

**AMBIGUITY OF NATURAL LANGUAGE IN MAKING PHILOSOPHICAL CLAIMS:
THE SYMBOL-LOGISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

Unlike the scientist, whose experiments speak for him most of the time, the philosopher relies heavily on natural language as instrument for showcasing his thought. On reflecting about ideas, things and reality in general, the philosopher raises fundamental questions and attempts to offer critically reasoned answers and bold conjectures to the questions. Thus, from reflection to raising questions and offering answers, the philosopher engages the service of natural language. While this paper is not in doubt about the crucial role of language in philosophy, it critically reasons that the problem of philosophy is language based. The history of philosophical ideas is characterised by controversial answers, claims and counter claims thereby giving rise to newer questions while the older ones remain unresolved. Employing the method of critical analysis, the paper traces the problem bedevilling philosophy to linguistic ambiguity. Controversies arise in philosophy not so much because of divergence of opinions but mainly because ambiguity in natural language prevents philosophers from understanding themselves. To address this problem, this paper suggests the employment of formalized language as a tool for conveying, interpreting and analysing philosophical ideas. Such formalized language, currently in use, albeit with tremendous success, in the field of logic, will help in reducing the problem of ambiguity in philosophy.

Key words: Ambiguity, Language, Linguistics, Logic, Philosophy, Symbolic Logic.

Introduction

Although the subject matter of philosophy and linguistics clearly differs, the intrusion of the former into the business of the latter has always been unpreventable. Philosophy simply interrogates reality while linguistics scientifically studies language. However, in discharging its

duties, philosophy unavoidably gets entangled in linguistic issues. This necessitates the interest of philosophy in linguistic affairs. The interest engineered the emergence of movements and outlooks like linguistic philosophy, analytic philosophy, logical positivism, philosophy of language, and so on. Their unified focus is to shift the attention of philosophy to linguistic analysis of language of philosophical and scientific discourses. Richard Rorty (1967) calls this “The linguistic turn”.

Philosophy’s inquest into the field of linguistics eventually crystallized into the attempt to employ formalized language in executing the task of philosophy. The high level of development attained in the last century in logic, a sub-field of philosophy, has been attributed to its adoption of formalized language in resolving natural language based problems. Incidentally, Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence Research, Information and Communication Technology, and other related well established disciplines today, actually lay their foundation on the formalized language of logic. Consequently, many argue that philosophy could take advantage of the robust formalized linguistic template of logic in tackling its own linguistic informed problems.

Reasoning along the line of thought above, this paper investigates how “ambiguity”, a linguistic issue in natural language usage, lays the foundation of philosophical problems. The various instances of ambiguity in natural language shall be discussed and then exemplified in the Parmenides-Heraclitean philosophical problem of ‘change and permanence’. This shall prepare the ground for the examination of the point of confluence between linguistics and philosophy. The symbol-logical language, that is, a language of specially contrived symbols with logical meanings, shall be introduced as a way out of the crisis of ambiguity in natural language especially when advancing philosophical claims. The paper shall be concluded with a brief

glance at the rudiments of the newly introduced language in order to capture its essence as instrument for clarifying philosophical issues.

The Problem of Ambiguity in Natural Language Usage

One of the obstacles to successful communication through the use of natural language is the problem of ambiguity. Language achieves its primary aim when it effectively communicates meaning. Problem sets in when an expression in natural language communicates more than one meaning and it is indeterminate which of the meanings is intended. This is the problem of ambiguity; a problem important not only to linguists, but also to philosophers (Gillon, 1990: 391). While the linguist's concern is taken for granted, the philosopher's interest is necessitated by the desire to protect himself from any obstacle that may hinder proper expression of philosophical claims and counter claims.

Some researches in linguistics and philosophy indicate that ambiguity in the use of natural language can be traced to confusion over the intended meaning of one of the words or phrasal structures that make up an expression (Kempson, 1977; Scheffler, 1979; Gillon, 1990). In Scheffler's view, "a word is ambiguous if its denotation on one occasion of its use diverges from its denotation on another occasion of its use" (1979: 13). Take for example the following:

- (i) Three men moved the table.
- (ii) The table of trigonometric functions contains an error.

