



**HAL**  
open science

# What Is Said, Linguistic Meaning and Directly Referential Expressions

Isidora Stojanovic

► **To cite this version:**

Isidora Stojanovic. What Is Said, Linguistic Meaning and Directly Referential Expressions. 2005.  
ijn\_00000624v1

**HAL Id: ijn\_00000624**

**[https://hal.science/ijn\\_00000624v1](https://hal.science/ijn_00000624v1)**

Preprint submitted on 5 Oct 2005 (v1), last revised 8 Mar 2006 (v2)

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# What Is Said, Linguistic Meaning, and Directly Referential Expressions

Isidora Stojanovic

CNRS/Institut Jean-Nicod, 1bis av Lowendal, 75007 Paris, France, and  
Stanford University, Dept. of Philosophy, Stanford, CA 94305-2155, USA  
isidora@stanford.edu

**Abstract.** Philosophers of language distinguish among the *lexical* or *linguistic meaning* of the sentence uttered, *what is said* by an utterance of the sentence, and *speaker's meaning*, or *what is conveyed* by the speaker to her audience. In most views, *what is said* is the *semantic* or *truth-conditional* content of the utterance, and is irreducible either to the linguistic meaning or to the speaker's meaning. I will show that those views account badly for people's intuitions on what is said. It will also argue that no distinguished level of what is said is required, and that the notion of linguistic meaning is the best placed to play the role of what is said. This relies on two points. First, our intuitions on what is said cannot be detached from the ways in which we talk about what is said, and from the semantics of speech reports and indirect discourse in general. Second, beside what is said, there is an equally important notion of what what-is-said is said about, or that about which the speaker is talking. These are, then, the three main ingredients needed for the theory of what is said: linguistic meaning, what is talked about, and a semantic account of reported speech.

## 1 The Received Wisdom about What Is Said, What Is Conveyed, and Linguistic Meaning

In everyday life, we say things, and the things we say may change our lives, affect our relationships and careers, and one may even go to jail because of what one has said. There is no doubt that people have a certain intuitive notion of what is said, and attempts have been made to account for it. In philosophy of language, what is said (by someone who utters a meaningful string of sounds) is normally identified with the truth-conditional content of the utterance, that is, some set of conditions such that the utterance is true if and only if those conditions obtain. Such truth conditions are most often seen as conditions on what the *world* must be like for the utterance to be true. Suppose that on 15 July 2005 at noon I am in Prof. Jones' office, and I say:

(1) It's cold in here.

To determine the truth value of my utterance, one needs to determine whether it was cold in Jones' office at noon on 15 July 2005: if it was, then (1) is true, and if it was not, then (1) is false. This is why most views take the truth-conditional content of (1)

to correspond to the set of all those worlds in which at 12 pm, 15/07/05, it is cold in Jones' office (see eg Kaplan (89), Recanati (93), Taylor (97)).

But we know from the speech-act theory that making utterances is a way of *doing* things. Consider (1) again. My interlocutor may reason that if I told her (1), that was not to *inform* her that it was cold in her office, which she already knew. Hence I must have intended to inform her of something else, like the following:

(2) I want you to close the windows.

My utterance of (1) clearly does not *say* the same thing as (2) (if I were to utter it), but in the context at stake, (1) *conveys* what (2) says. The distinction between what is said and what is conveyed, or *conversational implicature*, has been discussed a lot since Grice, and I will have little to say about it here (cf. Grice (89), Carston (02)).

Our lexical knowledge of what the words uttered mean need not always determine *what is said* by the utterance. But the move from lexical meaning to what is said is supposed to be fairly direct, requiring only knowledge of some basic parameters of the context of utterance: who is speaking, to whom, where and when, and to what they are referring. Thus in (1), the linguistic meaning of the words uttered tells you that (1) is true if it is cold *in there*, that is, where the utterance is made. To determine the truth value of (1), one needs to determine first where the utterance is made, and once this is seen to be Jones' office, we get that (1) is true if and only if it is cold in Jones' office.

*What is said* is thus normally seen as something that can be obtained in a more or less straightforward way from the linguistic meaning of the words uttered, the syntax of the sentence, and the basic contextual parameters. By contrast, *what is conveyed* heavily depends on the context and requires you to reason about the beliefs and intentions of your interlocutors, considerable general knowledge, and inference to the best explanation. For instance, my utterance of (1) may also convey the opposite of what it conveyed in our previous scenario. Suppose that 15 July is a very warm day, but Jones' office is so air-conditioned that it is freezing in there. Then by uttering (1) I could convey the following:

(3) I want you to *open* the windows.

The ways in which *what is said* and *what is conveyed* depend on the context has led to the distinction between *narrow* and *broad* context (cf. Bach). Caricaturing somewhat, the standard view may be captured with these two equations:<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The schema is compatible with two views on the role of syntax in the determination of what is said. One view holds that it is possible to assign a linguistic meaning to the entire (non-ambiguous) sentence, so that the only parameters of the narrow context are, roughly, the speaker and the spatio-temporal location of the utterance. The other view holds that linguistic meanings can only be assigned to words, but not to larger syntactic compounds. In that case, syntactic structure may be seen as provided by the narrow context (see King and Stanley (02) for discussion).

linguistic meaning + narrow context = what is said  
what is said + broad context = what is conveyed

In what follows, I will try to show that the notion of what is said supposed to fit the two equations is at best a theoretical artifact, with two major shortcomings: it fails to account for a large portion of our intuitions on what is said, and it does not extend into a fine semantic account of reported speech and locutions such as 'what he/she said'. Furthermore, the cases that I will appeal to actually appear to support this much simpler view:

linguistic meaning = what is said  
linguistic meaning + context = what is conveyed

Obviously, if such a theory can be worked out, it will be preferable to the standard theories on the grounds of parsimony and elegance, given that the latter posit a distinguished level of what is said.

## 2 Linguistic Meaning vs. What Is Said

At a first glance, one might plausibly suppose that the linguistic meaning associated with a sentence is the most obvious candidate to play the role of *what is said* by an utterance of that sentence. I want to argue that this is indeed a very plausible view. However, as already noted, this view is widely rejected nowadays. It will help, then, to start with those cases that have motivated its rejection. For simplicity, in this paper I will only consider a small fragment of English, including pronouns, ordinary proper names, some spatio-temporal adverbs, and definite descriptions, without considering the problems raised specifically by these.

### 2.1 Different Meanings, Same Things Said

The first motivation for a distinguished level of what is said comes from utterances whose speakers intuitively say the same thing, even though the sentences that they use do not have the same linguistic meaning. Suppose that I say:

(4) I have been injured.

By uttering (4), I may inform you that I have been injured. Now, suppose that you want to inform someone else, say Sonia, of this. You cannot use the same sentence that I used, because then you would inform her that you, not I, have been injured. I can sure refer to myself using the first person pronoun, but you need to find another way of referring to me. For instance, you might say:

(5) Isidora have been injured.

Or, if your conversation with Sonia already happens to be about me, you might just say:

(6) She has been injured.

The sentences uttered in (4), (5) and (6) have different meanings, given that different linguistic conventions are associated with 'I', 'she' and proper names. The 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun is used for the speaker, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun, for some salient female, and the name, for a bearer of that name. Still, it has been held that what you say in (5) or (6) and what I say in (4) is one and the same thing – something like the proposition true in those and only those worlds in which I, Isidora, have been injured before the time of my utterance. This intuition goes back at least to Frege, who wrote: “It is not necessary that the person who feels cold should himself give utterance to the thought that he feels cold. Another person can do this by using a name to designate the one who feels cold” (p. 236).<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2 Same Meanings, Different Things Said

The second motivation for the standard view is the idea that you can use one and the same non-ambiguous sentence to express different things, provided that you use it in different contexts. This insight, too, goes back to Frege: “The sentence ‘I am cold’ expresses a different thought in the mouth of one person from what it expresses in the mouth of another” (*ibid*), and is explicitly tied to the notion of what is said by Kaplan: “What is said in using a given indexical in different contexts may be different. Thus if I say, today, “I was insulted yesterday,” and you utter the same words tomorrow, what is said is different [...] There are possible circumstances in which what I said would be true but what you said would be false. Thus we say different things” (89, p. 500).

