Subjectivity and the Expressive – Reportive Speech Acts

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Abstract: Predicates of taste (e.g. fun), as well as interjections (e.g. wow), form a class of inherently subjective expression-types, consequently resisting straightforward treatment within truth-conditional semantics. While subjective expression-types semantically require an experiencer-argument, because that argument can potentially be set to anyone at all semanticists seem unable to explain how its value is interpreted systematically. I argue that interpreting the correct value depends directly on the speech act performed: Expressive or Reportive. One can only possibly express one’s own mental states, yet may report on anyone’s, including oneself. Rules of sentence choice thus predict distinct linguistic structures to be employed when expressing: as the experiencer-argument may become overt (fun for me) or remain covert (fun), when performing an expressive speech act it remains covert – it is otiose to refer to oneself when expressing. Assuming interjections are normally used expressively, I predict the experiencer-argument to remain covert when predicates of taste follow; e.g. “Wow! It’s fun!” is more likely than “??Wow! It’s fun for me!” Google yields many such distributional contrasts robustly. Importantly, interjections are not semantically expressive, as some semanticists assume; rather, expressing (and reporting) denote categories of use, not structure – things speakers do in uttering tokens of subjective expression-types.

Keywords: Speech act, expressive, reportive, predicates of personal taste, taste parameter/experiencer argument, attributive expletives, interjections

Introduction

This paper concentrates on two classes of expression types: predicates of personal taste (POPTs), e.g. fun, and expletives or interjections, e.g. damn, and argues that due to the subjectivity inherent in the meanings of both, they are readily usable in performing either an expressive speech act, where a speaker expresses or displays her own present mental state, or a reportive speech act, where a speaker reports on the mental state of anyone at any time.

Both kinds of expression types pose serious difficulties for standard accounts of formal semantics. These accounts are generally concerned with propositional content and truth conditions, matters understood to be objective, and usually not dependent on tastes or attitudes. Yet the expression types considered here are consistently recognized to involve an experiencer whose mental state the POPT denotes or whose attitude the expletive expresses. That which Bart calls fun Lisa finds excruciating, and Bart’s utterance of damn may convey...
an attitude that need not be shared. How, then, does one formulate objective truth conditions for strings like “This is fun” or “That jerk Homer ate all the doughnuts”?

For many years the question was set aside; for example, it has long been assumed that expletives, like jerk in the example above, are in no way involved in setting the truth conditions of the proposition, that Homer ate all the doughnuts. Frege would claim the expletive contributes nothing to ‘cognitive content’ and its analysis does not belong in semantics. Kaplan (1999:7) refers to the old dictum that “logic, and perhaps even truth, is immune to epithetical color”. The very term ‘expletive’ is derived from the Latin ‘explere’, literally ‘to fill’, the idea being that these are meaningless fillers, not part of semantic content.

POPTs are a little harder to ignore, as they appear in sentences that seem to convey propositional content; for instance it seems it ought to be either true or false that “roller coasters are fun”; but, well… for whom? If in order to understand a sentence we must be able to determine its truth conditions, then it appears that when POPTs are involved we could only do that by alluding to an experiencer argument, which, only once supplied, will enable proper assessment of truth, and hence render the sentence interpretable. Indeed, some sort of a ‘taste parameter’, or a contextual index in the semantic representation, consistently makes its way into propositional analyses of POPTs (Lasersohn (2005), Stephenson (2007) inter alia).

Expletives and interjections, by contrast, are assumed to belong to a unique semantic class of ‘expressives’, standing in opposition to “regular” propositional content (Cruse (1986), Kaplan (1999), Potts (2003, 2007) inter alia). Recognizing that ‘expressives’ are subjective and perspective dependent, much like POPTs are, Potts (2007) adopts the ‘taste parameter’ to the semantic representation of ‘expressives’ as well. Thus we find two kinds of expression types, POPTs and expletives, both subjective and dependent on an experiencer for

1 POPTs too have been occasionally analyzed so as to belong to the class of expressives (e.g. Gutzmann 2010), though for the most part they have been analyzed rather as conveying propositional content.

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their proper interpretation, and yet one is semantically ‘propositional’ and the other semantically ‘expressive’.

Regardless of the theoretical path pursued of each kind of expression type, any attempt to incorporate subjective expression types into formal semantics are met with basic theoretical difficulties. A most pressing problem is explaining how a value for the experiencer argument is interpreted systematically\(^2\). Answering to this problem is vital; for POPTs, because truth conditions would depend on knowing that value, and for expletives, because words which fall under the ‘expressives’, by virtue of this semantically imposed categorization, must denote someone’s attitudes or feelings. The question has theoretical implications, shedding light on the division of labor between semantics and pragmatics: assuming subjective expression-types semantically demand an experiencer-argument, could its interpretation be in any way structurally determined? And if not, might it nonetheless depend predictably and systematically on particular uses of language?

This paper is divided into two parts; in the first I will critically review current analyses both of POPTs and semantic ‘expressives’, exposing internal incoherencies in these accounts. In the second, an alternative unified analysis of both expression types is presented, based on an instrumental approach to linguistic structures, and relying on a distinction between expressive and reportive speech acts. Theoretically, the notion of an expressive speech act is distinct from the semantic class of ‘expressives’, in that the speech act precisely does not denote a semantic class. Rather than a category of linguistic structure, the expressive speech act is taken to denote a category of linguistic use.

Expression types are here understood as tools available to speakers and employed to advance rational goals; certain expression types, due to their structural properties, make well

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\(^2\) That is, provided that argument is not made overt, in which case the value would be straightforward.

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suited tools for the performance of certain kinds of speech acts. POPTs and attributive expletives, in accord with the subjectivity inherent to their meanings, make useful tools for displaying one’s present subjective mental states, but also for reporting on the states of anyone. Interestingly, distinct linguistic structures regularly accompany the expressive speech acts, thus giving rise to distributional asymmetries which will be identified and explained.

Part I: Subjectivity in Predicates of Personal Taste and Expletives

According to Lasersohn (2005) two mutually incompatible intuitions emerge from such dialogues as follows:

(1) Homer: Kissing is fun!
    Marge: No, kissing is not fun!