In (i) above 'table' denotes a furniture material. Divergence occurs in (ii) where the same word now denotes arrays of information (Gillon, 1990: 398). One can however fault Scheffler's line of argument on the ground that it is not only a word that determines the meaning of an expression but the different associations that hold among the various words that make up the expression. In the first example presented above, the association of the words 'men' and 'moved' quite directs

the mind to what 'table' denotes in the expression. Similarly, in the second expression, 'table' and 'trigonometric' are associated in such manner that the word 'table' cannot be thought of as a moving object as presented in the first expression but as arrangement of arrays of information. In essence, the divergence in denotation does not necessarily create ambiguity once the expressions are understood. Nevertheless, there are sharper expressions that can create confusion in meaning.

Consider:

Peter killed the lion of Ikorodu village.

On a second look, the word 'lion' as used above quickly triggers functional crisis. What does the word denote? Could it be a particular animal associated with that name and known to have its dwellings in Ikorodu town before its death? Could it be a figurative expression denoting an individual from Ikorodu town likened to animal champion such as lion? Attempt can be made to clear the present ambiguity by replacing the preposition 'of' with 'in'. Again, consider the result:

Peter killed the lion in Ikorodu village

Indeed, the denotation is unmistakable. 'Lion' here refers to a kind of animal. However, the new expression, on another look, creates circumstantial crisis. Are we making reference to an animal known to have dwelled in Ikorodu before its death? Are we making reference to an animal that finally met its death in Ikorodu village after a long tracking from village to village?

The contention above shows that it is not only words as individual entities that can render meaning problematical, ambiguity can also be founded on the phrasal structure of an expression. Accordingly, an expression is ambiguous if it accommodates distinct phrasal structures that confer multiple meanings on the expression. Take for instance the following:

- (i) The teacher saw his students smiling.
- (ii) The teacher saw his students smiling.

In (i) above, the students are the one smiling, whereas in (ii) the teacher is the one smiling.

From the discourse so far, ambiguity can be classified into two types: lexical and structural. The former deals with ambiguity that is word-centred, while the latter is structural bound. Reflecting on the nature of these two types of ambiguity as they affect natural language use, Khawalda and Al-Saidat (2012) lament that “Natural languages are vastly ambiguous, and our apparently effortless ability to account for this phenomenon is one of the central problems of modern cognitive science” (2). For Bach (1998), the concern is on how ambiguity relates to philosophy either in terms of creating or solving philosophical problems. To buttress Bach’s point of view, consider this popular expression in philosophy:

“Every event has a cause”

While the expression appears linguistically innocuous, it is loaded with ambiguity in reality. The expression can be interpreted to mean either that one cause brings about every event, wherein A causes B, C, D, and so on, or that individual events each have their own, possibly different, cause, wherein X causes Y, Z causes W, and so on (Marti, 2008: para.8). This is just one out of many instances of linguistic controversies that characterise the enterprise of philosophy. Indeed, this is expected considering the fact that philosophers rely on the use of natural language as instrument for moulding arguments in order to advance claims and counter claims. Many of the problems of philosophy are founded on linguistic crises. We presently showcase the popular Parmenides-Heraclitean problem of ‘change and permanence’ to reinforce this fact.

Instantiating the Crisis of Ambiguity in the Parmenides-Heraclitean Paradox of ‘Change and Permanence’

When the metaphysical problem of ‘change and permanence’ emerged through the conflicting theories of Heraclitus and Parmenides, some ancient Greek philosophers suddenly

became relevant due to their attempt to reconcile the theories. A close scrutiny of the theories, however, reveals no conflict at all and that all reconciliatory attempts are consequently built on faulty foundation associated with improper interpretation of the theories. Indeed Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus and Plato may not be blamed for the nature of their reconciliatory attempt, as they merely fall prey to the problem of ambiguity that characterizes the language with which Heraclitus and Parmenides couched their theories.

The thrust of Heraclitus' theory is that all things are permanently in a state of flux. He expresses this concept of constant change with his popular aphorism "you cannot step twice into the same river". The river changes because fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you. This concept of flux, thought Heraclitus, must apply not only to rivers but to all things, including the human soul. Rivers and people exhibit the fascinating fact of becoming different and yet remaining the same. We return to the same river although fresh waters have flowed into it, and the adult is still the same person as the child. Things change and thereby take on many different forms, but nevertheless, they contain something, which continue to be the same throughout all the flux of change (Stumpf, 1994: 13).

