

## CONCEPT INVENTORY

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For interpreters to do their work properly, they must be able to bring to the text an awareness of as many linguistic and conceptual features as appear and are presupposed in the materials they are trying to understand. Jesus' hearers in John 7:34-36 wondered whether he would go among the Gentiles or Diasporic Jews when he said, "*You cannot go where I am going.*" They could not understand him because in their minds they did not have the possibility of Messiah's ascension to heaven. The same thing happened with the Sadducees when they presented Jesus with the problem about a woman married to seven brothers in succession. They did not understand the power of God to generate new possibilities beyond what they could already conceive of on the basis of past experience.

Below are concepts we need in our concept inventory in order to think clearly. Deficiencies in our concept inventory cause us to make equivocations of unlike, but superficially similar, things. We "bend" the unknown into our known (equivocation); we "fudge" the unfamiliar into a familiar "pigeon hole." What happens is reminiscent of (1) a little kid hearing the word *concubine* and thinking she heard "cucumber vine." She fudged the unknown sound over into a known one. (2) A word that has a second meaning cannot be heard by people who know only one meaning. In their mind they supply the one meaning they know in place of the one the speaker meant, and confusion results—often without their ever suspecting they are confused. The same kind of thing can happen with (3) concepts. People can "make distinction without a difference" as well as not distinguish unlike things.

Many concepts below are clustered together for comparison and contrast with the hope that such an arrangement fosters greater clarity.

Typical language categories: identity (who, what), quality, time (when), direction (logical, chronological), location (where), means, manner (how), frequency/number, cause/purpose/result (why), condition/concession. Manner in adverbs and verbs corresponds with kind in adjectives and nouns as shown by the practice of deriving adverbs of manner (quickly) from adjectives (quick).

absolute (continuous) vs. decisive

To make something a decisive factor does not make it the monolithic/single characteristic or factor in the whole.

universal vs. absolute: universal means everywhere or in all cases; absolute deal with highest degree.

permissive vs. prescriptive (will, for example)

what is allowed (coming from elsewhere) vs. what is specific (coming from within)

prescriptive/ought vs. descriptive/is

descriptive vs. evaluative

making known the character of something *vs.* expressing opinion as to good or bad, effective or ineffective, and the like.

primary proof *vs.* confirmatory evidence

what leads to a conclusion *vs.* what fits with a conclusion

straight-line causal series, reciprocation/interdependency, compenetration, transaction, dialectic/thesis-antithesis-synthesis

In the context of personal relationships, transaction means that in the very process of one person's relating to the other the first is shaped by the relating. For example, in explaining something to the other person, a speaker formulates a way of wording or modeling it, which very process shapes the speaker's own way of viewing the matter and perhaps clarifies it.

objective-subjective

The difference between objective and subjective is not clear-cut. If toothpaste or some food makes a person gag, it could be said that it "was all in his head" because of the way he was looking at it. While that is true, the fact that he is looking at it that way is objective to someone else; even more so, the fact that it is gagging him is objective. After all, that is the reason the subjective is so important. Even if religion were only the subjective dimension, it would be important because it impacts the objective (other people, *etc.*).

To some extent interpersonalism transcends the objective-subjective distinction, because reciprocal relationship involves both people simultaneously and interdependently. Reciprocal relationship, interdependency, compenetration blur the objective-subjective variable.

distinctive *vs.* most important

The Lord's Supper may be the most distinctive element in a Christian stated gathering without being the most important.

Sexual relationship is the distinctive of marriage, but it may not be the most important aspect of a good marriage.

"necessary" can be in different senses: interpersonally, legally, naturally, logically

These areas can include appropriate (need to do "this" to avoid being misunderstood, for example)

necessary *vs.* sufficient cause

necessary *vs.* possible

direct and indirect causation

cause, conditionality, contingency, effect/result

Under cause, A produces B; under correlation, A and B both vary relative to x. Contingency is popularly expressed by saying that something is "the function of" something else.

