

# Re: An argument against modus ponens

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- *From:* John Jones <[jonescardiff@xxxxxxx](mailto:jonescardiff@xxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Sun, 21 Sep 2008 13:52:45 +0100
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george wrote:

On Sep 19, 11:01 pm, John Jones <[jonescardiff@xxxxxxx](mailto:jonescardiff@xxxxxxx)> wrote:

"It's raining" has a truth-value!

Ridiculous. And you know it. Logic isn't grounded in the weather forecast. Logic can't check the weather. "It's raining" has no truth value.

"John Jones is not my real name"  
has a  
truth-value! Sentences USUALLY have truth-values if they are in the  
indicative mood  
(interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences may fail to have  
truth-values,  
but those are all FROM NATURAL language, AND WE ARE TALKING ABOUT  
FORMAL

Then kindly follow your own example and remember that we are talking about formal languages. Unlike our natural language conditions, formal languages do not have access to local weather forecasts.

Put another way, what exactly is this thing that can be  
different things?

Nobody ever said anything could BE different things.  
Things can only be what they are.

Thankyou. Things can only be what they are, without truth or falsehood. So you can't speak of P being false. Why? Because a false P assumes both P and R.

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WE are NOT talking about words in the natural–language sense, OR about the things those words refer to. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT \*STRINGS\*. We are talking about SYMBOLS. We are talking about FINITE LISTS OF CHARACTERS. THOSE are our atomic building–blocks around here.

Then follow your own example and remember that. Strings etc represent themselves. They don't tell us what the weather might be doing, whether 'it's raining' is false or not.

We may also be talking about natural numbers and THE TWO truth–values as atoms,

Suggestively unintelligible. Ambiguous at best.

but because these are abstract,

That's no explanation. That's a logical wound–plaster.

it is entirely allowable to REPRESENT these AS STRINGS AS WELL. The number is not (necessarily) the SAME as its numeral, and the truth–value is not the same as the symbol or string that names it, BUT THEY MIGHT AS WELL be; they are both abstract.

That is airy–fairy land. I'm surprised you've gone there. Peter Pan says that numbers are numerals when they're abstract. I suppose Captain Hook has been swallowed by the crocodile by now.

And I repeat, this simply is not a problem in the context of a formal language.

That's sad. It's sad that someone out there thinks that numerals and numbers are all alike in the far–off, auto–put–right land of mathmatico–logic.

The problem is 1 level lower when you have to somehow convey which of 16 binary boolean functions some string is supposed to "mean" or point to. But that is simply NOT A PROBLEM for MOST people; you just handwave and keep going. The fact that the argument–lists for these functions are known to

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be two–element lists of truth–values (and the result is also a truth–value) means that  
ANY number of various string–representations of them WILL DO.

So now you are saying that there are lots of true and falses. Before, you were speaking of just 'true and false'.

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