depicted within the realm of a triangle to discover compliments of meanings in relation with the role of the frame of references, symbols and referent. A more detailed discussion pertaining symbols is isolated and advanced to convey their definitional role beyond the expressions of words.

Keywords

Definitions, Analyses, Terms, Concepts, Meanings, Symbols

1. Introduction

The article has been researched and compiled under the invisible shadow of leisure time attributed of monotony, but the uppermost command of the mind nonetheless continued to inquire on instantaneous ambiances pertaining philosophical and intellectual search for meaning. Albeit any identified and felt state of monotony contains no essential intonation and inflection variations in latitude of manifestation, the article aggregates on varied lin-

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guistic and symbolic attributes and imaginations that contribute in the search for meaning and meanings about meanings. Whilst monotony is a negative phrase associated with repetitions, dullness and tediousness, it startlingly contributed maximum gains in the analyses of definitions, terms, concepts, meanings and symbols and ultimately to the development of this manuscript.

The purpose of this article is to search for meanings through the germane variety of definitions that are circumstantially applied at a specific time and place. The critical questions being answered are whether there are similarities and differences between terms and concepts and whether symbols add value in definitional equations. The ethicality aspects of the manuscript are considered from varied sources of authority and references that are applied to advance and achieve premeditated purpose. The article contains philosophical ingredients of thought processing and intellect in language expressions to rationalize its utility. In search for meaning and meanings about meanings, the article is essentially definitional, terminological, conceptual and symbolic and it provides sectoral analyses of these constructs.

2. Analyses

Analyses refer to separation into parts possible with comments and judgments and an analyst is a person that is skilled to carry out such analyses in a specific field of study or interest [1]. To analyse is to carry out a detailed study into a specified phenomenon or problem thereby breaking down the phenomenon or problem in question into various parts. It is to submit a substance to certain tests in order to identify its constituents, the constituents that are broken up further into simplest elements. It also means to describe a sentence in terms of its grammatical components [2]. In this manuscript, analyses were carried out in the language spectrum of definitions-terms-concepts-meanings and symbols as advanced in the subsequent scripts.

2.1. Analyses of Definitions

Definitions* are useful in explaining and clarifying meanings of terms. A typical definition has two parts: a *definiendum* which is a term being defined and the *definiens* which are words that define the *definiendum*. When definitions are used, circularity should be avoided so that definiens cannot be understood without knowing the meaning of the definiendum. The definition of time for instance as a quantity measured by clocks or watches is too circular because it is difficult to provide full explanation of what clocks and watches are without taking them as instruments that measure time. Definitions are expected to demote *vagueness* and *ambiguity*. When something is vague it is out of focus in the sense that one cannot be sure what it is all about or even what the alternatives are. When the meaning of something is ambiguous, the alternatives can be clear nonetheless it may remain difficult to decide which ones to select. Ambiguities should be eliminated in order to promote common understanding and dictionary definitions are effective in achieving these. If not eliminated, it can lead to errors in reasoning since an argument might be effective if the involved ambiguities are resolved in one direction but not if it is resolved in another. If the argument only works in the event that the resolution requires interpreting the ambiguity wrongly, the argument just doesn't do the work it is supposed to do [3]. A term is ambiguous in a given context when it has two distinct meanings and the context does not make clear which one is intended. It is vague when "borderline cases" exist such that it cannot be determined whether the term applies to them or not. Scientists for instance have been unable to decide whether certain viruses are "living" or "non-living" not because they do not know whether or not the virus has the powers of locomotion, of reproduction, and so on, but because the word "living" is quite vague [4]. It is for this reason that Moore and Parker [5] denote that not only is the conclusion justified by the premises but the premises are also justified by the conclusion of a particular argument.

There are different kinds of definitions; namely stipulative definitions that are further alienated into two main kinds, *i.e*. those that introduce brand new terms and those that stipulate new meanings for *old terms*. For *old terms* in that new meanings can be brought about in the old term while the term itself remains the same. Some brand new terms can be formed by the combination of two terms in order to communicate new meaning(s). The term "multimarried" for instance can be formed and be defined to mean a person married more than twice and the brand new term "auntuncle" can be defined to mean "aunt" and "uncle". The old term "valid argument" could be defined to mean the argument for which there is a proof in predicate logic. Stipulative definitions that

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specify new meanings for old terms are of two kinds, namely those that add to the meaning of an old term by reducing its vagueness and those that change the meaning of an old term in areas which they are already clear. Extensional definitions comprise a list of all things to which the term applies. It would be impossible to define the term human being extensionally since to do so, one would have to list the names of every human being who has ever lived or will live. An intensitional definition of a term lists a set of properties that the term applies to all things having that set of properties. The definition of an unmarried male person who is twenty one years of age might be given as an intensitional definition of the term bachelor since it lists a set of properties a bachelor man possesses. An extensional definition provides the extensional meaning or the extension of a term and an intensional definition provides the intensitional meaning or the intension of a term. Terms have different intensional meanings and yet have same extensional meanings. The ostensive definition of a term is one that indicates the meaning of that term by providing a sample of things denoted. Ostensive definitions are risky in a way that extensional definitions are not. An extensional definition provides the complete extension of a term and leaves little margins for errors, while an ostensive definition furnishes only part of the extension of a term. Ostensive definitions are inherently ambiguous in their nature [6]. From the intensional and extensional definitions, it can be deducted that the Lord Jesus Christ was nailed on his feet but not his legs because a foot is not a leg although it is part of the leg. The hands of the Lord Jesus Christ were nailed but not his arms because hands are not arms albeit they are integral part of it. The two others beside him had their legs broken [7] and not their feet. The face of a human being consists of eyes, mouth and nose the head excluded.

