

(Materials of Lectures on the Philosophy of Language for S3 Students,

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Topics:

1. What is the philosophy of language? It is a reasoned inquiry into the nature, origins, and usage of language. Language and philosophy have a very close relationship one to another; without a philosophical examination of the meanings and structure of language, we cannot easily ascertain the objective truth of the statements we make, nor can we usefully discuss abstract concepts.

2. What are the areas of the philosophy of language. It is concerned with 4 (four) central areas:

1. the nature of meaning, (the language philosophers try to inquire into the nature of meaning, and seek to explain what it means to “mean” something, which includes the nature of synonymy, the origins of meaning itself, and how any meaning can ever really be known.

2. language use, (the language philosophers try to understand what speakers and listeners do with language when communication is taking place and how it is used socially).

3. language cognition, (the language philosophers try to know how language relates to the minds of both the speaker and the interpreter – for example how successful translation of words into other words are done.

4. the relationship between language and reality, (the language philosophers investigate how language and meaning relate to truth and the world).

What is the objective of the philosophy of language? It is to seek to understand the concepts expressed by language and to find a system by which it can effectively and accurately do so. It is the task of language philosophers to look for a theory of language which avoids the errors of meaning and usage which occur in all discussions of abstract concepts and which tend to lead those discussions into complicated matters. It is not an easy task at all, since it is not a

PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

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separate topic, but as a part of logic, history or even politics