In what appears to be contradictory to the view above, Parmenides avers that the concept of change is logically neither thinkable nor expressible. He maintains that whatever exists must be, absolutely, or not at all. To exist in an absolute way meant for Parmenides that whatever is, simply *is*. We can never admit, he said, that anything should come into being out of not-being. It was this concept of coming into being or becoming which strikes him as absurd, for he maintains that something either *is* or *is not*. As interpreted by Stumpf (1994), Parmenides laments: "...how can you say of anything that it came into being that it changed from not being to being? You cannot say about anything that it ever had non-being, for if you can think of an *it*, it already

exists and, consequently, there is no process of change because there is no non-being from which or into which a thing or a state of a thing could change” (16). Change, in the final analysis, is therefore illusory.

Reasoning that there are elements of truth in Parmenides’ view though it would defy logic of common sense to deny the reality of change as advocated by Heraclitus, subsequent philosophers consider it a philosophical task to reconcile the two views. With his introduction of the four elements, earth, air, fire and water, as the permanent constituent elements of things, Empedocles claims to have the answer to the problem of permanence. At the same time, he boasts to have solved the puzzle of change through his argument that when all the aforementioned elements come together, something new shall come into existence, and vice versa out of existence, if the elements disintegrate.

Anaxagoras, apparently not satisfied with the above explanation, replaces Empedocles’ four elements with infinite particles of things. The combination of these particles produces something while their separation results in something passing away (Omeregbe, 1996:19). This is the symbol of change. The indefinite particles, on the other hand, represent permanence. In Democritus’ view, while atoms are the permanent feature of things, their series of combinations to form things explain change. To Plato, change characterizes the things of the physical world while permanence characterizes the things in the ideal world of forms where nothing changes.

The results of the reconciliatory attempt above are not only ambiguous they equally fail to capture the real essence of the Parmenides-Heraclitean concept of change and permanence. For instance, it is difficult to understand what Empedocles meant by things constituting of a permanent feature of earth, fire, water and air. Anaxagoras’ view that everything is made of the particles of everything is equally ambiguous. That change is experienced in the physical world

while permanence is a feature of the world of form, as posited by Plato, even creates more confusion than it initially aims to clear. It is not clear if these postulates, claims and counter claims have figurative essence or should be interpreted as given.

The foundation of the problem can be traced to ambiguous use of language. The language employed by all the “reconciliators” fails to capture the essence of the problem in contention. However, effortlessly through his simple theory of *hylomorphism*, the father of logic himself, Aristotle, offers an unambiguous explanation of the problem of change and permanence. Permanence can be explained away through the essence of a thing. It is the essence of a thing that determines the nature of that thing; it would never change but remains the permanent feature of that thing. Change on its own can be explained away through attributes of a thing. Attributes are not permanent feature of a thing; they are the things that undergo changes. In other words, the essence of a thing remains permanent while its attributes (e.g. colour, height, size, weight) change. Thus for example, a man changes all through his life, from infancy to old age while his essence, as human, remains permanent. In spite of all the changes he undergoes from infancy to old age he remains human, (Omogbe, 1996:21). This is a simple explanation devoid of any form of ambiguity.

Given Aristotle’s postulate on essence and attributes, it is obvious that Heraclitus’ position actually revolves around the notion of constant changes ascribed to attributes of things. For instance, Heraclitus did not claim that river changes from what it is to what it is not, he only explained that considering the flowing attribute of river, you cannot experience the same water each time you step into the same river. He did not, as Parmenides appears to mean, that the water would change to blood or that the river would change to stone (these are substantial change). To say that a human person is constantly changing does not imply that he changes from

what he is to what he is not. It is his attributes (height, colour, behaviour and so on) that undergo changes not his essence. He cannot substantially change from a human person to a river, table, rice, and so on.

Once the element of ambiguity is removed from Parmenides' thesis, the consistency between his thought and Heraclitus shall be apparent. His denial of change actually revolves around essence and not attributes. The essence of a thing is the being of that thing hence it is the permanent feature of that thing. If he says that a man does not change from what he is to what he is not, he is only expressing the fact that a being that is regarded in all respects as a human being cannot change to what lacks the essence of a human being (with full respect to that notion). A human being cannot change to a fish for that would be absurd; he has changed from what he is to what he is not. However, it would be absurd for Parmenides to deny experiencing attributive change: that he was once a child, that he could be sad at a point in time and be happy at another, or that he would die sometime. These are Heraclitean attributive changes, which in fact are permanent feature of reality.

