# Some Useful Terms[1]

I refer to the following sentences through the handout:

1.	The all-time home-run leader is a steroid freak.
2.	Maisy is a mouse.
3.	Maisy es una ratón.
4.	Maisy es una ratón.

*Assertion* (also *statement*): A declarative sentence, used to say something that can be either true or false. We use sentences to make assertions, by expressing propositions.

*Attribute*: See *Property*.

*Concept*: An abstract object corresponding to sub-sentential-sized linguistic objects. Different people each have their own ideas, but may share concepts. Some concepts refer to or stand for objects. The inscription 'Guernica' is an instance of the title (a term) of Picasso's painting. When we see that inscription, we may have an idea of the painting in our minds. Your idea and mine may match, in which case we share a concept. That concept corresponds (or not), in some way, to the actual painting.

*Definite description*: An expression, usually beginning with 'the', which, like a name, picks out a particular object (e.g. 'the all-time home-run leader'). Russell calls them 'denoting phrases'.

*Expression*: Usually used to refer to a sub-sentential phrase, either a subject term or a predicate term.

*Inscription*: a written token of a term, or word.

*Name*: A term which picks out a particular object (e.g. 'Maisy'). Most names apply to more than one object, but we imagine that they do not because we can disambiguate by the context of their use.

*Predicate*: A term which expresses or stands for a property. Frege thinks of predicates as functions (from objects to truth values).

*Property* (also *Attribute*): I have no idea what a property is. A way of being? Ask Doug Edwards; maybe he knows.

*Proposition*: The meaning of a sentence type, an abstract object. Propositions are often expressed as that-clauses. They are mind- and language-independent. 1 means that the all-time home-run leader is a steroid freak, and 2 and 3 both mean that Maisy is a mouse. Propositions, unlike sentence types, are language independent. 3 is a different sentence (token and type) from 2, but expresses the same proposition. Frege calls propositions thoughts.

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[1] Some of these characterizations are not as precise as I would like, but may be helpful anyway.

*Sentence* (also *Sentence Token*): An inscription or utterance used for a speech act. We will mostly be concerned with sentences that can be true or false, declarative sentences, but questions and commands and exclamations are also sentences. One can utter a sentence, or write it down. I indicate sentences with scare-quotes: 'The tree outside my window is barren'. I might also just display it, and give it a name, as I did with the four sentence (token)s at the top of the page.

*Sentence Type*: An abstract object which can be instantiated by either an utterance or an inscription, or maybe even an idea. 3 and 4 are two sentence tokens, but only one sentence type.

*Singular term*: An expression referring to a specific thing. Names and definite descriptions are singular terms. We might interpret 'whales' as a singular term, referring to the one set of all whales. It is more natural to think of it as referring to many (all) whales.

*Subject-Predicate Form*: Many of the terms on this sheet refer to sentence-sized objects. Declarative sentences (and their corresponding propositions, etc.) can be parsed into subject-predicate form.

| Sentence | Subject | Predicate |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | the all-time home-run leader | x is a steroid freak |
| 2 | Maisy | x is a mouse |
| Whales are mammals | whales | xs are mammals |
| Mark went to the movie with Stephanie | Mark | x went to the movie with Stephanie |
| Mark went to the movie with Stephanie | Mark, Stephanie | x went to the movie with y |

Notice that we can parse 'Mark went to the movie with Stephanie' either as having a single subject, and a more specific predicate, or as having two subjects, and a more general, relational predicate.

*Term*: A linguistic unit. A term could be a word, a sentence, or a proposition.

*Use and Mention*: There is a difference between using a term and mentioning it. Ordinary instances of language are uses. When we talk about the terms of our language, we sometimes mention them. Often, we put terms which we mentioning in single-quotes. In C1, 'cat' is used. In C2, 'cat' is mentioned.

C1  The cat is on the mat.
C2  'Cat' has three letters.

*Utterance*: a spoken token of a term.