

## **Moore's Paradox in language and thought: towards a unified strategy of explanation**

Can everything that is true also be known or believed? Many renowned philosophical schools of thought argue that truth is always comprehensible. However, in the last 80 years philosophers of the analytic tradition found many puzzling examples that provide evidence against this common-sense view. One such observation was made by George Edward Moore, who famously noted that there is a feeling of absurdity associated with statements in the following form:

MP:  $p$ , but I don't believe that  $p$ . (e.g. „It is raining but I don't believe that”)

Although it seems that someone who states or accepts MP contradicts themselves, it is not easy to understand why – the sentence itself is not contradictory and describes a perfectly possible state of affairs. This observation was dubbed ‘Moore's Paradox’ by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953) and has remained a hotly debated issue in philosophy of language, philosophy of mind and philosophical logic since the 1940s. A thorough understanding of the mechanisms of this paradox is crucial in order to coherently construct concepts of great philosophical and psychological importance, such as “belief”, “self-awareness” or “introspection”. Unless a general strategy of solving this paradox is formulated, we have no guarantee that the concepts we use in our philosophical or empirical investigations is not ill-founded or self-contradictory.

The main research objective of my project is to provide a uniform analysis of Moore's Paradox in speech and thought. More specifically, the research will consist of:

- 1. An analysis of different Moorean constructions in speech and thought.*
- 2. A critical assessment of existing accounts of Moore-paradoxicality in language and thought and providing a definition of property of Moore-paradoxicality.*
- 3. An examination of different accounts of norms of assertion and transparency accounts of self-knowledge and their connection with explanations of Moore's Paradox.*
- 4. Providing a unified strategy of explaining sources of Moore-paradoxicality in language and thought.*

The traditional approach (most notably – that of Moore himself) to Moore's Paradox was to conceive it as a problem concerning statements – it was usually tackled from the perspective of philosophical pragmatics, which is the study of direct and indirect acts of communication through speech. This approach mostly focused on explaining the absurdity of the paradox by supposing that it violates pragmatic principles governing conversations and utterances. Another method aimed to provide a solution by presenting Moore's Paradox not as a flawed utterance, but as a problem rooted in irrational belief. The relation between those two strategies has not yet been widely studied and there exists a need to fill the gap between the explanation of absurdity of Moore's Paradox in speech, and its irrationality in thought. The project focuses on bridging this gap and providing a uniform approach that merges these two types of strategies.

The project offers a novel and complex approach towards Moore's Paradox, which remains a hotly and widely debated issue in contemporary analytic epistemology. The method of this project consists mostly of conceptual analysis, paired with the use of formal tools of doxastic and epistemic logic and comparison with the data provided by psychological and linguistic research. As such this project may greatly benefit research made in the philosophy of mind and language as well as philosophical logic and cognitive science.