

## Philosophical Logic

### Lecture 4: Natural language

**1. Non-mentalist theories of meaning** Two motivations: (i) intentionality of the mind should be analysed in terms of the intentionality of language; (ii) intentionality of language should be analysed in non-intentional terms.

**2. Meaning naturalism** Can we *reduce* facts about meaning to more natural, non-intentional facts? Meaning naturalism answers yes. It motivates the reduction by identifying what natural facts can account for linguistic meaning. (We set aside naturalistic mentalist approaches to linguistic meaning.)

**3. Causal theories of meaning** Using the idea of natural meaning (cf. Grice). Can we explain how our words have meaning in terms of the causes of our utterances? Proposal: use Kripke's idea of a rigid designator as model. Problem: language is more than a collection of names.

**4. Use theories of meaning** Use theories don't seek the origin of meaning in what we talk about, nor in what we want to say, but in regular or conventional patterns of use. Problems: Distinguishing language from other social patterns; long or bizarre sentences.

**5. Teleofunctional theories of meaning** Linguistic expressions as having *proper functions* (roughly: survival value). Language forms typically produce a characteristic response in a hearer that tends both (i) to encourage speakers to keep using the device and (ii) hearers to keep responding to it with the same (with a stable) response. 'Stabilising function.' The bee dance as a model for linguistic meaning. Does this solve the earlier problems?

**6. The idea of a natural language** Naturalistic theories of meaning purport to explain human language as an entirely natural phenomenon, possibly on a par with animal calls and bee dances. Are human languages (English, German, Chinese) really natural in this sense?