Since Kaplan, philosophers virtually take it for granted that once we have directly referential expressions in the language, such as demonstratives, indexicals and proper names, linguistic meaning differs from what is said in two respects: (1) there is something in what is said that is not in the linguistic meaning, namely, the reference of the directly referential expression; (2) there is something in the linguistic meaning that is not in what is said, namely, the descriptive, lexically encoded conditions that help you identify the reference, such as being the speaker for the indexical 'I', or being called 'David' for the name 'David'.<sup>3</sup> As Recanati puts it, “the property of being

<sup>2</sup> A *thought* in Frege’s terminology can, here at least, be thought of as *what is said*, as the phrase is used in the more recent literature. To be sure, there is controversy as to what was Frege’s theory of indexicals (assuming that he had any), but this is irrelevant to the present discussion.

<sup>3</sup> This sort of descriptive meaning is the one that Kaplan calls 'character'. For proper names, there is considerably less agreement that they have any kind of linguistic meaning. Kaplan himself, for instance, holds that the character of a proper name is the same as the content of a proper name, which in turn is just the referent of a proper name – for instance, the character of the name 'David Kaplan' would be David Kaplan himself. (Or, in his formal system, it would

the addressee is not a constituent of the proposition expressed [by utterances containing 'you']: it is used only to help the hearer identify the reference, which is a constituent of the proposition expressed.” (93, p. 39)

## 2.3 The Landscape Today

It is interesting that almost everyone today accepts this twofold difference between linguistic meaning and what is said. Almost everyone holds that, on the one hand, the referent of any directly referential expression is a constituent of what is said without being a constituent of the linguistic meaning, and, on the other, the descriptions associated with directly referential expressions are part of the linguistic meaning without reaching into what is said. This approach to directly referential expressions, their linguistic meaning and their contribution to what is said is so entrenched in the contemporary philosophy of language that it is sometimes the only thing agreed upon by authors whose views on what is said are otherwise radically different. It is beyond the scope of this paper to try to depict the theoretical landscape in any thorough or systematic way. Let us simply take a few glances at this landscape, so as to be aware of the variety of approaches to what is said defended today.

### 2.3.1. The main camp

The view that has emerged from Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* and Kaplan's *Demonstratives* is the most widely adopted view, whose adherents include people like Braun, Crimmins, Reimer, Salmon, Soames, Stanley, Taylor, and many, many others. Of course, there are lots of subtle differences and points of disagreement among these authors, but all of them draw a sharp distinction between linguistic meaning and what is said. This mainstream view also takes what is said to be propositions, traditionally conceived; which is to say, *eternal* propositions, whose truth values depend on what the world is like, but do not vary with other things, such as times or places or individuals.<sup>4</sup> It also holds that in the case of "pure" indexicals, such as the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun and adverbs 'here', 'now', 'today' and the alike, the linguistic meaning itself is sufficiently determinate to fix the reference, and hence determine what is said by the utterance. For example, the linguistic meaning of 'I' tells you that its referent is the

---

be a constant function from contexts to individuals, whose value is always Kaplan himself.) This view has some unwelcome consequences – for example, it is committed to the claim that there are as many names 'David' as there are Davids, and it cannot handle some important semantic data involving names – for argument and discussion, see Geurts (97). In this paper, I am simply assuming the so-called *metalinguistic* view, which takes the linguistic meaning of a proper name to be the condition of being called by or a bearer of that name.

<sup>4</sup> The main camp is divided between those who conceive of propositions as structured entities and those who model propositions by sets of possible worlds. It should be noted, too, that in his formal system, Kaplan models contents as functions that map pairs consisting of a possible world and a time to truth values, which is to say that such contents can and normally do take different truth values at different times. However, Kaplan's informal understanding of what is said remains tied to the traditional notion of proposition, that is, something that, if true, is true once and for all, and if false, is similarly false once and for all.

speaker, and since there is always a unique speaker in any given context, the move from the linguistic meaning to what is said does not leave room for any "pragmatic intrusion." But this view also accepts that in certain cases, the linguistic meaning is too poor to determine what is said. Demonstrative pronouns are the case as point: the linguistic meaning of 'he', which amounts to something like 'salient male individual', only constrains the referent of 'he', but in order to determine the actual referent, who will then go into what is said, one must take into account certain pragmatic facts about the utterance, such as which individual was jointly attended to by the speaker and her audience in the context of utterance. Nevertheless, this does not count as pragmatic intrusion, since the appeal to pragmatics is triggered by something from the sentence itself, namely the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun.<sup>5</sup> The mainstream view also acknowledges that there need not always be an overt, phonetically articulated element in the sentence to trigger the pragmatic resolution of an element that will go into what is said. Consider:

(7) Every bottle is empty.

If Sonia utters (7) at a party, she likely means to be saying that every bottle *at that party* is empty. In most views, the intended domain of quantification is taken to be part of what is said. For instance, what is said by (7) would be the proposition true in those and only those worlds in which every bottle at the party is empty (at that world, at the time of utterance). In the context described, we take (7) to be false if some bottle at the party is not empty, but we do not take (7) to be false just because, trivially, there are bottles in the universe that are not empty. If people's intuitions on truth values are to be taken seriously, as contemporary semantics does, and if what is said is conceived of as being a proposition, which varies in truth value along the possible world dimension, but not along other dimensions such as time or location or the domain of quantification, then it is easy to understand why the domain of quantification, or other parameters that similarly affect the truth value, have been seen as elements of what is said.

The main camp view also holds that for any element that reaches into what is said, there must be some element in the syntax of the sentence uttered, whose semantic interpretation may trigger a pragmatic process, such as those involved in interpreting demonstratives, that will help determine what is said. As Stanley writes: "All effects of extra-linguistic context are traceable to elements in the actual syntactic structure of the sentence uttered" (00, p. 391). The pragmatic processes that bridge the gap between linguistic meaning and what is said are thus always semantically driven.

---

<sup>5</sup> Bach takes this appeal to pragmatics to be evidence that demonstrative reference is not part of semantic content. This is an important point on which Bach departs from the main camp.

### 2.3.2. Contextualism.

It is on this very last point that contextualism departs from the main camp.<sup>6</sup> Contextualists hold that the linguistic meaning, to the extent that the notion makes sense at all, only loosely constrains what is said. Various pragmatic processes may be needed to determine what is said, without being triggered by any syntactic or semantic property of any element in the sentence uttered. Consider for example:

(8) Jones took out her key and opened the door.

A contextualist wants to say that part of what is said in (8), in the situation imagined, is that Jones took the key *out of her purse* and that she opened the door *with that key*. But there does not seem to be any element in the sentence uttered that invites the interpreter to identify Jones' purse as that out of which she took her key, and there is nothing that stands for how she opened the door (*viz.* with the key). Rather, it is the conversational context itself that makes it part of what is said in (8) that she took the key out of her purse and used it to open the door.

It is worth noting that on the issue of what it is that directly referential expressions such as names or pronouns contribute to what is said, contextualists are pretty much in agreement with the main camp in that they hold that it is the expression's referent, and nothing but the referent, that reaches into what is said.

It is sometimes believed that contextualism tries to get rid of linguistic meanings all together. But without being clear on what we understand by linguistic meanings, this claim is hard to evaluate. Contextualists certainly want to say that the sentence itself does not express anything merely in virtue of its lexical meaning; that is, anything that can be evaluated for truth or falsity relative to a possible world.<sup>7</sup> However, contextualists do not deny that words have meanings, albeit very flexible and often underdeterminate, tied to the notion of speakers' lexical knowledge. They also talk of the semantic potential even of complex expressions, and what has been

---

<sup>6</sup> A remark about the labels is in order. What I have described as the view of the main camp is already qualified, say, by Cappelen and Lepore (05), as *moderate contextualism*. Recanati (04) proposes a somewhat different taxonomy. He reserves the label 'contextualism' for those views that allow optional pragmatic processes, not triggered by anything in the sentence uttered, to enter into the determination of what is said. Recanati's further distinction between *moderate* and *radical* contextualism turns upon the question of whether the notion of the *minimal* proposition expressed, determined by the syntactic and semantic properties of the sentence uttered, makes any sense. (On Recanati's understanding of contextualism, the two views hold that the minimal proposition, if there is such a thing, does not play a role in determining what is said.) I adopt Recanati's taxonomy, but I will not bother to draw this further distinction between moderate and radical contextualism.

<sup>7</sup> Of course, if we take it that the relevant parameters of evaluation are not possible worlds, but rather contexts, or situations, then it is no longer clear that the contextualist would want to deny that the sentence *qua* sentence expresses anything; only, that thing is very different from what people think are the things that get expressed, which is, propositions. It is something that gives you a proposition and is susceptible of having a truth value only relative to some context of utterance, as broad as you like. Similar remarks on the issue of how radically contextualism departs from the traditional semantics may be found, for instance, in Predelli (05).



understood here by the linguistic meaning of a sentence need not be anything more specific or proposition-like than such semantic potentials.