Theoretical definitions attempt to formulate an adequate characterization of the objects to which it is applied. Its purpose is to formulate adequate theoretical definitions or scientifically useful descriptions of the objects to which the term applies. To provide a theoretical definition is tantamount to proposing an acceptance of a theory. Persuasive definitions are expressive and do not seem to be a type that coordinate with the other types of definitions already mentioned. Since language can function both expressively and informatively, it is plausible to suppose that a definition of any one of the other types mentioned herein above can also be persuasive definitions if they are phrased in emotive language and are intended to influence attitudes as well as instructions. In the Jamaican island of the West Indies Region, to be a “Marley” is a highest esteem accorded to the members of the family of the legendary musician icon; Bob Marley. Dictionaries might not comprise the term “Marley” in their insets not because it is a fairly brand new term but because it has a localized meaning of affirmation and negation. In all negations and judgments in which a relation between subject and predicate is thought, a peculiar relation of distinction is possible in two ways, either the predicate “B” belongs to the subject “A” as something which is contained in the concept “A”; or “B” or that “B” lies outside the concept “A” though connected with it. The first scenario of belonging translates into analytic judgment and the latter synthetic analytic judgments. There are those relations whom the connection of the predicate with the subject is thought through identity, while there are others in which the connection is thought without the identity which are called synthetic judgments. The former may also be called elucidatory the latter expansive judgment because in the former nothing is added through the predicate to the concept of the subject and the concept is only analysed and be broken up into constituent concepts which had all long been thought while the latter add to the concept of the subject, a predicate that had not been thought of at all and that could not be extracted from it by any analysis. If one has to go beyond the concept “A” and to know that the other concept is connected with it, a synthesis has to be effected considering that one cannot have the advantage of looking about in the field of experience. Greater generality should be balanced with the character of necessity [8]. Negation proper is unthinkable and it could appear only at the level of an act of judgment by which a comparison is established between the expected and obtained results. Negation would be a quality of judgment and the expectation of the questioner would be an expectation of the judgment response. As for nothingness, such would derive its origin from negative judgments; it would be a meaning defined but establishing the transcendent unit of all these judgments, a propositional function of the type, “X is not”. Negation by virtue of being a judgmental act is strictly identified with the affirmative judgment. Negation is also a pre-judicative attitude since one can question by a look and gesture [9].

There are things about the world and life and ourselves that cannot be adequately defined and understood from a maximally objective standpoint, however much it may extend human understanding beyond the point from which things started. A great deal is essentially connected to a particular point of view, or type of a point of view and the attempt to provide a complete account of the world in objective terms detached from these perspectives inevitable culminate to false reductions or to outright denial that certain patently real phenomena exist [10]. Lexical definitions are commonly used when the purpose is to eliminate ambiguity or to increase vocabu-

lary of a person for whom it is constructed. In the event that the term being defined is not new but has an established usage, the definition is lexical rather than stipulative. A lexical definition does not give its definiendum a meaning which is hitherto laced, but reports a meaning it already has. Lexical definitions may either be true or false in that they do not have a prior and independent meaning, their definitions are either true or false depending upon whether that meaning is correctly or incorrectly reported [4]. The purpose of definitions is rather not to promote generality and stereotypes but to inform or explain the meaning of a term or word; to influence beliefs and attitudes and not simply to convey linguistic information; to provide a persuasion and where persuasions is purposed, to accept that persuasive definitions are more real definitions than others since they are intended to provide agreed upon meanings of terms; to reduce vagueness or generality or to eliminate ambiguity [11]. Explanation of the meaning of the word or a term can be carried out theoretically. The Chemist for example defines acid as any substance containing hydrogen as appositive radical. Everything which is correctly called an acid in ordinary usage is denoted by the definition of a Chemist but no pretense is made that the Chemist's principle for distinguishing acids from other substances is actually applied by cooks or sheet-metal workers in their use of peculiar definitions. Definitions are also contextualized within a specific discipline to serve a specific purpose. The same term that means something to a Chemist might mean something different to a dissimilar discipline. From a purely linguistic point of view there are three main forms of ambiguities; phonetic, grammatical and lexical. In phonetic, the structure of the sentence might cause ambiguity. Since the acoustic unit of connected speech is the breath-group and not the individual word, it might happen that two breath-groups made up of different words becomes homonymous and thus potentially ambiguous. Where it is grammatically, the equivoque may result from the ambiguousness of grammatical forms or from the structure of the sentence. Many grammatical forms free as well as bound are ambiguous. Some prefixes and suffixes have more than one meaning and these might cause misunderstandings. Another fertile source of grammatical ambiguity is equivocal phrasing where individual words are unambiguous but their combination being interpreted in two or more different ways. The lexical factors contribute in ambiguity where the same word may have two or more different meanings and in this regard; definitions are useful. Fallacious arguments of equivocations can be eliminated where definitions are used to eliminate ambiguity [12]. Ambiguous expression can lead not only to fallacious argumentation but also to verbal disputes. Some apparent arguments are not on differences of opinions but rather on ambiguity promoted by lack of applicable precisions. Increasing of a vocabulary is among the purposes of definitions in that a language is a complicated instrument. People learn to use language the same way they learn how to use other tools, such as automobiles, kitchen and garden instruments. The proper use of language is achieved through observing and imitating the linguistic behaviors of people in routine daily interactions [4] and definitions pertains to terms under considerations in order to provide whatever meaning that applies.