Against the backdrop of this clarification, if Parmenides had Heraclitus' notion of change in mind when postulating his thesis of non-change, it was because Heraclitus was misunderstood on the basis of employing ambiguous language to express his position. For example, such expressions: 'All things are in flux', and 'You cannot step twice into the same river' are ambiguous, and such, can be interpreted in different ways. The first expression, for instance, does not indicate what is always in a state of flux; essence or attributes? The second expression amounts to sending language on exile, as Ludwig Wittgenstein feared. Parmenides is also a victim of ambiguity. The statement accredited to him that 'Being cannot change into non-being'

creates a forum for the overlapping of meaningfulness and meaninglessness in many contexts he employs them.

The Nexus between Philosophy and Linguistics

Over the years, the emergence of many philosophical problems has been ascribed to philosopher's ambiguous use of language. As such, it is not only Parmenides and Heraclitus that are victims of this problem, other philosophers are equally affected. Controversies unduly emerge here and there on philosophical issues not because philosophers share divergent opinions but so much because philosophers often do not understand themselves due to linguistic ambiguities. However, with time, it became clear that philosophers could not be wholly blamed for this problem but that the natural language with which philosophical issues are expressed cannot completely be exonerated.

The new conviction prompted some philosophers like Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Austin and so on to champion a shift in the focus of philosophy to language analysis at the beginning of twentieth century. Their original point was that we cannot take the representing capacities of language at face value, that in order to treat of things – which cannot be done save with the help of words – we must first treat of words and make sure which of them are really capable of treating of things. Thus the philosophers undergoing the linguistic turn slowly gave up asking “what is consciousness (matter, matter, evil etc.)?” in favour of asking “what is the meaning of ‘consciousness’ (‘matter’, ‘evil’ etc.)?” (Peregrin, 1998: 245). Expressing his view on the new turn, Wittgenstein asserts that the object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts so that the result of philosophy is not a number of philosophical propositions, but to make propositions clear. Supporting Wittgenstein, Ayer argues that rigorous linguistic analysis could prevent the use or abuse of language in ways that could cause us “to draw false inference,

or ask spurious questions, or make nonsensical assumptions” (quoted in Stumpf, 1994: 447). In fact, as revealed in some literatures (Miller, 2007; Morris, 2007; Lycan, 2008; Soames, 2010; Moses, 2012), the emergence of an area of research like ‘philosophy of language’ offers opportunity for finding solutions to the problem of ambiguity and meaninglessness confronting philosophers.

The increase in the call for the revision exercise of language as used by philosophers tactically paves the way for the creation of new logically informed language that would transcend the crises of ambiguity. This brought about the division of language into the classes of natural language and artificial language. While the former is the normal language with which we communicate from antiquity, the latter is a kind of symbolic and formalized language. Advocates of formalized language argue that symbolic language has far reaching advantages than its natural counterpart in advancing philosophical claims. It is further argued that the great progress made in logic in the contemporary period can be attributed to the employment of language of symbols to carry out logical tasks. It is on this ground that this paper offers symbolic language as a linguistic instrument for disambiguating and verifying claims in philosophy.

Overcoming the Problems of Natural Language with Symbol-logical Language

Some reasons have been adduced for the choice of artificial language over its natural counterpart. It has been alleged that the expressions of natural languages are ambiguous, vague and otherwise imprecise, whereas in an artificial language with precise semantic and logical rules those defects can be avoided; that in an artificial language it can be precisely determined that certain things are logical consequences of a given proposition and, as a corollary, in

favourable cases, whether paradox or contradiction results from certain assumptions; that artificial language can be so contrived to avoid certain known kinds of paradox or inconsistency which allegedly arise in any natural language (Edwards: 169). With this kind of thought in his mind, Russell argues that “Because language is misleading, as well as because it is diffuse and inexact when applied to logic (for which it was never intended), logical symbolism is absolutely necessary to any exact or thorough treatment of our subject” (quoted in Copi & Cohen, 1998: 142).

With the introduction of artificial language of symbols into logic, the subject, as Russell projected, has been able to avoid the problems of language. In fact, symbols are easier to manipulate, they provide economical shorthand, and they allow us to see at a glance the overall structure of a sentence. By using symbols we are able to deal with much more complicated arguments, and thus take logic much further than we otherwise could (Klenk, 1989: 12). Symbolism in logic has enabled logicians and philosophers to invent more powerful analytic tools and devices for disambiguating and appraising propositions and arguments (Anele, 2005: 162). Symbolic language will therefore help the philosopher in guarding against ambiguities when advancing claims.

