



Asking Questions: Using meaningful structures to imply ignorance

Robert Fiengo

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Asking Questions examines a central phenomenon of language -- the use of sentences to ask questions. Although there is a sizable literature on the syntax and semantics of interrogatives, the logic of "questions", and the speech act of questioning, no one has tried to put the syntax and semantics together with the speech acts over the full range of phenomena we pretheoretically think of as asking questions. Robert Fiengo not only does this, but also takes up some more foundational issues in the theory of language.

By positioning the findings of contemporary grammatical theorizing within the larger domain of language use, Fiengo challenges the use theorist to acknowledge the importance of grammatical form and the grammarian to acknowledge the importance of use. In addition to developing an Austinian distinction between four questioning speech-acts, and a proposal concerning the philosophy of language, *Asking Questions* contains a useful discussion of the type-token distinction and how use of language compares with use of other things. Fiengo also considers the nature of multiple questions, revealing what one must know to ask them, and what speech acts one may perform when asking them.

Asking Questions advances our understanding of a wide range of issues in a number of important respects. Scholars and students of linguistics and philosophy will find plenty to interest them in this pioneering work.

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