2.2. Terminological Analyses

A term is a word or phrase that expresses a particular idea and has a particular function. Terms get their meanings from definitions and definitions of terms require to be contextualized. A term is a word or expression of the jargon of a particular group or activity. The word "term" could mean a period of time having clearly defined limits for which something lasts or is intended to last especially a limited period of time that a person can serve in a position of power or office of influence. A term can also mean a period when a particular function or activity is on recess or in session. An approximately specified period of time with regard to which plans or predications are made *i.e.* short or long term. It also means conditions or stipulations that define the nature and scope or limit of an agreement or terms of references or of peace. The word "term" is thus a phrase constituting the subject or the predicate of a proposition. It also means to face up to or accept a fact or condition [13]. A language or a manner of expression informs in no uncertain terms what a specific term used in a language means. The central doctrine of traditional empiricism assert that terms get their meanings as a result of having been correlated with some set of impressions or to use a more contemporary term, some sense of "sense-data". Any term which cannot ultimately be defined by reference to some set of sense—data has no meaning. A philosopher who examines modern physics from the point of view of this presupposition might however be faced with a research problem because physics is full of terms which at least appear to refer to non-observable entities, terms such as electron, electronics and so forth. A philosopher of science who adopts an empiricist theory of meaning faces the challenge of showing how terms can be defined through reference to observables [14]. Given a set of propositions nominally dealing with supposed inferred entities, the properties which are required of the supposed enti-

ties to make these propositions true should be observed. A little logical ingenuity and the construction of some logical function of less hypothetical entities which has less requisite properties can be noticeable as well and as much. The constructed function is substituted for the supposed inferred entities in order to obtain a new and less doubtful interpretation of the body of propositions in question. The definition of terms and their application should therefore be contextual and be positioned within the language expressions. Outside the regime of languages, terms have no meaning no matter how much meanings may be attached to what they envisage to communicate [15]. The terms "bird"; "bed" and "bad" for instance have the same pronunciation albeit spelled inversely and having different meanings. Within the regime of language it can be articulated that "*It was a bad day for the rugby loving South Africans when South Africa was knocked out at the semifinals of the* 2015 *World Cup* and begin to comprehend that it was "bad" for an unpleasant state. It can also be stated that *the bed was taken out of the house before it caught fire* and in this regard the use of the term "bed" is contextualized to mean a piece of furniture for sleeping or resting on, usually comprising of bedstead, mattress, pillows, bedclothes and a bedspread [2]. Furthermore, *the feathers of the bird can be used for small scale household decoration* and a bird being any member of the class Aves which includes warm blooded, egg laying feathered vertebrates with forelimbs and modified to form wings [13]. Ullmann [12] informs that both polysemy and homonymy may be accompanied by syntactical differences when a word belongs to several parts of the speech, being used as an adjective, as a verb and a noun and these kinds of usage differ not only in meaning but in grammatical function. Homonymy emanates from different word classes as well. In contemporary times, philosophers make their minds between bewildering variety of theories of perceptions almost all of which center around the old problems of the relation between sense datum. Instead of using sense datum, some synonyms are used such as sensum or visual prehensum. The contemporary philosophers agree that a sense datum cannot always be identified with part of the material object to which it belongs and it is questionable whether one is ever justified in so identifying it. Philosophers tied themselves in unnecessary knots over perception by talking of sense data as if they were queer substantial entities which somehow have to be related to other entities called material objects and the question whether they are sense data or not in an unreal one. It is a matter of linguistic convenience to describe perceptual experience in terms of sense data; because the sense data language solves no existing problems and creates no newfangled problems [16].

