Towards an Analytic Pragmatism

Bob Brandom

Outline:
1. The classical project of philosophical analysis
2. The pragmatist challenge
3. Extending the project of analysis: pragmatically mediated semantic relations
4. Automata: syntactic PV-sufficiency and VP-sufficiency
5. The Chomsky hierarchy: a syntactic example of pragmatic expressive bootstrapping
6. Semantic examples of pragmatic expressive bootstrapping and further basic and resultant meaning-use relations

Analytic philosophy seeks to use logical vocabulary to make sense of the meanings expressed in some target vocabulary in terms of the meanings expressed in a base vocabulary.
Some candidates for the key kind of semantic relation between vocabularies include: analysis, definition, paraphrase, translation, entailment, reduction of different sorts, truth-making, supervenience.
Two core programs of analytic philosophy are empiricism and naturalism.

Meaning-Use Diagram #1:
Pragmatic Metavocabulary

The conventions of this diagram are:
• Vocabularies are shown as ovals, practices-or-abilities as (rounded) rectangles.
• Basic meaning-use relations are indicated by solid arrows, numbered and labeled as to kind of relation.
• Resultant meaning-use relations are indicated by dotted arrows, numbered, and labeled as to kind and the basic MURs from which they result.
The idea is that a resultant MUR is the relation that obtains when all of the basic MURs listed on its label obtain.

My basic suggestion for extending the classical project of analysis so as to incorporate as essential positive elements the insights that animate the pragmatist critique of that project is that alongside these classical semantic relations between vocabularies we consider pragmatically mediated ones, of which the relation of being a pragmatic metavocabulary is a paradigm.