On the one hand we understand that in matters of personal taste each is entitled to his or her own perspective and so each speaker is plausibly asserting a true statement. On the other hand, it should appear that Marge is contradicting Homer. Because of this apparent contradiction Lasersohn is reluctant to straightforwardly assign POPTs a hidden argument place, filled either overtly (as in fun for me) or covertly by an implicit indexical pronoun. That would entail that the proposition expressed by Homer is distinct from that expressed by Marge, as is evident from (2) and (3), and would thus fail to capture the disagreement felt in (1) between the parties.

(2) fun(kissing, Homer)
(3) ~fun(kissing, Marge)

Lasersohn’s analysis draws on the work of Kaplan (1989) on indexicals. According to Kaplan we distinguish between two senses of the meaning of a sentence: ‘content’ and ‘character’. The character is that which is constant across all utterances of an expression type; so if two different speakers utter “I’m a student” then they have uttered a sentence with one character. However, clearly each speaker has conveyed a distinct proposition; indeed
character fails to provide propositional content. The content, once supplied by a ‘context’ with values for any indexicals (e.g. world or agent), yields the propositional content of a sentence.

Kaplan treats contents as functions from world-time pairs to truth value, and characters as functions from ‘contexts’ to contents, or equivalently to propositions. Thus truth value can only be assessed given the content. The ‘context’ is understood technically as a formal construct that sets values for parameters. Suppressing much formal detail the picture we get can be summarized as follows:

(4) Character → Use ‘context’ to resolve indexicality → Content → Evaluate truth value

The utterance “I’m a student” has a single character when spoken by Bart or Lisa, but it conveys a distinct proposition in each case as the ‘context’ supplies a different value for I. Notice it would do Bart no good if he wished to deny Lisa by saying: “??No, I’m not a student”, because he would then be denying a completely different proposition than that which Lisa has asserted. A contradiction is therefore a matter of conflicting contents.

Returning to dialogue (1), Lasersohn indicates that Marge’s denial of Homer’s statement produces none of the anomaly we feel in Bart’s denial above. In (1) it should appear Marge is quite felicitously expressing her disagreement with an initial “No” and could even say “That’s not true” or “You’re wrong”. Lasersohn (2005:649) takes this as evidence that Marge’s utterance is “a very overt, direct contradiction” to Homer. The great dilemma posed for POPTs has become known as ‘faultless disagreement’ (Lasersohn 2005, 2009): Each speaker may be making a true statement and yet at the same time one statement contradicts the other.
Lasersohn explores several solutions to get out of this entanglement, but concludes that each fails to account either for the subjectivity that is inherent to POPTs, or for the contradiction.

One option, for example, is to de-relativize POPTs, so that the truth of sentences containing them does not vary with speaker, but is, rather, absolute. There are various ways of developing such an approach: one could argue for an existentially quantified hidden argument, or for a universally quantified one, or perhaps that there’s no experiencer argument at all. The main difficulty in any such proposal is that they fail to do justice to POPTs’ inherent subjectivity, i.e. to the intuition that each speaker may well be expressing a true proposition. Suppose most people in a relevant group thoroughly enjoy roller coasters but Maggie doesn’t; then it should appear impossible for her to truthfully say “Roller coasters are not fun”. Such a result, which seems virtually inevitable if the value of the experiencer argument is to be absolute, is simply absurd.

Another line of investigation explored by Lasersohn involves treating sentences containing POPTs as expressive. Under such an analysis, POPTs would be assimilated to expletives, such as whee! As mentioned, expletives are not thought to play a role in propositional content, and so in this approach sentences containing POPTs would not involve truth or falsity, but would rather serve only to express a speaker’s subjective perspective. This analysis, Lasersohn claims, fails to capture the intuition that there’s a contradiction between two speakers expressing opposite opinions. Contradiction, being by definition a matter of conflicting propositions, entails that sentences containing POPTs are propositional in nature. To distinguish POPTs from “real expressives”, Lasersohn shows, for example, that while sentences containing POPTs are coherently negated, as in (1), expletives are not:

(5) Bart: Whee!
Lisa: ?? No, that’s not true! This isn’t fun at all!
After having refuted these and other options Lasersohn finally proposes his own solution that is committed to account both for the subjectivity of POPTs and for the contradiction felt between the two expressions of mutually incompatible tastes. In essence what Lasersohn suggests is that the truth value of sentences containing POPTs be relativized to a contextual taste parameter – an individual index; but this relativization is of truth-value only, and importantly, not of semantic content. This allows for free variation in truth value even when semantic contents are mutually incompatible.

The indexical representing the new taste parameter, the judge, is quite different from the familiar time and world indexicals. The value for these latter is supplied by the ‘context’, as sketched in (4), in the derivation of content from character; once these values are given as input to the character, the content emerges in full. It is this portion of the derivation, Lasersohn maintains, that is responsible for the intuition that in (1) Marge is contradicting Homer, for the semantic content found in each utterance is identical, barring the negation.

However, the value for the new judge index cannot be supplied at this portion of the derivation, for if it were, then there would be no account of the intuition that each speaker is also expressing a true statement. When POPTs are involved, so it should seem, a truth value is not yet supplied even given the semantic content in full. The value for the judge index is supplied instead by the ‘context’, in the derivation of truth-value from content. This portion of the derivation accounts for the subjectivity of POPTs. Homer supplies himself as the value for the judge index of his statement, while Marge does for hers, each thereby expressing a true proposition.

There are several peculiarities in Lasersohn’s analysis, some of which Lasersohn admits to in full closure. To begin with one he doesn’t, there’s a problem in the very coherency of the formal proposal. Notice that the analysis sketched above asks us to accept that speakers intuit a contradiction that is explained at a level in the derivation at which the...
truth conditions have not yet even been fully supplied. Lasersohn asserts that contradiction is to be defined in the usual way: “Two sentences $\phi$ and $\psi$ contradict each other if their contents have an empty intersection” (2005:663). The contents, however, as they stand in this analysis, fail to fully specify what the truth conditions are. Seeing as the truth value of sentences containing POPTs is assessed relative to a judge parameter, and since the value for the judge parameter is lacking from the semantic content of such sentences then the truth conditions are as yet not available given the semantic content. How could there be a contradiction without truth conditions?

Furthermore, Lasersohn notes explicitly that “this analysis still […] leaves the nature of the disagreement somewhat mysterious. […] The fact remains that in this analysis there is no matter of fact on which disagreements of taste turn. Such disagreements are in some sense “without substance”” (2005: 683-684). Not only, then, does the contradiction somehow manage to precede knowing the truth conditions but moreover, it is “substanceless”.

