



Thursday, June 26th, 10:00-10:30, room 201

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**„A good dog is a bad dog and a bad dog is a good dog”
on the error of alleged contradiction, alleged non-contradiction
and mutual understanding**

Keywords: error of alleged contradiction, error of alleged non-contradiction, logic, language, mutual understanding

Our thinking as well as the product of thinking – our use of language, are not always correct. Logic – as a science of laws of correct thinking and correct expression of thoughts – comes to the rescue. An analysis of logico-linguistic errors will be helpful in their identification and elimination. This is exactly what also a teacher of a foreign language does: many a time he analyses a linguistic error in order to draw attention to that which is correct.

The aim of this presentation is to explore two kinds of logical error with a view to bettering our thinking and our use of language. Namely, the errors of alleged non-contradiction and of alleged contradiction will be elaborated upon. Occasionally we think that we speak in a non-contradictory manner, yet on closer inspection it transpires that our utterances contain a contradiction. This is the error of alleged non-contradiction. In the case of the error of alleged contradiction we think that we are dealing with contradictory statements but on closer analysis the opposite turns out to be true.

As these errors are strictly connected with one of the most important logical principles – the law of non-contradiction – it is only fitting that this principle is briefly discussed. In addition, a relationship between logico-linguistic errors and culture is also examined. The author makes an attempt to demonstrate that the knowledge of a given culture sometimes aids us in discerning the error of alleged contradiction though it may not be as helpful in recognising the error of alleged non-contradiction.

Mander notices that “[i]t is not true that we are naturally endowed with the ability to think clearly and logically – without learning how, or without practicing”. It is difficult not to agree with him, given the amount of illogicality found in the world today. It is astonishing for example to find how widespread the above-mentioned errors are. With fair amount of practice, however, we may see a far lower degree of error in thought and in speech, and in effect a higher degree of understanding within a particular culture as well as between cultures. It is a hope of the author that this presentation constitutes an example of such a practice.