A term is one or more words with a fixed meaning in a specific and usually a technical discourse and it is a word on a leash, so to speak. Terms are often esoteric, meaning that they are the words of which their compositions are not used in their ordinary language although they can be used occasionally as and when they are applied. Terms have technical meanings and applications. The convention of using capital letters in Public Administration denotes the subject or the field of study and the lower case public administration denotes that which is investigated by the subject and these clearly emphasize the significances of technical meanings and applications. The technical terminological clarity keeps the differences between crafts or trades sometimes called theory and practice [17]. In the public administration domain, effectiveness and efficiency are critical technical terms. Efficiency translates to inputs and outputs measurement along with quantitative factors and the term has larger implications on policy and mobilization of resources. It has policy and resource implications because it is incomplete and unreliable unless the quantitative measurements are combined with the larger policy and resource relation as well as the longer range objectives with which the implementation is constantly concerned. Efficiency is thus the choice of alternatives dictated by the desire to produce the largest results for the provided limited resources [18] even if it means far lesser resources than it is provided. In the business and commercial sector, effectiveness and efficiency are not only technical terms but critical values and when the technical term approach is applied, the meaning attached differs from the critical value approach. The value approach suggests that effectiveness and efficiency are useful to measure organisational performance and assist in the process of holding public and business functionaries accountable for the consequences of their actions. Efficiency becomes more than a profitable measure of labour productivity while effectiveness is a reflection of the impact of a program on its stated grand objectives [19]. When the ties between terms are clear in a specific environment of their contextual application, it is spoken of the denotative meaning of theory as expressed in language and when they are less certain, they are referred to as connotative meanings. Reference can be made to denotative and connotative meanings as meanings of constructs or propositions that do not translate to knowledge. There are provided meanings, but as yet the question of knowledge remains open. Knowledge is a more abstract concept subsuming both meaningful relations and the play of methodological evidences. Knowledge is the understanding of why a

given theoretical propositions is true or false after that proposition has been submitted to the test of method. Knowledge demands that meaning provided by terms should be evaluated and widened. It reaches out beyond the individual case, beyond the subjective meaning of some limited patterns and interfaces with the meaning of an ever-broadening community. A reference to knowledge suggests a superordinate grasp, a scope, and depth of insight far transcending the usual realms of the understanding of a man [20].

A further distinction is simulated in relation with descriptive or literal meaning of a term especially in relation with general or class terms applicable to more than a single object. A general term such as a "Planet" is applicable in the same sense equally to Mercury; Venus and Earth. In perfectly acceptable sense, these various objects to which the term "Planet" is applied are meant by the word and the collection of them constitutes meaning. In one sense the meaning of a term consists of the class objects to which the term may be applied and this sense of meanings in their referential sense has traditionally been called extensional or denotative meaning. A general or class term denotes the objects to which it may correctly be applied and the collection or class of these objects constitutes the extension or denotation of the term. To understand the term is to know how to apply it correctly and it is not necessary to know all of the objects to which it may be correctly applied. It is required to make an assessment of the criterion for deciding on any given object whether it falls within the extension of the term in question or not. All objects in the extension of a given term have some common attributes or characteristics which can be used on the same term in order to denote them. The collection of attributes shared by all and only those objects in a term's extension is called the *intension* and *connotation* of that term as cited above in the section of definition, emphasized herein with the ambit of terms because dictionaries define terms. The general or class terms have both the *intentional* or the *connotative* meaning and an extensional or denotative one. The term *connotation* has other uses in which it refers to the total significance of a word, emotive as well as descriptive and sometimes to its emotive meaning alone. There are varied senses of the term connotation which are namely; the subjective, objective, and the conventional. The subjective connotation for a speaker is the set of all attributes that a particular speaker believes to be in possession of by the objects comprising that term extension. The subjective connotation of a term can differ from one individual to another and the notion of subjective connotation is inconvenient for a purpose of the meaning of the term as defined, because it varies not merely from individual to individual but even from time to time for the same individual as new beliefs are acquired and the old ones abandoned. The objective connotation or objective intension of a term is the total set of characteristics common to all the objects that make up that terms' extension and it does not vary from one interpreter to the other. The conventional connotation of a term is its most important aspect for the purposes of meaning sought in definition and for communication purpose [4] but a term is not a concept the way the two are interchangeable used in the basic application.

2.3. Conceptual Analyses

A concept is a mental category of objects, ideas and events that share same properties. Concepts focus on the mental manipulation of the properties in order to appreciate their similarities while mental imagery focuses on the manipulation of spatial arrangements. Concepts are used where similar items are grouped together and such concepts are not formed from a set of common features but are built around representative sample or prototype. Conceptual groupings are used to organize people's lives and facilitate their interactions. When the grouping of items has occurred, it is easier to evoke the attributes of the concept than having to remember each separate object or event. Where conceptualization is not possible, it is not easy to stimulate thinking since concepts assist to categorize different objects according to their similarities [21]. A basic process in thinking is to categorize experiences and the categories that are formed as mental representations of groupings of related items called "concepts". Concepts are the building blocks of thinking and they assist in organizing knowledge in systematic ways [22]. A bundle of concepts are needed whenever a study of any complex situation such as the world or any organization is to be carried out. A working definition of the various phenomena and factors that are important in any complex situation or organization that is being examined might require to be conceptualized. Whereas it is vital to define terms as indicated above in the terminological scrutiny, this is not a matter of seeking the correct definitions from a dictionary but of choosing or constructing conceptual definitions which are likely to be helpful; to the particular project being developed. There are variety of ways that can be applied in the definition of terms and variety of ways pertaining conceptualizing organizations or the world at large. A concept of work organization or the world at large that could be helpful in order to create a viable theoretical framework could be