Historically, the employment of symbols in the field of logic is not a new tradition to the discipline. Aristotle, the father of logic, is known to have made use of certain abbreviations to facilitate his own investigations. Modern symbolic logic augmented this base by the introduction of many more special symbols. The difference between the old and the new logic is one of degree rather than kind, but the difference in degree is tremendous. Modern symbolic logic has become immeasurably more powerful a tool for analysis and deduction through the development of its own technical language. The special symbols of modern logic permit us to exhibit with

greater clarity the logical structure of arguments that may be obscured by formulations in ordinary language. It is easier to divide arguments into the valid and the invalid when they are expressed in a special symbolic language, for with symbols the peripheral problems of vagueness, ambiguity, idioms, metaphor, and amphiboly do not arise. The introduction and use of special symbols serve not only to facilitate the appraisal of arguments, but also to clarify the nature of deductive inference (Copi & Cohen: 6). Alfred North Whitehead himself posits that by the aid of symbolism, we can make transition in reasoning almost mechanical by the eye, which otherwise would call into play the higher faculties of the brain. Expressing similar perspective, W.E. Johnson (1978), asserts that the value of symbolism, as is universally recognized, is due to the extreme precision which its employment affords to the process of logical demonstration. As a language, it differs from all ordinary languages in three respects, viz, systematization, brevity and exactness (41).

Rudiments of Symbol–Logical Language

Propositions are considered as the building blocks of symbol-logical language. These are logical entities that can either be affirmed or denied. They are that kind of statements intended to assert something or make a declaration or deny claims. In this respect, they are distinguished from questions, commands, and exclamations. Neither questions, which can be asked, nor commands, which can be given, nor exclamations, which can be uttered, can possibly be asserted or denied. Only propositions assert that something is (or is not) the case, and therefore can be true or false. But truth or falsity does not apply to questions, or commands, or exclamations (Copi and Cohen: 5). Due to their unique characteristics, propositions also constitute the building blocks of a philosophical argument and, in fact, the expressions of philosophical claims. Some examples of propositions are:

- (i) Thales is an ancient Greek philosopher,
- (ii) Scientists are not occultists.
- (iii) Humans are rational being.

Further analysis shows that a proposition can be simple or compound. A simple proposition comes in the form of a basic statement i.e. a statement, which cannot be broken down into parts that are equally statements. For instance, the statement “Mill is a libertarian” is a simple or basic statement and cannot be broken down into parts; it asserts a simple fact that can be affirmed or denied. A compound proposition on its own is a combination of two or more simple statements, that have the status of being regarded as the components of the compound statement (the component of a statement is a part of a statement that is itself a statement, and is of such a nature that if replaced in the larger statement by any other statement the result will be meaningful). With the help of another kind of logical term called ‘phrasal connective’, simple statements are linked together to form compound statement. Phrasal connectives do not just play a linking role, they also determine the kind of relationship that may exist between the statements they connected. Phrasal connectives include: ‘and’, ‘or’, ‘if ... then’, and ‘if and only if’. Since a proposition can either be true or false, a special type of phrase is devised to distinguish a falsified proposition from an affirmed one. The phrase is ‘it is not the case that’ or simply the word ‘not’. Hence the proposition, “Austine is a language theorist” shall become “Austine is not a language theorist”. The inclusion of ‘not’ is to turn the proposition into a negative or a denying proposition.

In an attempt to carry out a precise symbolic representation of a proposition, certain letters of the alphabet are introduced to represent the proposition. These letters are called ‘variables’. Of course, a variable is an expression, which has no fixed meaning in a given linguistic system. It merely serves to indicate a place where a constant can be introduced and

used. S, P, and M are variables because anything can be substituted for them. p,q,r,s, are sentence variables while S,P,M are variables for terms (Otakpor,1997: 129). The type of variable that concerns us presently is the sentence variable designated by the letters p, q, r, s and so on. The simple proposition, “Logicians are analysts” can be symbolized as ‘p’ or any other arbitrarily chosen letter; hence it can equally be represented with ‘q’. Other examples are:

St. Augustine theorized on the concept of time.