### 2.3.3. Minimalism

At the other extreme we find semantic minimalism, defended, for instance, by Cappelen and Lepore (05). Although they see themselves as "minimalists", Cappelen, Lepore and those sympathetic to their view also hold, when it comes to directly referential expressions, that the semantic content is richer than the linguistic meaning, given that it includes the contextually specified referents of those expressions, though not their characters. On this score, there is no significant divergence among all these views believed to be radically opposed.

I should stress, though, that Cappelen and Lepore have a rather elaborate view on what is said. While they hold that the semantic content associated with an utterance is a proposition determined by the linguistic meaning of the sentence and only the most basic pragmatic factors, such as who is speaking, where and when, they abstain from identifying semantic contents with what is said. In their view, there are indefinitely many things "said" by any given utterance, because there can be indefinitely many possible reports of what has been said by the utterance (or by its speaker). It would take me too far to discuss their view in greater detail here. Suffice it to say that they question, as I will, the claim that people have *direct* intuitions on what is said. But they also deny that we have *any* semantic intuitions at all. They deny that intuitions on the truth *value* of a given sentence in a given context have any theoretical significance. It seems to me, however, that Cappelen and Lepore have, so to speak, thrown the baby with the water. I can see why they would want to deny that we have direct intuitions on what is said. It may be that our intuitions on what is said are very much tailored by how we *report* what someone has said. But from there to reject the significance of people's intuitions on truth values amounts to denying one of the main working hypotheses of contemporary semantics. Testing intuitions on truth value is one of the main tools of any semantic theory, and it is unclear which other tool might replace it. It is also quite mysterious how the methodology adopted by Cappelen and Lepore is supposed to work. They use several criteria in deciding whether two given utterances have the same semantic content, all of which heavily rely on the issue of whether it is correct or not to report those utterances as saying the same thing. But what can it be that, in their account, grounds the correctness of such reports? If they were to say, as I would, that we have intuitions on the truth *value* of a given sentence as uttered in a given context, and thereby on the truth value of a given report as made in a given context, then it would make sense to appeal to such reports in theorizing about the semantic content of the reported utterance. As it stands, though, their "minimalist" account lacks a starting point for the entire machinery to take off.

It goes without saying that I have depicted the landscape in very rough lines. Accounts such as Perry's, Stalnaker's, or Bach's, can hardly be assimilated to any of these camps. In Perry's view, "an utterance has as wide a variety of contents as we may find useful to isolate, for particular purposes of description and explanation. We can say that in at least the vast majority of cases, the common sense concept of "what is said" corresponds to content<sub>c</sub> [ie, usual propositional content]. This is a good

reason for an account of content to recognize this concept, but not a good reason to expect it to be the only or even the most theoretically fruitful kind of content” (97, p. 17). Perry's "reflexive-referential" theory goes with the main stream so far as the notion of what is said is concerned, but it is more flexible and therefore works better than the traditional theories.<sup>8</sup> Stalnaker, too, takes what is said to be the usual propositional content, although his framework has more flexibility than the Kaplanian accounts, and is therefore better equipped to deal with certain problematic cases. This being said, let me repeat that all these views largely agree on the issue of what it is that directly referential expressions contribute to what is said, in that they hold that they contribute their reference, and nothing but their reference.

### 3 Problems

I will now go through a series of problems for the standard theories of what is said, only some of which have been raised or discussed in the literature.

#### 3.1. Time-Neutral and Location-Neutral What Is Said

It is widely held that in simple sentences, the present tense works like a referential expression (cf. Partee (73)). It picks out a specific time, normally the time of the utterance, and brings it into the semantic content and into what is said by the utterance. The problem is that if what is said is thus tied to a specific time, there will be many cases in which people have the intuition that the same thing has been said, and will easily report what has been said as being the same, even though the contents of the reported utterances do not coincide on the time picked out by the present tense. To see the point, it is enough to reconsider one of our previous examples:

- (9) She has been injured. (Sonia talking of Jones, on Monday)
- (10) Jones has been injured. (Miles talking to Dorsky, on Tuesday).
- (11) That's what Sonia said that, too. (Dorsky's reply)

The report in (11) is intuitively true.<sup>9</sup> We easily take Sonia and Miles to have said the same thing, even though their utterances are made at different times and therefore

---

<sup>8</sup> In my (03), I show how Perry's theory can handle certain cases that Kaplan's theory cannot, but I also show that Perry's account, as it stands, is too flexible, and needs to be amended in order not to predict that two given utterances express the same content when, intuitively, they do not.

<sup>9</sup> A note about the methodology adopted in this paper. The intuitions have been gathered from three native English speakers, and three native French speakers for analogous cases in French. Of course, we can only speculate that if tested more broadly and in a better controlled way, the intuitive judgments of truth and falsity of these reports will still be the same.

have different contents, namely, that Jones is injured prior to  $t_1$ , the time of Sonia's utterance, vs. that she is injured prior to  $t_2$ , the time of Miles' utterance.

Note that not only the contents, but the linguistic meanings of the sentences uttered are different, too. The meaning of the proper name tells you to pick out a bearer of that name, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun 'she' tells you to pick out a salient female. The intuition that Jones and Miles say the same thing cannot, then, be explained by their having uttered the same sentence, since they have not.

Some might think that the reason why we can so easily report Sonia and Miles as having said the same thing is this. It is a fact that if some event  $e$  has happened prior to time  $t_1$ , and if  $t_1$  is before  $t_2$ , then event  $e$  has happened prior to time  $t_2$ . It follows that the truth of Jones' utterance entails the truth of Miles' utterance. In section 3.3., we will see more cases that suggest that when the truth of  $u_1$  entails the truth of  $u_2$ , we tend to report what is said by  $u_2$  as having been already said by  $u_1$ .

However, there are many cases in which intuitively, we say the same thing, even if the temporally specified contents of our utterances are not the same. Consider Jones in London, on 15 July 2005, saying:

(12) It is cold and windy.

Suppose now that three days later, Miles says in San Francisco:

(13) It is cold and windy.

There is clearly a sense in which Jones and Miles are saying the same thing. For, they are both saying that it is cold and windy. While saying the same thing, namely, that it is cold and windy, Jones is talking of London on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, and Miles is talking of San Francisco on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July, which is why their utterances need not have the same truth value. Still, this difference in truth value does not mean that what is said is different (or at least, there is no obvious reason why it should). Note, though, that when we say the same thing in the sense in which (12) and (13) say the same thing, but are also talking of the same thing, our utterances will have the same truth value.

The standard theories assign different contents to (12) and (13). (12) is taken to express the proposition that it is cold and windy in London on 15 July 2005, and (13), the proposition that it is cold and windy in San Francisco on 20 July 2005. What these theories need here are time-neutral and location-neutral contents, ie contents that are functions not only of possible worlds, but also of times and places.<sup>10</sup> But time-neutral contents have not always been welcomed (cf. Evans (79)), so some might try to avoid introducing them. To account for the intuition that Jones and Miles are saying the same thing, namely that it is cold and windy, defenders of propositional contents might point out that Jones and Miles are using the same sentence, albeit to express different propositions. And perhaps we report what is said as being the same simply because the sentences uttered are the same.

---

<sup>10</sup> In his formal system, Kaplan does use contents that are functions of times, even though his intuitive notion of content *qua* what is said is that of a time-specific content.

Though this account might work fine for (12)-(13), it fails to generalize. Suppose that on Wednesday 20 July, Jones, Miles and Dorsky are together in San Francisco, and it is incredibly cold and windy. The next day in Stanford, Jones says to Miles:

(14) It is cold and windy, though less than yesterday in the city.<sup>11</sup>

Next, suppose that on Saturday, 23 July, in London, Dorsky says to Miles:

(15) It is cold and windy, though less than Wednesday in San Francisco.

Miles might then reply to Dorsky, based on the conversation that he had with Jones:

(16) Jones said that, too.

The intuitions here are that Miles' reply is just fine, he is not saying anything false. There is certainly a sense in which Jones and Dorsky are saying the same thing, for they are both saying that it is cold and windy, but less than in San Francisco on 20 July 2005. And this might account for the intuition that (16) is true, when properly disambiguated.