needed [23]. A human being is for instance a concept of a person and a person is a term used to define a human being. A person differs from animals in that he/she is a *conscious being*, but this is not enough because dogs, cats and countless other animals are also conscious. Persons are self-conscious and have a conception of their own past and future; they can plan ahead and evaluate their present states and dispositions and attempt to change them. They are rational agents and they form concepts and arrive at knowledge and make use of it. They have feelings, happiness, grief, doubts and empathy but they are persons who are not human beings due to the notion of consciousness such as irreversibly unconscious patients in hospital; the feeble minded those in the last stages of Alzheimer diseases for instance. There are many others who could be persons but not human beings such as rational being from another planet who biologically resemble no earthly species [24]. Philosophers often draw a distinction between the *extension* and *intension* of a concept as related in the notion of terms and definitions cited above. The extension of a concept is a set of number of things which the concept applies and the intension of a concept is its meaning. The concept of a human being has a large extension [25] such as man, women, children, persons, wives, husbands and wives. On the question of *conscious being* referred above to qualify the personhood of a person within the concept of a human being, there are different forms of consciousness, *i.e*. agent consciousness; which is what a person have in mind when articulations are made regarding losing or regaining consciousness, propositional consciousness; which is expressed by the "conscious that" construction, introspective consciousness; which is what a person has in mind in telling that "His affection for me is fully conscious, but his hostility is not", relational consciousness; which is expressed by the "conscious of" construction, and phenomenal consciousness; which is a property that mental states possess when they have a phenomenological dimension presenting qualitative characteristics such as pain and the taste of things such as oranges, apples or mangoes, experiential consciousness; which has two notions of experiences and one of these applying to mental states that have proprietary phenomenology and comes to much the same thing as phenomenal consciousness. The notion of experience has a more general significance and it applies as well to state with a propriety phenomenology just as the first notion does but it also applies to thoughts, judgments, suppositions, volitions and all other mental states that count as occurrent propositional attitudes [26]. In this vein, Copi [4] informs that the term person does not refer to all persons, the dead as well as those not yet born, but rather to the "living person" and the notion of a living persons has the sense of a person living in the *now* in which the word *now* refers to the fleeting present. The intention of the expression "living person" and "conscious being" is different at different times and any term that has a changing extension has a changing intension also. When the intension of the term is fixed, the extension is fixed as well.

A concept may however be related to a physical object like colour or may be related to the relations between objects such as the concepts of "bigger" or "heavier" when comparing things or can be abstract like "democracy". There are formal conceptual hierarchies that are based on exact definitions or agreements about attributes in an objective sense and this type is called donative meaning of concept. Informal conceptual hierarchies are based on subjective or personal experience and emotions [27]. The concept of satisfactory explanation to historians when they claim understanding is not based on the nature of the subject matter but the concept of subject neutrality. For the clearest exemplification, historians focus attention where the thought is at its clearest. Physical scientists appropriate scientific explanation. There are no scientific explanation themselves that may be given at various levels of sophistications. Insofar as they explain particular occurrences they render predictable what is explained by subsuming it under universal empirical laws. In ideal cases, such subsumption exhibits a deductive pattern; a statement asserting that the occurrence of what is to be explained is shown to be logically deducible from statements setting forth certain antecedent conditions together with certain empirically verified general laws [28]. In Africa, the concept of marriage for instance has different proportions: if the couple agrees to live together as a husband and wife and inform their parents of their agreement; if the families of the couple that have agreed to live together consent on the marriage and exchange dowries; if the couple and their families agree to the marriage with the endorsement of the traditional authority or local chieftainship; if the couple that have agreed to live together in marriage has entered into a civil marriage before the court of law even if their parents have not consented to it; if the Minister of Religion had conducted a matrimonial service for the couple even if the marriage has no legal status attributed of the court legalities; if a man is married to more than one wife because in other African cultural orientation, a man is a bachelor when married to only one wife.

The concept of an identity is an invaluable bridging notion between individual agencies, choices and creation of self among other factors such as history, culture and social roles. There is however a challenge of terminology with the word identity in that it is frequently applied in the social sciences to mean different things at different