Lasersohn leaves the question open for future research as to what exactly is a contradiction without substance.

Stojanovic (2007), in criticizing Lasersohn, insists that we think of the nature of the scenario in which dialogue (1) could be uttered. If the case is such that Homer is understood to be talking about his own assessment of kissing, and Marge is understood to be talking about hers, then in fact there should be no intuition of disagreement whatsoever. Competent adult speakers understand that sometimes people are merely asserting how they feel, and that each person may feel differently; no disagreement emerges then. By contrast, if the speakers are understood to be making universal statements, then Homer would be asserting that in general kissing is fun, and Marge that it is, in general, not. Well, in that case there is disagreement and it does involve a real contradiction. However, now the speakers cannot both be saying something true; either the majority/everyone finds kissing fun or not.

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The force of Stojanovic’s argument lies in that once we consider uses of sentences containing POPTs we discover that a situation of ‘faultless disagreement’ never arises. If speakers know, as Lasersohn himself maintains, that it is only relative to a judge that truth values could be assigned, then speakers must understand that the value True could be assigned to anyone’s utterance.

Stojanovic, while acknowledging uses of linguistic structures, nonetheless thinks of POPTs as being propositional. Her criticism is just that at every context of utterance (i.e. concrete situation within which each set of utterances occurs) there’s a single and absolute value for the judge index, and so the truth value for each occurrence of a sentence containing a POPT is likewise absolute. In a particular circumstance the judge may be uniquely identified as Homer for Homer’s utterance, and as Marge for hers; no disagreement then. At another circumstance it may be identified as the universal quantifier for both Homer’s and for Marge’s utterance; then disagreement ensues, but only one is right.

Lasersohn argues, by contrast, that it is impossible that the truth value of sentences containing POPTs be determined absolutely even given a particular context of utterance. In Lasersohn’s view, Homer’s utterance, at one and the same time, may be assessed as True relative to Homer and as False relative to Marge. It is precisely because of POPTs inherent subjectivity that Lasersohn is resistant to accept that there’s an absolute truth value to sentences containing them. In Lasersohn’s own words: “In order to maintain an authentically subjective assignment of truth values to sentences containing [POPTs], we must allow that the objective facts of the situation of utterance do not uniquely determine a judge” (2005:669).

Here we hit on a central source for the debate that has arisen in the literature as to what is the correct analysis of POPTs: Lasersohn’s relativist view maintains that the truth value of sentences containing POPTs is relativized to a context of assessment, not to a
context of utterance, thereby leaving the value of the judge indeterminate even in a particular situation. In the relativist approach Homer’s utterance in (1) could be at one and the same time true relative to Homer’s assessment of the semantic content and false relative to Marge’s. Importantly, the number of ‘contexts’ (in the technical sense, i.e. the number of distinct sequences of parameter values) is equivalent to the number of individuals pertaining to the context of utterance – we get at least one ‘context’ for each potential individual who can serve as the value for the judge in a given context of utterance. This means basically that the judge can be interpreted to be anyone, a point we will return to below.

By contrast the contextualist view (e.g. Glanzberg (2007), Stephenson (2007)) argues that the context of utterance uniquely determines a judge, relative to which truth value is assessed and determined absolutely. In this approach the judge may be formally represented as an additional argument of the POPT proper, e.g. Stephenson’s (2007) “PROjudge”, and somehow this argument is supplied uniquely in every context of utterance. In Glanzberg (2007), the judge forms a scale, analogous to that formed by other gradable adjectives, but based on an Experiencer E; so fun, for example, would produce the scale enjoyment as experienced by E. The truth value of, say, “This is fun” would depend upon the absolute value of E in a particular context, however it may be gathered.

It is outside the scope of this paper to delve into the debate between relativists and contextualists. Ultimately it is the aim of the present work to show that any account of POPTs which analyzes them as consistently bearing a truth value at all is at odds with both intuition and empirical evidence. Indeed the next ax to grind applies equally well to relativists and contextualists.

3 The truth value will depend on other factors as well, such as fixing the standard for enjoyment.
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Wherever or however the ‘taste parameter’ is represented in the formal system, and whether the context of utterance determines a value absolutely or not, any account of POPTs must address the question of how a value for the taste parameter is to be determined at all, or as Lasersohn puts it “Who is the judge”?

Lasersohn considers the possibility that the judge is essentially automatically fixed, be it to the agent or alternatively to some individual or group intended by the agent. Any such option is rejected, for if the judge were to be fixed automatically that would strip POPTs of their subjectivity; a truth-value would be determined objectively in all cases by assessing the semantic content relative to the structurally determined judge.

But according to the relativist, the judge may be understood to be anyone at all that’s salient in the context of utterance. Therefore, the judge, as a structural theoretical construct, puts no restrictions whatsoever on how a value for it might be supplied. Observe that this leaves us with a picture where, in fact, anything could happen; the context of utterance may ultimately always give rise to unexpected interpretations. What could then count as empirical evidence against the theoretical work the judge index is meant to do?

To compare, observe that despite the value of the first person pronoun I also varying with context of utterance, it nonetheless seems possible to account for how the semantics computes this value every time; for I is straightforwardly set to the issuer of the utterance (Kaplan 1999). By contrast, the semantic accounts considered here offer no such statement which is able to systematically determine a value for the ‘taste parameter’ (however conceived). As will be seen below, the notion of an “auto-centric” judge seems intuitive at first, but comes with very many inescapable “deviations”.

Lasersohn has not sufficiently explained the workings of POPTs by just introducing the judge index and allowing it ultra-flexible interpretations. He continues to argue that as a general rule people tend to take themselves as the judge, whether one is the speaker, the
addressee or whoever. This tendency supposedly explains the disagreement in (1), if we take it that Marge, a competent adult speaker, interprets herself as the judge in both of her and Homer’s utterance.

Yet, as explained, even though we tend to adopt an “auto-centric” perspective, the judge may still always be set to anyone at all as should arise from the context of utterance. This inherent flexibility proves, in fact, a far more principled reason why the judge cannot be fixed automatically: it is not merely because of the subjectivity of POPTs, but rather because proper identification of the judge invariably depends on the seemingly unpredictable forces of the context of utterance.

The interesting question is then: given a context of utterance, what regular relationships, if any exist, can be observed between linguistic structure and the interpretation of the experiencer argument?

Lasersohn fails to provide any insightful answer. He rather lists various disparate “deviant” cases, in which an auto-centric perspective appears not to be adopted.

