

Homework: The meaning of *ouch* and *oops*

Introduction to Pragmatics, Fall 2010

Due: Friday, December 3rd, 15:00

- Watch David Kaplan's lecture entitled "The Meaning of Ouch and Oops". URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaGRLlgPl6w>
- Answer the following questions. Be brief, but explain your reasoning where appropriate; you shouldn't need more than a few sentences.

(It would be a good strategy to read the list of questions before watching the video, so you can make sure to catch the bits that are important for answering the questions.)

1. Kaplan lists a few words that don't seem to have a meaning, which nevertheless have a use: *goodbye, I*. What other words of English (or any other language you know) seem to fall into this category? List 5.
2. Kaplan distinguishes between the formalists (Frege, Russell, Carnap, Tarski, Church, Kripke) and the anti-formalists (Wittgenstein, Grice, Strawson, Austin). What do the formalists and the anti-formalists disagree about? What, according to Kaplan, was the one thing they agreed about?
3. When Kaplan showed that there could be a logic for indexicals, this was a victory for both the formalists and (as he later realized) for the anti-formalists. How is this so? Why does Kaplan say that there is no incompatibility between the formalist view and the anti-formalist view?
4. Kaplan says that the sentence *I am here now* is a "logical truth". What does this mean?
5. Kaplan also says that *I am here now* is not "necessarily true". What does this mean?
6. How can something be logically true without being necessarily true? (See class notes.)
7. Kaplan contrasts two arguments:

Argument 1: That damn Kaplan was promoted. Therefore, Kaplan was promoted.

Argument 2: Kaplan was promoted. Therefore, that damn Kaplan was promoted.

Kaplan says that the first argument is valid but the second argument is not.

- What does "valid" mean in this context?
- Intuitively, do you agree with Kaplan that Argument 1 is valid but Argument 2 is not? (There is no right answer for this question; just try to explain your gut reaction.)

- Assuming that Kaplan is right that Argument 1 is valid, but Argument 2 is not, what does this evidence show about whether the study of epithets like damn is part of semantics? What is his reasoning?
8. How does Kaplan define the terms “descriptive” and “expressive”?
 9. Based on Kaplan’s definition, can you think of some other examples of expressives? List 5.
 10. Under what circumstances is something descriptively correct according to Kaplan? Under what circumstances is something expressively correct?
 11. What is the expressive content of *ouch* according to Kaplan?
 12. What’s a situation where *ouch* is expressively correct? What’s a situation where *ouch* is expressively incorrect?
 13. Kaplan lists several properties:
 - having the semantic content, “I am in pain”
 - having a truth value
 - being a sentence
 - combining with other sentences

Which of these hold of *ouch*? Which of these hold of *I am in pain*?

14. What is the empathetic use of “ouch”? Give an example.
15. What is the expressive content of *oops* according to Kaplan?
16. Kaplan gives two examples of expressively incorrect uses of *oops*. What are they and why are they expressively incorrect? (There are different reasons for the two examples.)
17. Describe another expressively incorrect use of *oops* that you can think of.
18. What is the crucial difference between *oops* and *ouch* according to Kaplan?
19. Kaplan says that *goodbye* can be used insincerely. What is his example of that?
20. What is the theoretical importance of the fact that *goodbye* can be used insincerely?
21. What is Kaplan’s main point? Are you convinced? Explain briefly.