context like the concept of marriage cited above. The concept of identity is sometimes used to refer to people's notion of self and at other times it is used to refer to something much more cultural and beyond this it can be treated as an administrative matter such as the case of an identity card. The broad concept of human identity as the idea of who or what a particular person is in relation to others is an acceptable primes to construct the meaning of identity, because in Africa one is identified broadly in terms of a clan, ancestral lineage, a place of origin and association with kingship or royalty. The concept of identity defines ways in which any given individual is like other people and ways they differ from them. There are two separate but closely intertwined concepts of human identity: the internal self-identity and the external social identity, the former being personal and the latter cultural or discursive [23]. An architecture might draw a plan of a building using an identical concept of a boat and when such a building is complete, it resembles the boat like image. When such a building is defined, people might refer to it as the "Boat Building". The Universal Dictionary of the Readers Digest [13] consequently stipulates that a concept is a structure or a design of something considered in the abstract; or something conceived; a thought; a plan or an idea; a general idea or derived from specific instances or occurrences; a way of thinking about something. A concept of X exists when the conceptual definition of X exist or is known, but this is too far narrow because there are a number of meanings of countless words such as "cat", "run" "above" that are used constantly without being able to give a definition of them in words. Whenever having a concept involves, it doesn't require being able to state a definition—something that even the compilers of dictionaries often find it hard to accomplish. Other words like "red" "sweet" don't seem to be verbally definable at all but an exhibit instance of red can be made and it can be presented in words as to what the shade of color looks like. The criterion doesn't require a definition but only to use the concept with uniform correctness. People that are born blind who have never seen a red colour have a concept of redness but not the same one that sighted people have. Sighted people can have the concept of red by seeing instances of redness while the blind people cannot do it in this manner. They can only talk about wavelength, a physical phenomenon that is highly correlated with the experience of red as known by the sighted people. A man might have something in mind for which no concept yet exist for it and may then invent a concept for it or a person might use an old concept in a new sense, giving it a meaning it didn't have before [24]. Whenever terms and concepts are defined, the intention is to provide meanings befitting to them.

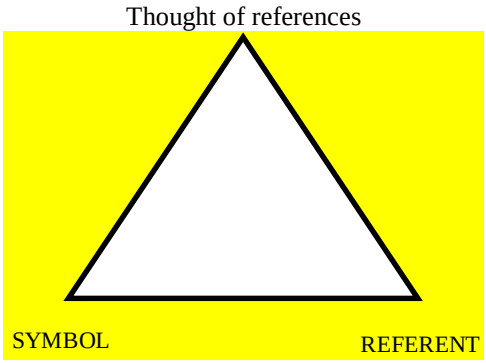
2.4. Analyses of Meanings

The primary function of language is to convey meaning whilst grammar shows how parameters of forms are linked to parameters of meanings. Although meanings are not inherent in linguistic forms, they are conventionally paired, more or less directly to forms. Language as a product of general cognitive abilities is in fact a result of the observance of a yet more basic principle in cognitive linguistics, namely; the cognitive commitment [29]. A meaning is what language is all about and an analyst who ignores it to concentrate solely on a matter of form severely impoverishes natural and necessary subject matter of the discipline and ultimately distorts the character of the phenomena described [30]. As soon as the spark has leapt across, as soon as tensions and the effects of the moment have been discharged in a word or a mythical image that require meaning, then a reversal can commence within the mind. A process of objectification can begin which advances further meanings as required. As the activities of human beings extend over and ever to wider areas, a progressive subdivision and ever more precise articulation of both the mythical and the linguistic world is achieved. The spell-binding tendency that congeals intense experiences in specific forms is counteracted by the conceptualizing tendency, which points towards generalization and specifications through meaning and meanings of meanings. While language and myths have a common root in the stratum of metaphorical expression, they are differentiated from each other along the axes of the production of a plenitude of meanings conveyed by images and the logic disclosure of a categorically articulated concepts and terms [31]. The Universal Dictionary of Readers Digest [13] explains that meanings refer to that which is signified or denoted by a linguistic expression such as a word or phrase; sense; semantic content; or a word with several different meanings. A meaning is that which one wishes to convey by words or actions or that which is felt to be the inner significance of something. A misconception exists that dictionaries provide the most accurate and authoritative meanings, but they are merely useful in learning a language and their entries often describe only the main usage of a term leaving out its more subtle aspects. A dictionary entry might include extra actual information that is not part of the meaning. Collins New Pocket English Dictionary [32] for instance provides that a cat is a small soft-furred four legged domesticated animals but a small furry dog