Once we accept that there is a sense in which what is said by (14) is the same as what is said by (15), and once we start looking for a semantics of speech reports on which Miles' report in (16) comes out true (on one of its readings), we can no longer stick with the traditional view. For, the propositions expressed by (14) and (15) are different, the one being that Stanford on July 21 is less cold and windy than San Francisco on July 20, the other being that London on July 23 is less cold and windy than San Francisco on July 20. However, in contrast with the case of (12) and (13), the sentences used by Jones and Dorsky have different linguistic meanings. In (14), 'yesterday in the city' bids you to look for a salient city and a day before the day of an utterance of 'yesterday'. In (15), 'Wednesday in San Francisco' bids you to look for a salient Wednesday and a place that bears the name 'San Francisco'. If, for instance, Dorsky were to use the same sentence as Jones, his utterance would be true if on July 23, in London, it was less cold and windy than on *July 22*, presumably again *in London*.

In sum, the standard account of what is said faces a challenge when presented with utterances that do not concern the same spatio-temporal locations, nor are utterances of the same sentence, and yet, people have no problem hearing them and reporting them as saying the same thing.

### 3.2. Same Meanings, Same Things Said

Let us go back to the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun 'I'. Suppose that Jones says:

(17) I have been injured.

---

<sup>11</sup> A remark on the geographical setting of the example: in Stanford, and generally in the Bay Area, 'the city' is normally used to refer to San Francisco.

Next, suppose that, possibly at a different time, Dorsky says:

(18) I have been injured.

Despite Frege's intuition that Jones and Dorsky will express different *thoughts*, and despite Kaplan's echoing claim that different people using the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun *say different things*, people have equally strong intuitions that, in an important sense, what Jones says in (17) is the same as what Dorsky says in (18). They each say that they have been injured.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, consider Miles who, having heard Jones in (17), now replies to Dorsky in (18):

(19) Jones said that, too.

To be sure, as it stands, (19) is ambiguous between Jones' having said that Dorsky had been injured and Jones' having said that she herself had been injured. But if Jones has never heard of Dorsky, and if this is common knowledge in the context of (19), the report that *Jones said that, too* will be taken to mean that Jones said that she herself had been injured; and, given (17), this report intuitively comes out true.

Here is more evidence from speech reports that suggests that (17) and (18) say the same thing:

(20) Jones said that she had been injured, and so did Dorsky.

(21) Jones said that she had been injured, and Dorsky said that, too.

(20) is ambiguous between a "sloppy" and a "strict" reading, and so is (21).<sup>13</sup> Either Dorsky said that he himself had been injured, or he said that Jones had been injured. But the mere availability of the sloppy reading is enough to pose a problem for the standard theories. For, the propositional contents of (17) and (18) are different and cannot play the role of what is said, if this is to be judged and reported as being the same.

The standard response to this sort of cases has been to point out that the sentences used by Jones and Dorsky are the same, and then suggest that when people use the same sentence or utter the same words, it is usually o-key to report them as having said the same thing, even though, strictly speaking, they said different things, since they expressed different propositions. In sections 3.4. and 3.5., I will show that this response is unsatisfactory, because it fails to generalize.

---

<sup>12</sup> As Feldman wrote: "We can say that what I assert by uttering 'I was insulted yesterday' is something that can be true for, or relative to, one person at one time, while being false relative to some other person at the same or some other time. So you and I assert the same thing by uttering 'I was insulted yesterday' and this thing may be true for me when I assert it and false for you when you assert it." (80, p. 79)

<sup>13</sup> The sloppy/strict distinction has been much discussed in the linguistic literature on ellipsis and anaphora. See eg Lasnik (89), Lappin (97), Buring (03).

### 3.3. Same Implications, Same Things Said

It is because of examples like these that some philosophers started to doubt that the notion of what is said had any determinate and precise sense. Lewis wrote: “Unless we give it some special technical meaning, the locution ‘what is said’ is very far from univocal. It can mean the propositional content, in Stalnaker's sense (horizontal or diagonal). It can mean the exact words. I suspect that it can mean almost anything in between” (81, p. 97).<sup>14</sup>

Ziff (72) offers other examples that similarly show how versatile the notion of what is said can be. Here is an example inspired by one of Ziff's. Suppose that Jones and Dorsky went to a certain party, to which Miles could not go. Miles now wants to know how the party went. He asks Jones, and she says:

(22) I should have stayed home and watched television.

Later, Miles asks Dorsky, who says:

(23) It was the lousiest party I've ever been to in my whole life.

Miles might well reply:

(24) Jones said that, too.

Or, talking yet to someone else who did not go to the party, Miles might report:

(25) You didn't miss much. Both Jones and Dorsky said that the party was boring.

Although the intuitions are not very robust in the case of (22) and (23), it is still true that in everyday life, we make reports of this sort. It is not unusual to report two people as having said the same thing when their utterances have some implication in common, and that implication is relevant in the context of the report. Thus, while Jones does not literally say in (22) that the party was boring, what she does say, viz. that she should have stayed at home and watched TV, *implies*, given some contextual background, that the party was boring. And similarly for (23).

Here is another example in which the fact that one utterance entails another makes it possible to report them as saying the same thing. Suppose that Prof. Jones says to her class:

(26) Everyone should go to Prof. Dorsky's lecture tomorrow night.

The next day, someone tells Sonia, one of Jones' students:

(27) You should go to the lecture tonight.

---

<sup>14</sup> Stalnaker's horizontal propositional content is a proposition in the usual sense, eg for (17), that Jones has been injured prior to  $t$ , where  $t$  is the time of her utterance of (17), while the diagonal content corresponds to the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered.

Sonia might reply:

(28) Yeah, Professor Jones said that, too.

Now, Jones in (26) did not say anything explicitly about Sonia. She said something more general, namely, that everyone should go to the lecture. This entails that Sonia, too, should go to the lecture, and that is what makes us feel that what is said in (27) has already been said in (26). Note, though, that if you exchange the sentences uttered in (26) and (27), the report in (28) will no longer sound correct.

A variety of similar cases have been noted and discussed by Cappelen and Lepore (97). In this paper, though, I do not want to press upon this kind of cases. I only want to point out certain differences between utterances that we report as saying the same thing because they have some implication in common and the other cases discussed in this paper. In those other cases, there is normally no entailment or implication shared by utterances reported as saying the same thing, such as (17) and (18). True enough, that Jones' has been injured and that Dorsky has been injured each entail that someone has been injured, but it is clearly not because of this that we report (17) and (18) as saying the same thing. For, if I say "Jones has been injured" and then you say "Dorsky has been injured," I certainly cannot correctly reply "That's what I've just said." Now, it is also true that the truth of (17) and the truth of (18) each pragmatically entail, as some might say, that *some speaker* has been injured. Although this is indeed an implication shared by (17) and (18), we are going to see that this sort of implication is probably not enough of an explanation of why we can easily report what is said as being the same.

Another difference is that in the cases considered in sections 2.1., 3.1., 3.2. and 3.4., not only is it fine to reply *That's what so-and-so said, too*, but it is generally just as fine to say, *That's exactly what so-and-so said, too*. On the other hand, if we report that the same thing has been said based on some implication shared by the two utterances, adding 'exactly' makes a huge difference, and what had been seen as a fine report will no longer sound correct.

### 3.4. Different Meanings, Different Propositions, Same Things Said

Let us take stock. We have seen that when different people say "I have been injured," there is the intuition that, at least in a sense, they are saying the same thing, for each is saying that he or she has been injured. The usual way of dealing with such cases is to point out that those people are all using the same sentence, which would then ground the intuition that they are saying the same thing – for, after all, they are uttering the same words.

In this and in the next section, I want to show that this explanation is not quite satisfactory. Although using the same sentence may partly account for the intuition that the same thing has been said, that cannot be the end of the story. Even when the propositions expressed by the two utterances are different, it is neither *necessary* nor

*sufficient* to use the same sentence in order to be saying the same thing, or for the report that the same thing has been said to come out intuitively true.

Suppose that Wednesday evening, after Dorsky's lecture on contextualism, Jones tells Miles:

(29) I enjoyed this lecture very much.

Next week, Miles sees Sonia, who was also at Dorsky's lecture. Sonia says:

(30) I very much enjoyed Prof. Dorsky's lecture last Wednesday.

Miles might correctly reply to Sonia:

(31) That's what Jones said, too.

