1.3.s. Summary

1.3.1. Our study of deductive logic will be guided by a picture according to which language serves to convey information and the information conveyed by a sentence is to be found in the proposition it expresses. This picture is oversimplified and something must be said about three respects in which the actual operation of language is more complex: the existence of speech acts whose function is not to convey information, the phenomenon of deixis or indexicality which causes the proposition expressed by a sentence to depend on the context in which the sentence is used, and the possibility of conveying information beyond the proposition expressed by a sentence through implicature and presupposition . These three features of language provide the heart of the study of pragmatics as distinct from semantics . The attitudes we will take to these complexities differ. Regarding the first, we will limit our consideration to the speech act of assertion and to its function of conveying information.

1.3.2. We handle indexicality by treating sentences only within a single context of use and consider only properties and relations of sentences that hold no matter what that context is. Analogous ideas can be used to approach the problem of vagueness .

1.3.3. We will consider only what is implied by a sentence as part of its truth conditions and not further information that may be implicated as conditions for appropriate assertion beyond the requirements for truth (and we will use responses to *yes-no* questions as one test for the difference).

1.3.4. Since a semantic presupposition is something that must hold in order for a sentence to have a truth value at all, sentences with non-tautologous presuppositions can fail to have truth values. Ideally, we would avoid sentences where such presuppositions appear, but the pervasiveness of definite descriptions . Instead, we will treat all terms as if they refer and thus will not attempt to capture semantic presuppositions of sentences containing them.

1.3.x. Exercise questions

1. For each of the following sentences, give a sentence it implies and a sentence it implicates (but does not imply) in the context described:

   a. *My plate is clean*, as reported by a small boy who has been told to finish his vegetables by a parent saying, "Clean your plate."

   b. *There is a cooler in the trunk*, said in reply to someone's expressed wish to have a beer.

   c. *I saw the director's last movie*, said in reply to someone who asked whether the speaker has seen a certain new movie.

2. Many philosophers would argue that the sentence *I'm Adam*, when true, expresses the same proposition as *I'm me* (*I'm I* if you prefer) or *Adam is Adam*; that is, if it is true at all, it is true in every logically possible world.

Tell how the phenomenon of indexicality or deixis could help to explain how *I'm Adam* could be informative even if these philosophers are correct and it expresses a tautology if it is true at all. What information can be derived from a sentence like *I'm Adam*?

3. J. L. Austin, the philosopher who made people aware of the variety and importance of speech acts, suggested a way of identifying them. Look for verbs that can fit in the context *I hereby ...* (e.g., *I hereby assert that ...* or *I hereby apologize*)—that is (in grammarians' jargon), verbs which can be used in "first person indicative active sentences in the simple present tense" along with the adverb *hereby*. Austin suggested that there are such verbs (he called them ***performative verbs***) for most speech acts (and that they number "on the order of 10^3"). Find half a dozen as varied in character as possible.

Homework assigned Wed 8/31 due Fri 9/2

Give your own example of a true sentence with a false implicature and briefly explain why it is an example. Your explanation should make use of the concept of *appropriateness*.