



semantic antinomies

- Everything I say in this presentation is false.
- Intuitively, this seems like an insurmountable paradox.
- On Tarski's theory, the first point in this slide is not something said *in* this presentation, but something said *about* this presentation in a *meta-presentation*.
- Tarski's success in resolving the paradox probably makes his theory deserving of our consideration.
- *the least natural number not definable in fewer than twenty-three syllables*
- Definition itself is a semantic concept (as are designation and satisfaction).

the T-schema

- X is true if, and only if, p .
- Truth is a predicate of the sentence we are discussing, so X is the name we are using for that sentence.
- ' p ' stands for the truth conditions of sentence X .
- seems obvious and trivial...
- **BUT...**

object-language/meta-language

- Tarski's theory depends on understanding language as lacking the characteristic of being semantically closed.
- Semantic terms do not exist in the object-language; we need a meta-language.
- We cannot discuss the semantics of semantic terms within the meta-language; we need a meta-meta-language.
- The names of sentences in the object-language are contained only in the meta-language.
- This distinction creates a hierarchy of languages that can be extended indefinitely, with each language in the hierarchy being "essentially richer" than the one below it.

formal vs. natural implications

- One way to understand Tarski's theory involves limiting our analysis to formal languages.
- When we do this, there is a clear distinction between object-language and meta-language.
- But in English, we do in fact use semantic notions to describe other English sentences.
- The role of formalized languages in semantics is analogous to the role of isolated systems in physics (365).
- Formalization makes possible an unambiguous, rigorous account of truth.
- This account can help us to understand our ordinary conception of truth.

formal vs. natural implications

- Everything I say in this presentation is true.
- Even taken naturally, we can conceptualize the preceding sentence as being understood by way of an implicit meta-meta-language.
- When I refer to my statements collectively, I am ascending to a higher semantic plane than the one at which those statements were made. In order to assess the truth of ‘everything...’ I have to ascend to an even higher plane.
- But what do I mean by ‘true’?
- Passing semantic judgment is fundamentally different from making a straightforward empirical claim.