The sentences used by Jones and Sonia are different, and their linguistic meanings are different. Had Jones used the sentence that Sonia had used, she could not have been referring to that same lecture, which was the same day as her utterance, and not the previous Wednesday. Still, there is an important sense in which Jones and Sonia are saying the same thing, for each is saying that she enjoyed a certain lecture, Dorsky's lecture on contextualism. However, the propositional contents that Kaplanian theories assign to (29) and (30) are different, the first being that Jones enjoyed that lecture, and the second, that Sonia enjoyed it, and there is no entailment relationship between those contents.

As another example, consider this dialogue between Jones and Miles:

(32) I am always in disagreement with the Chair of my department.

(33) That's what Dorsky said that, too.

Without further contextual cues, (33) is ambiguous. What is it that Dorsky said? Suppose that Jones is in the Philosophy Department, whose Chair is Prof. Phillips, while Dorsky is in the Linguistic Department, whose Chair is Prof. Lindberg. Then Dorsky might have said any of the following:

(34) Jones is always in disagreement with the Chair of her department.

(35) Jones is always in disagreement with Phillips.

(36) I am always in disagreement with the Chair of the Philosophy Department.

(37) I am always in disagreement with Phillips.

(38) I am always in disagreement with the Chair of my department.

(39) I am always in disagreement with Lindberg.

What (32) has in common with (34) and (35) is the usual propositional content. What (32) has in common with (36) and (37) is what we might call a *speaker-neutral* content. Note, though, that part of the speaker-related information in (32) has been



resolved, so to speak. The person with whom the speaker is said to be always in disagreement has been identified as Phillips, the Chair of the Philosophy Department. The speaker-neutral content that allows Miles to report Dorsky as having said the same thing as Jones is, then, *being on very good terms with Phillips*.

Finally, what (32) has in common with (38) and (39) is yet another speaker-neutral content: *being on very good terms with the chair of one's own department*. To be sure, (32) and (38) have something more in common: they are utterances of the same sentence. That is perhaps why the report in (33) sounds much better when it reports (38) rather than (39).

My main point here is that (36) and (37) can be heard and reported as saying the same thing as (32), even though their propositional contents are not the same, and the sentences uttered are not the same or synonymous either.

This example also shows that not just "anything in between" [propositional content and the words uttered] can play the role of what is said, pace what Lewis suspected. For, suppose that Dorsky says:

(40) Jones is always in disagreement with the Chair of my department.

There is no way of correctly reporting (40) as saying the same thing as (32). If Miles' reply in (33) were based on Dorsky's utterance of (40), it would be considered false. The interesting thing is that (40) and (36) or (37) are, so to speak, symmetrical. If you take the sentence uttered by Jones, viz. *I am on very good terms with the Chair of my department*, and resolve the definite description 'the Chair of my department,' or just the possessive 'my department', you obtain the sentence uttered respectively in (37) and (36). Similarly, if you take the sentence uttered by Jones, and resolve only the indexical 'I', you obtain the sentence in (40). However, (36) and (37), on the one hand, and (40) on the other, behave very differently in qualifying as saying the same thing as (32).

### 3.5. Again, Same Meanings, Different Things Said

Just as using the same sentence is not required for the same thing to be said, it is not enough either. Consider the following (minimal) pair of situations:

(i) speaker-neutral what is said

(41) I am a fool. (Jones talking to Miles)

(42) I am a fool. (Olaf talking to Miles)

(43) That's what Jones said, too. (Miles' reply to Olaf)

(ii) addressee-neutral what is said

(44) You are a fool. (Jones talking to Sonia, overheard by Miles)

(45) You are a fool. (Miles talking to Olaf)

(46) \*That's what Jones said, too. (again, Miles talking to Olaf)

There is a striking asymmetry between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun in how they behave in speech reports. Consider (43). As it stands, it is ambiguous between Jones' saying that Olaf is a fool and her saying that she herself is a fool. If it is, say, common knowledge in the context of (43) that Jones has never heard of Olaf and has no idea who he or she is, the dominant reading of (43) will be its sloppy reading, and (43) will be true in virtue of Jones' having uttered (41). However, if we try the same sort of sloppy report by simply replacing 'I' by 'you', no such report will be available. For, people have the strong intuition that (41) is not ambiguous, but downright false (assuming that Jones never said that Olaf was a fool).

The asymmetry between cases (i) and (ii) raises the following problem for the standard theories. There, propositional contents play the role of what is said. But (41) and (42) have different contents, and still, at least in a sense, they say the same thing, and, properly disambiguated, the report in (43) is intuitively true. One might think that this happens because the sentences uttered in (41) and (42) are the same. But take (44) and (45). There, too, the sentences uttered are the same, but we do not get a sloppy reading for (46). That report is not ambiguous, but false. This shows that something is missing in the account that the standard theories provide for case (i) in the first place.

Note, however, that if the reporter *explicitly* mentions the person that the reportee was talking to, then the use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun will similarly give rise to the strict/sloppy ambiguity in the report of what has been said. For, consider:

(47) That's what Jones said, too, to Sonia. (Miles talking to Olaf)

(48) That's what Jones told Sonia.

The reports in (47) and (48) are ambiguous between Jones' telling Sonia that Olaf is a fool and her telling Sonia "You are a fool." Again, if it is part of the contextual background that Jones couldn't be talking of Olaf, then the sloppy reading prevails and the reports come out true on the grounds of Jones' utterance of (44).<sup>15</sup>

The difference between the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun and 3<sup>rd</sup> person and demonstrative pronouns is probably even more striking. Consider:

(i) pronoun-reference-neutral what is said

(49) She is a fool. (Jones, referring to Sonia)

(50) She is a fool. (Olaf, referring to Mrs. Li)

(51) \*That's what Jones said, too. (Miles' reply to Olaf)

---

<sup>15</sup> In some exceptional cases, it is possible to get the strict/sloppy ambiguity with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun even if the person talked to is not explicitly mentioned. Here is one. Miles says to his wife: "You are the loveliest woman ever." She replies: "That's what every husband says in the early years of marriage." But it is likely that in cases such as this, we get the sloppy reading precisely because the strict reading is pragmatically unavailable.

(ii) demonstrative-reference-neutral what is said

- (52) These are healthy. (Jones, talking of carrots)
- (53) These are healthy. (Alex, talking of candies)
- (54) \*That's what Jones said, too. (Miles' reply to Alex)

Intuitively, neither (51) nor (54) are ambiguous. There is only one way to understand these reports, which is that Jones said that Mrs. Li was a fool, and that she said that candies were healthy. Now, if uttering the same sentence is supposed to account for certain cases in which we can correctly report that the same thing has been said, then why is it that in the other cases, such as those involving demonstrative pronouns, the prediction turns out to be wrong? Until it can provide an answer to this question, the standard theory of what is said proves to be very limited.

As a final remark, even with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person and demonstrative pronouns, we can have sloppy readings, provided that what the reportee was talking about and referring to is made explicit in the report:

- (55) That's what Jones said, too, of Sonia. (Miles' reply to Olaf)
- (56) That's what Jones said, too, for carrots. (Miles' reply to Alex)

But the fact remains that there is an interesting asymmetry between the 1<sup>st</sup> person and the other pronouns, and any good theory of what is said should try to account for it.

### 3.6. Same Propositions, Different Things Said

The last type of problematic case to be discussed here has been known well and for a long time from the literature on opacity and related phenomena. We know that substitution of co-referential expressions in *opaque* or *hyper-intensional* contexts is not always *salva veritate*, that is, it does not always seem to preserve the truth value of belief reports, and even more obviously of speech reports. Consider:

- (57) I have never been to Donostia. (Jones talking to Miles)
- (58) Jones has never been to San Sebastian. (Sonia talking to Miles)
- (59) \*That's what she said, too. (Miles' reply)
  
- (60) Jones said that she has never been to Donostia.
- (61) \*Jones said that she has never been to San Sebastian.

As it turns out, Donostia is just the Basque name for the town whose Spanish name is San Sebastian. Now, consider a scenario in which Miles but neither Jones nor Sonia know that Donostia and San Sebastian is one and the same town, and that Miles is well aware of the girls' ignorance. Suppose also that Jones has been to San Sebastian (known to her under this name only), and she has told Miles this. If asked whether

she has been to San Sebastian, Jones will reply "yes". In this scenario, the intuition is that Miles' reply in (59) is false, and that similarly, the speech report in (61) is false.