One deviant case occurs with this: “Is this tasty?” The speaker is unlikely to adopt an auto-centric judge here, as it is the addressee’s taste that is of interest. But note this is not categorical of this inverted sentence type, for the speaker might have used the same structure to express appreciation: “Is this tasty!”, in which case the judge is not meant to be the addressee.

If we look for regularity between inverted sentence form and interpretation of the judge index, we will inevitably fail. Yet if, following Fiengo (2007), we recognize that questioning is a speech act, and not a structural category, then we may note that when one performs this speech act, the experiencer argument of the POPT is regularly interpreted as the addressee. This is true regardless of the sentence form chosen, i.e. whether one asks “is this tasty?” or “this is tasty?” the experiencer argument would be interpreted as the addressee,
so long as it is recognized that questioning is the speech act being performed. Speakers learn all sorts of ways to make it clear that that is the speech act being performed, either in speech or in writing.

Another deviation Lasersohn notes occurs when convincing someone to do something: “It’ll be fun!” Again, the value of the judge is probably meant to be the addressee; here it is even more obvious that there’s nothing in the sentence structure that prevents an interpretation of an auto-centric judge. Yet, a generalization may again well be stated in terms of speech acts, now convincing, or imploring, or entreating, etc. It should seem rather straightforward why an experiencer argument would be understood to be set to the addressee when performing these acts. What’s the point of convincing you, if I take the experiencer argument of fun to be myself⁴?

Another deviation, Lasersohn claims, is found in indirect discourse, which by definition involves an exocentric judge. With this, the door is opened for essentially any sentence structure to be “deviant”, for any utterance may be delivered indirectly. However, there is really nothing deviant here, and the regularity emerges if speech acts are allowed into the analysis. When engaged in indirect discourse, one is reporting. If you report on the tastes of someone, then clearly it is the perspective of that someone that the POPT will be taken to denote. That’s why we call it “indirect”, and there is no reason to assume language users don’t know this. I will elaborate on indirect discourse below when discussing Pott’s analysis of expletives and interjections.

Looking primarily at the semantics, at that which is properly linguistic, makes it impossible to observe any regularity in how interlocutors interpret the experiencer argument. Lasersohn essentially brings an open ended collection of cases where an exocentric

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⁴ It could also be argued that when convincing the experiencer argument is meant to be interpreted as the universal quantifier, but even then it is important and essential, in fact, that the addressee will be included in this group. There are no exceptions to that effect, if the convincing is to be done right.

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perspective might be adopted. However, there are generalizations to be made about the interpretation of the experiencer argument, if we consider what speech act is being performed.

Interestingly, different structural tools, distinct sentence types, are used in the performance of different kinds of speech acts. Another generalization that escapes both relativists and contextualists has to do with the distribution of experiencer arguments – when do they surface overtly and when do they remain covert. Observe that if a speaker is understood to be performing a speech act of convincing, then it is normally all too plain, in such a context of utterance, that the experiencer argument is the addressee; in fact it is so plain that we should hardly feel we need to say it. I predict then that when convincing, sentences that lack an overt experiencer argument, e.g. “it’ll be fun”, will greatly outnumber those which include overt reference to the addressee, e.g. “?it’ll be fun for you/everyone/us”.

In the second part of this paper, the full rationale for this will be developed in detail. Now, the distributional difference will be given some empirical ground: a Google search for the exact string “Come on, it’ll be fun” yields 292,000 results. By contrast, “Come on, it’ll be fun for you” yields merely 7. Note further that “Come on man, it’ll be fun” still produces nearly 10,000 hits, while “Come on man, it’ll be fun for you” zero. The same extreme contrasts are paralleled in Hebrew too, and I invite the reader to try Google at this in more languages.

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5 The preceding phrase “come on” was chosen for the search to increase the possibility that convincing is the speech act that is plausibly being performed; the same phrase is also suggested in Lasersohn’s own example of convincing. It has been paralleled by a Hebrew equivalent in the Hebrew search.

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Let’s observe more distributional differences between overt and covert experiencer arguments in examples where judgment seems rather intuitive (supporting Google results and full explanation will be given in the second part of the paper). Suppose for a moment, Marge and Homer rekindle their love and on one special romantic night, as they lovingly kiss Marge utters:

(6) Oh Homer, kissing is fun!

Consider the relative oddity had she then said:

(7) ??Oh Homer, kissing is fun for me!
(8) ???Oh Homer, kissing is fun for us!
(9) ???Oh Homer, kissing is fun for everyone/anyone/one!

Or imagine Homer goes to the airport to pick up Marge. They have not seen each other in a long time and Homer missed her dearly. Upon seeing her face he calls:

(10) Hey! It’s so great to see you!

We probably won’t hear him say:

(11) ??Hey! It’s so great for me to see you!

We are all familiar with situations where we make a new acquaintance and say:

(12) It’s nice to meet you.

But normally not:

(13) ??It’s nice for me to meet you.

Or again when parting with your friend, you might say:

(14) It was good to see you buddy!

Less likely you would say:

(15) ??It was good for me to see you buddy!

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6 It is important to note that sentences marked by question marks are not argued to be impossible. Rather, the notation here indicates only that in the particular context given these are less likely.

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Lastly, imagine Bart having a blast at the Luna Park and as he is riding the scariest roller coaster he shouts elatedly:

(16) Wow! This is so much fun!!!

He is less likely to shout:

(17) ??Wow! This is so much fun for me!!!

(18) ???Wow! This is so much fun for everyone/anyone/one!!!

This distributional difference is entirely overlooked in the literature. Lasersohn maintains that “the contents of [fun(The-Giant-Dipper) and that of [fun for John(The-Giant-Dipper) are identical in their John-oriented segments” (2005:677), i.e. identical in so long as the judge is given a single value. Indeed in his formal system we see this equivalence:

\[
[[\alpha \text{ for } \beta]]_{U, c, u, t, w} = [[\alpha]]_{U, c, b, t, w} \text{ where } b = [[\beta]]_{U, c, b, t, w}.
\]

The same equivalence is seen in, e.g., Stephenson’s work, who writes that the sentence type “fun for X as judged by any judge j is equivalent to fun as judged by X. […] In principle […] there is nothing to stop [POPTs] from taking overt arguments” (2007:519). No insight could therefore be offered by these accounts for the distributional differences observed.

