

Alfred Tarski found his own solution to the problems of the correspondence theory. Alfred Tarski's theory of truth has two components. First, he defines a true statement as a statement that corresponds to reality. This is only a definition of "true statement" and not of "truth" in general. Of course, if one lists all true statements, one gets a definition of truth: truth is "snow is white" and "my name is Piero" and "the Earth is not the center of the universe" and "France won the 1998 world cup" and "...". But this is neither elegant nor practical (most languages have an infinite number of true statements). The second component to Tarski's theory is the idea that truth can only be defined relative to another language. Most languages include the word "true", but that leads to paradoxes like "I am lying" which is both true and false at the same time. The problem is simply that "true" is a word of the language and we are applying it to a statement of the language. Tarski realized that one can't define truth in a language through the language itself and avoid contradictions. So he defined only "truth in a language". One must use a "meta-language" to define truth in the "object language". Truth in the object language can then be defined recursively from the truth of elementary statements (the "sentential functions"). "For all sentences s in language L , s is true if and only if $T(s)$ is true", where $T(s)$ is a formula containing s and L 's primitives. Alfred Tarski's theory of truth does not work well with ordinary languages, although it works wonders with the formal languages of mathematical logic. The problem with Tarski's theory is that it is not clear what he defined. He did not define truth, but "truth in a language". By this, it is not clear if he indirectly acknowledged that the nature of truth is impossible or even pointless. A secondary problem is that his theory does not distinguish the linguistic theory from the metaphysical theory: explaining the word "true" is a linguistic matter, whereas explaining the nature of truth is a metaphysical matter. Tarski's theory is about the linguistic feature, and does not seem to even address the metaphysical question.

Tarski's work on truth³⁵ represents a watershed **in** the understanding of what it means to say that a statement is true **in** formalized languages.³⁶ As is well-known, **Tarski** held a semantic conception of truth—based on the concept of satisfiability—aiming at capturing the Aristotelian intuition that:³⁷

The truth of a sentence consists **in** its agreement with (or correspondence to) reality.

For **Tarski** a definition of truth that captures such an intuition must *imply* all the equivalences of the kind:³⁸

- 1) 'The cat is on the mat' is true if and only if the cat is on the mat.