Session 6 – THE NORMATIVE AND THE EMPIRICAL (PART 1)

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Session Overview

• In session 1, it was mentioned that declarative sentences included value judgments and factual judgments. This session is meant to discuss these judgments further, referring to value judgments as normative sentences and factual judgments as empirical sentences.

• **Goals and Objectives**

  At the end of the session, the student should

  1. Be able to identify factual sentences and value judgments.
  2. Understand that a sentence could be both normative and empirical.
The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- **Topic One: CONTRASTING FACTS AND VALUES**
  
  (a) factual sentences (empirical)
  
  (b) value judgments (normative)

- **Topic Two: EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT MEANINGS OF STATEMENT**
• Log onto the UG sakai LMS course site: http://sakai.ug.edu.gh/XXXXXXXXX
• Read Unit 5 of Recommended Text – pages 92-99
• Watch the Videos for session 6- The Normative and the Empirical (Part 1)
• Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for session 6 (Part 1)
Topic One

CONTRASTING FACTS AND VALUES.
FACTUAL STATEMENTS (EMPIRICAL)

• In session 1, “Thoughts as Object of Scrutiny” we were made to understand factual statements as expressions that describe the way the world is. What this means is that, they give a report of the way the world is as we experience them with our senses.

• We call them EMPIRICAL because they are expressions derived from experience or observations and they are verifiable.

• NB. They are objective truths. There is some way of investigating the world and its state of affairs in order to tell if they (factual statements) are true or false., whomever you are.
Examples

1. Those boys in the yard are setting fire to that cat.
2. Your brother is 6 feet 2 inches tall
3. Zoe is hungry
4. Obama won the 2008 USA election.
5. This copper strip expanded when it was heated to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
6. Some flowers are larger than others.
7. This shirt is green.
8. The adult human body has 206 bones.

• *NB. All the above statements can all be determined to be true or false upon observation. They are facts and can be proved with evidence.*
Value judgments on the other hand are expressions that *prescribe or evaluate* the way the world or things or someone *should or ought* to be.

It is also called **NORMATIVE** because it states a *standard* or *norm* to *prescribe or evaluate* an action or behavior or something.

They are *statements* or *claims* that are based on someone’s *belief*.
Examples

1. Nana Addo will be an excellent candidate for president. (why?)
2. The use of animals in lab testing is cruel and must be stopped. (why?)
3. You should save money. (why?)
4. We ought not to lie. (why?)
5. Saving money is good. (why?)
6. Jack is a fine man. (why?)
7. You should not leave the water running. (why?)
8. You should not hit your brother. (why?)
9. The Bahamas is the most beautiful place on Earth. (why?)

- **NB VALUE JUGMENTS certification depends upon principles of morality or on criteria of worth or utility. (This shows there are moral and non-moral value judgments)**
EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT MEANINGS OF STATEMENTS.
Some statements tend to convey two meanings such that in some sense they may be interpreted as facts (describing an observation) and in another sense will be understood as value judgments (prescribing or evaluating an observation).

When this happens, such an expression is said to have an explicit and implicit meaning.

Explicit refers to the obvious meaning.

Implicit refers to the intended or hidden meaning. It is the opposite of explicit.
Examples

1. This car provides the best mileage for its price.

2. Without IMF policies rescuing the Ghanaian population, the country would have deteriorated into a civil war like the rest of west Africa.

3. The recent patrol of the police force in this area has reduced the menace of arm robbery incidents in the neighborhood.

4. Asamoah Gyan is a successful man.

5. The virtuous effort of the SRC executives will benefit the students of University of Ghana and this will serve as precedence for other SRC executives from other universities.
All the above examples have explicit and implicit meanings. They all appear to be making explicitly factual declarations but implicitly they are all value judgments.

The use of best in eg1, and successful in eg4, and virtuous, precedence in eg5 are all value laden.

In eg2 the IMF policies are seen as a good thing for Ghana.

In eg3 the police patrol force is also seen as a good development for the neighborhood.

The cause of this is that because of the inability to always make a conscious effort to distinguish between when we are expressing a value judgment and when we are making a factual declaration, we confuse them and end up making expressions or statements that have explicit and implicit meanings.

NB EXPLICIT(FACTUAL), IMPLICIT(VALUE JUDGMENT).