Concluding thus far, we saw that a context of utterance must be taken into account when dealing with POPTs for proper interpretation of the experiencer argument. Yet without expressly alluding to the speech act performed no generalizations about its interpretation seem possible. Furthermore, current literature notes no distributional difference, and hence offers no explanation for the distinction between overt and covert experiencer arguments.

We turn now to expletives and interjections, and find they face a similar problem: It supposedly seems impossible to systematically determine whose perspective is conveyed in the use of such expression types. Again, there is a clear tendency that it is the perspective of
the speaker. When Bart says “That damn Homer”, it is normally taken to mean that damn reveals Bart’s attitude. But this is indeed only a tendency.

Potts (2007) argues that expression types such as damn, ouch or jerk require an experiencer argument in their semantic representation, much like Lasersohn and others accord POPTs. Potts adopts a judge index precisely because he wants a theoretical mechanism that would allow the value of the experiencer to be set to anyone, again ultimately leaving it for interlocutors to infer the value in a context of utterance. Potts also notes “deviations”, and solves the problem with the same malleable judge.

An important “deviation” comes from contexts of embedded clauses. While in (20) it may well be the speaker who is understood to have a negative attitude toward Bart, in (21) and (22) it’s probably not the speaker’s attitude, but rather that of the subject of the matrix:

(20) Lisa believes that that bastard Bart got a promotion.

(21) My father screamed that he would never allow me to marry that bastard Wesley. (Potts 2007: ex. 15)

(22) I am not prejudiced against Caucasians. But John, who is, claims you are the worst honkey he knows. (Potts 2007: ex. 16)

These “deviant” cases do not discourage Potts, as the judge index is capable of being set to any individual the context of utterance makes salient. The judge specifies an index for the experiencer argument that seems to be required in ‘expressives’ too; but here too the judge, as a theoretical construct, gives no special insight as to how speakers determine its value.

Interestingly, the deviation Potts sees in embedded contexts can really be explained quite straightforwardly and with no need for special theoretical mechanisms like the judge index. What Potts fails to recognize is that such sentences are, in fact, potentially ambiguous, and that the attitude associated with the expletive is consistently assigned to whoever’s words are in question. Fortunately, there is an orthographic mechanism to disambiguate these
strings, the quotation marks. Below it is indicated explicitly that whatever attitude is conveyed by bastard is to be attributed to the father:

(23) My father screamed that he would never allow me to marry “that bastard Wesley”.

By using the quotation marks it becomes evident that these are not the speaker’s words. There are ways for speakers to signal that they’re not using their own words in spoken conversations just as well, such as employing some particular hand movements or tone of voice, etc.

Not surprisingly, Potts’ examples all involve “verbs of saying”, such as “scream” or “claim”. It is indeed quite sensible that the embedded clauses of such verbs require quotation marks, as they offer the words of the matrix verbs’ agents. Other verbs, such as “believe” or “know” would not work in such a way. Observe the relative oddity in writing:

(24) ??John knows/believes that “that bastard Bart” got a promotion.

Interjections, which are also assumed to belong to the class of ‘expressives’, cannot be syntactically embedded and so the quotation-marks confusion normally does not arise for them:

(25) ??John screamed that whee!

However it is most certainly possible to embed “whee” if we just eliminate the complementizer and use quotation marks:

(26) John screamed: “Whee!”

And as expected this works with verbs of saying7, and not with verbs like “believe” or “know”:

(27) ??John believed: “Whee!”

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7 Clearly “whee” is not a claim and so the verb “claim”, while it can be considered a verb of saying, will trivially not work here.

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It is evident that the relevant question is not who the speaker is, but whose words are understood to be at hand.

Recall that Potts takes expletives and interjections to belong to a unique *semantic* class of expression types called ‘expressives’. Now, taken as such, Potts fails to note an internal incoherence in the category of ‘expressives’. In a nutshell, he does not observe that in examples like those above, where another speaker’s words are *reported*, then in those cases it becomes internally inconsistent to regard the expletive or interjection as an ‘expressive’.

Potts makes “perspective dependence” a defining characteristic of expressives. This property, coupled with the apparent deviation of embedded contexts, is in fact what motivates the *judge* index in the semantic representation of ‘expressives’. The problem is that *perspective dependence*, if handled by an all-capable judge index, becomes a property that is mutually incompatible with two other defining properties of expressives, *immediacy* and *non-displaceability*.

According to *immediacy*, Potts argues, it is a defining characteristic of ‘expressives’ that they don’t offer content, so much as inflict it. In that sense, Potts maintains, ‘expressives’ are like performatives. In saying “*I promise to come*” I commit myself to coming; the act of promising is actually being performed, and not reported on. By analogy, Potts explains that “the act of uttering an expressive is the emotive performance” (2007: 180, original emphasis). So in saying “*that damn Bart*” Lisa is actually displaying her negative attitude toward Bart.

But it should be evident that if we allow ‘expressives’ to have a *judge* index, then we are inevitably saying at best that *immediacy* only *occasionally* involves ‘expressives’, namely just in those cases where the value of the *judge* is set to the speaker. If the value is set rather to, say, the father, as in (21), then in that case the speaker’s utterance of *damn* is by no means immediate; it could not be an act of emotive performance, for the speaker is *reporting* on what her *father* had said.

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Next consider the property non-displaceability, which maintains that ‘expressives’ “always tell us something about the utterance situation itself”. This property is clearly related to the previous one. The expressive being immediate in its impact, it is assumed to denote the attitude of the speaker, at the time the utterance is made. Thus again one promises in saying “I promise”, and one is certainly not promising in saying “I promised/ He promises”.

But it should again be evident that in allowing a judge index Potts is opening the door for the so called ‘expressive’ to denote the attitude of anyone at any time. Indeed, if the father in (21) is to set the value for the judge index then in that case the ‘expressive morpheme’ must be displaced, indicating the attitude of a third party at a past time.

There could not coherently exist, therefore, a class of expression types called ‘expressives’, which is at one and the same time characterized by perspective dependence, and by immediacy and non-displaceability.

It makes good common sense that a speaker will use expression types such as damn or whee, because of their linguistic meaning, to express one’s own subjective attitudes, but this by no means entails that damn or whee, as expression types, i.e. as linguistic entities, are inherently ‘expressive’. In embedded contexts, in which the words of others are reported on, then such expression types are simply not used expressively, are not immediate in Potts’ sense, and are necessarily displaced.

