

Baronett, *Logic* (4th ed.)
Chapter Guide

Chapter 2: Language Matters

A. Intension and Extension

We can study meaning through definitions. More specifically, we can look at the definitions of **terms**. A term is a single word or group of words that can be the subject of a statement.

When we define a term according to its **intension**, we define it according to its characteristics. “Cat” means a furry, four-legged, meowing creature.

When we define a term according to its **extension**, we define it according to the class or collection of things to which the term refers. “Cat” means a feline animal.

B. Using Intensional Definitions

When we define, we assign meaning to a word, phrase, or symbol. So, we have that which is defined (the **definiendum**) and that which defines (the **definiens**).

Terms defined intensionally are often defined by **synonyms, word origins, operational features, genus, and difference**.

C. Using Extensional Definitions

Terms defined extensionally are often defined **ostensively, enumeratively, and by subclass**.

D. Applying Definitions

Intensional and extensional definitions are not the only types of definitions. Some other common types include **stipulative, lexical, functional, precisising, theoretical, and persuasive** definitions.

E. Guidelines for Informative Definitions

The clearer and more exacting are our definitions of words and use of those words in statements, the better our arguments will be. There are eight guidelines meant to facilitate the construction of informative definitions. Specifically, an informative definition should:

1. use quotation marks appropriately.
2. include the essential meaning of a term.
3. not be too broad or too narrow.
4. not be circular.
5. affirmative and not negative.
6. not use ambiguous or vague language.
7. not use emotionally charged or figurative language.
8. include a context whenever necessary.

F. Cognitive and Emotive Meaning

How we choose to use language says a lot about what we mean or intend by our words, such as when we choose to use language cognitively or emotively.

Language used **cognitively** attempts to describe or convey information rather than express emotion.

Language used **emotively** attempts to convey or express emotion.

Both types of meaning can be found in **value judgments**, which are claims that a particular human action or object has some degree of importance, worth, or desirability.

G. Factual and Verbal Disputes

It is important to distinguish between factual and verbal disputes.

A **factual dispute** occurs when there is disagreement over matters involving facts.

A **verbal dispute** occurs when vague or ambiguous language results in linguistic misunderstanding. Since this sort of dispute is really a misunderstanding, we say it is “merely” verbal.