The problem for the standard theory is, then, that it makes wrong predictions. If names are directly referential, and if all that they contribute to what is said is their reference, then what is said in (57) must be the same as what is said in (58). But this conflicts with people's intuitions on what is said, as well as on the truth conditions of speech reports (whether or not a proper name occurs embedded within 'said that'.)<sup>16</sup>

## 4 Linguistic Meaning = What Is Said

Although most people interested in this topic take the distinction between linguistic meaning and what is said to be ineliminable and well-delineated, the usefulness of this distinction has been questioned in the past. We have already noted Lewis' skeptic attitude. In a somewhat more positive vein, Feldman writes: "We can say that there is only one meaning – the one which Kaplan calls 'character'. When two people utter the same indexical sentence, they assert the character of that sentence. But that character may be true relative to an index containing one person and false relative to an index containing the other" (80, p. 81).<sup>17</sup> To my knowledge, Feldman himself did not develop this proposal, and it is unclear how he would have dealt with the apparent counter-examples, such as the cases in which intuitively the same thing has been said, even though different sentences have been uttered (sections 2.1, 3.1 and 3.4), or the cases in which the same sentence has been uttered, yet the reports of the same thing having been said come out intuitively false (section 3.5). What I want to do in this last part is to show, albeit in very rough lines, how to make such a proposal work on the variety of problematic cases considered here.

### 4.1. What Is Said, What Is Talked About, and Reported Speech

To begin with, let me first list the main tenets of the proposal:

- a) what is said by a given utterance is nothing more or less than the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered;

---

<sup>16</sup> The issue of substitution failures of co-referential names in opaque contexts has given rise to a huge literature, which is why I will tackle it very superficially here. See eg Salmon (86) or Soames (02) for a defense of the referential treatment of proper names that explains away the intuitions in terms of Gricean implicatures. See eg Crimmins and Perry (89) or Recanati (03) for alternative accounts that conform to the intuitions, while still treating proper names as directly referential expressions.

<sup>17</sup> The notion of an index comes from the *Index Theory*, as in Lewis (72). An index consists of a number of parameters, such as an agent, a time, a place; roughly, all the shiftable contextual parameters relevant to interpreting a given utterance.

- b) the linguistic meaning (of a sentence) is something that can be true with respect to some things while being false with respect to some other things;
- c) when we make an assertion, we do not just assert the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered, but we assert it *of*, or *about*, something;
- d) the linguistic meanings of indexicals, proper names, and other directly referential expressions are tagged as presuppositions: (i) they scope out of the negation or other operators, and (ii) normally, it is common knowledge among the speaker and her audience which things satisfy which presuppositions;
- e) when we report what is said by some utterance as being the same (or different) as what is said by some other utterance, we presuppose it known in the context of the report what the reported utterances are respectively about.

The theory of presupposition that would work for our purposes, both in d) and e), is the "binding theory" outlined in van der Sandt (92) and developed in Geurts (99), or some version of it. Since it is meanings, not propositions, that are presupposed, and since meanings are not true or false simpliciter, but are true *of* things (times, places, objects, situations), instead of asking whether a given presupposition is satisfied in a given context, we must ask whether it is satisfied of a given thing (cf. d. (ii)).

To get a better grip on it, it will help to see how this account works on a particular example. Consider Sonia who, holding up a carrot in her hand, says to Alex:

(62) This is a great source of vitamin C.

What Sonia says or asserts in (62) is the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered, which may be very roughly put as follows:

(63) *A salient, proximal object is a great source of vitamin C.*

Since the linguistic meaning of 'this', that is, the condition of being a salient, proximal object, is lexically marked as a presupposition, it must be common knowledge in the context of (62) which objects satisfy this presupposition. And, since the carrot that Sonia holds up in her hand most obviously meets this condition, she will manage to say something *about* it, viz. that it's a great source of vitamin C. Now, the linguistic meaning of the whole sentence is something that will be true with respect to some things at some times and false with respect to the same or different things at the same or some other time. For example, (63) is true of the carrot that Sonia is holding up in her hand and of the situation in which she is uttering (62), but (63) is false of the same carrot relative to the situation in which Sonia is uttering (62) while holding up a

candy in her hand (because the carrot is no longer salient, it is no longer "a this"), and (63) is again false of the candy itself, because it is not a great source of vitamin C.

The presuppositional behavior of indexicals and names accounts for the fact that when we use a word like 'this', there is normally something that we want to talk about. But it also accounts for the fact that when we report what someone else has said, we cannot just use in our report the same sentence that this person has used. Consider:

(64) Sonia said that this was healthy.

(65) A salient, proximal object is such that Sonia said that it was healthy.

(66) \*Sonia said that there was a salient, proximal object that was healthy.

The reason why (64) cannot be taken to mean (66), but can only mean (65), is that the presupposition carried by 'this' cannot be "accommodated locally," to use a jargon expression. The description encoded in the linguistic meaning of the demonstrative will scope out of the indirect discourse operator 'said that', which means that it will want to be anchored to something in the context of the report, rather than the context in which the reported utterance was made.

Before discussing this proposal case by case, let me try to make it more clear what tenet e) amounts to. Reconsider Sonia's utterance, made in reference to the carrot, followed by a reply from Alex:

(67) This is a great source of vitamin C.

(68) Jones said that, too.

When Alex reports Jones as having said what Sonia said, the issue of what it was that Jones was talking about will be presupposed in the context of the report. Given that Alex does not explicitly mention anything as being what Jones was talking about when she said what Sonia said, it will be understood that Jones was talking of the same thing that Sonia is talking about, namely the carrot.<sup>18</sup> This is why the report will come out intuitively false, if Alex makes it on the grounds of Jones' having uttered the same sentence as Sonia did, while referring to something that was not a carrot, say, to some candy. However, as it is known from the literature (cf. Geurts (99)), presuppositions can sometimes be anchored to an explicit element of the discourse. Pretty much the same thing happens in the case of reported speech, for the question of what the reported utterance was about:

(69) This is a great source of vitamin C. – Jones said that, too, of a candy.

---

<sup>18</sup> Obviously, Jones need not have been talking about the very same carrot that Sonia has been holding up in her hand. She might have pointed out to a different carrot, or simply said "The carrot is a great source of vitamin C." Since the example involves some delicate issues about reference to kinds and deferred reference, I will not press it any further.

## 4.2. How It Works

I have presented a proposal that identifies what is said by a given utterance with the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered. Let me now quickly review the key cases for any account of what is said, and show how they may be handled.

### 4.2.1. Different meanings, same things said

One major challenge to my proposal is that we often intuitively say the same thing using sentences that do not mean the same thing:

(70) I was injured yesterday. (by Jones, on 15 July 2005)

(71) Jones was injured two days ago. (by Miles, on 16 July 2005)

How are we going to capture the intuition that, in some important sense, what is said by those utterances is the same, when the meaning of (70), which we have identified with what is said, is that the speaker was injured on the day before the day of utterance, and the meaning of (71) is that someone called 'Jones' was injured two days before? If linguistic meaning = what is said, isn't that a straightforward denial that Jones and Miles have said the same thing?

Our proposal denies indeed that Jones in (70) and Miles in (71) say the same thing *tout court*, but this does not mean that there is no sense in which they may be understood and correctly reported as saying the same thing. We account for this in three steps. First, if we analyze the sentences uttered in (70) and (71), we will see that they contain the same subtree, with the same linguistic meaning, which at the surface level corresponds to the predicate 'was injured'. The sentences uttered do, then, mean the same thing linguistically, though only to a certain extent. But the extent to which they do is significant, since it corresponds to the predicate, which is the core of the assertion.

Our second task is to show how the parts that have different linguistic meanings may be ignored in judging whether the same thing has been said. But note that those parts correspond to words like 'I', 'Jones', 'yesterday' and 'two days ago'. As noted above and in the literature, the conditions lexically associated with indexicals and names are presuppositions.<sup>19</sup> The fact that a given thing satisfies such a condition, like the fact that Jones is the speaker of (70), is not the sort of fact that we normally assert or communicate, nor do we need to inform other people of such facts. Rather, the speaker will assume that such facts are already known to her audience, and will exploit this knowledge to help them figure out whom she is talking of, eg Jones, and then communicate something about her, eg that she was injured.

The third part of our account of why (70) and (71) are so readily taken to say the same thing lies in the fact that the person that Jones is talking about is the same as the person that Miles is talking about, namely Jones herself, and that both are talking of the same day, 14 July 2005. Both Jones and Miles are talking about the same person and the same day, and they are asserting about these the same thing, namely, that the

---

<sup>19</sup> For linguistic discussion, see eg Kamp & Reyle (93), Heim & Kratzer (98), Geurts (99). For philosophical discussion, see eg Strawson (56) or Stalnaker (78), (99).

first was injured at the time of the second. True enough, our account also predicts that there is a sense in which Jones and Miles are *not* saying the same thing. If you wish, Jones is saying of herself that she is speaking, while Miles is saying of her that she is called 'Jones'. But this difference in what they have said is not very significant, because those things get asserted for heuristic purposes only, to help us figure out what the assertion is about.