The trouble with Potts’ account of expressives is that it attributes the category of expressiveness, i.e. the non-displaceable emotive performance, to the expression type itself, rather than to the feeling human being. Potts talks as though it were words which are expressive, not people. If the expression types themselves were ‘expressive’ then they might have been dealt with in full by the semantics. But Potts’ semantic category of ‘expressives’ can’t escape from becoming an incoherent class.
We have examined what some of the recent literature has to say about two classes of expression types, POPTs and attributive expletives and interjections. Expression types of either of these classes are not readily incorporated into standard accounts of semantics, and both seem to require some kind of a taste parameter that accommodates an experiencer argument. But the setting of this parameter can supposedly only be stated in terms of “tendencies” and “deviations”. In the next section we will explore in more detail how making the speech act distinction, expressive vs. reportive, accounts for the interpretation and distribution of the experiencer argument in POPTs and expletives.

**Part II: The Expressive – Reportive Distinction**

I argue that expression types are actually never themselves expressive, but rather that speakers use certain expression types expressively. Under this instrumental approach, expression types are tools. Like all tools, expression types have a *structure* on the one hand and *uses* on the other. While the distinction between the two must be kept in mind, proper understanding of the expression types, as of any tool, inevitably requires an examination of both structure and use. It does not follow from the fact that *damn* is often used by speakers expressively that it belongs to a *semantic* category called “expressives”. Rather there’s a distinction here to be made between two categories of *use*, two *speech acts*: *expressive* and *reportive*.

While expression types are not themselves *expressive*, still, if there is some structural characteristic (semantic or syntactic) that makes certain expression types particularly suitable for performing an *expressive* speech act, we may take note of this and try to explain what in that structural characterization makes these expression-types suitable tools for performing that particular speech act. I argue here that expression types whose lexical meaning inherently involves the *subjective* attitude of some *experiencer*, are particularly suitable tools for
expressing; though, importantly, are not used exclusively for the performance of that speech act.

When a person is in a certain mental state he or she, in expressing or displaying that state, may use bits of language. One of the expressive speech acts would be, for example, to display pain. A useful tool for performing this speech act could be perhaps the expression type “ouch” or the sentence type “it hurt”. Cruse (1986: 274) writes: “expressed meaning most characteristically conveys some sort of emotion or attitude”. I subscribe to this general characterization, but stress that it is not the “meaning” which conveys the emotion, but rather the speaker, in uttering a token of one of these expression types, them meaning what they do. Now sometimes, rather than expressing our own subjective states, we report on the subjective states of others. I may tell you that “Sam thinks it’s fun” and be understood then to talk about Sam’s perspective.

Competent adult speakers are generally able to tell whether a speaker is performing an expressive or a reportive speech act, as they know how to perform them themselves. It is largely based on this understanding that the interlocutors successfully infer the intended identity of the experiencer argument associated with these expression types.

Interestingly, distinct linguistic structures prove predictably useful tools for the performance of either of our speech acts. Thus, when one is expressing, one generally uses a structure which leaves the experiencer argument covert. This means that when expressing or displaying one is more likely to use sentence types like “this is fun”, “that hurts” or “it’s tasty” rather than “this is fun for me”, “that hurts me” or “it’s tasty to me”. This does not mean that “it’s fun” is an expressive sentence type while “it’s fun for me” is reportive; sentence types are never accorded the category “expressive” or “reportive” for these are names of things speakers use language to do, not structural categories. The distributional distinction will be explained below, after characterizing the speech acts in more detail.

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We may characterize the *expressive speech act* as maintaining the following properties, noting along the way the contrast between it and the *reportive speech act*:

**Non Displaceability** – It is only the mental state that one is *presently* in that one can possibly *display*. By contrast, one may *report* on things however far removed in time and space. Thus one cannot *display* the pain one felt yesterday, but one can certainly *report* on the pain felt yesterday, or on the pain of others.

**Speaker’s Perspective** – It is only one’s *own* mental state that one can *display*. One cannot *display* the pain of another. By contrast one may well *report* that someone else is in pain. Note one may also *report* on one’s own pain. Here’s a nice example from Kimball (1971): suppose the doctor is gradually wrapping a rubber band around your wrist and asks you to inform her when it starts to hurt. As the band is going around you say “I’m still good, a bit more is fine, and… now it hurts”. When you say, in this context, “it hurts” you are not displaying your pain but reporting on it.

Based on these first two properties the reader should note how our account differs from Potts’, for here we are committed all the way that the concept of an *expressive speech act* is simply incoherent unless it is the speaker’s expression involved. Since it is not the expression type itself which is expressive, but the speaker, we need not worry about introducing an all capable *judge* index to handle a semantic class of ‘expressives’.

Understanding that an experiencer argument is inherently associated with POPTs, and considering in a given case what kind of speech act is being performed, is quite sufficient for speakers to successfully interpret the identity of the experiencer.

**Performatives** – *expressing* and *reporting* are performatives, i.e. categories of use, not structure. One performs a speech act of *displaying* one’s mental state *in* uttering an expression-type of the appropriate kind in the appropriate circumstances. Just like in saying “I bet you Sam will win” or “I promise to come” I do not report on my betting or my
promising but actually *bet or promise*, so too in saying “*ouch*” or “*it hurt*” in the right circumstances, I do not report that I am in pain, but actually *display* my pain.

As Austin well argues, reportive or assertive speech acts, i.e. those that seem to involve propositions, have no unique claim for having some relation between the sentence and reality. Sure, a report is said to be *True* in as much as it “fits” certain conditions in the world. But there are many ways by which a sentence may interact with reality. For example, in order for one to sincerely *display* a subjective mental state one must indeed *experience* that mental state. It would be insincere to yell out “*ouch!*” when one is not experiencing pain, or say in appreciation “*the soup is tasty*” when one finds it disgusting. The patient in the example above may also insincerely *report* that “*it hurts*”, not feeling any pain. But similarly it would be insincere to *promise* without any intention or capacity to do that which is promised. Each of these speech acts involves *some* interaction with the extra linguistic reality.

**Non Deniability/Non questionability** – An *expressive* speech act cannot be denied or questioned. If you’re hit on your toe and scream “*ouch!*”, or “*it hurts!*”, there is no sense in one denying or questioning your exclamation. By contrast, in the example from Kimball, the doctor could well question the report by responding with: “*Are you quite sure it hurts already?*” (Suppose the patient is a scared child who is worried about when it will actually hurt and so reports on his pain sooner than required). There is a contradiction of some sort between the speech acts of *displaying* on the one hand and either *questioning* or *denying* on the other. This has to do with the final characteristic of expressives below.

