Extra credit 2
Chris Potts, Ling 130a/230a: Introduction to semantics and pragmatics, Winter 2016
Distributed Mar 3; returned Mar 8

This extra credit is optional and open to everyone in the class. Any points you get on it will be added to your total in-class exercise points for the term. In this way, it can make up for a missed exercise. To receive credit, the work needs to be returned in hard-copy in class on Mar 8. No late work will be accepted for credit (but we'll still give you feedback on it).

1 Pragmatic presuppositions [up to 1 point]

Identify one pragmatic presupposition of this sentence, in its current context, as used by Chris.

2 Apologies [up to 2 points]

Background  The comedian Demetri Martin tells the following joke: “Saying ‘I’m sorry’ is the same as saying ‘I apologize’. Except at a funeral.” I take this to be suggesting a broader generalization: in every situation in which saying “I apologize” is appropriate, saying “I'm sorry” is appropriate as well (but not the reverse, with deaths you are not responsible for providing one counterexample to the reverse).

Your task  Either identify a situation in which “I apologize” is appropriate but “I’m sorry” is not (which would challenge the above generalization), or else (if you think the generalization is correct) sketch an account (1–2 sentences) of what extra information is conveyed by “I apologize” beyond what is also conveyed by “I’m sorry”.

The final question is on the other side of the page!
3 Framing

Political framing is the task of choosing language to describe people and policies in a way that favors one’s position. Arguably the most famous example in the U.S. is the “pro-life” vs. “pro-choice” characterization of debates about abortion. These terms use the positive frames of life and choice to highlight different aspects of the issue. Here are a few other examples:

- drilling for oil vs. exploring for energy
- Democrat Party vs. Democratic Party
- war on drugs vs. drug epidemic
- inheritance tax vs. death tax
- quiz vs. exercise

What’s noteworthy about these examples is how many of them turn on the presuppositions of the lexical items involved. For instance, war on X presupposes that X is something we can enter into combat with, whereas X epidemic presupposes that X is something we can seek to treat medically. Similarly, inheritance presupposes wealth, whereas death presupposes loss. And whereas quiz presupposes evaluation, exercise presupposes improvement via work (I hope).

The linguist George Lakoff has offered three basic tenets of political framing:

i. Every word has a frame.
ii. Negating a frame evokes that frame.
iii. Evoking a frame reenforces that frame.

In light of this role for lexical presuppositions, which of these tenets follows from our theory of presuppositions, and why? (3–5 sentences.)