is not a cat and a cat that has become large as a result of hormonal injection does not cease to be a cat. There are meanings that are sought from certain terms that are technical and a more general dictionary might not provide correct meaning such that a specialized dictionary for that particular discipline might be useful. The meanings of many concepts can also be controversial such that dictionary meanings can be limited. Another misconception about meanings is the etymological fallacy, the mistaken idea that the historical and the original meaning of a term should be sought in order to understand its current meaning. The word passion is for instance derived from a Latin root meaning "suffering", but it would be a wrong judgment to believe that a certain relationship is not really passionate because the parties involved are not *suffering*. The contemporary meaning of a word depends on how the word is actually used, and there is no reason why meaning and usage cannot change drastically over a long or short period of time [25]. Meanings are one of the most ambiguous and controversial provisions in the theory of languages. Accounts of meanings usually throw a handful of putty at the target of sign phenomena, while a technical semiotic provide words which are sharpened arrows and hence it is desirable for semiotic to dispense with the term and to introduce special terms for the various factors which meanings fail to discriminate. Scholars at the most are reluctant to abandon fundamental meaning of a term; they prefer to redefine it and add various qualifications to it. With this approach, ambiguity can be reduced but by no means resolved if one narrows one attention to the meanings conveyed. Many linguistic elements other than words may be commended to have "meaning" of some kinds: all morphemes are by definitions significant and so are the combinations into which they enter, and all these various meanings play their part in the total meaning [12]. In the writings of Firth [33], the meanings or functions are splinted into a series of component functions. Each function is defined as the use of some language form or element in relation to some context. A meaning is therefore regarded as a complex of contextual relations, and phonetics, grammar, lexicography and semantics handles own components of the complex in appropriate context. Depending on how the sentence is constructed, it may express aspects of meaning additional to its factual, propositional content such as the rhetorical aspect of a sentence's meaning. This aspect of a meaning is not part of the propositional content that it expresses; rather is the emotive or otherwise suggestive window-dressing surrounding, the proposition which may be used for persuasions. A sentence can reasonable be taken to express rhetorical message given the linguistic conventions according to which the words involved are normally applied. There is an aspect of meaning called implicature which is a meaning not stated, but which one can reasonable take to be intended, given the context in which the sentence is written or uttered and this is known more generally in linguistics as conversational implicature. Unlike the rhetorical force, implicature cannot typically be interpreted according to conventions covering ordinary use of the words in the sentence applied. In order for the implicature meaning to be distinguished, the content in which a statement is made should be recognized. Contextual factors include who the speaker is and who are the audiences of the speaker and the circumstances surrounding the particular use of the sentence [34].

A meaning is a relational expression suggesting that some items, to which one relates bears a certain relationship to other concepts already grasped, *i.e*. placed in interpenetrating relationship. A realistic interpretation of meaning holds the view that the relational aspect of constructs is provided in nature entirely independent of one's intellect and or behavior. An idealist on the other hand takes the view that such relations are provided more or less by a reasoning intelligence and that reality itself need no particular ordering of relations on which to have lasting meanings and this is referred to as idealistic interpretation of meaning. To an idealist, ideas must be taken serious and man's thoughts processes are part and parcel of the required reality and it is just as true to articulate that man's ideas create reality as it is to say his ideas reflect map of reality. Man looks at the world through transparent patterns or templates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world is composed. From the realistic view, theories are scientifically meaningless and they are not to be taken serious since they are kinds of epiphenomena, riding the crest of behavior. Meanings are tied to the delimiting functions of theory rather than to the descriptive functions. When a construction is formulated from a theoretical point of view, a structure is imposed, an intention, a meaning from the very outset. Meaning does not come secondarily after a construct has been formulated. How meanings are viewed also depend on the realism-idealism dimension [20]. In understanding meaning, it is never a question of selecting certain meanings for some stated purpose, from among the myriad meanings potentially applicable. Operational meanings do not derive their meanings from an act of pointing to first order abstraction which serve as the root spring for the higher level construct being defined. Operationism assumes some form of meaning in the construct under consideration even before the mechanical task of reducing the construct is begun with. Operationism is merely another form of deriving the implied meaning in a proposition or construct which has been propositioned or constructed and creatively ex-

pressed by theorists. Operational meanings serve their best function when they point out the laboratory conditions and methods by way of which the concept may be illustrated [35]. It is admitted that in formulating theoretical constructs, there is no methodological principle, no operational recipe which guarantees that no relevant factor has been overlooked except that delimiting function of theory would have taken place. Delimiting is a matter of overlooking certain variables which are there for the finding and the search for operational meaning [36]. The basic known analytical model of meaning is the basic triangle depicted below herein:



From the triangle, three complements of meaning are distinguished; namely the thought of references, symbol and referent. The word symbolizes a thought of reference which in turn refers to the feature or event. A referent of a term is what the term refers to such as an organization, a person, class of animal and a particular shade of colour [25]. There is nothing fundamentally new in this analysis of meaning; the mediaeval scholars had already reasoned that the word is signified through the medium of concepts and meanings. The triangle offers too little and too much, too much because the referent, the non-linguistic feature or event clearly lies outside the linguistic province. An object may remain unchanged and yet the meaning of its name may change if there is any alteration in the awareness of it, knowledge and feelings towards it. In order to grasp the meaning involved, the linguistic might concentrate on the left side of the triangle, the connection between “symbol” and “thought of references” [37].