#### 4.2.2. Same meanings, different things said vs. same meanings, same things said

Another major challenge to my proposal is to account for the fact that often, even though the same sentence has been uttered, it is not intuitively clear that the same thing has been said, nor can one always correctly report that the same thing has been said. Let me address together the problems from sections 2.2., 3.2. and 3.5. Consider:

(72) I have been injured. (Sonia talking to Miles)

(73) I have been injured. (Jones talking to Miles)

(74) Sonia said that, too. (Miles replying to Jones)

Because (72) may be true while (73) is false and vice versa, Kaplan and his followers hold that what is said must be different, or, as Frege wrote, that different thoughts are expressed, one involving Sonia and the other, Jones. In our account, what is said in (72) and (73) is the same thing, only that thing is not true or false simpliciter, but it is true or false with respect to people, times, situations. So (72) can only bear a truth value after being evaluated at a person and at a time, and those that determine the truth value of the utterance will presumably be those that we take the speaker of the utterance to be talking about and referring to. Since Sonia is talking about herself, while Jones is talking about herself, different individuals are relevant to the truth values of those utterances. But this does not mean that what is said is not the same.

The way in which we would account for the intuition that Sonia and Jones have said different things is by pointing out that what they said, which we hold is the same, was said about different individuals, namely Sonia vs. Jones. And this difference matters to our talk about what is said. For, when we report that the same thing has been said, we typically take it for granted that this was said about the same thing. If it was not, then we explicitly mention the other thing that it was said about. But if we leave that implicit, then when we report that the same thing has been said, we will be normally presupposing that it was said about the same thing, too.

But, as we have pointed out several times, (74) is ambiguous. As strong as the intuition that Sonia and Jones said different things is the intuition that they said the same thing, namely, that they have been injured (each). Some evidence for the claim that the same thing has been said comes from the fact that the report in (74) may come out intuitively true, even though Jones never said that Sonia had been injured. The notion of what what is said is said about gives us means of accounting for the sloppy/strict ambiguity in the report in (74). On the strict reading, on which Sonia said that Jones had been injured, the presupposition of what the reportee was talking of "projects", as linguists say, and gets anchored to a suitable element outside the context of the reported utterance. The only suitable element in the context of (74) is



the person that Jones is talking about, namely Jones herself, which is how we obtain that it was Jones who Sonia is reported to have said had been injured. On the sloppy reading, the same presupposition is "bound locally", to a suitable element from within the context of the reported utterance. But that can only be the speaker of the reported context, Sonia, who is explicitly mentioned. That is how we get that Sonia said about herself that she had been injured.<sup>20</sup>

What is nice is that the same account also explains why it is not always possible to correctly report that the same thing has been said, even though the same sentence has been uttered. Consider:

(75) You are a fool. (Sonia talking to Alex, overheard by Miles)

(76) You are a fool. (Dorsky talking to Jones, in Miles' presence)

(77) \*That's what Sonia said, too. (Miles' comment)

(78) That's what Sonia told Alex, too. (Miles' comment)

As indicated, the report in (77), on the assumption that Sonia never said that Jones was a fool, is false. It is not ambiguous, but just false. To account for this, we only need to point out that the presupposition of what Sonia was talking about cannot be bound locally, because there is no suitable element explicitly mentioned to which it may be anchored. But if the presupposition in (77) must project, it will be anchored to a suitable element in the context of the report, and the only such element is Jones, as the person being talked about by Dorsky. This gives us that Sonia said that Jones was a fool, which is false in the scenario considered.

Note how this contrasts with (78), in which we do get the strict/sloppy ambiguity. There, Alex is mentioned explicitly, which makes him a suitable anchor for the presupposition of what the reported utterance is about.

In sum, when we anchor this presupposition in the local context, ie the context of the reported utterance, when that is possible, we get the sloppy reading, and when we anchor it in the context of the report itself, we get the strict reading. The same account applies to the cases containing 3<sup>rd</sup> person and demonstrative pronouns discussed in section 3.5.

#### 4.2.3. Different meanings, different propositions, same things said

Recall the problem of time- and location-neutral what is said, from section 3.1.:

(79) It's less windy than yesterday in the city. (Jones, on Thursday 21 July, in Stanford)

(80) It's less windy than three days ago in San Francisco. (Dorsky, on Saturday 23 July, in London)

(81) That's what Jones said, too.

---

<sup>20</sup> For lack of space, I will not address the question of what makes an element a suitable anchor. Suffice it to note that the linguistic meaning will likely impose some constraints. For instance, we can anchor what is talked about to the reportee when the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun occurs in the reported sentence, as in (72)-(73), but not if it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun. For instance, (77) can in no way be understood as meaning that Sonia said of herself that she was a fool.

(82) Jones said that, too, on Thursday.

On the standard account, (79) and (80) express different propositions: that Stanford on 21/07/05 is less windy than San Francisco on 20/07/05 vs. that London 23/07/05 is less windy than San Francisco on 20/07/05. But clearly, there is a sense in which (79) and (80) say the same thing. Both Jones and Dorsky are saying that it is less windy than on a certain day in a certain place, namely in San Francisco on 20/07/05. That the same thing has been said is further witnessed by people's intuitions on the truth of reports (81) and (82). Moreover, while (81) is ambiguous, (82), though still ambiguous, has a dominant reading, its semi-sloppy reading, on which Jones said that in the place and at the time of her utterance it was less windy than Wednesday in San Francisco. This reading wins out because it is very unlikely that on Thursday, Jones would be talking of what the weather was going to be like the following Saturday in London.

If we hold that linguistic meaning = what is said, then, of course, we must say that (79) and (80) do not say quite the same thing. However, there is a sense in which they do, since the linguistic meaning of each is, roughly, that it is less windy than it was at a certain other place. Just as in the basic "different meanings, same things said" cases (2.1.), here too, the sentences uttered overlap on the predicate, which is the core of the assertion. On the other hand, the parts on which the sentences do not overlap have presuppositional meanings. Those parts correspond to 'yesterday' and 'in the city' and 'three days ago' and 'in San Francisco', all of which are temporal or spatial adverbs that we typically use to help our audience figure out which situations or events we are talking about.

What is also crucial to the intuition that in a sense, (79) and (80) say the same thing, is that the presuppositions on which their meanings differ are being presupposed *of the same thing*, namely San Francisco on 20 July 2005. So, as in the basic case, (79) and (80) do partly mean the same thing linguistically (something like "at this place it's less windy at that other place"), and also, both are about the same thing, namely the weather in San Francisco on 20/07/05. What is peculiar here is that the two utterances are not just about the weather in San Francisco on 20/07/05, but also about something else, namely the weather that is said to be less windy, and this is not the same for (79) and (80). One is about Stanford on 21/07/05, and the other, about London on 23/07/05. But on this point, all we need to do is deploy the same strategy as in the "same meanings, same things said" cases. We need to show that in reports (81) and (82), the presupposition of what is being talked about, that is, of where it is said to be less windy, can be bound locally. This is quite obvious in the simple case:

(83) It's windy. (Jones, on Thursday 21 July, in Stanford)

(84) It's windy. (Dorsky, on Saturday 23 July, in London)

(85) That's what Jones said, too.

The intuitions predict that (85) is ambiguous between a sloppy and a strict reading, and we account for this ambiguity by asking whether the presupposition of what

Jones was talking about is bound locally, in the context of Jones' reported utterance, or projects to the context of the report itself. The cases of (79) and (80) are slightly trickier, because for each, there is not just one thing talked about, but two: the actual weather and the one in San Francisco on 20/07/05, and the two are being compared. The presupposition of one thing talked about, viz. the actual weather, can be bound and even accommodated locally, giving rise to the sloppy reading on which (81) and (82) come out true. On the other hand, the presupposition of the other thing talked about projects, and the reason why it does is that in the context of the reported utterance, there does not seem to be any suitable anchor for it.<sup>21</sup>

The very same account may be given for the cases discussed in section 3.4., which instead of spatio-temporal adverbs involve personal and demonstrative pronouns, and it would have been somewhat redundant to spell out their analysis here.

