

**MR2884203 (2012i:03023) 03A05**

**Slater, Hartley [Slater, Barry Hartley] (5-WA-NDM)**

**Natural language consistency. (English summary)**

*Logique et Anal. (N.S.)* **54** (2011), no. 215, 409–420.

This is a brilliant paper contrasting the consistency of natural language with the difficulties arising from the absence of reflexive pronouns and of nominalising devices in the formal languages of recent logic. The focus of the paper is the abandonment not only of ‘that’-clauses, but also their referents: propositions, which together with those difficulties have combined to generate what have been called the ‘paradoxes of self-reference’. One consequence of those paradoxes has been the judgment that natural language is inconsistent.

From the summary: “Tarski’s assessment that natural language is inconsistent on account of the Liar Paradox is shown to be incorrect: what Tarski’s theorem in fact shows is that Truth is not a property of sentences but of propositions. By using propositions rather than sentences as the bearers of Truth, semantic closure within the same language is easily obtained. Tarski’s contrary assessment was partly based on confusions about propositions and their grammatical expression. But more centrally it arose through blindness to pragmatic factors in language—a blindness that was common in his time, and it has continued to the present day.”

Reviewed by *Jaime Nubiola*