

Re: A theorem for agnostics

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.logic/2004-07/2762.html>

From: Acme Diagnostics (*LFinezaphthis_at_partpostmark.net*)

Date: 07/26/04

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paulholbachSPAMBAN@freenet.de (Paul Holbach) wrote:

>> *paulholbachSPAMBAN@freenet.de (Paul Holbach) wrote in message news:<*

>> *881c8779.0407221954.31b74a36@posting.google.com>...*

>

>> *Insiders, who can always tell the*

>> *logical from the illogical below the surface of their idiomatic*

>> *expressions, may go their own convenient way. – But, nevertheless, too*

>> *much verbal sloppiness in logical discourse does increase the*

>> *likelihood that misinterpretations and false conclusions start*

>> *creeping in, even among 'the knowledgeable ones'!*

>

> *"Die Sprachen sind in logischen Fragen unzuverlässig. Ist es doch*

> *nicht eine der geringsten Aufgaben des Logikers, auf die Fallstricke*

> *hinzuweisen, die von der Sprache dem Denkenden gelegt werden."*

>

> *(Frege: "Die Verneinung", 1918)*

>

> *"As regards logical issues, the languages are unreliable. It is not*

> *one of the logician's minor tasks to point to the snares which*

> *language has set for the thinker."*

I object to the word "unreliable."

Without that word, it is reasonable to inference "logical issues" as intending "theoretical logical issues." But "reliable" is a pragmatic logic word, is it not? Is there some theoretical logic definition of "reliable" of which I am unaware?

With that word there, "logical issues" becomes ambiguous.
Theoretical logic? Pragmatic logic? Both?

Pragmatically, language is certainly not unreliable and that is so easy to demonstrate that I won't bore readers with it. Briefly, people would stop using it. The world would stop. Language is self-correcting specifically to the point of reliability, and there are thousands of professional linguists working night and day to assure that very thing. I have lots of examples. I've used them before, not even questioned,

never mind refuted. Aircraft carriers, business, software implementation and support, for instances. Usenet is a great example, just as I am here trying to make the envisioned use of this quote in this group more reliable in this post. I will keep trying until I judge that it is, and stop there.

The definition of reliable I am using is: "A probability to satisfy the circumstances and importance of the subject." It is (IMO) a more operative version of the common usage dictionary definition of "rely." I further have confidence in it because I've posted it many times and nobody has objected so far.

Note: This is not necessarily a criticism of Frege. Most obviously, there are the vagaries of translation to English and "reliable" has synonyms. Also, such authors are often quoted incorrectly, or quoted correctly out of context, or make common usage mistakes when leaving their theoretical context for popular description, or once in a great while will stray outside their specific fields and make loose statements. Certainly not as frequently as a simpleton like myself.

Larry