**Non propositional** – At least some of the times when one is *reporting*, one is probably using sentence types which have truth-values. This makes perfect sense because

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8 I rely here on Austin’s (1962) analysis of speech acts and on Wittgenstein’s (1953: §244) early contrast of *expressive* and *reportive*.

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when *reporting*, one is often in the business of saying something that is either true or false. But that is never the case when *expressing*. An utterance in an expressive speech act is never true or false, as there is no logical sense in which a display of one’s mental state is true. Observe that one cannot lie in *expressing*. As noted, one may deceptively utter “ouch!” expressively even when one is not experiencing pain, but we hardly call that a lie, i.e. knowingly making a false claims (see Kaplan 1999).

Above I characterized what I consider the most important properties of the expressive speech act, contrasting it to the reportive speech act. I now turn to the defining semantic characteristic which unites POPTs and attributive expletives and interjections:

**Subjectivity** – POPTs denote some subjective attitude or mental state. Clearly, each person may hold her own subjective tastes. A little test (which is not foolproof but still useful) to identify subjective predicates in English is to see whether or not the expression “for one” makes coherent sense as an overt argument for the predicate in question. Thus it seems rather strange to say “Collecting comics is fun/interesting/boring for one” or “Vegetable soup is tasty to one”. Yet if we take an objective predicate like “healthy” it is perfectly sensible to say “Eating vegetables is healthy for one”. Attributive expletives also have perspective oriented meanings. He who is considered to be a jerk by one person is the friend of another.

Having delineated the properties of the expressive speech acts and of POPTs and expletives, it should become apparent why these expression types are so naturally used in performing expressive speech acts. Our language provides us with an arsenal of subjective predicates and exclamations, and we use them to express our personal, subjective, feelings, states and attitudes. This is a very human thing to do. We often just have to show how we feel; “it’s not enough to tell me that you love me, I want you to show it!”

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We return now to the structural distinction between two kinds of sentence types containing POPTs: those in which an experiencer argument is realized overtly and those in which it is left covert. Examples of sentence-types in which there is an overt experiencer are: “This is fun for x; That is tasty to x; It hurt x.” And examples of sentence-types in which an experiencer is absent are: “This is fun; That is tasty; It hurt”.

Now I argue that a sentence type which contains a POPT and has no overt experiencer argument is, precisely due to this structural characteristic, more suitable for expressing. The rational is simple – since one can only display one’s own mental state, when performing a speech act of displaying it is simply otiose to refer to oneself.

Theoretical support for this idea comes from a concept known as Austin’s Thesis, which states: “No modification without aberration” (Austin 1961). Suppose I tell you: “I ate lunch”. Now it is quite obvious that I ate lunch deliberately. There is no way that you would think that I did not do so deliberately. Yet if I say to you: “I deliberately ate lunch” then that is surely a little odd. The hearer must wonder why the speaker is saying this. Clearly something must be outside of the norm if this modification is made. The point is that it is so obvious that I ate lunch deliberately that under the normal circumstances I will not say that I did so deliberately. Such modification to the sentence is not appropriate unless the message I am trying to convey is in some sense itself aberrant: hence no modification without aberration.

Turning to POPTs, in a context of utterance in which it is clear that I am displaying, such as when a bowling ball falls on my toe and I shout “It hurts!”, or when I make your acquaintance and say “It’s nice to meet you” (I’m not reporting that it’s nice, but showing you that it is) or when I say “It was fun hanging out” or “It’s good to see you” (again I am displaying my enjoyment, not merely telling you about it), it is clear in all those cases that it is my attitude which is consistently being displayed. Remember that by definition it is only
possible to display one’s own feelings. Now it is so obvious the feeling is mine, that it would be quite odd to display my pain in saying “That hurts me!”, or to display my positive feelings about hanging out in saying “It was fun for me to hang out” or “It’s good for me to see you”. When an utterance is issued expressively there could be no one other than the speaker whose attitude the POPT could take as its argument, so saying “me” is otiose, just like saying “deliberately” before – it serves no end.

To say “It hurt me” is to specify that it hurt me and not someone else. There could be many reasons why one would use this sentence type and not the other, but generally it is a good tool to use when one wishes to report on someone’s pain. It is possible to report on the attitudes or feelings of anyone, and so it is potentially conducive for the speaker trying to convey a coherent report, to overtly state who that someone is. Suppose you ask me “Why does Sam collect comics?” I may reply to you: “Well, because it is fun for him”. I may choose here the sentence-type which includes an overt experiencer because I am informing you about Sam, and moreover I don’t want you to think the attitude belongs to me or shared by me.

I would like to now offer some empirical support to my claims. I assume that expression-types such as damn, wow, fuck, etc. are generally used by speakers expressively. In accordance with this assumption I predict that tokens of sentence types such as “Wow, this is fun!” will produce more results upon exact Google searches than sentence types such as “Wow, this is fun for me!” I perform Google searches for various such sentence types which include all sorts of initial interjections and all sorts of POPTs. My predictions are consistently born out. The results below will all be from English. It is true that relying on English results is problematic, mainly because so many nonnative speakers use the internet. However, first it should be noted that the results to be presented are so robust that the test seems to be efficient even for English. Secondly, the same robust contrasts have been duplicated in Hebrew too, a
language which is used on the internet virtually only by native speakers. I again invite the reader to apply these tests to any language you are able to.

To start, an exact Google search for the sentence type “It’s fun for me” yields 1,030,000 results. But when we add the initial interjection damn as in “Damn, it’s fun for me” the results plummet to 7. By contrast, the sentence type “Damn, it’s fun”, without the experiencer argument, yields 853,000 results. Even more, “Wow, it’s fun” yields 3,000,000 results, whereas “Wow, it’s fun for me!” a mere 8.