(a) Correlation means seeing two things as belonging together—as forming a set. (b) Correlation may imply coextensiveness, but not necessarily. (c) Correlation means varying together; the second and the first are a function of a third, more basic matter.

purpose vs. result

Result is what arises from something before it; purpose is the intent to bring about that result.

contrary vs. contradictory (= different vs. opposed)

causation vs. correlation

parallel vs. serial

logical relationships: overlapping categories

parallel categories

part-to-whole relationship (and *vice versa*)

coextensive

part + part to make whole

(James' use of "faith" and "works")

positive, neutral, negative

deductive vs. inductive

Deductive refers to working backward from a conclusion or full picture to the unvoiced parts or causes that make it up or lead to it.

category and continuum

Category and continuum can relate in the process of change. For one thing, degrees can exist within the categories. In interpersonal relationships (and belief changes), what happens is that more and more experiences "pressure" against the ceiling (or right end of one category in the overall continuum) until psychologically as well as objectively a "conversion" into the next category occurs. These "points" in a process are "direction-setting events/experiences," "the straw that broke the camel's back," "decision points."

Under continuum belong duration (time), degree (kind), distance (space)

analog vs. digital

number vs. degree parallels category vs. continuum

general and particular

freedom within a framework; a larger frame of reference can qualify a statement.

part and whole (note *gestalt*)

various "levels" (within a category)

restrictive and nonrestrictive

word *vs.* concept *vs.* reality

general *vs.* absolute

theory and practice

prohibited, permitted, required

potential *vs.* actual

absolute and relative

(inherently) necessary *vs.* appropriate (= what is required by *vs.* what fits/harmonizes with)

cp. positive commandment *vs.* moral law

commandment/prohibition *vs.* advice

logical necessity (consistency and deductive) *vs.* natural necessity *vs.* moral  
necessity

impossible/possible *vs.* not necessarily/necessarily

positive *vs.* restrictive

qualitative *vs.* quantitative

identity *vs.* quality

kind *vs.* degree

intuitive *vs.* discursive

reality/example *vs.* analogy/comparison/illustration

same/comparison/like *vs.* similar/identity/is (proportion of shared characteristics)

legal/law *vs.* natural/nature/being/ontic-being *vs.* ideal/metaphysical *vs.* symbolic

impersonal *vs.* personal *vs.* interpersonal

consistent *vs.* circular

being, action, and relationship

Meaning is a relational concept. What something means may be (a) the referent of a word, (b) what leads to a subsequent fact or act, (c) what is tantamount to.

idea vs. reality

nothing and something

particular vs. general

(continuous vs. iterative/repetitive, cyclical, characteristic) vs. punctiliar

inner vs. outer (internal vs. external)

impelled from within vs. compelled from without  
overt vs. covert: visible to others vs. not visible to others  
consistent and correlative  
futurum vs. adventus: futurum leads to the next by internal causation; adventus  
leads to a change from external causation.

cyclical vs. linear vs. spiral

As a historical pattern linear involves the new (*novum*), which means creativity, while cyclical means simply moving back and forth between the old options that have always been and will never increase.

monism vs. dualism vs. pluralism

monistic (of one kind/part), dualistic (of two kinds/parts), pluralistic (of many kinds/parts)

in parallel vs. in series

simple vs. complex

Simple means there is one or relatively few aspects to the whole; complex means there are many and perhaps that there are varying degrees in some of the aspects rather than plus or minus. Uniform throughout vs. different aspects or parts.

form and content/meaning and function

McLuhen's concept that the medium is the message relates to, and qualifies, the form-meaning distinction.

parallel and serial

parsimonious—simplest explanation, what can serve as an underlying explanation for a variety of particulars

manner, means, agency, condition, concession, time (during, at, extent), place (direction toward and from, location), frequency/number, quantity, nature/kind/quality, identity, purpose, result, attendant circumstance, correlative circumstance

discrete vs. relational

Discrete vs. relational occurs on the subjective side as to whether a thing is thought of in itself or in connection with other things called context, environment, surroundings, and the like.

I vs. other

the one and the many (singular and plural)

descriptive vs. evaluative vs. prescriptive

distinctive and primary; peculiar and most important

faith, fact, opinion

Faith means what is integral to one viewpoint; fact means what is true but does not bear on the character and function of a viewpoint; opinion refers to an idea that has insufficient basis.

same, vs. like (similar) vs. different (as to kind)