#### 4.2.4. Same propositions, different things said

Whether the same name has been used may be relevant to the truth of reports that the same thing has been said, even when the different names stand for one and the same individual. If Sonia says "I have been to San Sebastian," it may not always be correct to report: "Sonia said that she had been to Donostia," even if San Sebastian, where she says that she has been, just is Donostia. Similarly, if Miles says, talking of Sonia, "she has been to Donostia," it is not clear that he may correctly add "that's what she said, too." After all, Sonia said that she had been to San Sebastian, not to Donostia, and if one asked her whether she had been to Donostia, she would sincerely reply "no, never."

The present proposal accounts for the intuition that different things have been said by taking it that different things have indeed been said. For, what is said is linguistic meaning, and the meanings of the two sentences are different. The meaning of 'San Sebastian' is, roughly, the condition of being called by the name 'San Sebastian', and that of 'Donostia', being called 'Donostia'. This difference in the linguistic meaning is enough to account for the fact that what is said is not insensitive to the choice of the name used.

## 5 Conclusion

I started this paper with a presentation of what we might call the received wisdom on what is said, one of whose central tenets is the distinction between linguistic meaning and what is said. We then saw two main types of cases that *prima facie* motivate this distinction, the "different meanings, same thing said" cases and the "same meanings, different things said" cases, as I called them. We also saw that even some radically

---

<sup>21</sup> As a matter of fact, (81) and particularly (82) tend to be viewed as ambiguous between the semi-sloppy reading, on which Jones said on Thursday 21/07/05 that it was less windy than on Wednesday 20/07/05 in San Francisco, and the full-blown sloppy reading, on which she said that it was less windy than "three days ago," which would mean Monday 18/07/05. To account for the latter reading, we would need to establish that even the second presupposition can be bound locally.

opposed views, like contextualism and minimalism, appear to agree on the question of what it is that directly referential expressions such as proper names and personal and demonstrative pronouns contribute to what is said. Then we moved to a series of cases that square very badly with the distinction linguistic meaning vs. what is said. In particular, we often get the intuition that the same thing has been said, even though the reported utterances do not express the same (traditional) proposition, nor do the sentences uttered have the same linguistic meaning. We have also seen cases in which utterances of sentences that mean the same thing are reported as saying the same thing, even though, again, different propositions are expressed. However, such cases do not generalize that easily, and we have noted interesting asymmetries among the 1<sup>st</sup> person, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person, and the other pronouns, as used in utterances reported as saying the same thing. In the last part of the paper we gave, albeit in very rough lines, a positive account that takes what is said to be nothing more or less than the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered. The three notion deployed in the construal of our account are linguistic meanings, what is talked about, and a semantics for reported speech. We then saw that certain semantic and perhaps syntactic properties of speech reports and indirect discourse need to be taken into account in order to explain some of our intuitions on what is said, which admittedly to not always support the equation "what is said = linguistic meaning." Finally, we tried to show how our account works by applying it case by case both to the examples that seem to motivate the standard theory and to the examples that seem to put it into jeopardy.

## 6 References

- Bach, K.: You Don't Say, *Synthese* 128 (2001)
- Bach, K.: The Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction: What It Is and Why It Matters, in Turner, K. (ed.) *The Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction from Different Points of View*, Elsevier (1999)
- Bach, K.: Seemingly Semantic Intuitions, in Campbell, J. et al. (eds.), *Meaning and Truth*, Seven Bridges Press (2002)
- Braun, D.: Demonstratives and Their Linguistic Meanings, *Nous* 30 (1996)
- Buring, D.: *Binding Theory*, Cambridge University Press (2003)
- Cappelen, H. and E. Lepore: On an Alleged Connection Between Indirect Speech and the Theory of Meaning, *Mind and Language* 12 (1997)
- Cappelen, H. and E. Lepore: *Insensitive Semantics*, Oxford: Blackwell (2005)
- Carston, R.: *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication*, Oxford: Blackwell (2002)
- Crimmins, M. and J. Perry, The Prince and the Phone Booth: Reporting Puzzling Beliefs, *The Journal of Philosophy* 86 (1989)
- Feldman, R.: Saying Different Things, *Philosophical Studies* 38 (1980)
- Frege, G.: Logic, in Beaney, K. (ed.), *The Frege Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell (1997)
- Geurts, B.: Good News for the Description Theory of Names, *Journal of Semantics* 14 (1997)
- Geurts, B.: *Pronouns and Presuppositions*, Elsevier (1999)

- Grice, P.: *Studies in the Ways of Words*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press (1989)
- Heim, I. and A. Kratzer: *Semantics in Generative Grammar*, Oxford: Blackwell (1998)
- Evans, G.: *Does Tense Logic Rest Upon a Mistake?* In Evans G., *Collected Papers*, Oxford University Press (1985)
- Kamp, H. and U. Reyle, *From Discourse to Logic*, Kluwer Dordrecht (1993)
- Kaplan, D.: *On Demonstratives* (1977), in Almog, J. et al. (eds.), *Themes About Kaplan*, Oxford University Press (1989)
- King, J. and J. Stanley, *Semantics, Pragmatics, and the Role of Semantic Content* (2002)
- Lappin, S.: *The Interpretation of Ellipsis*, in Lappin S. (ed.) *The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell (1996)
- Lasnik, H.: *Essays on Anaphora*, Kluwer Dordrecht (1989)
- Lewis, D.: *General Semantics*, in Davidson, D. and G. Harman (eds.), *Natural Language Semantics*, Reidel Dordrecht (1972)
- Lewis, D.: *Index, Context and Content*, in Kanger, S., Ohman, S. (eds.), *Philosophy and Grammar*, Reidel Dordrecht (1980)
- Levinson, S.: *Presumptive Meanings: The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicatures*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press (2000)
- Partee, B.: *Some Structural Analogies between Tenses and Pronouns in English*, *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 70, no. 18 (1973)
- Partee, B.: *Binding Implicit Variables in Quantified Contexts*, *Papers of Chicago Linguistic Society* (1989)
- Perry, J.: *Reflexivity, Indexicality and Names*, in Kunne, W., et al., *Direct Reference, Indexicality, and Propositional Attitudes*, The CSLI Publications (1997)
- Perry, J.: *Reference and Reflexivity*, The CSLI Publications (2001)
- Predelli, S.: *Painted Leaves, Context and Semantic Analysis*, *Linguistics and Philosophy* 28 (2005)
- Predelli, S.: *Contexts. Meaning, Truth, and the Use of Language*, Oxford University Press (2005)
- Prior, A.: *Time and Modality*, Oxford University Press (1957)
- Recanati, F.: *Direct Reference*, Blackwell Oxford (1993)
- Recanati, F.: *What Is Said*, *Synthese* 128 (2001)
- Recanati, F.: *Oratio Oblique, Oratio Recta: An Essay on Metarepresentations*, The MIT Press (2003)
- Recanati, F.: *Literal Meaning*, Oxford University Press (2004)
- van der Sandt, R.: *Presupposition as Anaphora Resolution*, *Journal of Semantics* 9, (1992)
- Salmon, N., *Frege's Puzzle*, The MIT Press (1986)
- Soames, S.: *Beyond Rigidity: the Unfinished Semantic Agenda of 'Naming and Necessity'*, Oxford University Press (2002)
- Stalnaker, R.: *Presuppositions*, *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 2 (1973)
- Stalnaker, R.: *Assertion*, in Cole, P. (ed.) *Syntax and Semantics* 9, Academic Press, London (1978)
- Stalnaker, R.: *Context and Content*, Oxford University Press (1999)
- Strawson, P.: *On Referring*, *Mind* 59 (1956)
- Stanley, J.: *Context and Logical Form*, *Linguistics and Philosophy* 23 (2000)

- Stanley, J.: Semantics in Context, in Preyer, G. (ed.) Contextualism, Oxford University Press (2005)
- Stojanovic, I.: What to Say on What Is Said, in Blackburn P. et al. (eds.), Modeling and Using Context, Springer-Verlag, LNAI 2680, Berlin (2003)
- Stojanovic, I.: A Different Story about Indexicals, ILLC Research Report Series, Amsterdam (2005)
- Taylor, K.: Truth and Meaning, Oxford: Blackwell (1998)
- Taylor, K.: Misplaced Modification and the Illusion of Opacity, in O'Rourke et al (eds.), Situating Semantics: Essays on the Philosophy of John Perry, The MIT Press, Cambridge (forthcoming)
- Ziff, P.: What Is Said, in Davidson, D. and G. Harman (eds.), Natural Language Semantics, Reidel Dordrecht (1972)