I have yet to note how many results are given to just “It’s fun”, and that is 28,000,000. This means that about 14% (close to 4,000,000) of the occurrences of “It’s fun” are actually initiated by either wow or damn. This, while less than 0.1% – merely 15 out of the 1,030,000 occurrences of “It’s fun for me” start with wow or damn. Additional Google results are presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>That was interesting for me</th>
<th>That was interesting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wow, that was interesting</td>
<td>Wow, that was interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for me</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6,830,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>That hurt me</th>
<th>That hurt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,980,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God damn that hurt me</td>
<td>God damn that hurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh fuck that hurt me</td>
<td>Oh fuck that hurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is tasty to me</td>
<td>It is tasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,900</td>
<td>4,620,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man it is tasty to me</td>
<td>Man it is tasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>112,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wow it is tasty to me</td>
<td>Wow it is tasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yum it is tasty to me</td>
<td>Yum it is tasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mmm it is tasty to me</td>
<td>Mmm it is tasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>6,670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important not to get confused and think that sentence-types such as “this is fun” or “it hurt” are inherently expressive. They are not. Sentence-types are never expressive, speakers are. Sentence-types which lack an overt experiencer argument are better suited for being used expressively, precisely because they lack that argument; the predicate being subjective, this argument is invariably otiose when displaying.

We have already seen in the doctor’s example before how “It hurts” can be used to report. The reason “It hurts” is an appropriate sentence-type to choose in that context is because it is obvious that the patient, in response to the doctor’s explicit request, is reporting on her own state of pain, and so there too, although reporting, it is otiose to use the sentence-type “it hurts me”. Whenever the experiencer argument is syntactically optional then, if it is perfectly obvious who it denotes, and if making it overt serves no other end, then speakers are predicted to leave the argument covert.

Now we can also understand what happens to expletives in embedded contexts. Since in embedded contexts the speaker is reporting on what someone else has said, then clearly the speaker is not then using the expletive expressively, i.e. to display her own attitude. The interpretation of the experiencer argument follows here straightforwardly from appreciating what speech act is being performed.

The same rational from “Austin’s Thesis” guides the use of POPTs and expletives in many other speech acts as well. We have seen in part I that when convincing, one is naturally understood to mean what the addressee will find fun or tasty, and so making that overt is again otiose. That explains why the Google results for “Come on, it’ll be fun” are much higher than “Come on, it’ll be fun for you”.

Similarly, when one is understood to be performing an act of warning, then it should be quite obvious that the addressee is being warned, for that is what warning is about; and so again we should expect then to find the experiencer argument covert. Indeed a Google search Nadav Sabar, nsabar@gc.cuny.edu
yields, for example, 396,000 hits for “Watch out! It’s dangerous” and also 595,000 more for “Look out! It’s dangerous”, but then it yields zero results for either “Watch out/look out! It’s dangerous for you”. “It’s dangerous” alone has 3,000,000 results and so close to one third of these start with “watch out/look out”. “It’s dangerous for you” alone has 120,000 results, 0% of which start out with “watch out/look out”.

We go back now to the initial problem raised with respect to POPTs: ‘faultless disagreement’. In dialogue (1) if we take each speaker to be expressing his or her own subjective attitude toward kissing, then in that case no contradiction arises for no proposition is even involved; the expressive speech act is not propositional. Now the use of “No” can be analyzed as the performing of an expressive speech act just as well. Suppose your sports team scores and you shout ‘YES!!’ while your disappointed friend shouts ‘NO!!’ Is this a contradiction? The situation in (1) is quite parallel; each speaker is expressing his/her subjective individual attitude, without any contradiction, or indeed a truth-value, being involved. Marge might simply be expressing the opposite attitude from that expressed by Homer; thus the analysis here allows preserving all contradictions as contradictions of substance, as has been assumed since Aristotle.

The critique might argue here that while the analysis presented accounts for “yes” and “no”, it still fails to explain how it is that Marge may respond to Homer with “You’re wrong” or “That is not true”. These responses seem to make it obvious that a contradiction is actually taking place and that propositional content is involved, not expressing. To this I respond, first one should realize that the words “true” and “false” are hardly reserved by speakers solely for propositional content. A good example comes from the movie “The Life Aquatic”: in one scene the wife of the main character, Steve, decides to leave him and finally says: “Goodbye Steve”, to which Steve replies: “Even if it’s true, don’t say it”. Do we want to argue that the wife’s “goodbye” was propositional? That seems rather absurd.

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Second, I argue that the burden of proof is on the analyst who claims that “That’s not true” or “You’re wrong” are indeed readily used responses to “This is fun” or “This is tasty”. A Google search verifies my intuitions that such responses are actually quite unlikely. I have searched for exact strings comparing cases where there’s evidence for either agreement or disagreement among interlocutors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You’re right, it’s fun to: 1,840,000</th>
<th>You’re wrong, it’s fun to: 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You’re right, it isn’t fun to: 5,160</td>
<td>You’re wrong, it isn’t fun to: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s true, it’s fun to: 260,000</td>
<td>That’s not true, it’s fun to: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That’s false, it’s fun to: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You’re right, it’s tasty → 15,200</th>
<th>You’re wrong, it’s tasty → 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You’re right, it’s interesting → 2,460,000</td>
<td>You’re wrong, it’s interesting → 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s true, it’s interesting → 442,000</td>
<td>That’s not true, it’s interesting → 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That’s false, it’s interesting → 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re right, it isn’t interesting → 1,600</td>
<td>You’re wrong, it isn’t interesting → 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears that by and large speakers tend not to express overt disagreement when it comes to matters of taste. These findings are really not surprising at all. Adult speakers, who have developed a theory of mind, are well aware that each person holds their own subjective attitude toward such matters as what is fun or tasty. Therefore, it makes little sense for a competent adult to blatantly protest against his/her interlocutor that they are wrong or false in having the subjective taste they have.
In this paper I argued for the merits of an instrumental approach to language, where the work of the analyst consists of explicating, on the one hand, the *structure* of expression-types, and on the other hand the *uses* to which expression-types are put. The uses and interpretation of the expression types accounted for here can really only be fully understood with reference to each one of those two aspects.

According to this framework, using language, i.e. using expression-types, is not in essence different from tool using generally. While the structure of the tool is distinct from its uses, the two are intimately related. It is not an accident that a hammer is used to put a nail in the wall or to break open a piggy bank or perhaps as a novelty, to hit someone on the head. The hammer’s structure, weight, size and shape make it a tool appropriate for just such tasks. Similarly, certain expression-types, because they have the structures they do, are deemed by rational language users to be appropriate tools for the performance of particular speech acts. POPTs and expletives, due to the subjectivity inherent in their meanings, are appropriate tools to use either to *express* one’s own subjective attitude or feeling, or to *report* on anyone’s.

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