

## PH130 Meaning and Communication

### Lecture 1

“We are asking ourselves: what do we do with a statement “I know ...”? ... *that* is how one must decide whether something is knowledge or not.” (Wittgenstein 1974: §230)

“One says “I know” when one is ready to give compelling grounds. “I know” relates to a possibility of demonstrating the truth. ... If what [someone] believes is of such a kind that the grounds he can give are no surer than his assertion, then he cannot say that he knows what he believes.” (Wittgenstein 1974: §243)

“I am sitting with a philosopher in the garden; he says again and again “I know that that’s a tree”, pointing to a tree that is near us. Someone else arrives and hears this, and I tell him: “This fellow isn’t insane. We are only doing philosophy” (Wittgenstein 1974: §467)

Examples of sentences that are never appropriate:

Blag fuels spy fears at petrol pump IT supplier

Fat people eat accumulates.

The horse raced past the barn fell.

Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo.

Grice on why a theory is needed:

- i. “the most promising line of answer lies in building up a theory which will enable one to distinguish between the case in which an utterance is inappropriate because it is false or fails to be true, or more generally fails to correspond with the world in some favored way, and the case in which it is inappropriate for reasons of a different kind. ...

- ii. “I do not regard it as certain that such a theory can be worked out, and I think that some of the philosophers in question were skeptical of just this outcome;

- iii. “I think also that sometimes they were unimpressed by the need to attach special importance to such notions as that of truth.” (4)

Grice on convention:

- iv. “My impression is that Searle (like Austin) thinks of speech-acts of the illocutionary sort as conventional acts, the nature of which is to be explained by a specification of the constitutive rules which govern each such act, and on which the possibility of performing the act at all depends” (19)

- v. “while some speech-acts (like promising, swearing, accepting in marriage) may be conventional acts in some such sense as the one just outlined, and while remarking is no doubt a conventional act in some sense (since it involves the use of linguistic devices, which are in some sense conventional), I doubt whether so unpretentious an act as //p. 20// remarking is a conventional act in the above fairly strong sense.” (19–20)

- vi. “This issue cannot be settled in advance of an examination of the character of speech-acts and of the meaning of the phrase “conventional act.” (20)

“The correct use of the expression “I know”. Someone with bad sight asks me: “do you believe that the thing we can see there is a tree?” I reply “I know it is; I can see it clearly and am familiar with it” (Wittgenstein 1974: 476)

“it made sense for Moore to say “I *know* that that is a tree” if he meant something quite particular by it” (Wittgenstein 1974: §387)