

Title: Vagueness, Prestige and Taboos

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Sometimes vagueness is helpful in avoiding conflict: a person may be ready to make an apology or a promise only if he can word it vaguely. Sometimes, however, vagueness is to be avoided. For an achievement to bear prestige there should be a clear line between doing it and not, and likewise a “taboo”, a very strong type of social norm, usually has a clear line between compliance and violation. Philosophers have tended to treat vagueness as a relationship between a word and its meaning, but I define it within a global game model of communication. This approach solves some conceptual problems and shows why it is necessary for prestige and taboos.