p

God is an existing being.

q

If simple propositions are symbolized as above, how do we symbolize a compound proposition that by nature comprises, not just more than one propositions but also comprises phrasal connective? To carry out this task, logicians devise symbols of convenience to designate these phrasal connectives. They are called ‘sentential connective’ or ‘logical connective’ or ‘logical operators’. Their task is simply to link sentence variables that make up a compound proposition. Each of the phrasal connectives we identified previously has its own corresponding logical connective (i.e. symbolic representation). The phrasal connective “and” is claimed to play the role of conjoining two simple propositions. The result is normally a compound proposition called ‘conjunctive statement’. The symbolic form of the phrasal connective that formed the conjunction of the two statements is called the ‘dot’ with the symbol “•”. The compound statement “Plato is a rationalist and Aristotle is an empiricist” can be symbolized thus:

$p \bullet q$

‘p’ here stands for “Plato is a rationalist”, while ‘q’ designates “Aristotle is an empiricist”. The dot in the middle of them is a logical connective.

In the same manner, the phrasal connective “or” is claimed to play the role of a disjunction between two statements. The result is the ‘disjunctive statement’. The logical connective employed here is called the ‘wedge’ or the ‘vee’ with the symbol “ \vee ”. The compound statement, “Popper is either a scientist or a philosopher” can be symbolized as:

$$p \vee q$$

‘p’ here represents “Popper is a scientist” while ‘q’ stands for “Popper is a philosopher”.

The “if . . . then” phrasal connective is employed to establish a conditional relationship between two statements. The representative symbol employed here is called the ‘horseshoe’ with the symbol “ \supset ”. The symbolic representation of the compound statement “If Alston is an analyst of language then he is an analytic philosopher” shall be:

$$p \supset q$$

While ‘P’ represents “Alston is an analyst of language” ‘q’ represents “he is an analytic philosopher”. The horseshoe sign links them together.

The “if and only if” phrasal connective which plays the role of a material equivalence is designated with the symbol called the “three bar sign”, “ \equiv ”. The compound statement “Aquinas can be regarded as a medieval philosopher if and only if he proved the existence of God” can be symbolized as:

$$P \equiv q$$

Both ‘p’ and ‘q’ stand for “Aquinas can be regarded as a medieval philosopher” and “he proved the existence of God” respectively.

Symbolic logic also provides a conventional means of symbolizing a negative statement i.e. a simple statement that attracts the “not”. The sign of negation is called the ‘tilde’ or the ‘curl’; its symbol is “ \sim ”. This symbol commonly comes before the variable representing the

statement that is being denied. The negative statement “Lagos is not a metropolitan city” can be symbolized as:

$$\sim p$$

With the analysis made above one can conveniently symbolize a whole argument, consequently casting off the natural language shell of the argument, and leaving behind a simple precise and clear argument form. Below is an example of an argument and its symbolical rendition:

If Descartes believes that knowledge is acquired through reasoning, then Descartes is a rationalist. If Hume on his own argues that knowledge is acquired through sense experience, then Hume is an empiricist. Descartes actually believes that knowledge is acquired through reasoning and Hume is truly convinced that knowledge is acquired through sense experience. Consequently, it is obvious that Descartes is a rationalist and Hume is an empiricist.

The argument can be symbolized as:

1. $d \supset r$
2. $h \supset e$
3. $d \cdot h / \therefore r \cdot e$

To anyone who understands the elements of the application of symbols to arguments, the above symbolized argument is simple, clear and precise unlike its initial natural language form, which would require deeper reflective exercise for the argument to be understood. We reiterate Alfred North Whitehead’s assertion on symbolism to capture the thrust of this paper:

...by the aid of symbolism, we can make transitions in reasoning almost mechanically by the eye, which otherwise would call into play the higher faculties of the brain.

Conclusion

Ambiguity is a fallacy of word and sentential usage. It is classifiable into lexical and structural types. The former relates to complexity of meanings of word; the latter focuses on complexity of meanings of sentences. Many philosophical problems arise due to this fallacy. The attempt by some concerned philosophers to resolve these problems is what crystallized into philosopher's interest in linguistic affairs. The new interest prompted the design of formalized language by some logic oriented philosophers. Having tested such language with great success in logic, a sub-field of philosophy, it is argued that philosophy as a whole can adopt similar language as instrument for ridding itself of linguistically informed problems.

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