2.5. Analyses of Symbols

From the analytical model of meaning in the basic triangle depicted above, the word symbol is derived from the Greek word *symbolon*. In ancient Greek, it was a custom to break a slate of burned clay into several pieces and give one piece to each individual as a mark of identification. At a later date, individuals who received a slate would meet to fit the pieces together. The persons who bring the slate are confirmed to be the ones who received the slate earlier and if there are others without, such are identified as having not been there when slate were received. The use of symbols was widened to include the engraved shells, carried by those initiated in the mysteries both as marks of identification and as essential components in the ritual practices. The symbols were used as a short step away to the word’s eventual meanings in which an object, either through a visual similarity or a common agreement between those using it, represented something other than itself. An ideogram for example is a special type of a symbol, a graphic illustrating an idea or a concept. An object can be called a symbol as long as a group of people agrees that it means more than just itself. A rose can be a symbol of love; two crossed swords a symbol for war [38]. The meaning of a name is identified with the object which the name denotes. As to whether a sign is a name or not is linked to a question whether there is an object for which it stands. The meaning of a name is also equated with its bearer because a name has no meaning unless it denotes an object. The expressions which take the form of definite or indefinite descriptions are not used as names, so that it is not necessary to make their contributions to the meaning of the sentences into which they enter. These sentiments depend on the assumption that in all cases in which a predicate is attributed to a subject, two or more subjects stand in some relation. In all cases except those in which the existence of a subject is simply asserted or denied, the use of a symbol carries the convert assertion that there exists an object which answers to it. The procedure is to make this covert assertion explicit. The elimination of descriptive phrases, their representation as incomplete symbols is achieved by expanding them into existential statements and construing these statements as asserting

that something has the property which is contained in the description. The procedure can also be applied not only to expressions which have the same grammatical form of descriptive phrases but to any nominative sign which carries some connotations. The connotation of a sign is taken away from it and turned into a predicate with an indefinite subject. When a subject for the predicate is found, the same treatment is applied so that the original predicate is augmented by another and the process continues until one gets to the point where the subject of all these predicates is either refereed to indefinitely by the expression such as "*there is an x such that*"; standing for what is technically known as the existential qualifier [39].

Arguments presented in English as a medium of communication or any other language might often be difficult to appraise because of the vague and equivocal nature of the words used. The difficulty could be on the amphiboly of their construction; misleading idioms they might contain; their potential confusing metaphorical style and the distraction due to emotive significances they might have. It is convenient to set up an artificial symbolic language free from these defects in which statements and arguments can be formulated to avoid the involved peripheral difficulty. It is possible to make transitions in reasoning almost mechanically which otherwise would call into play the higher faculties of the brain through the aid of symbolism. There are symbols for conjunction, negations and disjunction [4]. In Africa, specific black clothes are put on to symbolize and communicate different purposes and meanings. A woman putting on specific black clothes might be communicating that she is mourning and such a woman is treated and interacted with from a certain specific understanding and position. Men are prohibited in terms of the applicable culture to express romantic love in respect of the bereavement condition of the woman in question. A woman in the circumstance doesn't have to verbally express herself as the colours and the manner of her dressing defines who she is and the level of social interaction she might respond and not respond to. Some might however put on black clothes for religious purpose. In the beginning, man created symbols and pictures on cave walls to communicate specific messages and definitional meaning. When man began to feel a need to express abstractions; differences in degrees; nuances in definitions; philosophical concepts such that symbols proved inflexible and inadequate, then languages began to proliferate [40]. Modal logic systems have been developed to capture the ideas of logical necessity. In particular a modal logic seems to be needed to capture the concepts of logical entailment, implications and logical equivalence. By using logical operators, statements of logical implications are symbolized easily, but symbols can be applied instead of logical operators. The value of symbols is not only used in African traditional societies, but in modern societies as well. Special modal system have been devised which encompasses the ordinary sentential and predicate logic [6]. The road signs are symbols that communicate, define a meaning of something and command a specific action from motorists and pedestrians. From these signs, life is regularized to create harmony and laws are made around these symbols if not that they influenced the promulgation of certain laws. The value of symbols defines what logical argumentations might not provide. In the liberating power of symbols the process of symbolization amounted to no more than the spell binding and condensing power of objectifying individual, meaning laded experiences in mythical form. The dialectical character of symbolization points in the opposite direction because acts of symbolizations are distinguished by the fact that they break open environments shaped by the peculiarities of a particular species. The peculiarities of particular species is through the transformation of fluctuating sense impressions into semantic meanings, fixing them in such a way that human mind can reproduce the impressions in memory and preserve them. The temporal dimensions of past and future are also opened up to the human mind. Animal awareness of time stands under the dominance of the present: the past is preserved in darkness; the future is not raised to the level of an image as something which can be anticipated. The embolic expressions which first create the possibility of looking backward and forward play a critical role. What appeared in the past now separate out from the totality of repressions and no longer passes away once the sounds of languages have placed their seal upon it and given it a certain stamp even if it means in the form of a name defining the person who bears it [31]. Symbols provide definitions; meanings and any monotonous leisure time of analysis in philosophical and intellectual search of meaning cannot be complete without connecting with the utility they provide.

3. Conclusion

The manuscript provided varied analyses to clarity the use of definitions, terms, concepts, meanings and symbols. The analyses didn't only provide clarity of these theoretical constructs, but demarcated their respective utility and application. The explorations of these constructs connected to cross functional aspects of multidiscip-

linary application beyond the use of language as a tool of communication and reached out to substantial constructs applicable to social sciences domain. From the application of these constructs, conclusion is reached that definitions of terms, concepts and the search for meanings as well as the use of symbols increase vocabulary, eliminate ambiguities, enhance mental manipulation of ideas and properties to appreciate similarities and differences.

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